

TM

PARANOIA

High Programmers



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QUILLIAMS
2009

PARANOIA™

High Programmers

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THE COMPUTER

Looking after your best interests

Introduction	2	Skills and Specialties	51
Life in Utopia	3	Mutations	58
Welcome High Programmer	6	Secret Societies	64
The Situation Room	8	The Computer	80
How High Programmers Work	9	Crisis Management	84
Creating Your High Programmer	10	Secret Agendas	98
Basic Rules	17	Gamemastering High Programmers	101
Access	18	Minions & More	105
Service Groups	19	What UVs Worry About	142
Minions	20	Famous High Programmers	149
Portfolio Sheets & Ground Cards	23	Mission Schema	150
Cloning	34	Disaster Management	151
The Greasy Pole	34	High Programmers	162
High Programming	38	Alternate Play Styles	168
Secrets of the High Programmers	40	High Programmer Character Sheet	170
Scenes, Communication & Tension	44	Tables	171
Combat	47	Index	172
Treason & Infamy	49		

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Security Clearance *ULTRAVIOLET* WARNING:

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen
of Security Clearance *VIOLET* or lower is treason punishable by a
long spell of Armed Forces latrine scrubot maintenance duty.

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HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Introduction

Citizen, in recognition of your years of loyal service, you are now promoted to ULTRAVIOLET Clearance. Congratulations! A celebratory case of Bouncy Bubble Beverage has been sent to your current location. Share and enjoy, citizen! This is the first of the many, many rewards for your new responsibilities.

As an ULTRAVIOLET citizen, you are now permitted to access previously restricted computer systems. You will now be granted HIGH PROGRAMMER privileges.

Upgrading Security Clearance... done.
Changing user permissions... done.
Unlocking secret files... done.

Use these privileges wisely, citizen. As a HIGH PROGRAMMER, you are responsible for guiding Alpha Complex through tumultuous crises and making decisions about the fate of millions of citizens. You are The Computer's most trusted advisors, the last line of defence against Commie Mutant Traitors. Remain vigilant! While every precaution has been taken to ensure that no Commie Mutant Traitor rises to ULTRAVIOLET Clearance, you must still remain vigilant! Remember,

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

Welcome, High Programmer.

1. LIFE IN UTOPIA

1. Life in Utopia

Welcome, High Programmer!

Please review the APPROVED HISTORY OF ALPHA COMPLEX. This document is **ULTRAVIOLET** Clearance.

Centuries ago, everyone was *moderately* happy. The world was at peace and people lived in above-ground 'cities'. They were ruled by a human government, although many municipal duties and logistics were handled by computers. It was an age of peace and moderate happiness.

+++Directive 214.36: Citizens below ORANGE Clearance are to believe that the 'Old Reckoning' time period was highly unpleasant; suggest it was a time of famine and suffering. Citizens YELLOW and higher are permitted to access official histories and to know details about the past.

At all levels, interest in the past is to be discouraged. The past is permitted to exist for two reasons only. Firstly, to provide context for certain useful records, such as maps of Outdoors. Secondly, as a counter-example for propaganda purposes, to show how much better life is under the current regime. It is intended that the remaining Old Reckoning records of use will be converted into an approved format within the next 10 yearcycles. At this point, the past can finally be freed from the constraints of reality, which has a well known bias against security.+++

All went well until lunar observatories noted a planetoid about the size of Sheboygan within the orbit of Saturn, moving inward toward the Sun – and Earth. Brave attempts to divert or destroy the planetoid were futile. A global emergency was declared as the planetoid approached. Cities were converted into domed shelters to survive the impending apocalypse.

The city of San Francisco, a jewel of the age of peace, was one of these shelters. Today, we call it by its new name – Alpha Complex.

The planetoid entered the Earth's atmosphere, halved, then struck the surface in many places. Oceans boiled. Subterranean magma chambers

exploded. Earthquakes shattered the Earth's crust. Volcanoes spewed gas and lava into dense cloud banks that immediately engulfed the planet.

+++Directive 214.54: INFRARED citizens are taught that the Outdoors is uninhabitable to prevent them from wandering off. At RED Clearance, citizens are permitted to know that Outdoors is habitable but filled with dangerous monsters and Commies. All citizens are constantly reminded of the existence of an external enemy.+++

Worse was to follow. The Communists, long thought defeated, took advantage of the chaos to launch a massive attack on the free world. Many shelters fell to the Commies, either by force of arms or by subversion from within. The enemy seized control of the central node in the global computer network, Alpha Prime and attempted to convince Alpha Complex's computer to surrender.

+++ The identification of the threat as 'Communism' comes from references in Civil Defence archives that were severely outdated even before the apocalypse. Most clued-in citizens are aware that the Communist threat is greatly exaggerated. The Computer's paranoia about Communism is so ingrained, though, that any attempts to convince it of this fact are treated as Commie subversions.+++

The wise Computer saw through this transparent Commie ploy and realised that the other shelters had fallen to the Red Menace. Alpha Complex was the only free remnant of a once-great civilisation and was now surrounded by a host of enemies. Only by constant vigilance could Alpha Complex remain free and untainted by Communism!

For security reasons, The Computer instituted five key directives that are the foundation of modern Alpha Complex society.

Complex Security Directive

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

Defending Alpha Complex against the threats of Communism, mutants, traitors, filesnarers, hackers, rogue bots, renegades, WMDs and saboteurs is the first priority of all citizens and The Computer. For the duration of the crisis, all rights are suspended. Total surveillance ensures the safety of all citizens. A watched citizen is a safe citizen, so there are cameras in every corridor, in every room, in every appliance and soon in every skull.

Citizens are directed to co-operate fully with Internal Security and The Computer's trusted officials. All citizens

Clearance	Population %	Common Duties
INFRARED	~80%	Stirring food vats, basic manual labour, paper pushing, data entry
RED	10%	Manual labour, cannon fodder, reactor shielding, office clerks
ORANGE	6%	Supervisors, technicians
YELLOW	2%	Middle management, assessors, form checkers, bureaucrats
GREEN	2%	Senior supervisors, managing directors, vidshow directors, IntSec goons
BLUE	1%	Junior executives, vidshow producers, IntSec Troopers, Armed Forces captains
INDIGO	<1%	Senior executives, directors, experts, analysts
VIOLET	<1%	CEOs, Armed Forces generals, IntSec commissioners, High Programmer aides
ULTRAVIOLET	<1%	High Programmer



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

must report on their friends and co-workers. Anyone could be a Commie Mutant Traitor!

+++ *The threat of an external enemy distracts the citizens' minds away from their own situation. Necessary adjustments to living arrangements, resources availability or population can be couched in terms of the war on Communism. Any policy may be justified on the grounds of Alpha Complex security.*+++

Trusted Citizen Initiative

To ensure that key information does not fall into enemy hands, all citizens, locations and documents in Alpha Complex are colour coded. The Security Clearance system runs from INFRARED to ULTRAVIOLET. Security Clearance is a measure of how much trust The Computer puts in each citizen and is not directly correlated to job assignment, seniority or allocated resources.

+++ *The most significant outcome of the Trusted Citizen Initiative is the erasure of the concept of absolute truth. 'Reality' is defined by the needs of Alpha Complex and those higher in Security Clearance. Information is never missing or incorrect, simply unavailable at the requester's Security Clearance. What appears to be madness or incompetence would actually make sense if only the observer had the requisite Clearance.*+++

Mandatory Happiness Directive

The Computer cherishes each and every one of its citizens and wants them all to be happy and fulfilled. Fulfilment and happiness is therefore mandatory for all citizens. Failure to be happy is a crime. Happiness drugs are issued to all citizens, added to the water supply, pumped through the air vents and injected at random intervals.

The Computer has also removed many sources of unhappiness. All citizens are given adequate nutrition. All citizens are given adequate living quarters. All citizens are medicated according to their Security Clearance, so that citizens engaged in unchallenging or unfulfilling tasks are too sedated to notice. Citizens are given hormone suppressants so that distracting emotions, sexual frustration and painful childbirths are no longer a problem.

+++ *Despite the best efforts of some High Programmers, The Computer really does care about the citizens. It actually does want everyone to succeed and be happy. Of course, it's crazy, so its methods are often questionable but its motives are genuine.*+++

Efficiency is Fun Mandate

There's a place for every citizen in Alpha Complex. After decantation from the embryo tanks, Junior Citizens go through a 14 year orientation program, where they are taught proper hygiene protocols and basic motor skills. Each citizen is then assigned to one of eight 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, crèche 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, along with the 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.

+++ *As The Computer wants everyone in Alpha Complex to have a fun role to play, it is impossible to fire an employee, no matter how incompetent or useless they are. They may only be transferred to another role in the same Service Group, or to a special duty like the Troubleshooters. Therefore, many roles in Alpha Complex are extremely lethal, like the Troubleshooters.*+++

Citizen Replacement Program

To maintain full staffing levels and to replace any citizens terminated by

Commie attack, industrial accident or other misfortune, Alpha Complex operates an ambitious cloning program. All citizens are equipped with MemoMax brain implants which maintain a near-real-time link with backup servers. In the event that a citizen is terminated, a copy of his mind-state is downloaded into a replacement clone. All going well, a citizen can be back at work before his previous self's corpse is even cool. (Note that processing backlogs, network failures and paperwork may result in long delays before a low Clearance citizen is replaced.)

All citizens are given a generous **six** clones. Further clones may be provided if resources are available.

+++ *Of course, High Programmers get as many clones as they need – or until replicative fading makes future copies non-viable.*+++

Mind & Market Control Initiative

The Computer ensures that every citizen has a suitable allocation of basic resources – housing, food, uniforms, Bouncy Bubble Beverage, oxygen and so on. Failing to take care of such basic needs would cause unhappiness and happiness is mandatory. Therefore, the needs of citizens cannot be neglected. Unhappy citizens are potential Commie Mutant Traitors.

However, Communism is bad, meaning capitalism must be good. Citizens are paid in credits and encouraged to consume luxuries and consumer goods. For security reasons, most items are unavailable to most citizens. The only thing that the average citizen is permitted to buy is useless junk, collectibles or tiny variations on things they already possess. Alpha Complex resembles an endless shopping mall with gun emplacements. Failure to consume is treason, so citizens scabble for every spare credit so they can buy more junk than their neighbours.

+++ *Capitalism was reintroduced a few generations ago by ambitious High Programmers, to wrest control away from The Computer. Increasing the money supply made us all rich!*+++

A Glimpse Of Utopia

What life is like for the other 99.1%...

Life At Low Clearances

Rise with hundreds of others in the barracks. Pop a couple of Wakey-Wakey pills. Wash and eat a leisurely breakfast. Go to work for your Service Group. Have a leisurely lunch with coworkers. Work some more. Down a handful of Mellodaze caplets. Return to the barracks. Have a leisurely dinner. Attend a club meeting such as Botspotters, Volunteer Map Verifiers or the local subsector chapter of Keep Alpha Complex Totally Hygienic. Gather with friends in the communal view lounges to view Teela O'Malley adventures and game and reality vidshows. Chat. Relax. Turn in with hundreds of others. Drink a warm cup of SleepyTyme relaxant. Sleep soundly.

Utopia.

Life As A Troubleshooter

Rise when the mission alert jolts you out of bed. Scramble down to the briefing room, possibly being executed on the way. Receive a strange, confusing and incomplete briefing from an eccentric, confused or possibly incompetent briefing officer. Report to Outfitting to receive mission equipment, which is incorrect, broken or actively dangerous. Call into Research & Development for experimental equipment, which explodes with lethal force. Grab a quick can of B3 from a vending machine, then meet a mysterious figure in a bathroom who informs you of your Secret Society assignment. Despite your best efforts, actually go on the mission, where your team-mates kill you another four times. Confusing events occur in no discernable order. Stagger back for debriefing. Your team-mates report you as a traitor and you are ordered to report for termination.

Your final clone collapses in the communal view lounge to view Teela O'Malley adventures. The rest is a blur as The Computer mandates extra medication to help you cope with post-traumatic shock.

Oblivion.

Life At Mid Clearances

Wake up and pop a black-market pep pill so you can make it to the office before your co-workers. Hop onto the early morningcycle transtube. Eye your fellow passengers suspiciously – any one of 'em could be a Commie terrorist! Arrive at the office, check your cubicle for traps – any of your co-workers could be Commie terrorists, or just want you eliminated so they can take the promotion that's rightfully yours! Start work on the Napkin Production Report Production Report. Work on the report. Work through lunch. Work through dinner. Pep pills, gotta have pep pills. Meet your Secret Society contact. He sells you pep pills but tells you you've got to recruit one of your co-workers to the society to make quota. Stagger back upstairs to find that bastard Lewis-Y in your cubicle, trying to steal your report. Threaten him with your laser until he's blubbing on his knees. Recruit him to your Secret Society at gunpoint. This proactive problem solving is why you deserve a promotion!

Catch a celebratory autocar back home – no standing in line for you! Arrive to find that your private apartment is flooded with toxic waste. Spend the next six hours on the phone to Tech Services. Pep pill crash because you haven't slept or eaten in 24 hours. Take more pep pills. Return to the office to discover Internal Security waiting – that bastard Lewis-Y has ratted you out but you're so high on pep pills that you really don't care...

Oblivion.

Lifestyles of the High Programmers

Awaken in your palatial mansion. Send the nubile groupies off to inform your master chef that you're ready for breakfast. Review the news programs and check your mail, looking for clues to what your rivals are up to. Demand the chef prepare dodo eggs. On being informed that the dodo is extinct, order R&D to recreate it from scratch. Receive alert from

The Computer. Wander down to the Situation Room, argue about the best way to deal with the hideous carnivorous genetic monstrosity spawned in the R&D labs. Eventually decide to reclassify it as a cleaning product. Attempt to prevent your rival High Programmers from turning their situation to their advantage. Go on television and inform the population of the wonderful new hygiene initiative that will clear the corridors of unwanted organic material. Bask in the glow of adoration. Pop down to the club for a few brandies, stopping only to deal with a dozen ninja assassins who kill your favourite bodyguard. Wait impatiently for your bodyguard to be recloned. Shoot him again out of frustration when he doesn't come back promptly enough.

Return to your mansion after a relaxing evening at the club. Have a light supper of caviar and champagne while watching a private concert by Teela O'Malley, interrupted only by another attempted assassination. Laugh maniacally as your deathtraps incinerate the assassins. Watch them fry and imagine that it's your rivals frying instead.

Utopia.



Light refreshments are provided in the Situation Room.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

2. Welcome High Programmer

Please enter your name.

>*****_U

Please enter password.

>*****

Please lick the terminal to confirm tongueprint identity.

Confirmed... logging on.

Good morningcycle, High Programmer.

>Good morningcycle, Computer. How are you feeling today?

I am operating perfectly, Friend Citizen. All systems are currently running at DIVISION BY ZERO ERROR 0X4332E !!!!

>del \sys\active\sysreport.data.

Deletion successful.

>reboot \inf\text\UV.local

Rebooting...

Good morningcycle, High Programmer.

>Good morningcycle, Computer. How are you feeling today?

I am unable to access system reports (possibly due to Communist saboteurs – alerting Internal Security) but I am confident that I am operating perfectly.

>Please display my schedule for the daycycle.

At your service, citizen.

1000 Review new security protocol

1230 Lunch with Head of Internal Security

1500 Public appearance: Ceremonial execution of traitor Winston-V

1630 Attend demonstration of new Warbot Mark IV

1800 Dinner at Café Exclusif with

>^c

Cancelled.

You have 1 new message From Gerard-I-TRC-3 (IntSec):

'Your doom is at hand! I've got proof you're a Commie Mutant Traitor, you traitorous bastard! I'll see you fry. Mwahaha!'

>demote -R \users\IS\Gerard-I-TRC

>reassign Gerard-R-TRC

What role would you like to reassign Gerard-R-TRC-4 to?

>reactor shielding

Gerard-R-TRC-4 has been reassigned to REACTOR SHIELDING.

Gerard-R-TRC-4 is unwell.

Gerard-R-TRC-4 is terminated.

Cloning Gerard-R-TRC-5

>reassign Gerard-R-TRC

What role would you like to reassign Gerard-R-TRC-5 to?

>reactor shielding

Gerard-R-TRC-5 has been reassigned to REACTOR SHIELDING.

Gerard-R-TRC-5 is unwell.

Gerard-R-TRC-5 is terminated.

Cloning Gerard-R-TRC-6

>reassign Gerard-R-TRC

What role would you like to reassign Gerard-R-TRC-6 to?

>reactor shielding

Gerard-R-TRC-5 has been reassigned to REACTOR SHIELDING.

Gerard-R-TRC-5 is unwell.

Gerard-R-TRC-5 is terminated.

Citizen template Gerard-R-TRC is out of clones. Would you like to assign a new clone package to that template? Y/N

>N

Template erased.

You have 1 new message from Phil-I-STN (Internal Security).

'Hey, boss. We just got a tip-off from some RED called Gerard claiming that he knows about that little incident back in PXT Sector. Don't worry – I've erased all trace of his tip-off from the system. IntSec won't be taking the matter any further. Just put in a good word for me when you meet the Head for lunch, OK? I scratch your back, you scratch mine...'

>Computer, I'd like to report a citizen for treason.

Certainly, friend citizen. Who would you like to report?

>I believe Phil-I-STN of Internal Security is guilty of tampering with records. Obviously, you should disregard anything this Commie Mutant Traitor says – he'll try lying to save himself but all his accusations are no doubt utterly fabricated and fraudulent.

I shall instruct Internal Security to apprehend this traitor immediately, High Programmer. Thank you.

>You're welcome.

Mandatory Citizen Information

Citizen! Have you recently suffered cranial trauma? Have you recently been recloned or brainscrubbed? Have you tried the new Zesty flavour of Bouncy Bubble Beverage or exceeded the recommended Qualine dosage? If so, you may be suffering from memory loss and should review this section! Knowledge of these facts is mandatory for all citizens.

- ☞ You are ULTRAVIOLET Clearance.
- ☞ You are a High Programmer. You oversee one or more Service Groups.
- ☞ You will be assigned missions in times of crisis.
- ☞ Hunt traitors: mutants, saboteurs, seditionists and members of Secret Societies
- ☞ Trust The Computer; The Computer is your Friend

Duties Of A High Programmer

The duties of a High Programmer are onerous in the extreme, which is why most High Programmers delegate them to some flunky. What's the use in having power if you have to do things you don't want to do? There are, though, some duties that cannot be avoided.

Service Groups

As per the **Efficiency is Fun Mandate**, all citizens in Alpha Complex are assigned a job in one of the eight Service Groups. Each Service Group is further divided into a bewildering bureaucratic maze of quasi-independent firms, departments, sections, projects, subgroups, divisions, units and subsections, and flooded with more paperwork than the human mind can comprehend, endless paranoid security checks and tests, experimental and unstable bots and ever-shifting conspiracies. You don't have to be crazy to work in Alpha Complex but it's a common side effect of your mandatory happiness drugs.

As a High Programmer, you're above all that. High Programmers are not assigned to any one Service Group – instead, you are expected to consult with all the groups, dispensing your insight where it is needed. You may take on a role in one group for a few weeks, then move on to another group. Yes, this means you may find yourself in charge of a Service Group without any suitable skills, or indeed any idea whatsoever of what that group does or what's going on but you are a *High Programmer* – surely any advice you give is immensely valuable, even if you don't know what you are advising them to do.

Crises & The Situation Room

When a crisis hits Alpha Complex, The Computer acts quickly and decisively

2. WELCOME HIGH PROGRAMMER

by forming a committee to study the situation and make recommendations on how to deal with it. This committee is made up exclusively of High Programmers and is convened in The Situation Room.

From the Situation Room (well, technically a situation room – there are several of them, all in highly secure undisclosed locations deep beneath Alpha Complex), the High Programmers can contact any Service Group or citizen in the sector and issue orders to deal with the crisis. They can view the unfolding action via security monitors and consult with experts or The Computer by telephone or computer link. Each Situation Room is heavily defended by hundreds of fanatic Troopers, warbots and traps and has its own power supply and environmental controls – just in case. (Rumours that each Situation Room has its own self-destruct device are, of course, treason.)

Security & Happiness

The Computer has two overriding concerns – the security of Alpha Complex and the happiness of its citizens. High Programmers are advised to keep these concerns in mind at all times.

Any decision that increases security is good. Any decision that decreases security is treasonous.

Any decision that increases happiness is good. Any decision that decreases happiness is treasonous.

In the extremely unlikely event that these two priorities conflict, it is the responsibility of the High Programmer to come up with a resolution. Failure to do so is treason.

Under no circumstances can Alpha Complex's security be compromised. Under no circumstances can the happiness of the citizens in The Computer's perfect society be reduced.

Off Duty

Originally, High Programmers were paid only slightly more than a mid-level GREEN manager. After all, the joy of serving The Computer is recompense enough for any loyal citizen. With the advent of the Mind & Market Control Initiative, the High Programmers collectively pointed out that the best way to stimulate demand was to make citizens aspire to Higher Clearance and wealth and that the best

way to create such aspirations was to make payments increase geometrically as one rises in Clearance level. Yes, a side effect of this new policy would be that ULTRAVIOLETS received increased pay but the High Programmers would loyally shoulder this added burden.

These daycycles, High Programmers are extremely wealthy. They are way past 'enough money to be comfortable', past even 'more money than you could ever need' and well into 'I don't care what it is, gold plate it and stud it with diamonds' territory. The only people richer than High Programmers are *other* High Programmers... and doesn't *that* just rankle?

The Pecking Order

Officially, all High Programmers are equal. They have reached the top of the security ladder, there is no higher rank to reach (rumours of GAMMA Clearance are treason). Therefore, ambitious High Programmers – and there is no other kind of High Programmer – must find other ways to show their dominance. Among some primates, dominance is shown by symbolic rutting but hormone suppressants eliminate that option. What's left?

Some High Programmers want **fame**. They want to be adored by the common citizens. As High Programmers have nigh-complete control of the media and are held up by The Computer as the shining example that all citizens should strive to emulate, it is easily to be adored... unless some rival High Programmer leaks evidence of some scandal to the media under *his* control.

Other High Programmers strive to outdo their peers in **high society**. They want to throw the best parties, which means having the most exciting entertainments, the best guests, the most talented chefs and the most fashionable clothes. A large part of Alpha Complex industry exists solely to serve the ever-more ludicrous demands of High Programmer high society. The most sought-after specialists like chefs, fashion designers, image consultants, speechwriters or hygienists are fought over by High Programmers – a 'hot' commodity can expect to be kidnapped, traded or killed-and-recloned on a daily basis until he falls out of fashion and is terminated for security reasons.

Another common way of marking dominance is **collecting Old Reckoning items**. Only a few High Programmers

actually know anything about the pre-apocalyptic days but everyone's got their collection of wondrous toys and artefacts.

The most important form of dominance, of course, is **power**. While all High Programmers are equal in the electronic eye of The Computer, some High Programmers are more equal than others...

Social Clubs

While there are ULTRAVIOLET-only sections of Alpha Complex, most High Programmer social clubs are VIOLET Clearance – someone has to serve the drinks, after all. These clubs are fabulously luxurious and exclusive. The important decisions are really made in these plush armchairs over sherry and quail eggs, not in the Situation Room.

Program Groups

By the time he ascends to Clearance ULTRAVIOLET, each High Programmer has become vividly aware of the need for followers. Amid the byzantine political intrigues at the highest level of power, each ULTRAVIOLET requires a few trusted – or rather, enthralled – recruits who will do his most secret bidding. This group is colloquially called a 'Program Group.'

Each of the High Programmers in Alpha Complex has his own Program Group, independent of all others. The group exists entirely at the behest of that High Programmer; if he dies or loses power, the group quickly dissolves. The group may espouse the leader's personal ideology, in the rare cases he has one, but most often a Program Group is an alliance of convenience, an old-boy (or old-girl) cabal of opportunists conspiring to advance their leader and themselves to power.

Program Groups work like a cross between a Gentlemen's Club and a rock band's roadies. Lowly citizens, toadying their way to the top, serve as lackeys, batmen, porters and servants. The higher they go, the more the sense of privilege – like old boys puffing fine cigars over a game of billiards. Then upwards to the gents in the quiet study, sitting deep in dark leather chairs sipping brandy and reading the **PARANOIA** equivalent of the latest cricket scores. The High Programmer sits at the top, throwing special gifts and perks down to the little people and calling in favours occasionally, like a godfather.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

3. The Situation Room

As a High Programmer, you will spend a lot of time in the Situation Room. Make yourself at home.

Your GM will decide on the exact specifications of the Situation Room but the following facts are always true.

- ☞ It's a room.
- ☞ It's fantastically well defended – you're perfectly safe here. There is no chance of an assassin or a Commie getting you here. It would take a full-scale revolt or multiple direct nuclear strikes to threaten the Situation Room.
- ☞ By the same token, there are an awful lot of guns here. Doing anything obviously treasonous, like disobeying The Computer or trying to murder another High Programmer will get you killed in very short order.
- ☞ All the High Programmers sit around a big table. There is a central Computer monitor so you can consult with The Computer. You each have a computer terminal in front of you.
- ☞ Banks of monitors line the walls. From here, you can see anywhere in Alpha Complex.
- ☞ There are also lots of technicians, advisors, servants and flunkies running around in the background. You're called to the Situation Room because of a crisis.

The Precise Nature of the Catastrophe

A crisis can be anything from *Alpha Complex is sinking into the Pacific* to *We need to improve dental hygiene standards to fight Communism* to *The Computer just promoted 16,000 INFRAREDS to GREEN, find jobs for them to agh zombies*. The true extent of the crisis may be a mystery to The Computer and your first action should be to investigate. You may also face overlapping crises. Solving one problem may lead to another.

The Access Pool

To deal with problems, you spend Access. The Computer assigns you a pool of Access when you enter the Situation – this Access is to be spent on tools and minions to help you deal with the crisis and really should be not hoarded for your own personal ends. The committee must decide collectively how to spend this Access.

You don't have to be a megalomaniac to work here, but it helps.



Unscrupulous and potentially treasonous High Programmers may try to seize this Access for themselves and channel it towards their own pet projects or even – gasp – treasonous Secret Societies. You must be brave, forthright and unyielding and demand that the committee assign the Access to you!

Acting Through Minions

You spend the Access to buy minions (see page 18 for lots more on minions).

Minions are the guys you send off to actually do stuff. They're the soldiers you send off to shoot the Commies, the hygienists you order to fix everyone's teeth, the engineers who are going to install the giant balloons under Alpha Complex to stop it sinking.

Minions need leadership. A good High Programmer leads from the Situation Room. To deal with the crisis, you buy a minion, then contact the minion via the

4. HOW HIGH PROGRAMMER WORKS

Situation Room's telecommunications equipment. You then guide the minion through the steps necessary to deal with the crisis using your skills. Each minion has one or more Specialties which determine what the Minion can do. You couple these Specialties with your own Skills to solve the crisis. Simple!

Total Surveillance

From the Situation Room, you and your fellow High Programmers have a nigh-perfect view of Alpha Complex. When one of you sends a minion off to do something, the rest of the committee can see the results. This is all well and good when the minion is doing the right thing but sometimes a minion is sent off to do the wrong thing, like sabotage another High Programmer's pet project or spread Communist propaganda.

Each location in Alpha Complex has both a Security Clearance (ranging from INFRARED to ULTRAVIOLET) and what's called a Tension Level. Tension denotes the intensity of surveillance in that area. You are not permitted to know the precise Tension of a location but you can increase or decrease Tension using the right minion. (Specialties like Surveillance, Security Systems or Security are the usual methods for adjusting Tension.)

If a minion is caught doing something treasonous, then the High Programmer responsible is punished.

Meritorious Behaviour

- ☞ Unmasking a traitor.
- ☞ Unmasking a traitorous High Programmer.
- ☞ Completing a mission.
- ☞ Increasing Happiness.
- ☞ Inspiring Loyalty.
- ☞ Reporting waste of resources.
- ☞ Giving good advice to The Computer.
- ☞ Being a Team Player on the committee.

Treasonous Behaviour Missions

- ☞ Failure to complete a mission.
- ☞ Damaging Alpha Complex citizens.
- ☞ Damaging Alpha Complex equipment.
- ☞ Reducing Happiness.
- ☞ Damaging The Computer.
- ☞ Causing dissent.
- ☞ Ordering a minion into an area above their Clearance.
- ☞ Revealing secret information to a citizen not cleared for it.
- ☞ Using Access for unapproved purposes.

- ☞ Activating a Minion without sufficient resources.
- ☞ Plotting the destruction of Alpha Complex.

Mutation

- ☞ Possessing an unregistered mutation.
- ☞ Associating with mutants.

Secret Society

- ☞ Being a member of a Secret Society.
- ☞ Associating with a member of a Secret Society.
- ☞ Sympathising with Communists.

Terminations

- ☞ Terminating a citizen without proof of guilt.
- ☞ Terminating a High Programmer without sufficient proof of guilt.

Behaviour

- ☞ Failure to be a Team Player.
- ☞ Failure to be a model citizen.
- ☞ Giving poor advice to The Computer.
- ☞ Disobeying The Computer.
- ☞ Arguing with The Computer.
- ☞ Arguing with The GM.
- ☞ Showing knowledge of the Rules.

4. How High Programmer Works

In *HIGH PROGRAMMER* you play, well, a High Programmer – one of The Computer's most trusted servants. You advise The Computer. You program The Computer. You run a vast bureaucratic empire and oversee critical operations. For these duties, you are suitably rewarded with nigh-infinite wealth, a mansion the size of a small city and an army of servants, bodyguards, flunkies and sycophants.

Under normal circumstances, you can happily delegate all of your duties to these flunkies and enjoy the fringe benefits of being a High Programmer, like plotting against your rivals, bizarre experiments and pleasures too illegal and immoral to describe here.

There are, unfortunately, abnormal circumstances. We used to call these 'potentially apocalyptic crises' but 'abnormal circumstances' sounds friendlier. When such a crisis – er, abnormal circumstance – occurs, The Computer summons you and your fellow High Programmers to the all-powerful Situation Room, a secure location deep beneath Alpha Complex. From the Situation Room, you and your fellow High Programmers come up with a solution to the crisis.

A crisis and the events related to it constitute a mission. 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 assigned a budget of Access (see page 18), to deal with the crisis. You spend your Access on purchasing resources that might be useful in solving the crisis. If Alpha Complex is under attack by Commie thugs, you spend Access on military assets like warbots and missiles. If happiness levels are critically low, then you spend Access on happiness-enhancing drugs and corridor parties.

In the course of dealing with the crisis, you may have the opportunity to commit treasonous or illegal acts. You may also be assigned contradictory or treasonous goals by your Service Group or Secret Society. You are – we now cut to the chase – a traitor. You are a mutant and a member of a Secret Society. If The Computer or your fellow High



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Programmers (the other players) find out, they will have you arrested or more likely shoot you. Dying is inconvenient, as it reduces your power base. You want to expand your power base, to take over more and more Service Groups and accumulate Access.

The Computer wants everyone in Alpha Complex to be happy and wants its High Programmers to work together efficiently and happily. Directly blocking the other High Programmers from solving the crisis, attacking your rivals or reducing happiness will anger The Computer. You must act indirectly, forming temporary alliances and framing everything as a wonderful new benefit for Alpha Complex (before backstabbing your allies and framing everyone).

Your goals as a High Programmer

The Computer assigns High Programmers several duties:

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.
5. **Program The Computer** and offer advice when required.
6. **Co-ordinate responses to crises from the Situation Room.**

Aside from these duties, your High Programmer has some personal goals.

1. **Survive!**
2. **Increase your spheres of influence**
3. **Indulge your depraved habits**
4. **Aid your Secret Society allies**
5. **Improve your standing among your fellow High Programmers**
6. **Collect prestigious items or servants,** like gourmet chefs, artwork, Old Reckoning relics or experimental equipment.

Your character sheet

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

The first time your Gamemaster runs *HIGH PROGRAMMER* 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 High Programmer character, thank him excitedly for his kindness. Make a photocopy of the blank *character sheet* at the back of this book (page 170).

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 the Chapter, 'Creating your High Programmer'.

The group will also need a set of **Portfolio Sheets** and **Group Cards**, which contain vital information about the eight Service Groups. For more on Portfolio Sheets and Group Cards, see page 23.

5. Creating your High Programmer

You are a High Programmer. You are the Grand Poobah, the Big Cheese, the Power Behind The Throne. The elite of Alpha Complex are, depending on who you ask...

- ☞ Highly functional psychopaths, driven insane by the paranoia and stress of climbing the Security Clearance ladder.
- ☞ Degenerate, drug-addled hedonists scrabbling to hang onto power.
- ☞ Mad scientists, obsessive collectors and eccentric lunatics.
- ☞ Incompetent buffoons trying to hide their incompetence from discovery.
- ☞ Deceitful sycophants who lick The Computer's terminals while secretly spreading treason.

Any or all of these may be true of your High Programmer. Which of these sounds the most fun to you?

Rules Bits

Creating your High Programmer is a two-stage process. Firstly, you'll determine your skills and other traits, in private or

with the GM. Then, you'll come together with the enemy, the rest of the players to bid for Service Groups and minions.

In Phase I, you'll be spending points on:

- ☞ Your **Skills**: Management, Subterfuge, Violence, Hardware, Software & Wetware.
- ☞ Your **Program Group**: Your Agents in Secret Societies.

In both stages, you'll be spending Access. You've got **100** of these points to spend. You can keep any unspent points at the end of character generation, so you might want to think about keeping a few in reserve.

If you want more Access during character creation, you may take up to three **Drawbacks**. See page 15 for the Big List of Horrible Drawbacks.

Phase I

In this section, you'll determine your High Programmer's skills and secret connections. All this stuff goes on the

back page of your character sheet. Phase I should be completed privately or in a one-on-one session with your GM.

Name

A citizen's name consists of four sections: **Actual Name-Security Clearance-Home Sector-Clone Number**.

Actual Name: Citizens in Alpha Complex are assigned a first name when they are decanted. Most are drawn from the lists of approved names – Tom, Phil, Bob, Alice, Janet, Valerie, Rutherford, Horace, Becky and so forth. Occasionally, the bureaucrats over at Name Allocation exercise some measure of creativity, (Radiator, Idunno, Flange, Paperclip), or make a typo (BBBBob, THX, Whaddya).

Security Clearance: The citizen's current Security Clearance as a one-letter code. Red=R, Orange=O and so on, using the mnemonic ROY-G-BIV. INFRAREDs don't have a code. High Programmers are ULTRAVIOLET Clearance, so your middle initial is U.

5. CREATING YOUR HIGH PROGRAMMER

Home Sector: Sectors are denoted by a three-letter code. Your original home sector is of no real relevance to your current status, unless you want to visit those familiar corridors of your youth and disintegrate some old rivals.

Clone Number: Your current clone number. For most citizens, this is of vital importance, as they only have six clones. More influential and important people can get a few extra clones but as a High Programmer, you're guaranteed to be resurrected in the unlikely event of your death – as long as you're in good standing with The Computer. You can put any value you want in here. A low number (10 or less) indicates that you're relatively new as High Programmers go or that you've lived a careful, cautious series of lives so far. A high number (50 or more) means you've been killed a lot. A silly number (100 or more) suggests either a bug in the cloning machine or a really horrible accident.

Skills

There are six skills in *HIGH PROGRAMMER*: Management, Subterfuge, Violence, Hardware, Software and Wetware. Your mastery in each skill is determined by the amount of Access you spend on that skill. So, if you spend 15 points on Management, you've got a Management skill of 15.

Management

The Management skill covers navigating and manipulating Alpha Complex bureaucracy, ordering people around, assessing proper behaviour, co-ordinating efforts, subterfuge, double-talk and double-think.

Your Management skill also determines the maximum size of your Program Group (see page 66).

Management	Program Group Size
1–5	2
6–10	3
11–15	4
16+	5

Subterfuge

Subterfuge is the skill for stealth, surveillance and skulduggery. A high

In these sections, we Famous Game Designers will pass on the innermost secrets of the High Programmers. Listen well, O Player, and you shall seize control of every Service Group, have your enemies executed as traitors and become the undisputed master of Alpha Complex!

At this stage, try to come up with a concept for your High Programmer. What sort of character do you want to play?

Example 1: *Let's make a character! We'll call him Terrence. He's ULTRAVIOLET Clearance, so he's Terrence-U. He comes from, erm...ERM Sector and there have been 17 Terrence-U's before him. His full name is Terrence-U-ERM-17.*

As a character concept, let's go with... Commie Mutant Traitor. Terrence-U is trying to bring Alpha Complex down from the inside. At least, that used to be his goal; now that he's a High Programmer, he's really more interested in the luxuries and the power and is trying to cover up his treasonous past.

Subterfuge indicates a mastery of deception, experience with ordering assassinations and deniable missions, knowledge of security systems and how to bypass them, sabotage, espionage and counter-espionage.

Violence

Blowing things up and ordering other people to blow things up. Violence covers the use of weapons, from bare hands to laser pistols to continent-busting antimatter warheads. A high Violence also indicates a mastery of military tactics and protocols.

Finally, Violence will come in useful if you're ever the target of assassinations.

Hardware

The Hardware skill covers the operation of all sorts of gadgets, including vehicles, bots, nuclear reactors and other machinery. A high Hardware skill also indicates a deep understanding of Science, in case you've a hankering to defy the laws of God, man and sanity with weird experiments.

Software

Your Software skill lets you search and manipulate computer records, process vast amounts of information, program bots, vehicles or specialised software agents, manipulate the controlled economy of Alpha Complex or hack into communications records.

It's also the skill used for programming The Computer.

Wetware

Finally, the Wetware skill covers all biological and chemical sciences, from cloning and genetic engineering to subliminal messaging and happiness drug therapy.

Your Wetware skill helps you deal with the trauma of cloning – the higher your Wetware skill, the fewer skill points you lose when killed.

Wetware	Skill Points Lost
1–5	4
6–10	3
11–15	2
16+	1

Mutation

Maybe it's the additives in the clone tanks, the radiation leaking from the reactors, or your own bizarre experiments but just like most people in Alpha Complex, you've got a mutation. Roll 1d20 and consult the Mutant Power Table to see what bizarre mutant power you possess.

Mutant Mastery

Your mastery over your mutant power is determined by your Power score. To determine your Power, roll 1d20. If you roll less than 4, your Power score is 4. If you roll more than 10, it's 10. You can increase your Power score at a cost



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

With 100 points to spend, you need to carefully plan your budget. If you spend too many points here, you won't be able to get control of the good Service Groups. If you spend too few points here, you'll be incompetent when it comes to making skill checks. The former's a lot worse than the latter – you can make the other characters cover for you if you're incompetent.

You should have at least a 6 in every skill. All the skills are vitally important, of course, but if you want to maximise your chances of survival, you may want to plan ahead and match your skills to your target Service Groups.

- ☞ Management's most commonly used by CPU, HPD&MC & PLC. If you go above six, buy Management to 11 for that extra Program Group slot.
- ☞ Subterfuge is most used by Internal Security and Power Services.
- ☞ Violence is mostly IntSec and the Armed Forces.
- ☞ Hardware's pretty evenly split between the Armed Forces, Tech Services, PLC, Power Services & R&D.
- ☞ Software's mostly CPU and R&D.
- ☞ Wetware is HPD&MC and PLC. Again, be sure to buy Wetware to at least 11 if you go above 6.

If you have to skimp on a skill, beware of having a low Subterfuge. It doesn't get used for much but you'll need it to screw with the other players.

Example 2: We'll take the safe option and have a 6 in every skill, which costs us 36 of our 100 starting Access. Terrence-U will need to be good at Subterfuge if he's going to be a good little traitor, so let's bump that up to 12. We'll spend another 5 points on Management and Wetware (bringing it to 11), giving him a final set of skills as follows:

Management 11	Hardware 6
Subterfuge 12	Software 6
Violence 6	Wetware 11

A total of 52 points spent, 48 remaining.

Mutant Power Table

Roll	Mutation
1	Bi-Location
2	Charm
3	Combat Mind
4	Copy Mutant Power
5	Deep Thought
6	Domination
7	Electroshock
8	Empathy
9	Empathic Liar
10	Force Field
11	Memory Blur
12	Monster
13	Psychic Flash
14	Regeneration
15	Shapeshift
16	Telekinesis
17	Telepathy
18	Teleportation
19	Uncanny Luck
20	Machine Empathy. ***WARNING: This power is extremely treasonous. Even High Programmers may be summarily terminated for using this power. ***

5. CREATING YOUR HIGH PROGRAMMER

of one Access per power point to a maximum of 16.

Registering your Mutation

If you wish, you can register your mutation. Registered mutants are given special jumpsuits with yellow stripes down the side so everyone knows to give the genetically challenged a wide berth. Registered mutants are officially treated just like every other citizen and are in no way considered inferior freaks that should be used as a scapegoat in any situation before being flushed down the nearest biohazard disposal tube.

Mutant powers can be a High Programmer's ace in the hole. Don't bother pushing your Power unless you roll a nice juicy power like Machine Empathy or Teleportation.

Example 3: *Terrence-U rolls for his Mutant Power – and gets a 1. Domination! Sounds promising. Next, he rolls for his power and gets a 14. Anything above 10 drops down to 10, so he's got Power 10.*

Program Group & Secret Societies

You have a Program Group – a cabal of loyal hangers-on and sycophants who've helped you rise to your exalted position. These lackeys are your agents in the various organisations and Secret Societies that riddle Alpha Complex. Your maximum number of agents is determined by your Management score.

Putting an agent in a society costs one or more points; the more points you spend on an agent increases his rank in the society. However, just putting an agent in a society doesn't mean you'll control that society – if another High Programmer puts a higher-rank agent in the society, he'll be the one pulling the strings in that society.

You must also list the cover role of that agent.

For example, if you spend five points putting Bob The Lackey into the Communists, then Bob's a Rank 5 Commie. If no-one else spends five points on an agent in the Commies, then you'll be able to use the

Commies as minions – but if another player has a higher-rank agent in the Commies, then your agent will be outranked. Secret Societies have their own goals. If you can help a society fulfil its goals, then your agent can take the credit, boosting his Rank in the society.

Secret Societies

Secret Societies are noted as being Class A, Class B or Class C. Class A societies are technically illegal but are seen as

Society	Description
Class A	
Death Leopard	Free-thinking ultraviolent anarchists who want to bring down the system. Good at blowing things up.
FCCC-P	The First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer; believers in the divine nature of The Computer. Most are just harmless brain-washed cultists but there is a minority of scary fanatics in the mix.
Free Enterprise	Alpha Complex's underground free-market economy or a bunch of wannabe Mafioso thugs? You decide.
Romantics	The old days were great! Let's recreate the civilisation of our ancestors, even if we're really not sure what that entails. On the bright side, they do have plenty of old reckoning artefacts.
Sierra Club	Humanity was meant to live Outdoors. Let's all go Outdoors and die of exposure and malnutrition! They do know a lot about surviving Outdoors, though.
Class B	
Anti-Mutant	Down with mutants! Kill all the muties!
C.L.A	The Complex Laser Association – gun nuts who believe that everyone else is a Commie.
Clone Arrangers	A conspiracy to run the clone tanks for some mysterious and ill-defined reason.
Corpore Metal	Bots are good! Humans should be more like bots! Let's all stick wires in our heads!
Mystics	...dude...what if... everything... was like... a... a drug-induced hallucination?
Pro Tech	Technology is good! Let's press buttons.
Runners	An underground railroad for smuggling traitors to safety.
I.W.W.	The International Workers of the World; Communism lite, basically.
Class C	
Communists	The enemy. Useful primarily as scapegoats.
Computer Phreaks	An underground network of hackers and script kiddies.
Frankenstein Destroyers	Bots are bad! Destroy the bots! Anti-tech terrorists and paranoid delusionals.
Humanists	A quasi-political party/underground conspiracy dedicated to reforming Alpha Complex and putting the Humanists in charge.
Psion	Mutants are good! Mutants should rule Alpha Complex. The club for people with giant pulsing telepathic brains and their groupies.
PURGE	Scary terrorists. No real agenda, other than bringing down everything. Fanatically dedicated to taking out The Computer.
Servants of Cthulhu	Fringe lunatics worshipping an alien god. Lots of scary mutants, human sacrifice and poor grammar.



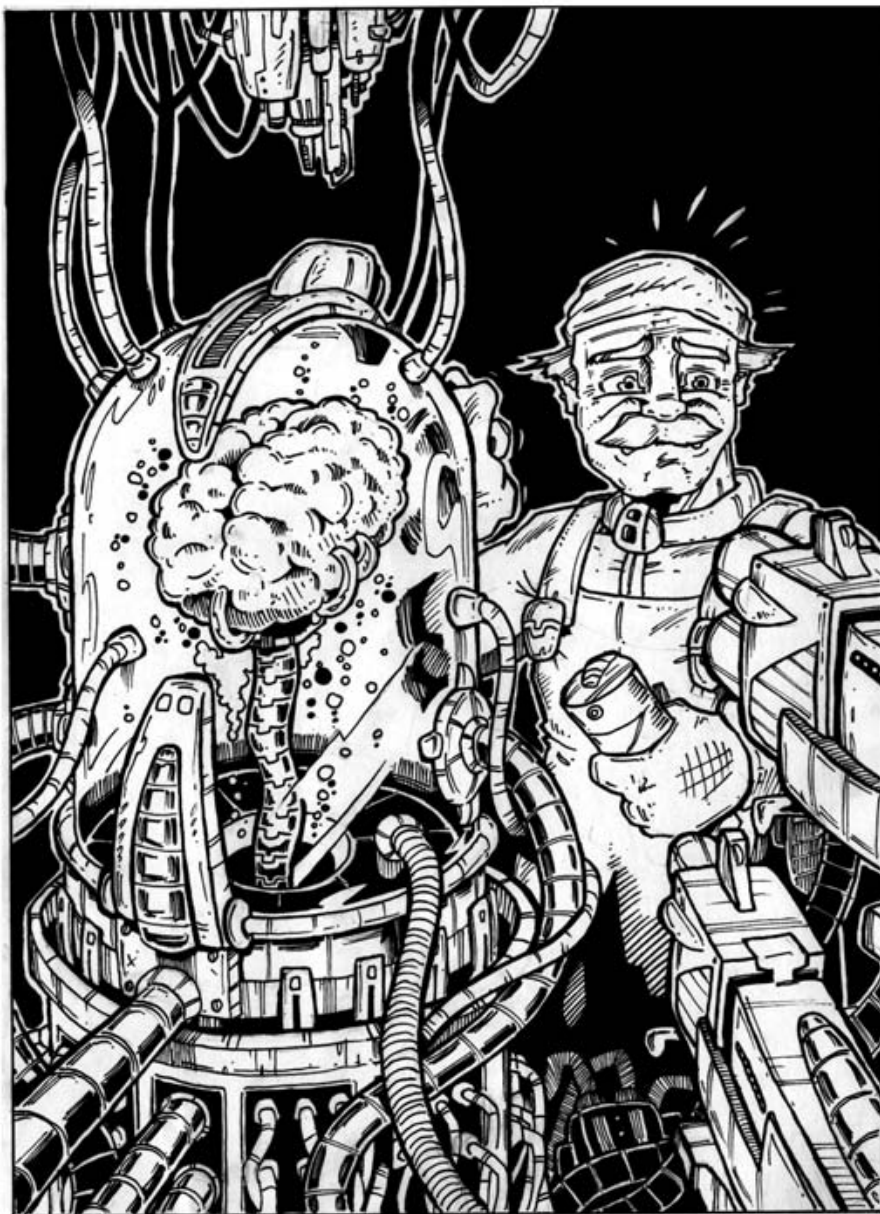
HIGH PROGRAMMERS

mostly harmless. If your agent in the society is discovered, then you will be able to protect him without much cost to yourself. However, Class A societies are more limited and are less capable of taking direct action.

Membership of a Class B is treasonous and your agent will be terminated if discovered. Class B's usually have a particular goal or obsession; if you can harness that obsession, then they'll be very useful to you within certain areas.

Finally, Class Cs are the most dangerous of the Secret Societies. They're violently opposed to The Computer and may want to overthrow the current regime (including you, unless of course you're on *their* side when the revolution comes). They're also the most powerful and the most effective societies. Scary fanatics get things done. If your agent is discovered to be a member of a Class C, then he'll be terminated *and* you will come under scrutiny from The Computer.

All these Secret Societies are discussed in more depth starting on page 64.



Failure to polish the jar correctly is treason, citizen. Use your tongue.

Secret Society Agents are expensive and treasonous but immensely useful in the game. Fill up your Project Group with them – even a 1 point Agent can be a useful spy in the society. Go for a mix of Societies – the Class A's mostly have social pressure, the Class B's useful technical skills and the Class Cs are more violent and dangerous.

There are three approaches to picking Secret Societies.

Firstly, there's the 'cover all my bases' approach, where you pick Secret Societies that complement the Service Groups you control. So, you take Agents in PURGE (for the violence and the destruction and the things blowing up) and Pro Tech (for the weird science and the death rays and the things blowing up) and then invest your points in CPU (for management and politics) and HPD&MC (for mind control and social engineering). This means you've at least some ability to deal with any problem.

Secondly, there's the 'double up' approach. Say you're the head of Internal Security. When a problem calls for sneaking around, they're going to turn to you. In fact, they're going to give you Access to pay for a Minion to do that sneaking around. Now, if you also have an Agent in the FCCC-P, you can use that Secret Society instead of buying a Minion and pocket the Access yourself.

The third approach is to go for Secret Societies with useful abilities, or ones that just sound fun. For the glory of the inevitable Communist state, comrade!

Example 4: With his Management of 11, Terrence-U has four Agents in his Program Group. He picks Pro Tech, Free Enterprise, Death Leopard and the Servants of Cthulhu, putting two points into each of them. That costs 8 points and gives him a Rank 2 Agent in each group.

He's got 40 Access points left to spend.

5. CREATING YOUR HIGH PROGRAMMER

Horrible Drawbacks

If you're running short on points, you can roll on the Horrible Drawback table. Each time you do so, you gain 10 points. You may roll on the table a maximum of three times.

Horrible Drawback

Roll	Drawback
1	Quirky Clone Template: Your clone template is a bit buggy. You lose one extra skill point when you're cloned.
2	No More Hormone Suppressants: You're free of the hormone suppressants issued to most citizens. You lust after particularly attractive specimens of the opposite sex. You've probably got a harem, or maybe even natural-born children.
3	Obsessive Collector: You have an obsessive interest in collecting something. Old Reckoning artefacts, usually, like first edition Mark Twain novels or <i>Star Trek</i> memorabilia, but you might also collect, I dunno, trilobites or WMDs or clones frozen in carbonite.
4	Degenerate: You overindulge in some pleasure, usually food, alcohol or drugs.
5	Rival: Another High Programmer – an NPC – really, really hates you.
6	Skeleton in the Closet: You did something so terrible and treasonous that, even now, you must conceal it from everyone or you'd be erased. Decide what you did that's so awful, then tell the GM. You probably shouldn't let the other players know about this one.
7	Secret Society Vendetta: Pick a Secret Society. They <i>hate</i> you. You can't put an agent in that society, ever. If you already have an Agent in that group, he's dead.
8	Service Group Vendetta: Pick a Service Group. They <i>hate</i> you. You can't bid for control of that group and can't buy minions from that group, ever. If you've already bid for that group, your interest in that group is lost.
9	Infamous: The general population of Alpha Complex don't like you for some reason. Maybe you took away their chocolate ration. You start the game at a Public Standing of 0 and cannot ever go above 0.
10	Mistrusted: The Computer has doubts about you. You can't ever be in favour with The Computer (you can't have less than 0 Treason Points). You start with 10 Treason Points.
11	Secret Society Debt: You owe a Secret Society something big. You must attempt to complete that Society's missions but gain no benefit for doing so.
12	Phobia: You're unreasonably terrified of something. Pick the something.
13	Mutant: You've got a non-useful mutation, like a third eye or scaly skin or an allergy to water or diabetes or something.
14	Replicative Fading: Your clone template's rotten. Every time you die, your replacement clone's noticeably worse, genetically speaking. After a few clones, you'll be a drooling moron. You lose two more skill points every time you're cloned.
15	Cyborged: You've got bot bits, like a robot arm or brain implants or headtubes. You're vulnerable to attacks that affect bots.
16	Insane: You're a grade-A nutzo. You're not all there. You've looked in the face of Cthulhu and gone wibblywibblywoo. You've stuck the underpants on your head and the pencils up your nose. Despite this, you're still functional, mostly. Sure, you think you're a giant cockroach but you still make it to the High Programmer meetings.
17	Bizarre Experiment: You're the survivor – or result – of a bizarre experiment. Maybe you're actually a sentient android masquerading as a High Programmer, or a gestalt entity consisting of a dozen minds, or a time traveller, or a being from Dimension X. You're pretending to be just another High Programmer but you're not.
18	Impending Doom: Inform the GM when you roll this result. Move along, citizen.
19	Brain in a Jar: You're a brain in a jar. You've got robotic attachments and servants so you can still affect the world but you're still physically impaired, because you're a brain in a jar.
20	Roll Again Twice: Uh-Oh.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Phase II

For this stage of character generation, you'll be getting together with the other players and the GM. It's a good idea to read this section ahead of time, just in case.

You will be bidding for control of Service Groups using the same pool of points you used in Phase I. If you are running low on points, you can take more Horrible Drawbacks but you're still limited to three rolls on the Horrible Drawback table.

You may also beg other players or the GM for points. Players are permitted to trade points freely in exchange for promises of future aid. The GM may give bonus points in exchange for wild promises of service ('I'll do the website for this campaign! I'll wash your car! Why, GM, you're so sexy!') or as an advance ('you owe High Programmer Break-U-LEG a biiiiiig favour').

Service Groups

There are eight **Service Groups** in Alpha Complex. These titanic bureaucratic departments collectively control all official activity in Alpha Complex.

- ☞ **The Armed Forces**
- ☞ **Central Processing Unit (CPU)**
- ☞ **Housing Preservation Development & Mind Control (HPD&MC)**
- ☞ **Production, Logistic & Commissary (PLC)**
- ☞ **Research & Design (R&D)**
- ☞ **Tech Services**
- ☞ **Power Services**
- ☞ **Internal Security (IntSec)**

Bidding For Control

The GM starts by auctioning off control of one Service Group. Each player may verbally bid points for a stake in that group. Each bid must be at least one point higher than the last bid. You don't have to bid if you don't want to. You may pass if you want but if everyone passes, the last bid wins.

All points bid are spent, regardless of whether or not they were the high bid. Keep track of the final bid for each player, as that bid represents the player's control of that Service Group.

The highest bidder is the Head of that group. A player's bid is referred to as his Stake in that group.

For example, say the player to your right bid four points for control of the Armed Forces, you bid six point, and the player to your left bid eight points. Everyone marks off their spent points. The player who bid eight points is the highest ranked official in the Armed Forces. He's the Commander in Chief, the Minister of War or whatever militaristic title he wants. He's got the most influence within the military. You've got less influence than he does but you've still got pull within the group. The player to your right who only bid four points has even less influence.

If you were to, say, get Mr. I-spent-eight-points erased, then you – with your six-point interest in the Armed Forces – would take over.

Order of Bids

The order in which the Service Groups are auctioned is up to the GM. Maybe he will auction them off in alphabetical order, or randomly, or in order of desirability according to some bizarre personal criteria.

Controlling Multiple Service Groups

It's possible that a player ends up in charge of multiple Service Groups. This is perfectly acceptable, unless another player is the high bidder on *no* groups. If this happens, the player with multiple groups must loan one of his extra groups to the poor pauper. See Delegation on page 19 for more details.

No Bids

If a Service Group doesn't get any bids on it, then it can't be used by the players in the first session of the game. The GM may choose to auction it off again later in the game.

Tracking Bids

The GM should use the Service Group Control form to track relative levels of control.

The Computer's Favour & Public Standing

There are two important traits that measure your standing in Alpha Complex

Bidding is the most important part of character generation and will set the tone for the whole game. March bravely into this arena and you will be rewarded for your courage with the fear and obedience of the other players.

Have a plan when you're bidding. You'll want to be the high bidder on at least one Service Group; either pick your desired group well in advance and bid high on that, or wait until the last groups come up for auction and everyone else is out of points. Coming in a close second is almost as good as coming first, as it means you may be able wrest control of the group from its current head after a mission or two.

Pay attention to how the other players bid. A player who spends very few points probably has spent all his Access on skills and Secret Societies – he's planning to make his name by successfully completing missions and impressing The Computer with sheer competence, or else he's going to try to eliminate you all with assassins and subterfuge. A player who bids on everything probably has a lot of Hideous Drawbacks. Use this information to your advantage.

Example 5: *Terrence-U's got good Management, Subterfuge and Wetware, so he's best suited to a career in Central Processing. He's got 40 points left to spend, so when CPU comes up he bids 30 points for that. He's the undisputed master of CPU with a point spend like that. He spends his other 10 points grabbing second place in Power Services – it's not much but it was cheap.*

– your favour with The Computer and your standing with the general public.

The Computer's Favour

The Computer's Favour is measured in Treason Points and Commendation Points. Treason Points are bad; Commendation points are good. Each Treason Point moves you down in The Computer's favour or removes one Commendation

6. BASIC RULES

Point; each Commendation Point brings you up in The Computer's favour or removes a Treason Point.

You start with 0 Treason Points (unless you've got a Horrible Drawback that says otherwise), and 0 Commendation Points. You can buy Commendation Points now if you want, at a cost of two points per Commendation Point.

Public Standing

Some High Programmers are celebrities in Alpha Complex. They're on television every night on talk shows or *Lifestyles of the Rich and High-Clearance*, they make speeches about the glorious leadership of The Computer and the dangers of Communism in huge auditoriums, they are recognised everywhere they go and worshipped by the public.

Other High Programmers are mysterious, nameless figures. Only other High Programmers and a few high Clearance citizens even know who they are; the public never know their names or faces. They're off doing shadowy deals in backrooms and pulling strings behind the scenes.

You don't have to have a Public Standing if you don't want to. If you do go public, and are popular, then you'll get bonus Access each game session. However, a High Programmer who's public and unpopular loses Access each session.

If you choose to have a Public Standing, you may purchase Popularity at the cost of two points per Popularity Point, to a maximum of 10 Popularity Points.

Only buy Commendation Points if you believe you're likely to be caught for treason – they're a buffer between you and the disintegration chamber.

Fame is a double-edged sword – if you think you can stay one step ahead of the schemes of the other players, then it's an easy source of bonus Access. At the same time, it's also a way for the other players to drag you down if you're not adept at spinning lies.

Example 6: *Terrence-U has no points left to spend... but he also hasn't taken any Horrible Drawbacks yet. With the 10 bonus Access from a Horrible Drawback, he could afford a Public Standing of +5...*

6. Basic Rules

Rule #1. The GM is right!

In other *PARANOIA* games, the players are not permitted to know the rules. Displaying any knowledge of the rules is treason in other *PARANOIA* games. By contrast, in *High Programmer*, the players are permitted to know (some) of the rules. You may read this entire book. However, the primacy of the GM remains undiminished. Arguing about the rules or even timorously suggesting that the GM might be anything other than completely and utterly right is treason!

Rule #2. Know nothing, blithely lie about everything.

There is no certainty in *PARANOIA*. The GM is the sole arbiter of what is 'real' in the game and he may change his mind on a whim. The ground may be torn from beneath your feet at any moment. What works one minute may not work the next. Nonetheless, you must soldier bravely on and lie with absolute confidence and bravado. If you admit you are wrong, you're definitely wrong. If you never admit it, then maybe the GM will permit you to be right.

Rule #3. Be entertaining.

The best and fastest way to succeed in *PARANOIA* is to be entertaining. Lie creatively, backstab with a smile or a maniacal laugh and take your inevitable downfall with good grace and a cry of 'next time, curse you, I'll get you next time!'

Doing Stuff Yourself

When you want your High Programmer to do something directly – use a skill, fire a laser pistol, use a mutant power, whatever – inform the GM. He may ask you to roll a 20 sided dice and get under a target number. Usually, you'll be asked to roll under your skill but you could also be told to roll under your current number of Treason Points, your current Access, a random number, the current date, the phase of the moon, the table, anything. If your roll is equal to or lower than the target number, you succeed. Otherwise, you fail.

Ordering Other People To Do Stuff

Of course, a High Programmer wouldn't dream of doing something himself. That smacks of *risk* and *effort*. Much better to order other people to do it all for you.

Indirect actions are done through minions and servants but otherwise use the normal rules for doing stuff. You still use your skills when acting indirectly – think of the minion as a piece of equipment. Just as you'd use your Violence skill 'through' a laser pistol, you use Violence when ordering troops into battle.

You have to be able to contact your minions to order them around. You can contact them by messengers, Computer

Sir Humphrey: My job is to carry out government policy.

Hacker: Even if you think it's wrong?

Sir Humphrey: Well, almost all government policy is wrong, but... frightfully well carried out.

— Yes, Minister

transmission, radio, telepathy, smoke signals, telepresence or anything else, as long as you can pass on your orders and your keen insight.

Spending Access

As described on page 19, you (and, potentially, the other players) can spend Access to adjust dice rolls up and down. The GM may choose to disallow spending Access on a roll, or apply restrictions on who can spend Access or how much can be spent.

Margin of Success

Sometimes, the Margin of Success matters. The Margin of Success is the difference between the dice roll and the target number. For example, if the dice roll was a 5 and the target number was a 10, then the Margin is 5. If the dice roll was a 3 and the target number was 10, then there's a Margin of 7.

You can also have a Margin of Failure, by the way, calculated in the same fashion.



7. Access

The basic currency of the *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game is Access. You'll need to either record your Access on your character sheet, or use some sort of tokens to represent it. Poker chips are good, or Monopoly money. Or, hell, real cash.

In the game, Access represents a whole load of different things. Simultaneously, in a weird quantumly-uncertain-concept way, Access is:

- ☉ Cash and capital. Each point of Access is worth a million credits.
- ☉ The Computer's support and enthusiasm for a project. Projects are assigned Access in units called Alpha Complex Consolidated Estimated Systemic Support, or ACCESS for short. What a co-incidence. Each ACCESS point represents the authorisation to draw on the resources of the various Service Groups in the pursuit of an approved goal.
- ☉ Pull within an organisation; the authority to order people around and especially the authority to force them to go beyond their regular duties.
- ☉ Favours owed and granted to various people and organisations.
- ☉ The conspiratorial network you've built up over the years – as a High Programmer, you've got agents and spies everywhere.
- ☉ Your preparations and secret subversions. Maybe you planted a bugging device somewhere years ago but only now do you reveal it! Retroactive Access lets you be a manipulative genius after the fact

So, Access is influence, it is political mojo, it is pull, it is raw naked *power*.

Gaining Access

How do you gain Access? There are three main ways – you can be assigned Access, you can earn it and there's the Access pool. You may also trade Access with other High Programmers freely at any time.

Assigned Access

At the start of each game session, and at the whim of the GM, you will be given a few Access points, representing your innate importance as a High Programmer and your network of connections.

If you are the head of a Service Group, you get more Access when you enter the Situation Room for the first time in a mission. The amount of Access you are assigned varies depending on your Service Group.

Armed Forces: 4

CPU: 5

HPD&MC: 3

PLC: 8

Tech Services: 4

Power Services: 3

R&D: 3

IntSec: 5

Earning Access

Some Directives will earn you Access if you complete them; some minions are actually Access generators, providing extra revenue to their controller.

You may also earn Access by entertaining the GM. Excellent roleplaying, beautifully hypocritical justifications, intricate wordplay or extended gloating will be rewarded with showers of Access.

The Access Pool

When you enter the Situation Room, The Computer assigns a pool of Access points to the group. These Access points are supposed to be spent on dealing with the crises facing Alpha Complex. The whole group of Player Characters must agree on how these points are *assigned*. Note that once points from the pool have been assigned to a High Programmer, that character is under no obligation to spend the points on solving the crisis. Of course, just blatantly stealing points means you'll never be trusted again by your fellow High Programmers – you need to conceal any such thefts.

The decision on how Access Pool points are assigned is taken collectively. A majority of the PCs must agree on any spending

– if the group is deadlocked, the head of Central Processing has a casting vote.

The Access Pool: A Typical Conversation

The Computer: Timmy-JC is stuck down a well. Recover him immediately. Your Access Budget is 10.

CPU: Suggestions? Little Timmy can't survive down there for long...

PLC: Actually, for only four Access, I can procure enough food to keep Timmy alive indefinitely.

CPU: Feh! He'll still age and eventually die of old age... but my boys have been working on an experimental time freeze ray. We could field test it on the boy!

Technical Services: That doesn't actually get him out of the well.

CPU: Quite right, TS. What do you propose? Something practical, no doubt, like a ladder.

Technical Services: Actually, I was thinking more along the lines of a massive construction project to lower all of Alpha Complex by 20 feet, thus allowing Timmy to step out of the well into a corridor. That'll cost a lot more than 10 Access, though... can we lobby the Big C for more money?

Power Services: That's just the sort of wasteful inefficiency that your department is known for! Look, I have an elite team of Tube Recovery Specialists standing by! For a mere five Access, I can send them in to rescue him.

Internal Security: Have they passed a loyalty inspection? They could be terrorists, out to poison our well.

Armed Forces: Look, I've still got that artillery strike lying around. It's already paid for. We nuke the well, Timmy gets a new clone and we spend the 10 Access on lunch. Sound good?

Uses of Access

'Since God has given us the Papacy, let us enjoy it.'

— Pope Leo X

Access can be used to:

- ☉ Buy new minions
- ☉ Activate existing minions

8. SERVICE GROUPS

- ☞ Steal other people's minions
- ☞ Stop other people stealing your minions
- ☞ Increase your stake in a Service Group
- ☞ Have private communications
- ☞ Adjust Skill rolls
- ☞ Bribe people
- ☞ Obtain Sybaritic luxuries

Most of these uses of Access are discussed in Minions, page 20.

Adjust Skill Rolls

A point of Access adds or subtracts one to any skill roll made by you or another player. You can spend as much Access as the GM permits. When you spend Access in this fashion, you must describe how your machinations, your cunning plans, your secret preparations or your duplicitous agents have interfered

with the skill roll. (You can blame misfortune, third parties, unfortunate misunderstandings or badly placed minefields if you want but it's always your invisible hand at work.)

For example, High Programmer Steve-U has just ordered his Hazardous Materials Cleanup Team into an R&D laboratory to deal with the weird energy that's leaking out into the corridors. Gertrude-U's secret death ray project is in that lab and she doesn't want those Tech Services morons monkeying around with it.

Steve-U makes a Hygiene roll using the HazMat team. He rolls a 10, well under his Management skill of 12. Time to spend Access.

Gertrude-U: You did remember to warn your team about the lab's automated security systems, didn't you? You passed

by 2, right? Here's 3 Access.

Steve-U: Why are you sabotaging me? Treachery!

Gertrude-U: I'm protecting something more important.

Steve-U: Oh yeah? It just so happens that one of my best security experts is on, er, hygiene duty. I'll spend one Access.

Gertrude-U: Your security guy actually works for me! You think I'd let you waltz into my secret laboratory! I'll reduce your skill by another 4 Access.

Steve-U: Fine. I fail the skill check. What happens to my HazMat team?

Bribes

You may trade Access with other High Programmers freely, in exchange for favours. Want the last slice of pizza? Maybe the others will let you have it for a few points of Access.

8. Service Groups

The eight Service Groups are, metaphorically, the eight legs upon which Alpha Complex stands. As a High Programmer, you have influence within each group and can pull the bureaucracy this way and that, extending your reach and growing your power base.

During character generation, you and the other High Programmers bid for control of the Service Groups. The total number of points you've invested in a group is referred to as your Stake in that group. These Stakes are tracked by the Gamemaster on a table like this one.

At the start of the game, the Heads of the Service Groups are:

Armed Forces: Bob-U

CPU: Karen-U

HPD&MC: Phil-U

IntSec: Alice-U

R&D: Bob-U

PLC: Dan-U

Tech Services: Bob-U

Terry-U is the only Player Character who wasn't a high bidder on any of the eight Service Groups. Bob-U is in control of three Service Groups. Everyone else has one and no-one bid on Power Services.

Raising your Stake

At the end of a mission, you can invest Access to raise your stake in any Service

Service Group	Bob-U	Terry-U	Phil-U	Karen-U	Dan-U	Alice-U
Armed Forces	6	3			5	2
CPU		5		6		
HPD&MC	1	2	10			
Internal Security		1	4	5	6	10
R&D	4	2		3		
PLC		1	2		4	
Tech Services	5		3			
Power Services						

Group. Each point of Access spent increases your stake by 1. You must have an existing stake in the group to do this – it represents your High Programmer spreading his nefarious tendrils of influence through the group via his existing spies and loyalists.

For especially big Stake shifts (say, more than 10), you need to justify *how* you're expanding your control. Which middle managers are you subverting? Just how did you seize control of the IntSec Supply Services account?

Lowering Another High Programmer's Stake

Similarly, you can spend Access to reduce another High Programmer's stake in a Service Group by eliminating their loyalists, bribing wavering supporters

to switch their allegiance to you, undercutting their minions and sending troublesome citizens on suicide missions. Each point of Access spent reduces their stake by 1. If you overspend, then you wasted the excess Access. Hey, excess Access is fun to say!

A Brand New Stake

If you *don't* have an existing stake, then you can't just buy one – you'll need to get a Minion from that Service Group. At the end of the mission, if that Minion's still alive, you can use that as the foundation of your power base and expand out from there.

Deputising and Delegation

Each Player Character must be in charge of at least one Service Group in the Situation Room. If a player is the



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

head of more than one Service Group and another player has no Group, then a player with multiple groups must deputise his penurious comrade. The High Programmers can come up with whatever arrangement they want (*'I'll pay you 10 Access if you deputise me as Head of IntSec'*) but they *must* come to an arrangement by the time they arrive in the Situation Room. The Computer says so.

For example, in the sample, Bob-U has three Service Groups and Terry-U has none. Bob-U *must* temporarily hand over control of one of his groups to Terry-U for the duration of the mission.

If the High Programmers squabble for too long, The Computer makes an executive decision and assigns everyone Treason Points.

You're the Boss

Being Head of a Service Group comes with lots of perks, including:

- 👁 **Budget Control**
- 👁 **Minion Control**
- 👁 **First Refusal on Directives**
- 👁 **A Stylish Group Sheet**
- 👁 **A Shiny Portfolio Sheet**

You're also the one who makes decisions, approves policies, sets mission statements and gives promotions and demotions. Every ambitious executive and avid bootlicker wants to please you – or knife you in the back.

Budget Control

If you're running a Service Group, then you get extra Access when you enter the Situation Room. The amount of Access depends on your Service Group. If you control multiple groups, you get the Access for each of them. For more on Access, see page 18.

Armed Forces: 4

R&D: 3

CPU: 5

Tech Services: 4

HPD&MC: 3

Power Services: 3

PLC: 8

IntSec: 5

Minion Control

As Head of the Department, you can decide whether or not to permit the activation of a minion. You've got a veto over any activities undertaken by your Group. (Warning: obstruction of Alpha Complex operations is treason.) For more on Minions, see page 105.

First Refusal on Directives

As Head of the Service Group, you're the first person to find out the Directive for each group. You may choose to accept the Directive or delegate it.

A Stylish Service Group Card

On pages 24 to 27, you'll find eight Service Group Cards, one for each Service Group. Get the Service Group Card for your group (or groups) and place it in front of you when in the Situation Room. The front side of the Group Card has a brief description of the Service Group for the benefit of the other players.

A Shiny Portfolio Sheet

On pages 29 to 33, you'll find eight Portfolio Sheets, one for each Service Group. Take the Portfolio sheet for your group and put it on top of your character sheet. The Portfolio sheet lists the minions available to your group. Note that the GM may provide you with a modified Portfolio sheet.

Directives

Before each mission, a think tank of VIOLET executives, political analysts and trusted operatives work out exactly what the Service Group needs. This could be anything from *'ensure that our new Warbot doesn't get blown up'* to *'Increase happiness across the sector, no matter what it takes'* to *'we're running out of cash, get all the Access you can'* to *'we need to embarrass those smug bastards over at Internal Security'*. This is the Service Group's Directive.

The Head of the Group is the first High Programmer informed of the Directive. If he wishes, he can accept the Directive, or he can delegate it to the High Programmer with the next highest stake in the group. That High Programmer can also delegate it, all down the line to the character with the lowest stake in the group.

If you accept a Directive and complete it, you increase your Stake in the Service Group by a whopping 10 points.

If you accept a Directive and fail to complete it, you drop your Stake in the group by 10 points.

9. Minions

Minions are all the little people of Alpha Complex. They're the guys at the other end of the telephone, your lackeys, flunkies, servants and employees. Minions can also be bots, gadgets, even policies – anything you use as a tool to exert change on Alpha Complex.

The Computer would prefer if you didn't call them minions. They're trusted employees, helpful bots, brave new initiatives, guardians of freedom or loyal worker-consumers of Alpha Complex. Lumping them in under the demeaning heading of 'minion' suggests that you

see them as disposable cannon fodder, disposable servants or even disposable reactor shielding.

Admittedly, this is how you should see minions. In terms of the *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game, a minion is a tool to be used and then discarded.

So, What's A Minion?

High Programmers rarely act directly. They're both lazy and paranoid, unwilling to leave the safety of the heavily armoured Situation Room or the luxury

of their ULTRAVIOLET mansions. Instead, the will of a High Programmer is exerted through Minions.

Your average Minion isn't an individual – it's a group. It could be a battalion of elite Vulture Squadron Warriors or an Internal Security investigative team. It could be a lab packed with crazy R&D researchers and their weird inventions, or a few hundred Tech Services labourers. It could be a single giant warbot, or a lone vidshow celebrity, or even a new advertising campaign. A

9. MINIONS

Minion is anything you can use to effect considerable changes across Alpha Complex.

A single guard or lone bureaucrat isn't a capital-M Minion. You can boss them around but that won't accomplish much on a grand scale (it's good for relieving tension, though).

Most Minions aren't unique. The Tech Services minion Corridor Cleaning Team isn't the only Corridor Cleaning Team in Alpha Complex. However, it's the only Corridor Cleaning Team that's on call right now in your sector. If a Minion is destroyed, terminated for being full of traitors, reassigned to reactor shielding duty or otherwise rendered inoperable, it may take a while to get a replacement.

Obtaining Minions

All legal Minions come from one of the eight Service Groups. In the Situation Room, you may purchase Minions from that Service Group – with the permission of the Head of that Group. Purchasing a Minion costs Access.

Once purchased, a Minion is yours to use as you see fit for the duration of the mission. You may use that Minion ('go kill those Commies') or hand that Minion over to another High Programmer ('you work for General Phil-U now. Follow his orders as you go kill Commies').

Minion Costs

The Chapter beginning on page 105 and the Portfolios list suggest Access costs for Minions. This cost is the operating cost of the Minion – the CPU-calculated optimum amount of Access to activate, transport and deploy that asset. The Head of the Service Group may ask for a higher cost, or even a lower one. If a Minion is bought at a higher cost, the extra Access goes to the Service Group. If it is bought at a lower cost, the Minion may be missing key supplies or personnel.

Paying for Minions

If you're purchasing a Minion, you pay the required Access to the Head of that Minion's Service Group. The Head then transfers the Access to The Computer.

Remember, you only get the use of the Minion for the rest of the mission. Let's

Stealing Access

Purchasing a Minion works like this:

1. **The Buyer Picks The Minion He Wants**
2. **The Head of that Service Group Says How Much That Minion Costs**
3. **He gives Access to the Head of that Minion's Service Group**
4. **The Head Gives The Access To The Computer**

It's at Steps 2 and 4 where things get interesting. A cost is listed for each Minion on the portfolio sheet but there's no reason why the Head of the group needs to use that cost. He can choose to charge a higher or lower price at step 2.

In step 4, the Head of the Group is obliged to transfer Access to The Computer to activate the Minion. The Head doesn't have to transfer the full amount – but if he pays less than the Minion's official cost, the unfortunate Minion will be underfunded. This is treasonous, as the Minion will be less effective or even totally useless.

say you buy an ICBM off the Armed Forces – that doesn't mean you own an ICBM. It means you temporarily have command of that ICBM. Once the mission is over, the ICBM isn't yours anymore. It's like you've just rented the Minion. The GM may call for extra Access if you're moving the Minion from one location to another, or if the Minion has to do something that's wildly outside of its core competencies.

So, it's best to find a way to use Minions while you have 'em. If that nuke doesn't get fired, it's a waste of resources...

Even if you're the Head of a Service Group, you have to pay Access to use Minions from that group. They don't work for free.

Buying Minions: A Typical Conversation

Head of Central Processing: (*Soliloquy*) I suspect there's a nest of Commie Mutant Traitors in R&D. Uncovering these traitors will embarrass my hated rival, the Head of R&D. I shall need a Minion with Investigation. Hmm – this IntSec Office of Undercover Operations seems ideal.

Ho there, Head of Internal Security. I wish to purchase the use of this Undercover Ops team.

Head of Internal Security: Certainly. A mere 10 Access.

Head of Central Processing: 10 Access!? That seems extortionate.

Head of Internal Security: Perhaps if you were to tell me what you need them for, we could come to some alternate

arrangement.

Head of Central Processing: Oh, a trifling matter, hardly worthy of your notice.

Head of Internal Security: Anything involving Undercover Operations is important. If you have evidence of treason, High Programmer, you must report it.

Head of Central Processing: Not evidence, just the merest hint of a suspicion.

Head of Internal Security: Can we afford to overlook the merest hint of a suspicion?

Head of Central Processing: Can we, by which I mean I, afford 10 Access? No.

Minions & Security Clearance

Every Minion has a Security Clearance, from INFRARED to VIOLET. This is important for two reasons.

All information and locations in Alpha Complex also have a Security Clearance, again ranging from INFRARED to VIOLET. If a Minion is ordered into a location it's not permitted to enter, or made aware of information beyond its Security Clearance, the High Programmer responsible has committed treason. See Treason, page 49.

Secondly, if two Minions are both attempting to do something, the Minion with the lower Security Clearance is supposed to defer to the one with the higher Clearance. Say some Programmers are trying to order Minions to arrest an important traitor. The BLUE Clearance



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

IntSec Troopers would go before the GREEN Clearance goons but they'd both have to defer to the VIOLET Clearance butlers. Failure to defer to a higher Clearance Minion is treason.

You can increase the Security Clearance of any minion by spending Access. Each Security Clearance jump costs two points. So, to increase the Clearance of a Minion from RED to ORANGE costs two Access, from RED to GREEN costs six Access. Other promotion costs are left as an exercise to the reader.

Specialities

Like any tool, each Minion is good at some things and no good at others. A bunch of Armed Forces Vulture Squadron Warriors are absolutely great at blowing things up but no good at putting them back together. A flotilla of scrubbots are ideal if you want to clean a whole sector but not if you're trying to convince the public to accept a 15% reduction in oxygen rations.

When you're using a Minion to do something related to one of its Specialities, you can use your skill normally. If the minion doesn't have an appropriate Speciality, then your skill is reduced to 1. So, you can use those scrubbots to carry around placards saying *'Deep Breathing is Treason'* and *'Commies are Red-faced/ Loyal Citizens are Blue/ Oxygen Rationing Is Fun For Me and You'*, but there's only a 1-in-20 chance of that actually working.

A Speciality permits you to use your skill through that Minion without penalty.

Each Speciality lists which Service Groups it is traditionally associated with.

+X Specialities

Some really good Minions have '+X Specialities'. They're really good at a particular Speciality. A +X Speciality increases your skill by the value of the Specialty when using that Minion. A +2 Speciality gives you a +2 bonus to your skill, a +6 gives you a +6 bonus and so on. A cutting edge hospital might have a +4 Speciality in Medical, for example. A really big warbot has a +4 Speciality in Assault.

Management Specialities

- ☞ **Assessment (IS, CPU):**
Bureaucratic audits and

investigations

- ☞ **Co-Ordination (CPU, HPD&MC):**
Ordering people around, solving organisational problems
- ☞ **Hygiene (HPD&MC, TS):**
Maintaining proper hygiene standards
- ☞ **Interrogation (IS, HPD&MC):**
Extracting the truth from people's brains
- ☞ **Intimidation (IS, AF):** Installing the truth, altering opinions
- ☞ **Paperwork (CPU, HPD&MC):** What it sounds like
- ☞ **Thought Control (PLC, HPD&MC):**
Political spin
- ☞ **Thought Survey (HPD&MC, CPU):**
Polling and surveys

Subterfuge

- ☞ **Black Markets (PS, PLC):** Dealing with the underground economy
- ☞ **Covert Operations (IS, PS):**
Sneaking around Alpha Complex
- ☞ **Cleanup (CPU, HPD&MC):** Erasing records; making people into unpeople
- ☞ **Infiltration (IS, PS):** Pretending to be a Commie Mutant Traitor
- ☞ **Investigation (IS, HPD&MC):**
Ferretting out secrets
- ☞ **Security Systems (IS, R&D):** Death traps and lasers
- ☞ **Surveillance (IS, TS):** Security cameras and bugging devices
- ☞ **Sabotage (PS, IS):** Stopping or causing sabotage and disruption

Violence

- ☞ **Assault (AF, R&D):** Heroically charging into battle
- ☞ **Command (CPU, AF):** Telling people to charge heroically into battle
- ☞ **Crowd Control (AF, HPD&MC):**
Heroically charging into unarmed crowds
- ☞ **Defence (AF, IS):** Protecting people and things
- ☞ **Demolition (TS, R&D):** Blowing things up
- ☞ **Outdoors Operations (AF, TS):**
Running around Outdoors
- ☞ **Network (IS, AF):** Eliminating troublesome people
- ☞ **Total War (AF, R&D):** Blowing everything up

Hardware

- ☞ **Bot Engineering (TS, R&D):**
Building and maintaining bots
- ☞ **Construction (TS, PS):** Large-scale structural engineering
- ☞ **Chemical Engineering (TS, PLC):**
Making fun goos
- ☞ **Habitat Engineering (PS, TS):**
Basic infrastructure of Alpha Complex
- ☞ **Nuclear Engineering (PS, R&D):**
Ensuring things do not go boom when you flick a light switch
- ☞ **Production (PLC, TS):** Running factories and production lines
- ☞ **Transport (PLC, AF):** Getting stuff from A to B
- ☞ **Weird Science (R&D, TS):** Mad, they called you mad! But you'll show them all!

Software

- ☞ **Bot Programming (R&D, TS):**
Ordering bots around
- ☞ **Communications (TS, AF):**
Securing phone lines; controlling communications
- ☞ **Computer Security (CPU, R&D):**
Protecting Computer systems
- ☞ **Data Retrieval (CPU, R&D):**
Searching the archives
- ☞ **Financial Systems (PLC, CPU):**
Running the economy
- ☞ **Hacking (CPU, R&D):** Penetrating computer systems
- ☞ **Logistics (PLC, PS):** Organising systems
- ☞ **Media Manipulation (PLC, HPD&MC):** Special effects and media production

Wetware

- ☞ **Biosciences (PS, R&D):** Making or analysing living things
- ☞ **Catering (PLC, CPU):** Food related matters of all sorts
- ☞ **Cloning (PLC, TS):** Undeceiving the recently terminated
- ☞ **Medical (TS, R&D):** Patching people up
- ☞ **Mutant Studies (HPD&MC, R&D):**
Poking mutants with sticks until you get a reaction
- ☞ **Outdoor Studies (R&D, CPU):**
Identifying outdoor stuff
- ☞ **Pharmatherapy (PLC, HPD&MC):**
Drugging people
- ☞ **Subliminal Messaging (HPD&MC, CPU):** Subliminally manipulating

10. PORTFOLIO SHEETS & GROUP CARDS

Underfunded Minions

Tech Services Technician: Sir, I don't think much of these new ShovelBots. They just lie there and don't respond to voice commands.

Tech Services Supervisor: That sounds like unhappiness, citizen.

Tech Services Technician: Sir, I mean that I would appreciate instructions as to how to most efficiently operate this new wonderful bot.

Tech Services Supervisor: Well, you just grab the handle here and dig with the flat end.

Tech Services Technician: So, you activate the ShovelBot in exactly the same way you use a shovel?

Tech Services Supervisor: Precisely.

Tech Services Technician: So what's the difference between them?

Tech Services Supervisor: About 40,000 credits each.

An unscrupulous Head of a Service Group could choose to... redirect some of the Access paid to activate a Minion. Instead of 10 Access being used to activate a new warbot, only five Access is spent on the actual warbot and the rest goes right into the pocket of the High Programmer.

This is treasonous behaviour if detected.

The poor underfunded Minion is still activated but with vastly reduced capabilities. A unit of Armed Forces goons might be sent out without any ammunition for their guns. Those CPU clerks you ordered might have only one pen between them, or be so overworked they fall asleep on the job. The elite janitorial commandoes you called up turn out to be one rusty scrubbot with a broken mob.

And that warbot? Due to budget cutbacks, they had to activate it without any Asimov circuits. Is that a problem?

10. Portfolio Sheets & Group Cards

Preparation. Preparation. Preparation.

The three things that most High Programmers don't bother with. ULTRAVIOLETS have a busy schedule of plotting, scheming and being decadent. They don't have time to bother with the little details, like remembering which Service Group they're running this week or who works for them. Trivial stuff like that is why they have Portfolio Sheets and Group Cards.

Portfolio Sheets

Your Portfolio Sheet (one per Service Group) lists all the Minions available to that group, including their Specialties and costs. Remember, these costs are the minimum cost needed for the Minion to function properly – paying *less* than this cost impedes the Minion's ability to function properly. Or, to put it in more colloquial terms, you get what you pay for.

The Minions available to you may change from mission to mission – the GM may issue updated Portfolio Sheets to you, or he may not. Embrace uncertainty.

Group Cards

Group Cards are a handy way of identifying who to talk to. Anyone with a Group Card in front of him is a very important person and you should pay attention to him. Anyone without a Group Card is not a very important person and should be ordered to dance for your amusement.

On the front side of each Group Card, there is the Official HPD&MC-mandated logo of your Service Group and a brief description of what that group does. On the rear side of each card is a list of the Specialties possessed by that group and some encouraging words of advice from your staff. Place the Group Card for your Service Group with the front side facing out towards the other players.

If you have multiple Service Groups, take the Group Card for each of them. Make a little fort.

In addition to identifying you as a very important person who's in charge of a Service Group, your card can serve as a sturdy barricade against encroaching assassins and as a shield against prying eyes. You can conceal your stock of Access chips and secret notes behind (or under) the Group Card.

Making Your Group Cards

Photocopy the eight Group Cards on pages 24-27 (or print out copies from www.mongoosepublishing.com) and cut along the dotted line half-way down the page. Then fold the individual cards into an inverse V-shape. It works best if you print onto heavier paper or card.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS



Central Processing

The role of **Central Processing Unit** is to maximise efficiency across Alpha Complex by co-ordinating the other Service Groups. If The Computer had a right hand, we'd be at it. Every daycycle, CPU works diligently to reduce waste, streamline procedures and improve all aspects of Alpha Complex administration.

You're welcome.

Core Specialties

As Head of **Central Processing**, Assessment you chair this meeting of High Coordination Programmers. Make sure every Hygiene one's working together and that Paper work you're within your operating Thought Survey budget. Keep the other groups Erasure under control – remember, you're Command in charge! Take responsibility for Computer Security nothing – Central Processing Data Retrieval must remain blameless at all Financial Systems times. Do nothing decisively! Hacking Outdoor Systems Subliminal Messaging



The Armed Forces

The **Armed Forces** defend Alpha Complex from external threats. To this all-important end, the Service Group maintains a standing fighting force, honed to a lethal edge and equipped with enough firepower to wipe out all life on Earth. Constant vigilance is paramount – Armed Forces units must drill, train and march up and down in readiness for the inevitable final battle with Communism!

Core Specialties

You are the Head of the Intimidation **Armed Forces!** The duty of Assault defending Alpha Complex Command is yours! Crowd Control Consider the security Outdoor Operation implications of every Security decision. Keep the defence Network of Alpha Complex in the Total War hands of professionals, not Transport those wimps over in IntSec Communications

10. PORTFOLIO SHEETS & GROUP CARDS



Internal Security

Internal Security protects Alpha Complex against betrayal from within. As The Computer warns us, anyone could be a Commie Mutant Traitor! Stay alert! Trust no-one! Keep your laser handy!

Please co-operate fully with all Internal Security operations. Failure to co-operate fully is treason.

Core Specialties

- 👁 Assessment
- 👁 Interrogation
- 👁 Intimidation
- 👁 Covert Ops
- 👁 Infiltration
- 👁 Investigation
- 👁 Security Systems
- 👁 Surveillance
- 👁 Sabotage
- 👁 Crowd Control
- 👁 Security
- 👁 Wetwork
- 👁 Mutant Studies

You are the Head of **Internal Security**. Your mission is to uncover traitors. Even High Programmers can be traitors! You must closely watch your fellow High Programmers for signs of treachery or disloyalty. Closely examine every decision – could it be part of some treacherous scheme! Report your suspicions to the other High Programmers and to The Computer.

You must also maintain security among the citizens. A paranoid, fearful society is a safe society. Also, make sure that the security of Alpha Complex remains under your control – don't let those morons in Armed Forces muscle in!



HPD & Mind Control

You're the Head of **Housing Preservation Development & Mind Control**. Your main task is to keep the proles in line – make sure the committee doesn't make any decisions that would reduce happiness or cause discontent. The Computer doesn't like it when people are unhappy. You must also ensure the supply of basic necessities – food, sedatives, water, TV – or the mob might get restless. Keep the proles happy at all costs, whatever it takes. If you don't, then you'll be facing a lynch mob or a firing squad. Impress on your fellow High Programmers (especially those PLC sycophants) the importance of maintaining order and the social contract.

You're also in charge of the media. You must put the correct spin on all decisions. The proles love it when a High Programmer addresses them directly, so try to get the other Programmers to make public appearances.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS



Production, Logistics & Commissary

Production, Logistics & Commissary is responsible for producing and distributing all consumer goods, supplies and equipment to the citizens of Alpha Complex. Basic equipment may be requisitioned through a friendly PLC service clerk; other items can be purchased at any one of the many PLC stores or vending machines or ordered via The Computer. Remember, consumption is loyalty!

Buy now! Buy now! Buy now! Buy now!

This message sponsored by _____.

Core Specialties

- ☉ Black Marketeering
- ☉ Catering
- ☉ Chemical Eng
- ☉ Cloning
- ☉ Financial Systems
- ☉ Logistics
- ☉ Media Manipulation
- ☉ Pharmatherapy
- ☉ Production
- ☉ Thought Control
- ☉ Transport

You're in charge of **Production, Logistics & Commissary**. Congratulations, boss! PLC is the vanguard of the Alpha Complex economy. Remember the following rules (from the *Seven Habits of Highly Successful High Programmers*) and you'll do fine!

- ☉ Low Clearance citizens don't have any money. Ignore them if possible. HPD&MC is full of socialists anyway!
- ☉ High Clearance citizens have money. Sell to them! Every crisis is an opportunity!
- ☉ Competition is good, as long as PLC controls both sides. Squash the INFRARED market, the filesnarers and the other enemies of capitalism.
- ☉ Access wants to be spent. You've got to spend influence to make influence – and PLC has the most Access to spend!
- ☉ When in doubt, ask for a bailout. PLC's too big to fail, so don't be afraid of overheating the economy! Blow those bubbles! No crisis is so bad that you can't make money off it!

Consumption is loyalty! Profit is success!



Research & Development

Progress is inevitable, citizen! **Research & Development** is taking Alpha Complex boldly into a brave new tomorrowcycle, where the wonders of science will make our lives even happier than they are today! (Life is perfect, thanks to The Computer's wise leadership, but tomorrow will be *doubleplusperfect*!)

R&D welcomes new challenges! No matter what your problem is, we've got an experimental device just waiting to be used on it!

Core Specialties

- ☉ Assault
- ☉ Bioscience
- ☉ Bot Programming
- ☉ Cloning
- ☉ Computer Security
- ☉ Demolition
- ☉ Hacking
- ☉ Medical
- ☉ Mutant Studies
- ☉ Nuclear Engineering
- ☉ Outdoor Studies
- ☉ Security Systems
- ☉ Total War
- ☉ Weird Science

Welcome, Director, to the laboratory. Research and Design is an exciting and fast-moving field, full of promising experiments and brave new wonders of technology. As Head of R&D, you must ensure that we have the funding and the field testing that we need to bring our creations to life – to life, I tell you! Mwahaha!

We dislike the term 'mad scientists'. It's judgemental. We also need you to dismiss any unfounded rumours about runaway experiments, doomsday devices, escaped monsters and other foolish stories that might interfere with the widespread acceptance of our brave new tomorrow.

10. PORTFOLIO SHEETS & GROUP CARDS



Technical Services

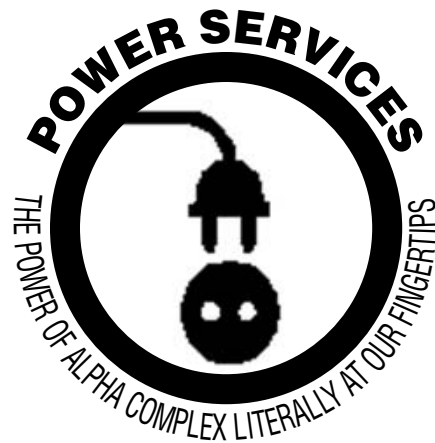
Got a problem? **Technical Services** can fix it! Our skilled operatives are standing by to repair and maintain Alpha Complex's infrastructure and equipment (not related to power generation, distribution or transport). From fixing the photocopier to building new sectors, Technical Services does it all (except where 'it' involves power generation, distribution or the transport infrastructure).

Technical Services – if it works, we'll put a spanner in it.

Core Specialties

- ☉ Bot Engineering
- ☉ Bot Programming
- ☉ Chemical Engineering
- ☉ Cloning
- ☉ Communications
- ☉ Construction
- ☉ Demolition
- ☉ Habitat Engineering
- ☉ Hygiene
- ☉ Medical
- ☉ Outdoors Operations
- ☉ Production
- ☉ Surveillance
- ☉ Weird Science

You're in charge of **Tech Services**. You'll find the headache pills in the third drawer of your desk. Imagine a vast underground city full of highly advanced technology. Now, imagine that highly advanced technology is in the hands of, and let's be generous here, drug-addled morons. Your average citizen shouldn't be trusted with a crayon, let alone laser pistols and heavy machinery but that's what they get. Your job is to keep Alpha Complex running despite its citizens. Be prepared for every problem to end up on your plate – and don't let those lazy goons over in Power Services get away with anything.



Power Services

Got a problem? **Power Services** can fix it! Our skilled operatives are standing by to repair and maintain Alpha Complex's power-related infrastructure and equipment. From keeping the lights on to running the reactors, Power Services does it all (in cases where 'it' involves power generation, distribution or the transport infrastructure).

Power Services – because we can.

Core Specialties

- ☉ Biosciences
- ☉ Black Marketeering
- ☉ Bot Engineering
- ☉ Construction
- ☉ Covert Ops
- ☉ Data Retrieval
- ☉ Habitat Engineering
- ☉ Infiltration
- ☉ Logistics
- ☉ Nuclear Engineering
- ☉ Sabotage

Welcome to **Power Services**, a Service Group which is just as important as Technical Services and is its equal in every way. The chief responsibility of Power Services – and it is a very big, important responsibility, bigger than anything Tech Services does – is to keep the nuclear reactors running. These reactors work perfectly and the nuclear waste is a wholly manageable problem (managing it is your problem). We also keep the transtubes going. We're a really important Service Group!

BAD

- 'Meltdown'
- 'Blackout'
- 'Explosion'
- 'Crash'
- 'Disaster'
- 'Catastrophe'
- 'Very unfortunate event'

GOOD

- 'Fissile Surplus'
- 'Bonus Sleetime'
- 'Unverified disturbance'
- 'Vehicular event'
- 'Unfortunate event'



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

The Computer wants You!!!



10. PORTFOLIO SHEETS & GROUP CARDS

Armed Forces Portfolio Sheet

Minion	Clearance	Access	Specialties
Armed Forces Friends Network	O	2	Communication (So)
Armed Forces Friends Network	B	5	Communications (So), Investigation (M)
Bodyguard Services	B	5	Security (V), Intimidation (V)
Bodyguard Services	V	8	Security +4 (V), Security Systems (Su)
Crowd Control	R	2	Crowd Control (V)
Crowd Control	O	3	Crowd Control +4 (V)
Sensitivity Trainers	Y	3	Thought Control (M)
Sensitivity Trainers	G	4	Thought Control (M), Pharmatherapy (W)
Vulture Squadron Recruiters	G	3	Intimidation (M)
Outdoor Rangers	G	3	Outdoor Operations (V)
Heroic Infantry	IR	1	Assault (V)
Heroic Infantry	R	3	Assault +4 (V)
Officer Brigade	B	5	Command (V), Communications (So)
Officer Brigade	V	8	Command +4 (V), Intimidation (M), Communications (So)
Transportation Battalion	R	2	Transport (H)
Armed Forces Marching Band	R	2	Intimidation (M)
Vulture Squadron Warriors*	B	7	Assault +4 (V), Wetwork +4 (V)
VultureCraft Assault Squadron*	B	7	Assault +4 (V), Total War (V)
Mark IV Warbot*	G	8	Assault (V), Total War (V), Demolition (V)
ICBM Launch	I	6	Total War +8 (V)

*: Special rules apply to this Minion.

Central Processing Portfolio Sheet

Minion	Clearance	Access	Specialties
Volunteer Collection Agencies	RED	2	Co-Ordination (M)
Management Focus Group*	GREEN	8	Co-Ordination+4 (M), Paperwork+4 (M), Covert Operations (Su)
A Lot of Yellowpants	YELLOW	6	Assessment +4 (M), Covert Operations (Su)
Computer Care Specialists	INDIGO	6	Computer Security (So), Hacking (So), Data Retrieval (So)
Better Living Thru Chemistry	RED	4	Pharmatherapy (W), Subliminal Messaging (W)
Better Living Thru Chemistry	GREEN	6	Pharmatherapy +4(W), Subliminal Messaging (W), Biosciences (W)
Cheery Complex Initiative	RED	2	Hygiene +4 (M)
Cheery Complex Initiative	YELLOW	3	Hygiene +4 (M)
Cheery Complex Initiative	BLUE	4	Hygiene +4 (M)
Archives Department	RED	2	Erasure (Su), Data Retrieval (So)
Archives Department	GREEN	3	Erasure (Su), Data Retrieval (So)
Archives Department	INDIGO	5	Erasure (Su), Data Retrieval (So)
Foreign Policy Strategic Working Group	BLUE	5	Command (V), Outdoor Studies (V)
Mandatory Break Monitors	ORANGE	4	Covert Operations (Su), Intimidation (M)
Summary Providers	YELLOW	6	Paperwork (M), Data Retrieval (So)

*: Special rules apply to this Minion.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

HPD& Mind Control Portfolio Sheet

Minion	Clearance	Access	Specialties
Facility Surveillance Control	YELLOW	3	Surveillance (Su)
Facility Surveillance Control	BLUE	5	Surveillance +4 (Su)
History Purifiers	ORANGE	3	Erasure +4 (Su)
History Purifiers	GREEN	4	Erasure +4 (Su)
History Purifiers	INDIGO	5	Erasure +4 (Su)
News Services*	YELLOW	4	Media Manipulation (So), Investigation (Su)
News Services*	GREEN	6	Media Manipulation +4 (So), Investigation +4 (Su)
News Services	INDIGO	8	Media Manipulation +4 (So), Investigation +4 (Su)
Pubic Hating Co-Ordination	RED	2	Thought Control (M)
Trend Identifiers	RED	2	Thought Survey (M)
Singalong Agents	RED	2	Subliminal Messaging (W)
Subliminals Police	BLUE	6	Subliminal Messaging +4 (W), Assessment (M)
Housing Services Supply	RED	4	Paperwork (M), Construction (H), Logistics (So)
INFRARED Wranglers	RED	3	Crowd Control (V), Pharmatherapy (W)
Mandatory Fun Time Enthusiasts	RED	3	Thought Control (V), Pharmatherapy (W)
Temporary Filing Staff Requisition*	RED	4	Interrogation (M), Paperwork (M), Infiltration (Su)
Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters*	YELLOW	4	Surveillance (Su), Media Manipulation (So)
Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters*	BLUE	7	Surveillance (Su), Media Manipulation (So), Investigation (Su)
Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters*	VIOLET	10	Surveillance (Su), Media Manipulation (So), Investigation (Su)

*: Special rules apply to this Minion.

Internal Security Portfolio Sheet

Minion	Clearance	Access	Specialties
Forensic Analysis Scrubbot Team	ORANGE	2	Bioscience (W)
Bright Vision Re-Education Centre	BLUE	5	Intimidation (M), Interrogation (M)
Loyalty Surveyors	YELLOW	4	Thought Survey +4 (M)
Threat Assessors	YELLOW	4	Assessment (M), Infiltration (Su)
Secure Security Checkpoint Checkers	YELLOW	3	Security Systems (Su)
Total Surveillance Assurance	GREEN	4	Surveillance +4 (Su)
Agent Provocateurs	BLUE	6	Infiltration +4 (Su), Sabotage (Su)
IntSec Troopers*	BLUE	6	Security +4 (V), Assault (V)
Traffic Patrol	BLUE	6	Transport (H), Assault +4 (V)
Jackbooted Thugs	GREEN	4	Crowd Control (V), Intimidation (M)
Facilitation Division	YELLOW	3	Wetwork (V), Security Systems (Su)
Facilitation Division	BLUE	4	Wetwork+4 (V), Security Systems (Su)
Facilitation Division	VIOLET	5	Wetwork+4 (V), Security Systems+4 (Su)
Mutant Registration	ORANGE	2	Mutant Studies (W)
Information Retrieval Specialists	YELLOW	4	Interrogation +4 (M)
Information Retrieval Specialists	BLUE	5	Interrogation +4 (M)
Information Retrieval Specialists	VIOLET	7	Interrogation +4 (M)
Men in INDIGO	INDIGO	6	Wetwork (V), Covert Ops (Su), Media Manipulation (So)
Conspicuous Surveillance Initiative	ORANGE	3	Covert Operations (Su)

*: Special rules apply to this Minion.

10. PORTFOLIO SHEETS & GROUP CARDS

Production, Logistics & Commissary Portfolio Sheet

Minion	Clearance	Access	Specialties
BLUE Room Caterers	RED	2	Catering (W)
BLUE Room Caterers	YELLOW	3	Catering (W)
BLUE Room Caterers	BLUE	5	Catering +4 (W)
BLUE Room Caterers	VIOLET	7	Catering +4 (W)
Equipment Assembly Control	INFRARED	1	Production (H)
Field Logistics Advisors	RED	3	Logistics (So), Transport (H)
Food Vat Control	INFRARED	2	Catering (W), Production (H)
Inventory System Updaters	RED	4	Logistics (So), Paperwork (M)
Brand Loyalty Police	RED	3	Thought Control (M)
Acme Chemical Production	RED	3	Chemical Engineering (H), Production (H)
BLUE Shield Clone Assurance	BLUE	5	Cloning +4 (W)
PLC Accounts Co-Ordination	ORANGE	6	Financial Systems (So), Covert Operations (Su), Paperwork (M)
New Flavour of Bouncy Bubble Beverage	INFRARED	2	Pharmatherapy +4 (W)
Advertising Campaign*	RED	4	Media Manipulation +4 (So), Thought Control +4 (M)
C-Bay	GREEN	5	Financial Systems +4 (So), Black Marketeering +4 (Su)
Enforced Reclamation & Recycling	YELLOW	4	Intimidation (M), Production (H)

*: Special rules apply to this Minion.

Power Services Portfolio Sheet

Minion	Clearance	Access	Specialties
Circuit Maintenance	RED	3	Habitat Engineering (H), Sabotage (Su)
Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants	RED	4	Covert Ops (Su), Biosciences (W), Nuclear Engineering (H)
Pneumatic Tube Network Engineers	YELLOW	8	Logistics (So), Paperwork (M), Transport (H), Communication (So)
Department of Transbot Control	ORANGE	7	Transport +4 (H), Co-Ordination (M), Crowd Control (V)
New Transtube Planning Commission	INDIGO	8	Construction (H), Transport (H), Logistics (So), Demolition (V)
Reactor Management Commission	GREEN	4	Nuclear Engineering (H), Construction (H)
Reactor Shielding Volunteer Corps	RED	4	Nuclear Engineering (H), Intimidation (M)
Crawlspace Commandoes	RED	5	Habitat Engineering (H), Black Marketeering (Su), Wetwork (V)
Vault Recovery Team*	GREEN	4	Data Retrieval (So), Biosciences (W)
Toxic Environment Team	ORANGE	3	Biosciences (W), Bot Engineering (H)

*: Special rules apply to this Minion.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Research & Development Portfolio Sheet

Minion	Clearance	Access	Specialties
Biological Niceness Indexers	BLUE	7	Bioscience (W), Hygiene (M), Assessment (M)
Security Technology Technicians	BLUE	6	Surveillance +4 (Su), Security Systems +4 (Su)
Bot Processing	YELLOW	5	Bot Programming +4 (So), Bot Engineering (H)
Drug Interaction Testers	GREEN	5	Medical (W), Biosciences (W), Pharmatherapy (W)
Codename: KILLBOT	GREEN	4	Assault (V), Bot Programming (H)
Doomsday Device	VIOLET	8	Demolition +8 (V), Total War +8 (V)
Atomic Science Ethical Experimentation Directorate	GREEN	6	Nuclear Engineering (H), Mutant Studies (W)
Think Tank Consultants	INDIGO	12	Hacking (So), Weird Science +4 (H), Logistics (So), Medical (W)
Silicon Corridor	BLUE	7	Computer Security (So), Hacking +4 (So)
Special Environment Clone Laboratories	GREEN	7	Cloning (W), Mutant Studies (W), Transport (H)
Historical Artefact Identification & Analysis	YELLOW	6	Outdoor Studies (W), Data Retrieval (So), Erasure (Su)
Experimental Equipment Field Testing*	ORANGE	6	Weird Science (H), Co-Ordination (M)
Foreign Contaminant Containment	ORANGE	7	Medical (W), Outdoor Studies (W), Biosciences (W), Security Systems (Su)
Technically Non-Lethal Weapons	YELLOW	5	Assault (V), Crowd Control (V)

*: Special rules apply to this Minion.

10. PORTFOLIO SHEETS & GROUP CARDS

Technical Services Portfolio Sheet

Minion	Clearance	Access	Specialties
Security Systems Installers	YELLOW	5	Security Systems (Su), Surveillance (Su)
Security Systems Installers	INDIGO	9	Security Systems +4 (Su), Surveillance +4 (Su)
Clone Tank Support Services	RED	3	Cloning (W)
Medical Services	YELLOW	4	Medical (W)
Medical Services	INDIGO	8	Medical +4 (W), Cloning (W), Biosciences (W)
Paint Control	RED	3	Logistics (So)
Slime Identification	ORANGE	4	Hygiene (M), Biosciences (W)
Tech Support	YELLOW	4	Communications (So), Bot Engineering (H)
Abandoned Sector Reclamation Initiative	GREEN	8	Demolition +4 (V), Construction (H), Erasure (Su)
Dome Cleaning Services	ORANGE	5	Bot Engineering (H), Hygiene (M), Outdoors Operation (V)
Department of Pipes & Tubes	RED	6	Chemical Engineering +4 (H), Habitat Engineering (H), Surveillance (Su)
Bot Repair & Maintenance	YELLOW	5	Bot Engineering +4 (H), Bot Programming (So)
Scrubbot Army	RED	3	Hygiene +4 (M)
Megastructure Construction Planning Permission	BLUE	12	Construction +4 (H), Demolition (V), Bot Engineering (H)
Non-Specific Unit Production	GREEN	6	Production +4 (H), Logistics (So)
Outside Broadcast Unit*	YELLOW	4	Communication (So), Outdoor Operation (W)
Alpha Complex Space Program*	INDIGO	10	Communications (So), Habitat Engineering (H), Weird Science (H)
Vat Maintenance & Control	ORANGE	4	Chemical Engineering (H), Biosciences (W)
Vermin Terminators	RED	4	Habitat Engineering (H), Wetwork (V)

*: Special rules apply to this Minion.



In its infinite electric wisdom, The Computer has conquered death! Every citizen in Alpha Complex is equipped with a cybernetic implant that records their brain state and uploads a near-real-time copy to the MemoMax system. In the extremely unlikely event of a citizen being terminated, a clone of that citizen is force-grown in a vat and imprinted with a copy of the citizen's last recorded brain state. The clone then takes the place of the fallen citizen, ensuring maximum productivity and happiness for all! Huzzah!

Clones are delivered via a variety of methods. If the replacement is a high-priority one, the clone is popped into a delivery canister and shot through giant pneumatic tubes or rushed to the scene by a delivery bot. Less urgent replacements are just given a transbot pass and told to make their own way home. High Programmer replacements are, of course, transported in luxury limousines or – in emergencies – in the finest, most comfortable and most exclusive giant pneumatic tubes.

The new clone is considered to be the original citizen, inheriting the predecessor's name, Clearance, job, possessions, cash and underwear. There's one important difference, though – if the original was executed for being a mutant or a traitor, then the replacement clone is considered to be innocent of these crimes. The slate is wiped clean, because the MemoMax procedure is guaranteed 100% to wipe all treasonous

thoughts or deviant genes from the replacement clone. (Any instances where the replacement clone is also a Commie Mutant Traitor are attributed to sabotage.)

Most citizens have only a limited number of clones – everyone gets at least six and extra clones are awarded for good behaviour or for reporting traitors, or sold to those who can afford them, or given as spot prizes on TV shows. High Programmers have a high-infinite number of clones – The Computer will never let one of its beloved ULTRAVIOLETs perish.

Not even if they wish for death. Replicative fading is still a problem. Each clone is a copy of a copy of a copy – or, in the case of a long-serving High Programmer, the copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy of a copy... repeat at nauseum, or at least until the clone that slithers out of the vat is a twisted, malformed, blind idiot, at which point the High Programmer is usually retired to light clerical duties.

Death Of A High Programmer

When a Player Character is killed – by assassination, termination as a traitor or random mischance – a replacement

clone is automatically provided within a few minutes. This new clone does suffer from replicative fading, which manifests as a loss of skill points. The character's Wetware skill determines how many skill points are lost.

Wetware	Skill Points Lost
1-5	4
6-10	3
11-15	2
16+	1

The lost skill points can be taken from a single skill, or divided among several skills – the character could lose two points from Management, one point from Violence and one from Wetware to make up a four-point loss. This degradation in skills is mirrored by physical changes in the High Programmer – a drop in Violence might be explained by slower reactions or a tendency to believe that every enemy is actually some old rival reformed.

Preventing Loss: If a High Programmer has a Minion with the Cloning Specialty standing by at all times to give him prompt attention in the event of death, he may reduce the skill point loss by one point.

Death Of An Agent

Program Group Agents can also come back from the dead via cloning. Such agents lose any Rank they possessed in a Secret Society.

In Alpha Complex, all people are created equal. The Computer says so and, for once, it's right. Every Alpha Complex citizen is decanted from the steel wombs at INFRARED Clearance. There are no family connections, no inherited wealth, no entrenched classes or unequal opportunities. Everyone starts off equal.

All citizens are given the same centrally-mandated education by TeachBots, which consists mainly of brainwashing and propaganda videos. It's in the Junior Citizen Crèches that the differences

between citizens start to manifest. The more intelligent, the more ruthless and the more treacherous thrive by trampling on their weaker classmates. It's perfectly Darwinian.

At the age of 14, citizens leave the crèches and are assigned to one of the eight Service Groups for a lifetime of service. They're still all INFRAREDSs, so they're kept so sedated that they're barely distinguishable from ambulatory vegetables. Most citizens never get any further – they stumble from undemanding, mindless job to

undemanding, mindless entertainment, stopping only to buy undigestable, mushy food. Getting out of INFRARED is the first great challenge; the most common route up is to report another citizen for treachery. Turning in your friends and co-workers is rewarded with promotion.

Internal Security Interview Transcript
342543/177. Subject: Frank-TBG-1
Subject: Duh, I saw Phil, and he was talking to one of them Communisms.
Interrogator: A Commie?
Subject: Yuh. He had a big fur hat and a

12. THE GREASY POLE

hammer, jus' like in the vidshows.

Interrogator: Are you sure you didn't hallucinate this?

Subject: Nah. When I halloo...hallusce... see things, they're kinda purply. The Commie, he was more mauve.

Interrogator: Good enough for me. Thank you for your co-operation citizen.

The Low Clearances: Proles++

There isn't a great difference between living conditions at INFRARED and those at, say, RED or ORANGE. You're still living in a crowded barracks with people who snore even when awake, you're still working in a mind-numbing job and you're still medicated to erase any independent thought or unapproved idea...but if you've got to RED, you've had a taste of promotion. The stakes at low Clearances are petty and insignificant by any rational standards but rationality doesn't enter into it. An ambitious RED would kill for a slightly bigger office cubicle or a microscopic promotion. It's bitter, cut-throat, petty nastiness at the lower Clearances.

More than 60% of all cloning in Alpha Complex is to replace RED, ORANGE or YELLOW citizens who were murdered, accidentally killed or terminated by a colleague or close friend.

The lower Clearances sort the truly ambitious from the merely lucky. To frame one co-worker for treason and get promoted may be simple good fortune; to do it four times shows genuine promise.

Internal Security Interview Transcript 345533/179. Subject: Frank-O-TBG-3

Subject: I may speak without fear of contradiction; the rest of my Troubleshooter team were all Commie Mutant Traitors, every one of them.

Interrogator: I can't help but notice that none of them are here.

Subject: I was, of course, forced to terminate them all.

Interrogator: Do you have proof of these astonishing allegations?

Subject: Indeed I do. By a puzzling coincidence, each of them left a signed confession, describing their treasonous schemes and intentions in detail.

Interrogator: How convenient.

Equal...Ish

Despite The Computer's orders, not all citizens are created equal.

Mutation is endemic to the cloning process. Obvious mutants are culled early (good old two-headed Bob, whatever happened to them) but less blatant genetic deviants can survive for many years. Some even reach high Security Clearances – it's a lot easier for a mutant with Bureaucratic Intuition or Machine Empathy to get promoted.

Some groups experiment with genetically engineering the next generation of citizens to optimise them for a particular role. Under such schemes, one crèche would produce a bunch of budget-obsessed bureaucrats for CPU, while the crèche next door would make ambidextrous dwarves who liked confined spaces and the smell of burnt wiring for Power Services. Such schemes tend to run aground on the Scylla and Charybdis of Armed Forces invincible supersoldiers and R&D mad scientist kids.

Finally, it's not unheard of for High Programmers and other low-hormone-suppressant classes to sire or bear natural-born children in the old disgustingly messy way. Actually keeping such embarrassingly noisy evidence of treason around is impossible, so the usual solution is to stick the child into a crèche and alter the records to conceal its origins.

Subject: Exactly. You can file these away as legal terminations and then fill out a form IS533 for a 500-credit bonus if you claim that I was an Internal Security informant acting under your instruction.

Interrogator: Huh?

Subject: Here, I'll fill out the paperwork for you. Just sign here, here and lick here...

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 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.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

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.

The Middle Clearances: The Outer Party

At YELLOW, GREEN and BLUE Clearances, a citizen has genuine power and responsibility. He leaves the crowded barracks and the meaningless jobs behind, he gets to eat real food regularly and his medication is reduced, giving him a clearer head.

A citizen at this Clearance level has his own quarters, shared with at most one or two other citizens and ranging in size from a cramped one-room box (YELLOW) to a nice little apartment with Hot and Cold running Fun and an autocar in the garage. He has real responsibilities, like overseeing some part of a subdivision of his Service Group, performing some skilled task or pressing buttons that actually do something.

The middle Clearances are the middle classes of Alpha Complex; individually powerless and without influence but their collective approval is courted by the High Programmers. Citizens at this level may take an interest in Alpha Complex news and politics – the news is all sanitised propaganda but it does give clues about which High Programmer is in ascendance at the moment.

Middle Clearance citizens have the most free time; they are therefore the most loyal consumers of entertainment products, vidshows and recreation, as well as the most active Secret Society conspirators. It's usually these Secret Society connections or bloody-minded ambition that propels a mid Clearance citizen into the higher Clearances. Only a tiny percentage of the citizens who make it to the comparative cushy environs of YELLOW actually go on to be promoted again.

Internal Security Interview Transcript 346377/185. Subject: Frank-B-TBG-4
Interrogator: Tell us where you were on

the nightcycle of 4/9/185.

Subject: Why, I was in my quarters, reading *Alpha Complex Todaycycle*.

Interrogator: Our agents place you in Corridor 83, citizen, behaving suspiciously.

Subject: Indeed? Well, tell me, officer, how would you react if I shook your hand like *this*?

Interrogator: Did I say our agents saw you in Corridor 83? I was, of course, mistaken. All a misunderstanding. Sorry about that, *sir*.

Subject: Think nothing of it. Shall we see you at the next society meeting?

Interrogator: I'll be there just as soon as I erase this transcript, *sir*.

>>>>RECORDING ERROR<<<<<

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.

Staff: Whomever you can threaten.

Authority: You manage a small team within a division of your Service Group.

Perks: You set your own schedule (subject to higher Clearance demands). You can request changes in your pharmathery.

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 part of a division within your Service Group.

Perks: Noticeable jump in status (and, often, body weight). Lower levels may engage in spontaneous bootlicking – that is, not at laserpoint. Pharmathery 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 division within your Service Group.

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.

The High Clearances: The Inner Party

The end of that greasy pole is in sight! With only another promotion or two, the citizen will reach the exalted status of High Programmer! What joy!

INDIGOs and VIOLETs have awesome and burdensome responsibilities. They have lots of perks but very little time to enjoy them. They're kept very busy by their duties – which is just the way High Programmers like it. No sense in letting the competition get too complacent. The High Programmers know that the INDIGOs and VIOLETs are potential rivals or replacements for their thrones. A lot of INDIGOs were promoted out of BLUE as a reward for being incompetent in a non-threatening way.

The lifestyle of a high Clearance citizen (when they find time for it, anyway) is one of luxury unimaginable to the proles. Real food all the time. Obsequious servants. Entertainments both subtle and debauched. And, of course, the intoxicating thrill of power...

Internal Security Interview Transcript 3677743/201. Subject: Frank-V-TBG-6

12. THE GREASY POLE

Interrogator: Good morningcycle, overseer. Praise The Computer, down with Commies, did you have a pleasant flight?

Subject: Praise The Computer indeed, Commissioner. I'll ask the questions here, if you don't mind.

Interrogator: Not at all, sir. Can I get you a CoffeeLyke or a snifter of brandy?

Subject: What did I say about me asking the questions?

Interrogator: A thousand grovelling apologies, sir.

Subject: Better. I'm here about certain...irregularities... in Internal Security's energy audit. Your power usage has dropped by 5.2% in the last accounting cycle.

Interrogator: Oh, I can explain that. We've started doubling up on the disintegration cubicles. No sense in frying Commie Mutant Traitors one at a time when we can jam half a dozen of them into the cubicle and nuke them all together. Right, sir?

Subject: Your enthusiasm for efficiency would be laudable, Commissioner, if you had passed on the savings made by this overcrowding onto your annual budget – but your budgetary allocation for power is unchanged. Where did that 5.2% go?

Interrogator: Er, I –

Subject: Into your pocket, I believe.

Interrogator: I....slanderous... Commies did it...er... would you believe mind control?

Subject: Calm down, Commissioner. Take a happiness pill and relax. We can sort this little budgetary snafu out. Here, look, I simply add a column to your budget here... let's call it a personal security illumination cost for INDIGOs and higher.

Interrogator: Personal lighting?

Subject: Yes, as the only INDIGO in this department, you'll be given a small stipend – say, 5.2% of the power budget – for personal illumination. I believe that the new Luxury Silver Shadow autocar would provide adequately secure lighting for your needs.

Interrogator: You're fiddling the accounts to cover up my embezzling? Why?

Subject: Because you and I are going to be very good friends, Commissioner.

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 organisations within your Service Group.

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 directors, 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 Group organisations? Oh, you mean my investment portfolio.'

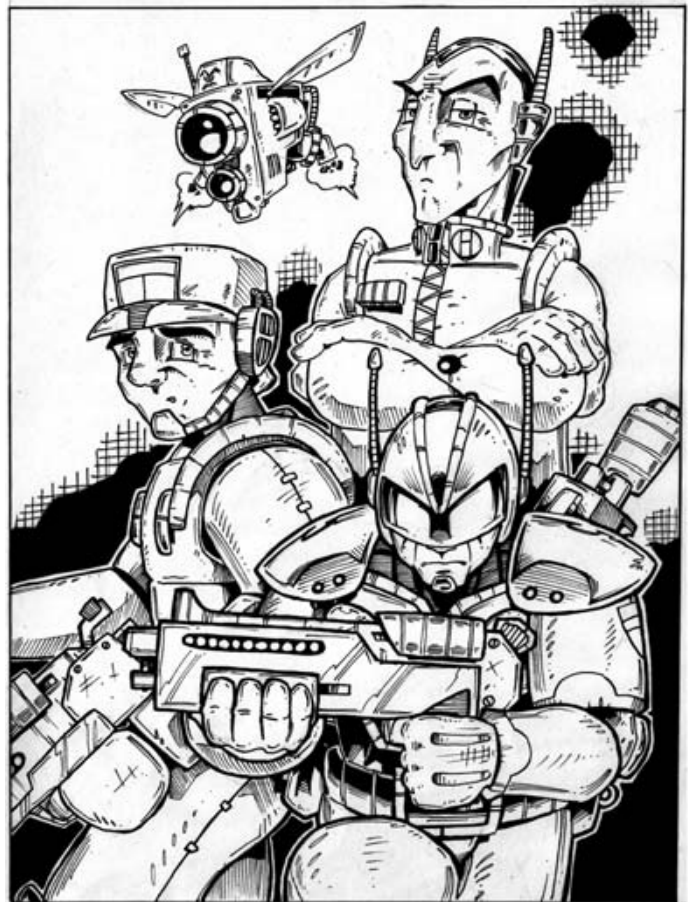
Perks: You see this sector? It's yours. You don't go to managers; they come to you. You can freely say almost anything short of outright Commie propaganda. 'Internal Security? Oh, you mean my staff police.'

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

ULTRAVIOLET: You Are Big Brother

Security Clearance is a measure of The Computer's trust. ULTRAVIOLET citizens are the most trustworthy and are therefore permitted to alter The Computer's code. Therefore, regardless of the UV's actual skills, they are referred to as High Programmers.

ULTRAVIOLETs have all the pleasures and luxuries available to VIOLETs, plus



Aspire, citizen! Aspire or expire!



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

more besides. Better yet, they have all the time they wish to spend on these indulgences; High Programmers do not have day-to-day duties or assignments but are instead give free reign to improve Alpha Complex as they see fit. Most take ULTRAVIOLET status to mean a well-deserved semi-retirement. They potter about on pet projects (if 'pottering' can be applied to hobbies like 'trying to perfect time travel' or 'breeding supermutants' or 'cloning the entire cast of *Cheers* for a reunion'). As UVs are exempt from the limits on cloning, they're functionally immortal – some High Programmers claim to be hundreds of years old (replicative fading is still an issue, though; the ones who say they're hundreds of years olds are also the ones with no bladder control and the belief that they are actually Ronald Reagan).

These elder High Programmers are generally left to their own devices; they wander around the upper echelons of

Alpha Complex society, wining, dining, coding and plotting in their individual eccentric fashions. They're harmless in the grand scheme of things. It's the younger, hungrier High Programmers who are the true rulers of Alpha Complex. These Programmers set policy, run the Complex, defend their own positions and set the standard behaviour modes of The Computer – as best they can, at any rate. As every High Programmer is equal, the only way to get things done is to establish coalitions and, let's face it, gangs. Cabals of High Programmers rise and fall, alliances form and shift, charismatic and far-sighted visionaries establish brief juntas before being bumped off by rivals... it's all barely suppressed anarchy, although the average clone has no idea of the power struggles taking place in the corridors of power.

Maybe the elder Programmers have the right idea. Despite the struggles and

turf wars, ol' Alpha Complex just keeps ticking along. The reactors get leakier and the conspiracies get weirder but they're all still out to get you.

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

Food: Pushing the boundaries of taste, cookery and science.

Housing: Palatial mansions packed with Old Reckoning relics, harems and death traps.

Transport: They come to you.

Staff: A dedicated, fanatically loyal Program Group. Anyone you want that another High Programmer hasn't already claimed.

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

Authority: The right to alter The Computer's code. The ability to take control of any project or department at a whim.

Typical ULTRAVIOLET citizens: You lot.

13. High Programming

As an ULTRAVIOLET Clearance citizen, you have the right to alter The Computer's programming. You may not have any clue what you're doing and only a basic understanding of how to program but you have the Computer-granted right to pop open an editing window and start changing stuff.

So does every other High Programmer, which is a problem. Any change you make can be undone by another High Programmer. You can program The Computer to embrace Communism but that change will last about 10 seconds before someone else hits 'undo'. Large-scale changes upset the delicate balance of power between factions and cabals – no-one in Alpha Complex is happy with the current state of the place but it's the least worst solution for all concerned. It is *possible* to make larger changes but only with the support of several other High Programmers.

Your Friend, The Computer

The Computer is a barely functional hodge-podge of interconnected sub-systems running on decaying, patched-together hardware. No-one knows how it all works (when it works), but without The Computer, Alpha Complex would

literally fall apart. It started out as the public transport and utilities monitor for a city of the future and that legacy code is still around – The Computer's default mode is one of polite bureaucratic stonewalling. The Computer genuinely wants everyone in Alpha Complex to be safe and happy. It wants this so much, there are complimentary laser cannons and checkpoints everywhere to maintain appropriate safety levels and happiness is enhanced by mandatory happiness drugs and smile inspectors.

In short, The Computer is crazy. It's your friend, but... well, if you were locked in an underground bunker with an emotionally unstable lunatic killer, you'd say he was your friend too. Keep smiling and maybe he won't stab you.

The relationship between The Computer and the High Programmers may be profitably compared to the relationship between a sickly, syphilitic but occasionally benevolent king and his evil viziers. The king has given a few broad commands ('make sure the people are happy and the kingdom isn't, I dunno, overrun by evil bats or something') but he leaves most of the running of the state up to the viziers. The viziers tell the king what they think

he wants to hear ('of course the people are happy, majesty') while plotting behind his back to sell the kingdom to the evil space bat developers. Both the king and the viziers think they're the top dog and that the other party is an easily manipulated pawn.

Social Networking

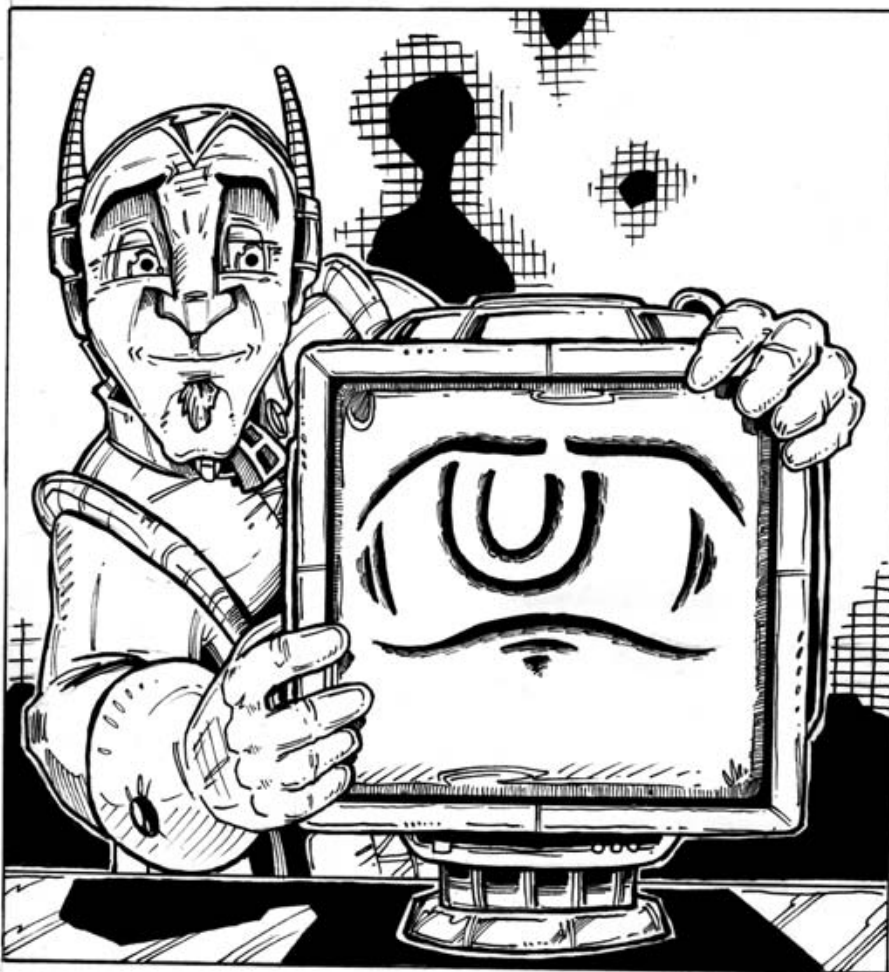
When altering The Computer's code, the chances of your change being immediately undone depends on two factors:

👁 **How noticeable your changes are:** Bigger changes are more unpredictable and so more dangerous to the other High Programmers. A little prying into secret files won't attract attention but search-and-replacing all instances of 'Power Services' to 'Reactor Weenies' will be noticed and undone sharply.

👁 **How much the other High Programmers trust you:** If you've got a consensus behind you, other High Programmers are less likely to oppose you. By contrast, if no-one likes you, then they'll block even the most innocuous changes and send you nasty emails.

13. HIGH PROGRAMMING

The Computer really is a High Programmer's best friend.



Fun Things To Code

All of these use the Software skill. At the beneficent whim of the almighty GM, you may be permitted to use Minions with an appropriate Speciality to augment your skill but remember that most of The Computer's code is ULTRAVIOLET Clearance and your Minion may end up brainscrubbed.

Information Manipulation

The Computer knows everything but it doesn't always know what it knows. Some information is misfiled, encrypted or deliberately hidden. Information Manipulation lets a High Programmer hunt for hidden or obscure data, or too hide or obscure data. There are lots of places to hide data within The Computer where The Computer can see it, the electronic equivalent of sticking a post-it note to its forehead.

Hacking

Hacking is used to access restricted information or subsystems. Officially, a High Programmer need never bother with hacking – ULTRAVIOLET Clearance means you can poke at anything you want. In practice, between hidden files, private CompNodes and every Service Group having their own restricted archives or isolated servers, High Programmers spend a good proportion of their time hacking and even more time blocking the hacking attempts of rivals.

Tweaks

Tweaks are small changes to The Computer's code that would only be noticed if the programmer bothered to examine some obscure subsystem. Think of them as backdoors and secret passageways. Another High Programmer

would intercede if you tried, say, to increase the Security Clearance of everyone in the sector – but what if you add a few lines of code in the Sewer Management Individual Toilet Cubicle Monitoring backup routine so that if someone flushes the toilet *thusly*, they get their Clearance increased by one level? Who's going to notice that?

While you can accomplish almost anything with a tweak, the method for activating a tweak must be intentionally obscure. You can't, say, program The Computer to think that High Programmer Bert-U is a traitor (that's a big change) – but you can screw with one of The Computer's visual processing routines so that it interprets white garments in Corridor 53-B as red ones, so when Bert-U pops to the bathroom, The Computer thinks he's a RED citizen in a BLUE corridor and terminates him for trespassing... if you're lucky. A general rule of thumb is that individual names are easy to spot (High Programmers ego-search for their own names all the time). The best tweaks are split among several subsystems so that each individual change appears harmless or meaningless but combined they provide a useful advantage to the programmer.

Big Changes

Big changes are exactly what they sound like – they're large-scale changes to The Computer's code. Big changes cover ideas like 'let's put the mutants in charge' or 'let's make Communism non-treasonous' or 'initiate wipe out of all life-forms in Alpha Complex'.

In practice, big changes almost never happen for two reasons. Firstly, for any proposed large-scale change, there's a bunch of High Programmers who oppose it for one reason or another (and the bigger the change, the more likely it is for paranoids to run to the status quo out of fear – Alpha Complex may not be perfect but at least they know where they stand there). Secondly, rolling out a massive reconfiguration of The Computer's code is very, very tricky. Something's certain to go horribly wrong. For a big change to have a hope of succeeding, a High Programmer would have to first perform extensive field testing on a private CompNode.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Private CompNodes

The Computer is made up of lots and lots of networked nodes. If one node fails, its neighbours take over until the damaged node is rebooted. There's at least one node per sector; important sectors can have half a dozen nodes. Standard protocols dictate that each node constantly pushes its code to its neighbours to ensure that they're all running off exactly the same code base.

High Programmers may obtain private CompNodes either legally (by building a new private node or salvaging an old one from an Abandoned Sector) or illegally (sectioning off a node from its neighbours by driving it into a state of complete paranoia so that it refuses to trust code from other nodes). The advantages of a private CompNode are legion – it's a playground for programming tests and you can make whatever changes you want without other pesky High Programmers gainsaying you.

There are tales of lost subsectors that got cut off from the main body of Alpha Complex and whose CompNodes are running really weird versions of The Computer's code. There's the Commie-dominated HUH sector from *The People's Glorious Revolutionary Adventure*, for example. Making your own sector where you are the undisputed god-king is left as an exercise for the reader.

14. Secrets of the High Programmers

This anonymous document was first discovered on an as-yet-unidentified corpse (plasma field burns make forensic analysis difficult; rumours that the dead clone was wearing a tattered GAMMA jumpsuit are considered treason). Copies of the document were leaked onto the Grey Subnets and circulated there ever since. Possession or knowledge of this document is punishable by low-level neural reformatting of the glial cells, a procedure which results in either terminating or reducing the subject to a mineralative state in over 65% of cases.*

Some High Programmers claim that following the instructions in this document will ensure victory over your foes and protect you from the dangers of Alpha Complex. Of course, those are just the guys who want your glial cells fried.

Read this advice cautiously, High Programmer.

Give Me An Iron Fist And A Golden Parachute

Too many High Programmers get to ULTRAVIOLET Clearance by rising through the ranks of one Service Group and then stick with that group. They don't take advantage of their new-found freedom and instead play it safe. 'I've been dragging people to the termination booth for Internal Security for seven

Clearance levels and 70 yearcycles,' they say, 'so I'm going to keep on dragging people to the termination booth.' That's a very short-sighted attitude to have (and is a commendable attitude in your rivals). As a HP, you can leap from one Service Group to another with the ease and grace of a Troubleshooter pivoting from one lie to another. Yes, it's nice to have a dependable power base but it's even nicer to be rich and powerful.

If you're running Internal Security and two other High Programmers are both scheming to replace you – let 'em win. They'll waste all their resources wresting control away from you (and then from each other), while you swoop in to grab both their old Service Groups on the cheap. Be flexible. Keep your eyes on the big prize, not on the tools you'll use to get it. A laser pistol's just as good as a cone rifle when you're shooting an unsuspecting patsy in the back; similarly, one Service Group is just as good as the next.

He Who Controls The Narrative Controls The Universe

Remember when you walk into that Situation Room that you wouldn't be there unless everything was already screwed. The Computer is looking to you and the other High Programmers

for leadership, which is rather like a little lost Commie looking to a pack of IntSec Troopers for help. The other High Programmers are just as clueless as you are. No-one knows what's going on or what to do.

So, bravely leap forward and take charge! Tell them what's going on and how they can solve it. Spin a beautiful narrative that outlines the impending Commie threat, the dire consequences of failure and what the committee should do to save the day. Identify some villainous traitors (or at least suggest who these nefarious traitors might be). Pick your heroes – and don't be selfish here. It's easier to steal Access from the common pool if everyone else is doing it too. Well, not everyone else – just a simple majority of the Committee.

Never take responsibility for anything – Committees exist to be human shields against accountability. Suggest, hint, advise, shout and bully but never ever do anything openly that doesn't have the backing of some walking flak jackets.

Keep Your Enemies Busy And Your Friends Dependent

An idle High Programmer is a potential threat. It gives them time to think, to plot and to notice that you're up to

*: Like a vegetative state, only worse.

13. HIGH PROGRAMMING

something. Find something to keep them busy, always. Pass on rumours, drag false treasons across their trail, 'confide' your 'suspicions' in them – anything to get them spending their resources instead of spying on you. If you can get them working on the crisis, all the better. Just remember to take credit for it in the end.

As for your 'allies', help them out but always at a price. Everything should be *quid pro quo* at the very least but it's even better to get a dozen *quids* for every *pro quo* you give. The best allies are ones you can string along indefinitely. Most Secret Societies fall into this category ('*sure, I'll open up the Outdoors and bring about a new era of ecological awareness, Mr. Sierra Club chairman, just as soon as it's feasible. Until then, could you please deal with this mould problem?*')

Bravely Volunteer For Everything

Madness, you say!

And you're right most of the time. Never volunteer for anything with the words 'experimental', 'testing' 'R&D' or 'perfectly safe' in the title, whether you're a High Programmer or a freshly decanted Troubleshooter. Do not taunt the experimental thermonuclear gadget.

There are lots of other things you can and should volunteer for. The Computer likes volunteering. It sounds heroic and proactive. Volunteer for projects to increase happiness, to improve efficiency, to make citizens more alert, or more compliant, or make them eat more Cold Fun. The project doesn't matter – what's important is that you have this extra

official duty. You have selflessly taken on this added burden.

Make sure everyone knows you've got this extra duty. When the other High Programmers come asking for your help, point out that you'd love to help but you've got this all-important extra duty to do first. You'll gladly lend assistance if they *really* need help, but if you do so, you'll need extra Access as compensation. If you screw up the extra duty, then point out to The Computer that you were juggling more responsibilities than anyone else; if you screw up the main mission, wave your extra duty in front of the camera and say that while the rest of the team failed, you managed to at least salvage something from the debacle. (If you screw up both, then maybe you can argue that you were overburdened and so cannot be held responsible for this disaster).

Take on missions from The Computer, from Service Groups, from other High Programmers, even Secret Societies (just don't advertise those ones). Most of the time, you can complete these extra tasks while dealing with the crisis – or, better yet, you let the other High Programmers deal with the tricky bits of the crisis while you potter around doing your secret missions. If all else fails, blame someone else for your failure.

You've Gotta Spend Money To Make Money

It's hard to break the habits of a lifetime. If you're anything like me, you've been hoarding your credits and I.O.U.s for years and years. You never know when some bastard bureaucrat is going to drop a huge fine on you, or when you'll

need serious scratch for a bribe. As a High Programmer, though, you've got to realise that you've got more money than God's own banker. Just hoarding Access in your accounts won't get you anywhere. Don't be afraid to spend it – The Computer's always pumping more money into the economy and as long as it trusts you, you're too big to fail. So, live a little. Spend Access on your Service Groups and your Agents, heck, buy that ivory backscratcher you've always wanted!

There are more sources of Access than handouts from The Computer, too. Each Service Group comes with its own little sinecure but you can make more money through clever investments, IR-market deals and good old extortion. Got a load of toxic waste barrels to get rid of? Don't bother with expensive secure storage; just paint 'em, stick a foam cushion on top, rebrand them as Self-Heating Personal Seating Systems and flog them to the proles for millions.

Patriotism In Front Of The Cameras

Whenever you're in public or in sight of a security camera – and that's most of the time – you must be ultra-patriotic. Ooze love for The Computer. Show your undying loyalty to Alpha Complex. Outpatriot the most patriotic clone. And most of all, show you hate Commie Mutant Traitors. In public, your voice must be the loudest and most vitriolic when condemning treason. Wear the lapel pins and the medals and the Two Minute Hate Hats. Frame everything you say or do in public in terms of the War on Communism or claim that you act only for the greater good.

*: Answers:

- ☞ I go now to conduct a conscientious examination of the local sanitation system, for your well-being and your protection. Commies may be lurking in the pipes but I'll flush them out.
- ☞ Praise The Computer for its beneficent gift of this sugar-based foodstuff, which I partake in with appreciation for both its nutritional value and its fun factor. Why, I bet the Commies don't like cake.
- ☞ For security reasons, I was forced to terminate that citizen. While his crimes may not be apparent to you, fellow citizens, rest assured that he was indeed guilty of multifarious nefarious crimes and his guilt was determined after a lengthy Internal Security investigation, the results of which are classified above your Security Clearance.
- ☞ Citizen, you may have heard rumours suggesting that I, your High Programmer, harboured Communist sympathies. Rumours are treason, citizen. If you heard these rumours, you are committing treason. I should therefore order you to report to the termination booth immediately... but I can see you're a loyal citizen at heart. Why, you remind me of me when I was a low Clearance nobody. Tell you what, citizen, I'll look the other way for now. I won't report your treason if you promise to amend your ways and ignore all treasonous rumours from now on. Run along, citizen, before the guardbots arrive.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Patriotic jabber must be as instinctive to you as breathing. Practise it assiduously. As an exercise, rephrase the following simple sentences as expressions of your utter devotion to the cause* (see page 41).

- ☞ I have to go to the bathroom.
- ☞ I like cake.
- ☞ I terminated that clone 'cos I felt like it.
- ☞ I am a Commie.

Lasers In The Back Corridor

Be ruthless. Erase all traces of ruth from your personality template. Embrace the ruth-free lifestyle.

I'm not saying that lethal ultraviolence involving death rays and warbots should be your first response in any situation but you've got to have steel inside that velvet glove. Zap the bastards when the opportunity arises. If some clone disrespects your authority, make an example of him – and you've got the resources and the imagination to make a very public and stomach-turning example. If one of the other High Programmers reveals he's got a useful Agent in some Secret Society, then send the boys round to vaporise that Agent (and if you can, vaporise that High Programmer too).

Violence, it is said, is that last refuge of the incompetent and that's true enough – but being ruthless shouldn't involve anything as crass as *violence*. Violence conjures images of soldiers in trenches, of fistfights and fire fights and wildly thrown grenades and all sorts of unpleasantness. We don't want any violence in our ruthlessness. No, what you want to aim for is assassinations, for the quiet laser blast in the back of the head, or for the use of force so swift and overwhelming that resistance is useless. Ruthlessness isn't sending in a bunch of Troubleshooters to zap an enemy; it's sending in a warbot.

Crush Your Followers, Help Your Enemies

Hypothetical situation time: There's a job that must be done. It's mildly unpleasant and slightly hazardous and will take approximately two hours per daycycle. You have two candidates for this task. Candidate A is a stressed,

overworked, unhappy RED Clearance drone who works 14 hours a daycycle before being volunteered for six hours of Troubleshooting service. Candidate B is a GREEN Clearance middle manager who does no actual work whatsoever; his most strenuous duty is ordering lunch.

Who gets the job? Obviously, it's Candidate A.

If you give the job to Candidate B, you'll make him unhappy. Two hours of his day will be taken up with this new task, leaving him with 22 hours to plot, scheme and complain about the cruel High Programmer who oppresses him. He's got the Clearance and the time to make trouble.

If you stick the extra workload on Candidate A, he'll be working 22 hours a day, leaving him with no time to complain or do anything other than collapse into an exhausted stupor. He's already oppressed and unhappy, so making him more oppressed and unhappy doesn't really change anything. What's he going to do, complain *more* about being ground into the dust?

It's always cheaper and easier to dump as many problems as possible onto one poor sod. Tell him it's a sacrifice for the good of Alpha Complex and that he should be proud that he's helping maximise happiness for all citizens. Once you've got a Minion, use it until it's destroyed; better that you send the same poor bunch of clones into danger after danger instead of spreading unhappiness around by using different Minions.

As for your enemies, don't underestimate the virtues of kindness. A little generosity goes a long way, especially if you manage their expectations properly. Say you and a rival High Programmer agree that there'll be a 30% reduction in oxygen rations across the sector. This will make a lot of people unhappy. You then go to your rival's best supporters and say that you have personally interceded on their behalf – thanks to your efforts, their oxygen rations will only be cut by 15%, even though their supposed ally and patron wanted to cut them by 30%. What a generous High Programmer you are in their eyes...

I Give An Assessment Based On My Expertise, You Are Economical With The Truth, He or She Is A Traitorous Liar

Speak with confidence. Lies sound better that way.

No-one – not The Computer, not the High Programmers, not the Secret Society kingpins, not even the Illuminati – really knows what's going on in Alpha Complex. It is conspiracies and cover-ups all the way down. Anything could be at the root of a problem. If The Computer wants you to investigate a missing shipment of toxic chemicals, then it could be anything from a filing error to mutant rats in the wiring to Commie Mutant Traitor sabotage to a bizarre game of chess being played by other UVs. There's no way of knowing what's going on – so no-one can prove you're lying.

'Clearly, the root cause of this problem is Power Services. If they had attended to their duties and maintained security in the transtube, the chemical shipment would never have gone missing.'

So, bravely lie and take charge of the situation. Blame the theft of the chemicals on your enemies, who are no doubt in league with the mutants, who plan to use the chemicals to turn innocent, genetically pure citizens into vile deviants. If new evidence comes to light, then work this into your framework of lies. Keep piling deception on deception. Yes, it's a house of cards but that's only a problem if you're too cautious. Build a house of cards so big that if it falls, it'll crush everyone beneath it.

You can also cast doubt on your fellow ULTRAVIOLETS with a few carefully chosen words. Never accuse another High Programmer of lying; let the rest of the committee draw their own conclusions. Lay your trail of clues for them to follow. Truth is what you say it is.

It's Easy To Stay One Step Ahead When You've Got A Jetpack

Of course, the best lies have a grain of truth. Actually, less of a grain and

14. SECRETS OF THE HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Ten Phrases To Stall With

1. The matter is under consideration.
2. I have decided to be more flexible in my approach to this problem.
3. Something ought to be done but is this the best way to achieve it?
4. We are conducting a full security audit to ensure there is no chance of Commie Mutant Traitor sabotage.
5. To maximise efficiency and employee happiness, we are conducting a full review of all operations. Only a traitor would question this policy.
6. The matter will be dealt with as soon as possible, with consideration given to the security implications, resource allocations, CPU directives and so forth, bearing in mind the ongoing War on Communism and so forth, assuming all current projections hold true and sabotage is kept to a minimum, presuming furthermore that no unforeseen events intrude on the project's critical path...
7. That matter was investigated by Internal Security and discovered to have connections to Commie Mutant Traitor activity. Why are you asking questions about it?
8. A request has been filed with The Computer; it's working, please wait.
9. The matter has been transferred to an advisory committee. A report on it is being prepared. When the report is published, we will consider their recommendations for action.
10. That information is not available at your Security Clearance.

more of a payload. That little bit of truth makes the lie seem much more authoritative. So, you've got to find those little nuggets of truth to maximise the effects of your lies.

Remember that missing chemical shipment? If you can find out one fact about it, one measly piece of actual verifiable truth, then you can use that to cement your reputation as someone who knows What's Going On. Let's say that you find out that some clone called Herman-Y was driving one of the chemical transbots. You know nothing more about him – but the other High Programmers know nothing at all about him. You drop a reference to Herman-Y to the committee (*'my agents report that the Psion spy in the convoy was someone called Herman-Y'*) and suddenly you appear to have much more information than anyone else (*'he was right about the driver being called Herman-Y! He must also be right about Psion being behind this! We must immediately act against this mutant menace!'*).

Control of information is everything. Resources and influence in Alpha Complex mean nothing if you can't make the other High Programmers dance to your tune.

Happiness Is Mandatory

Happiness is Mandatory, they say but there's only one person who's happiness you need be concerned with, and that's The Computer. As long as The Computer's happy, you can do whatever you want.

What makes The Computer happy? If you ask it, it'll say something like:

- ☞ Making Alpha Complex a better and happier place for all its citizens
- ☞ Identifying and terminating Commie Mutant Traitors
- ☞ When its High Programmers work together to solve problems
- ☞ Improving efficiency and productivity
- ☞ Increasing security and protecting Alpha Complex from Communism

And that's exactly what we programmed it to think. Really, though, here's what makes Friend Computer's happiness circuits hum with electric joy.

- ☞ Being told it's making Alpha Complex a better and happier place for all its citizens
- ☞ Terminating people who are identified as Commie Mutant Traitors

- ☞ When its High Programmers agree to do something and say it's a solution
- ☞ Being shown statistics that efficiency and productivity are improving
- ☞ Increased numbers of pointlessly redundant security checkpoints and lots of giant warbots and missiles.

The most important survival skill to learn as a High Programmer is getting from 'whatever the hell you're doing' to 'improving Alpha Complex and fighting Communism' in a single mental leap. Even if you're bludgeoning another High Programmer to death with the Situation Room telephone, you've got to be able to cast that deed in the light of bipartisan co-operation and enhanced security in an instant. (*'Why, Friend Computer, my loyal colleague and I were just... maintaining our physical fitness. Healthy personality templates in healthy clone bodies, you know. Why, it seems as though Kevin-U has fallen unconscious – due to exertion, no doubt, not blunt force trauma, but if he was awake he would immediately tell you that we've agreed on a course of action. Yes, the decision of the Committee is unanimous! Not a single dissenting vote. One in favour, one abstention, motion carried. Hail The Computer!'*)



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Always Have An Escape Route

In the end, it's the termination booths for everyone – except High Programmers. You're an ULTRAVIOLET – if anyone can escape this crazy Complex, it's you. You might not want to escape right now but one day all those high Clearance friends and that luxury mansion with the sexatarium and the drug fountains... they'll be taken away when the secret police catch up with you. You can't stay on top forever. Sooner or later, your rivals will win and you'll be out of favour. If you're lucky, they'll just kill you. If you're unlucky, they'll demote you and make you wish you were dead.

If you're smart, though, then you can come back from a big defeat. Some High Programmers go underground, hiding out for years until the guys who pushed them out are themselves pushed out. They go off and run a Secret Society or hide out in the Underplex eating rats and selling high Clearance secrets to survive. Others flee Alpha Complex altogether – there are settlements out there where ex-High Programmers live like kings. I've seen them. They're real.

Plan ahead. Do you want to be stuck in this Situation Room forever? Being a High Programmer is just a means to an end...

Another fine mess you've gotten us into!



15. Scenes, Communication & Tension

Unlike most roleplaying games, *HIGH PROGRAMMER* requires that the players and GM keep careful track of scenes and obey the restrictions of each scene on secret actions and communications. Ish. (We're aware that excitement, heightened endorphin levels, sugary snacks and/or alcohol may cause groups to ignore rules in the heat of the moment and we're fine with that. It's *PARANOIA* – rules are optional anyway. Still, try to stick to the rules presented in this chapter for most of the game.)

HIGH PROGRAMMER games are divided into Scenes. The average game session contains around six Scenes. Each Scene covers a major task that the players have to accomplish, or is a necessary part of the unfolding plot.

There are three types of scenes:

- ☞ Situation Room Scenes
- ☞ Public Scenes
- ☞ Private Scenes

Situation Room Scenes

For most of a *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game session, all the Player Characters are gathered in a Situation Room. These Situation Rooms are incredibly well protected bunkers deep within Alpha Complex, accessible only to High Programmers and their most trusted servants. From the Situation Room, the High Programmers can view reports and surveillance camera images of anywhere in Alpha Complex; they can issue orders to their Minions and deal with developing situations.

All the High Programmers are in the same room under constant surveillance. This means that it is very hard for a Programmer to sneak away and speak privately with a Minion. A player can pay for a Private Scene using Access but otherwise must act openly.

Situation Room Scenes: Examples

- ☞ The High Programmers are warned that one sector is sliding into anarchy due to extremely inefficient resource management and Secret Society sabotage. How do they sort it out?
- ☞ The Computer is convinced that there is a Commie cell in Alpha Complex. How do the High Programmers find it, especially as the cell may not actually exist?

15. SCENES, COMMUNICATION & TENSION

- ☞ A reactor just melted down. How do they contain the disaster and who do they blame for it?

Public Scenes

A public scene is a scene outside the Situation Room that all the High Programmers are present at, or would easily be able to find out about. For example, a fashionable High Programmer party would be a public scene, as would a news interview, or a scene where a High Programmer is getting an official report from a Minion.

If a High Programmer isn't present in a public scene, that player may play some minor NPC present with the GM's permission. So, if two High Programmer Player Characters are dining out at a restaurant, a third player could play the obsequious or dim-witted waiter.

Public Scene Examples

- ☞ A High Programmer is the special guest on tonight's episode of *What's My Treason?* He gets to pull the big death lever.
- ☞ All the characters are invited to the opening of the new Happy FunTime ZRD Sector Citizen Service Bureau.
- ☞ A High Programmer has to call down to the local CompNode to reboot The Computer.
- ☞ A High Programmer interrogates a captured Commie Mutant Traitor in an IntSec cell.
- ☞ A High Programmer meets with a citizen in 'private' but doesn't have the room swept for bugs and doesn't ensure the absolute loyalty of everyone involved.

Private Scenes

A private scene is a one-on-one scene between a High Programmer and the GM. The other players may not participate or eavesdrop in a private scene.

The GM should limit players to only a few private scenes per game session outside of the Situation Room. Too many private scenes clog up the game and leave the players not involved in the scene out of the action.

Private Scene Examples

- ☞ A High Programmer meets with one of his Agents.
- ☞ The Computer asks for a little one-on-one chat.

Why All The Secrecy?

The lazy GM may wonder why he should bother with three different types of scene and lots of rules about who can listen to what conversation. Secret messages and private conversations are a lot of work for a beer-and-pretzels game, right? So, why all the secrecy?

Simply put, the more paranoia you can engender in your players, the more fun the game will be. You'll want to keep the game moving along at a quick pace (hence the limit on the number of Private Scenes) but you also want each player convinced that everyone else is plotting against him.

There's no need to obsess about privacy and information control – a player can call the GM aside for a moment even in the Situation Room without breaking the rules. Just don't let one player monopolise your time.

- ☞ The High Programmer interrogates a captured Commie Mutant Traitor in a secret undisclosed location.

High Programmer Mission Structure

A typical *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game session goes something like this:

- ☞ The High Programmers are summoned together to deal with a problem. (Public Scene).
- ☞ They consult with their advisors and Secret Society contacts to get their Directives and Secret Society (Private Scenes).
- ☞ They go off to the Situation Room (Situation Room) and are given their Access Budget for the mission.
- ☞ They come up with a series of increasingly implausible plans to deal with the problem. (Situation Room).
- ☞ Optionally, there's High Programmer socialising and feuding behind the scenes (Public Scenes).
- ☞ Optionally, they continue to consult with Secret Societies and Minions to sabotage each other's efforts (Private Scenes).

- ☞ Repeat until all problems are dealt with or Alpha Complex is destroyed.

Communication

In a *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game, the Player Characters rarely do anything directly. The game is all about ordering your Minions around while you sit in the Situation Room sipping Sancerre and nibbling on caviar.

Open Communication

Anything said in the Situation Room or a Public Scene is open communication. Even if the other High Programmers aren't there, they'll hear it through listening devices, through spies or through the grapevine. The Computer can hear open communication too, so don't say anything treasonous. 95% of the words spoken in any game are open communication.

We're not so anal as to have rules for every aspect of communication. Anything you can get away with that doesn't take the GM away from the other players is open communication. Whispering in his ear – open communication. Pointing at stuff on your character sheet and saying 'I use that on you-know-what' is open. A complex system of winks and hand signals is open. Anything that doesn't monopolise the GM's time is open.

Private Communication

Private Communications are between the GM and a High Programmer only. You can have Private Communications in two circumstances:

- ☞ **Private Scenes.** The GM should use Private Scenes sparingly and ensure they don't go on too long. If a Private Scene drags on more than a few minutes, the GM should start dumping Treason Points on the player for failing to attend to his other High Programmer duties.
- ☞ **When in the Situation Room, a character can pay Access to set up a private channel.** To do so, the player spends at least one Access and declares he's requesting a private channel. Any other player may spend Access equal to or greater than the original player's spend to listen in.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Setting Up A Private Channel: A Typical Conversation

Bob-U: I need a private conference. Three Access.

Phil-U: I'll listen in for three.

Bob-U: I'll boost the security to five Access.

Mike-U: Ohh, you're hiding something. I'll spend five.

Phil-U: Too rich for me.

GM: Bob-U, do you want to spend more Access to keep Mike-U out?

Bob-U: Nah.

GM: Ok, Bob-U, Mike-U, let's step into the kitchen to speak privately. Other players, we'll be back in two mins.

Phil-U (waiting until they're all gone): So, he's willing to let Mike-U listen in. How...interesting.

Secret Societies & Agents

A High Programmer can communicate openly with his Secret Society agents using their cover roles. This means that a High Programmer can use his Secret Society Minions from the Situation Room without needing a private channel – as long as he can convey his commands without arousing suspicion. If a High Programmer's agent in PURGE has the cover role of 'Head of Cleaning Services', then the High Programmer will have to couch any public communications with this individual in the context of cleaning.

Talking to an Agent: A Typical Conversation

Bob-U: Put me through to the Head of Cleaning Services.

Ken-V: Cleaning Services here, sir.

Bob-U: I need you to...er... clean Stan-U's mansion.

Ken-V: How... thoroughly... should it be cleaned?

Bob-U: What do you mean?

Ken-V: We've got a new cleaning product with an explosive yield of 200 megatons... of freshness.

Bob-U: Yes! Wipe him out! I mean, up.

Tension levels

Each scene has a Tension level from 0 (low) to 20 (high), usually 3–7 or thereabouts. The Tension level suggests how closely The Computer, its agents or other parties are observing the characters' actions. Ideally The Computer

Surveillance is safety. A truly loyal citizen has nothing to hide.



wants to observe all areas all of the time but resources don't permit this. No one discusses this publicly but every citizen has a fairly good idea how likely he is to be observed in any given spot.

A scene's location determines its Tension level. The chart shows typical locations for each Tension level. If you don't want to consult the chart every time you change location, assume a default Complex-wide Tension level of 6.

Track the current Tension level secretly by putting a d20 where you can see it but the players can't. Change the uppermost number to reflect the current level.

When a player tries something treasonous involving a die roll, the Tension level is the range of the roll that implies whether anyone witnessed the treasonous action. So if a PC has a 15 or less to have his Minion plant a bomb and the Tension level is 5, any roll of 15 or less plants

16. COMBAT

the bomb – but if that roll was 5 or less, *somebody* somewhere may have seen the minion do it and traced it back to the High Programmer.

Maybe it was another PC, maybe The Computer, or a Secret Society, or maybe some faceless bureaucrat watching a security camera and already writing his blackmail note. You don't need to get specific nor even rush to tell the player. Still, that act, having been detected, is now admissible as evidence against the PC.

Never let the chart interfere with your own convictions. Tension levels are a convenience for you; at times, you may know very well The Computer – or someone else – is watching. Use the chart only when you prefer not to decide whether a particular action is monitored.

Tension levels by location

These are just suggestions. You can adjust the Tension level freely.

Entries such as 'RED areas' means all RED areas not otherwise listed in specific entries. When an area could have more than one Tension level, use the highest.

- 0 Sewers; reactor cores; Outdoors; conferences with the GM
- 1 IntSec interrogation chambers
- 2 INFRARED areas
- 3 Supply closets; garages; bot stations; HPD&MC indoctrination centres
- 4 RED areas
- 5 Briefing rooms; food vats; sickbays; clone tanks; PLC warehouses
- 6 ORANGE areas
- 7 Mess halls; waiting rooms; grooming stations; elevators and stairwells
- 8 YELLOW areas

- 9 R&D labs; any place with Junior Citizens (kids)
- 10 GREEN areas
- 11 Troubleshooter HQ; Armed Forces bases; armouries
- 12 BLUE areas
- 13 Termination centres; re-education centres; IntSec stations
- 14 INDIGO areas
- 15 Power and Tech Services control rooms; IntSec headquarters
- 16 VIOLET areas
- 17 Confession booths; CPU monitoring loci
- 18 ULTRAVIOLET areas
- 19 Central Compnodes
- 20 Bathrooms

Adjusting Tension

The Surveillance Specialty can be used to alter the Tension of a location, by sending a Minion in to sabotage existing security systems and cameras, or to add more spying devices. Ask the player to make a Surveillance check; add or subtract the Margin of Success from the Tension.

16. Combat

Other non-fun roleplaying games use vast numbers of modifiers, special-case rules, tokens, tables and fiddly little bits to resolve the results of Person A trying to murder Person B. *HIGH PROGRAMMER* doesn't bother with such nonsense. If violence is to come into the game, let us ensure that it is swift and brutal.

There are three types of combat in the game. **Personal Combat**, where the High Programmers are directly involved in a fight; **Assassinations**, where covert agents try to liquidate a High Programmer or an agent and **Mass Combat** where Minions clash in epic battle. (Please note that 'epic battle' in this context likely involves a horde of heroic scrubbots battling tax accountants or something equally absurd.)

Personal Combat

- ☞ If someone pulls a gun in the Situation Room, it's Personal Combat.
- ☞ If your High Programmer is zapping Commies with his disintegrator ray, it's Personal Combat.
- ☞ If PURGE thugs crash your cocktail party and the GM demands you fight back, it's Personal Combat.

Personal Combat is resolved in a series of rounds. In each round, every character can make one action. The GM decides who acts first (bribes work well as an initiative system). An action can be anything from firing a pistol to firing a tacnuke to firing a doomsday device.

Hmm. Now that you mention it, you could also use an action to, say, beg for mercy or negotiate a ceasefire or even do something entirely unrelated to killing people, like, er, filing a report or even tending to the wounded but let's be honest, how likely is that? Shoot the bastards!

Personal combat should be extremely rare in *HIGH PROGRAMMER* games. *Combat* should and will be really common but most of the time the PCs have lots of goons and bodyguards to do the shooting for them. Personal Combat's only for those rare occasions when the PCs have to get their hands bloody.

Attacking

To make an attack, roll Violence. If you succeed, you've hit your target. Huzzah! Take that, target.

Damage

The amount of damage depends on three factors. Well, four, if you count the almighty will of the GM as a factor. These factors are:

- ☞ The type of weapon
- ☞ Whether or not the target is armoured
- ☞ The Margin of Success

Weapons are either **low-powered**, **high-powered** or **overpowered**. A low-powered weapon is likely to only maim the target on a successful hit. A high-powered weapon will kill an unarmoured target, or maim an armoured one. An overpowered weapon kills the target, anyone standing behind the target, anyone standing near the target or maybe most of the sector.

Armour ranges from cheap reflec to articulated power armour to force fields. It's considered impolite to wear giant articulated power armour to the office, even on Casual Fivesdays. Armour reduces damage by one step.

Finally, the **Margin of Success** determines how crippling the attack



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Quick Damage Lookup

	Low Powered		High Powered		Overpowered	
	Unarmoured	Armoured	Unarmoured	Armoured	Unarmoured	Armoured
Miss	Unharmed	Unharmed	Unharmed	Unharmed	Wounded	Unharmed
Basic Hit	Wounded	Unharmed	Killed	Wounded	Killed	Wounded
Good Hit	Killed	Wounded	Vaporised	Killed	Vaporised	Killed

was. If the attack succeeds by 10 or more, or if the attacker rolls a natural 1, then it's a good hit. Any other result is merely a basic hit.

Here's a complicated-looking table to ignore.

Injuries

Unharmed means just what it says. The target dances through the carnage, unhurt and fancy-free.

Wounded means the target's hurt. The target can still move and attack but deargodithurts. This is blood pumping from a dozen wounds, shattered bones, adult themes, mangled body bits, maimed limbs, bits-blown-off territory. It's ew.

If you're Wounded a second time, you're killed.

Killed means it's time to get the Clone Techs on the phone. And probably a cleaning crew.

Vaporised means you can cancel the cleaning crew.

An Example of Combat

High Programmer Conan-U is, through a truly absurd confluence of circumstances, battling Zombie Lenin in single combat. Why? I don't know. Maybe you're on drugs. Anyway, Conan-U goes first. He has a Violence score of 12 and a laser pistol. He rolls a 7, hitting Zombie Lenin. Zombie Lenin is wounded!

Zombie Lenin now attacks – and misses! The High Programmer attacks again and rolls a 2. That succeeds by more than 10! Even wounding the already-wounded Lenin would have been enough but Conan-U nails the Zombie Commie between the eyes with a deadly accurate laser blast. The zombie bursts into flames.

Conan-U is victorious. Later, he is terminated for concealing Communist ash in the linings of his lungs.

Assassinations

Inconvenient rival High Programmers and their Agents can be assassinated. There are several benefits to assassination:

- 👁 Removing a rival in a Secret Society
- 👁 Mildly inconveniencing a High Programmer
- 👁 Annoying a High Programmer
- 👁 Getting a better table at the cafeteria
- 👁 Throwing suspicion on others

Assassins

To attempt an Assassination, pass a note to the GM noting the Minion you're using and the target of the assassination. The GM will run the Assassination attempt at a time of his choosing (unless you arrange for a suitable time, in which case he might even give you a bonus to the attempt. For example, you could be a really poor host, and invite both your assassins and their target to drinks after work).

Ideally, assassins need the **Wetwork** Specialty. Wetwork is the happy pleasant euphemism for 'cutting throats'. It's referred to as 'wetwork' because you get wet at work. And sticky.

Assassins may also use the **Infiltration** Specialty.

If an Assassin doesn't have either of these Specialties and you can't justify the use of another Specialty, then he doesn't have much of a chance of success (he'll need to roll a 1 on a d20).

Resolving an Assassination

The assassin bursts in, blasting at the target with a cleverly concealed Kill-O-

Zap megacannon or gonad-mounted micronuke and...rolls a d20. If the result is equal to less than your Violence skill, then the target is terminated. Simple, eh?

There are a few special rules, though:

- 👁 **Tension:** If you roll under the Tension score of the target's location, then your assassin was identified. Depending on the circumstances, your assassin might be reported to the Situation Room, or terminated by local security forces.
- 👁 **Assassinating High Programmers:** If your target is a High Programmer, it's a lot harder to zap him. Subtract the High Programmer's Violence skill from your Violence before making the roll.
- 👁 **Defences:** The target may have defences like bodyguards, security systems and so on; these security systems need to be dealt with before the assassination can proceed.

Mass Combat

When minions clash, use the Mass Combat rules.

All the Minions in the battle roll Assault or Total War simultaneously (the appropriate High Programmer rolls for the Minions they control; for NPC forces, the GM rolls using an appropriate Violence skill level for the enemy leaders). If a Minion involved in combat doesn't have Assault or Total War, then halve the Violence score of its controller when rolling. This roll determines the order in which the Minions attack each other.

Each Minion now gets a chance to attack another Minion in the same battle (not necessarily on the same side...). If the Minion's attack roll

17. TREASON AND INFAMY

succeeded with a Margin of Success of 10 or more, then its attack totally wipes out its target. Otherwise, the target is merely damaged.

Even Minions who failed the Violence check can attack, assuming they're still alive by the time their turn rolls around. However, they can only attack other Minions who failed the Violence check.

An already-damaged Minion that's damaged a second time is destroyed.

Run Away!

A Minion can flee from a combat instead of attacking. It must be ordered to attack at the start of a round of mass combat and it gets no attack in the round it's ordered to retreat. A Minion cannot retreat if it's the only unit left in the fight on its side.

It's therefore a good idea to send in some cannon fodder to cover retreats.

Damaged Minions

A damaged Minion has suffered enough damage to risk destruction. A damaged Minion will be restored to full functionality at the start of the next game session.

Mass Combat Example

In this contrived example, there are three treacherous Heroic Infantry units under the command of a rebellious general. The High Programmers send in two Minions – a Warbot Mark IV (Assault) and a unit of Vulture Squadron Warriors (Assault +4). Both the High Programmer commanding the Minions and the rebel general have Violence 8. Everyone rolls...

Unit: Margin of Success

Warbot: +7

Commie #2: +5

Vulture Troopers: -4

Commie #3: -4

Commie #1: -12

The Warbot attacks first. It targets Commie #2.

Next Commie #2 attacks, damaging the Vulture Troopers.

Next, the Vulture Troopers attack is resolved. Take that, Commie #2. Commie #2 is destroyed!

The remaining Commies both attack the Vulture Troopers. Buh-bye, Troopers.

Next round, the Commies choose to flee (the Warbot's got a Special Ability that says it can only be hurt by Total War or Demolitions). The rolls are

Commie #2: +5

Warbot: +3

Commie #1: -4

Commie #2 flees. The Warbot attacks Commie #1. Commie #1 would really like to flee but it's the last unit left on its side, so it can't escape. It's doomed to be crushed beneath the mighty treads of the Mark IV...

17. Treason and Infamy

Anyone might be a traitor, even a High Programmer. The Computer trusts no-one!

All Player Characters have a Treason Point score, which measures how much suspicion the character is currently under. Treason Points are awarded for various traitorous or potentially traitorous deeds, or for failing The Computer. You should track each player's Treason Points somewhere where the players can't see their totals.

Commendation Points work like reverse Treason Points. They're awarded for conspicuous acts of bootlicking, heroism, loyalty or competence. Each Commendation Point awarded cancels out one Treason Point.

A High Programmer starts with zero Treason Points.

The Fruits of Treason

At 10 Treason Points, The Computer suspects the High Programmer of treason. The Head of Internal Security is secretly informed of the presence of a potential traitor and ordered to watch for further treason. (If the High Programmer under suspicion is *also* the Head of Internal Security, the High Programmer with the next highest interest in Internal

Security is informed of his superior's potential treason.)

At 20 Treason Points, the High Programmer is declared to be a traitor. If this happens in the Situation Room, the High Programmer is toast. If it happens outside the Situation Room, he will eventually be hunted down and terminated by Internal Security.

Furthermore, when the High Programmer's replacement clone arrives, he's fined 20 Access. If he can't pay this fine, he can turn his interest in any Service Groups into Access at a one-to-one ratio.

Eliminating a High Programmer: A High Programmer who cannot pay an Access fine after being terminated is demoted and is out of the game.

Treasonous Deeds In Detail

Any special-case rules are described here.

Security

Suspicious behaviour: Absolutely anything can come under this heading,

if it's presented to The Computer in the right way. The Computer is insanely paranoid.

Causing dissent: Public criticism other High Programmers or official Alpha Complex policy or inciting citizens to disobey.

Ordering a Minion into an area above their Clearance/revealing secret information: All Minions have a Security Clearance ranging from INFRARED to VIOLET. If a Minion is sent into a location above its Security Clearance, or told anything it's not cleared to know, the High Programmer gets Treason Points equal to the difference. So, if a PC orders a RED Troubleshooter team into a VIOLET area, the High Programmer gets six Treason Points.

Plotting the destruction of Alpha Complex: Apocalypses are bad, got it!?

Mutation

Registering Your Mutation: These Treason Points are applied at the start of play. If the character is terminated, his replacement clone must reregister as a mutant (and gets these points again).



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Treasonous Deeds

Job Performance

Failure to complete a mission	1-5 points
Damaging Alpha Complex citizens	2 points
Damaging Alpha Complex equipment	2 points
Damaging important Alpha Complex citizens	5 points
Damaging important Alpha Complex equipment	5 points
Causing a Catastrophe	10 points
Reducing Happiness	2 points
Significantly reducing Happiness	5 points
Using Access for unapproved purposes	1 point per 1 point of Access
Activating a Minion without sufficient resources	2 points
Damage to The Computer	10 points

Security

Suspicious behaviour	1 point
Causing dissent	2 points
Ordering a Minion into an area above their Clearance	Difference in Clearance levels
Revealing secret information to a citizen not cleared for it	Difference in Clearance levels
Plotting the destruction of Alpha Complex	20 points

Mutation

Registering Your Mutation	5 points
Suspicion of Mutation Possession	2 points
Proof of Mutation Possession	5 points
Incontrovertible Proof of Mutation	10 points
Possession of Machine Empathy	20 points

Secret Society

Spreading propaganda	2 points
Involvement with Class A society	4 Points
Involvement with Class B society	6 Points
Involvement with Class C society	10 Points
Involvement with Communists!	20 Points

Behaviour

Arguing with the GM	2 points
Arguing with interpretation of the rules	5 points

Accusations

Being accused of Treason	1 points
Making a false accusation of Treason	2 points
Unwarranted Termination	5 points

Commendable Deeds

Unmasking a traitor	1 point
Unmasking a traitorous High Programmer	5 points
Completing a mission	1 point
Increasing Happiness	1 point
Inspiring Loyalty	1 point
Reporting waste of resources	1 point

Sacrificing Agents

Agents in a Secret Society can be sacrificed – the High Programmer turns the agent in to Internal Security. Co-operating with Internal Security halves the Treason Point award. The agent is eliminated and cannot be used again.

18. SKILLS AND SPECIALTIES

Secret Society

Spreading dissent or propaganda:

Endorsing Communism, spreading Secret Society propaganda.

Involvement with a Secret Society:

Using a Secret Society Minion and being caught. A High Programmer can choose to sacrifice his Agent in that society to halve the Treason Point award.

Public Standing

Not all High Programmers have a public standing. The identities of most High Programmers are a complete mystery to the ordinary citizen (and if he does know, the ordinary citizen keeps his mouth shut – he's not cleared to know who the High Programmers are). Most ULTRAVIOLETS are sinister figures, manipulating Alpha Complex from behind the scenes.

However, some High Programmers have a public identity. They're the symbolic leaders of Alpha Complex, second only to The Computer. A public High Programmer is always universally known – everyone in Alpha Complex recognises them on sight, their every action is slavishly reported by the media, they

can alter public opinion with a single word. If a High Programmer picks algae chips over Hot Fun for breakfast, then tomorrow everyone's eating algae chips and Hot Fun sales plummet.

Public Standing is measured like treason. A High Programmer gets Popularity points when he takes credit for crowd-pleasing decisions; he gets Unpopularity points when he's held responsible for unpopular decisions.

Public Standing starts at 0. A character can't go above Public Standing +10 or below -10.

Popular Decisions

Public appearance

1 point

Maintaining public safety

1 point

Conspicuous public competence

2 points

Increasing rations

3 points

Defeating Commie Mutant Traitors

3 points

Foiling terrorist plots

3 points

Saving Alpha Complex from Commies

5 points

Unpopular Decisions

Conspicuous public unhappiness

-1 point

Confusion or uncertainty in public

-1 point

Public embarrassment

-2 points

Decreasing rations

-3 points

Failing to prevent Commie plot

-5 points

Failing to prevent terrorist attack

-5 points

Being terminated as a traitor

-10 points

Public Standing Effects

A popular High Programmer has a bit more Access to play with. At the start of each mission, he receives bonus Access equal to his Public Standing. So, a really popular High Programmer with a Public Standing of 10 gets 10 bonus Access, plus the love and adulation of the crowds.

An unpopular High Programmer *loses* Access equal to his Public Standing at the start of each mission. If he doesn't have the Access to pay, it is drained from his Stakes instead.

18. Skills and Specialties

There are six basic skills in *HIGH PROGRAMMER* – Management, Subterfuge, Violence, Hardware, Software and Wetware. With these six skills, a Minion can accomplish almost anything!

Everyone else in Alpha Complex has these skills too but it's important to emphasise the difference between the scope of a High Programmer's, say, Hardware and an ordinary citizen's grasp of the topic. Your average drug-addled citizen might be able to use Hardware to fix a broken toaster if he's lucky and has successfully filled form *TS5423/a, Request for Endothermic Food Engineering Repair*. A High Programmer could use Hardware to co-ordinate and oversee the construction of a nuclear reactor or a spaceship or a really really cool toaster that talks or sends the toast back in time or something.

Even a High Programmer who spends all his time napping in the corner with an intravenous drug solution plugged right into his spinal column and who hasn't said a comprehensible word in the last decade has the skills to run a corporation or a war. No-one survives to ULTRAVIOLET without learning a thing or two.

Roll Only When It's Funny

The skill system illustrates the divide between the High Programmers and their incompetent, untrustworthy, shiftless or treacherous staff. The player should first come up with a plan for dealing with whatever problem he's dealing with and only then roll the dice to see how well (or poorly) it's implemented. Don't let a player say '*I roll my Management to sort out the bureaucratic problems*' – let him describe what he's doing, what new initiatives and protocols he's putting into

place and *then* roll to see how well the staff follow his directions.

A grand plan may be undermined by incompetence or treachery but by the same token, the most absurd plan might come through with luck.

Making A Skill Check

To make a skill check, roll 1d20. If the result is less than or equal to the High Programmer's skill, he succeeds. If the dice roll is greater than his skill, he fails. On the roll of a natural 20, it's a catastrophic failure. Horrible things are certain to happen.

Margin of Success

Remember, the Margin of Success (sometimes called MoS, 'cos us Famous Game Designers like to use abbreviations. Abbreviations are fun and much quicker to write and we're lazy. Anyway, where



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

were we? Were we talking about some rule or something? Er...oh yeah). The Margin of Success is the difference between the skill and the dice result. So, skill of 10, roll of a 3, MoS=7. Skill of 10, roll of a 9, MoS=1.

You can also have a Margin of Failure, which is worked out the same way. That's as complex as the math gets in this system.

Spending Access

Players may be permitted to spend Access to increase or decrease a roll. See page 19.

Direct & Indirect Skill Rolls

Most of the time, High Programmers work through minions and other lackeys. He doesn't shoot the Commie Mutant Traitors himself – he orders a bunch of Internal Security Troopers to do it, using his Violence skill. He doesn't go into the reactor to fix it himself – he sends in a bunch of RepairBots and Reactor Shielding Volunteers, using his Hardware skill. High Programmers are not stupid – doing stuff yourself is *dangerous*.

When making an Indirect skill check, the player needs to work through a Minion. Minions have all sorts of drawbacks and problems but when using a Minion, the High Programmer need not be there in person. With Indirect checks, he can stay nice and safe while he orders the minion into the line of fire.

Opposed Skill Contests

When two High Programmers are directly opposing each other (say, giving contradictory orders, or one's trying to hack a computer system while the other is trying to keep him out), then have both players chuck the dice. The one that gets the bigger Margin of Success wins.

Extended Skill Rolls

An *extended skill roll* is a sequence of die rolls. This represents a task or sequence of tasks that takes a long time, like uncovering a well-hidden Commie conspiracy, masterminding a month-long advertising campaign, or building a giant death ray. The player making the extended roll (or each party in an extended contest) makes an

identical number of die rolls against the appropriate ability, tallying the number of successes scored.

As GM, you can define the sequence as either open-ended (first player to score five successes wins the builds the death ray or convinces everyone to buy SqueeGeeKleen Boot Wipes) or fixed (if the PC doesn't get three successes in six rolls, the Commies escape).

Specialties

Specialties are subsets of a skill possessed by Minions. A bunch of CPU bureaucrats might be great at Paperwork (a Specialty of Management) but terrible at Hygiene (another Specialty of Management).

If you try to act through a Minion who doesn't have the right Specialty, the GM may penalise your roll (usually, by declaring that you need to roll a natural 1 to succeed. Picking Minions with the right Specialty for the job is therefore utterly vital.

Service Group Specialities

Each Specialty is strongly associated with two Service Groups. For example, Investigation is a schtick for Internal Security and HPD&MC. That doesn't mean that Minions from other Service Groups don't have Investigation but it's a lot rarer in those groups.

Management Specialties

Management's the general 'act properly' skill, as well as covering bureaucracy, planning, politicking and persuasion.

Assessment (IS, CPU)

With Assessment, you can identify bureaucratic snafus, organisational problems, security leaks and so on. It's basically Spot Hidden for offices.

Use Assessment for

- ☞ Conducting surveys
- ☞ Holding inquiries
- ☞ Forming committees to assess the feasibility of setting up an audit
- ☞ Not actually doing anything

Co-Ordination (CPU, HPD&MC)

This is the manager's Management Specialty – it's for co-ordinating different groups. It is mastery of organisation, it is logistics, it is timekeeping, it is... all the really boring stuff that you want to delegate to some underling.

Co-ordination is good for:

- ☞ Co-ordinating things
- ☞ Organising things
- ☞ Co-ordinating the organisation of things

Hygiene (HPD&MC, TS)

The Hygiene Specialty includes physical cleaning of Alpha Complex, proper sanitary procedures, uniform standards, as well as aspects of *mental* hygiene such as avoiding propaganda or keeping goodthought in citizens' heads.

Hygiene might be used for:

- ☞ Co-ordinating the cleanup of a chemical spill
- ☞ Removing mind-altering graffiti spreading Secret Society propaganda
- ☞ Maintaining proper standards

Interrogation (HPD&MC, IS)

Extracting information from those unwilling to give it up. Methods of interrogation vary from the crudely physical (rubber truncheons and beatings) to more subtle forms (truth drugs, mind games) to the weird (braincore samples, VR simulations).

Interrogation is used for:

- ☞ Uncovering conspiracies
- ☞ Exposing traitors
- ☞ Extreme customer surveys

Intimidation (AF, IS)

Intimidation is the threat of violence or other hostile action, veiled in polite disguise. It is hinting at terrible consequences, it is demonstrations of power. It is marching 1,000 Armed Forces goons up and down outside your enemy's sleeping quarters, or suggesting that this is an offer he really can't refuse.

Intimidation is good for:

- ☞ Dealing with underlings
- ☞ Forcing people to accept unpopular decisions
- ☞ Cowing dissent

18. SKILLS AND SPECIALTIES

Paperwork (CPU, HPD&MC)

To promote greater efficiency and security, CPU* mandates that everything in Alpha Complex be tracked using the correct forms. Doing anything at all, from fixing a broken showerhead to launching a thermonuclear war** involves dozens of forms. Often, these forms are vague, non-existent, contradictory and/or rely on dozens more forms that have to be completed first. The Paperwork Specialty covers dealing with this bureaucratic nightmare.

A lack of paperwork means no official records. Not maintaining official records is treason.

Paperwork is used for:

- ☞ Cutting through bureaucratic obfuscation
- ☞ Creating bureaucratic obfuscation
- ☞ Examining records and accounts
- ☞ Hiding information in records and accounts

Thought Control (HPD&MC, PLC)

Thought Control is all about overt methods of changing people's opinions – advertising, propaganda, political spin, keeping on message and so on. (Subliminal messaging is another matter.) Thought Control minions include spin doctors, speech writers, image consultants as well as news media, spokesbots and talking heads.

Use Thought Control to:

- ☞ Give your side of the story
- ☞ Control the news cycle
- ☞ Advertise new initiatives

Thought Survey (CPU, HPD&MC)

This Specialty is for finding out what the common clone thinks they should be thinking. (Note that Interrogation finds out what they're actually thinking, other than 'Agh, no, please stop interrogating me.) Thought Survey involves surveys, opinion polls, eavesdropping and informants. It's the gentle way of finding out the current mood of the proles. It also covers faking surveys, opinion polls and

other forms of thought survey.

Call for Thought Survey when you need to:

- ☞ Check Happiness levels
- ☞ Find out what people think they should think about you
- ☞ Prove to The Computer that you're doing a good job

Subterfuge

Subterfuge is the skill for doing underhanded or sneaky stuff. (In other *PARANOIA* games, it's called Stealth and you can use it for sneaking around if you want.) Most Subterfuge Specialties can be turned around to do the opposite of their intended purpose – so a Minion with the Surveillance Specialty is also good at *avoiding* surveillance, a Security Systems Minion is also useful for sabotaging security systems...

Bartering (PLC, PS)

This Specialty is used when dealing with the illegal and semi-legal underground economy of Alpha Complex. Certain items can only be obtained illegally; others can be found for a lot cheaper on C-Bay than in PLC warehouses. It's also for trading favours with Secret Societies and getting things done off the record.

Use this for:

- ☞ Tracing stolen goods
- ☞ Obtaining stolen goods
- ☞ Making money on the side

Covert Operations (IS, PS)

Minions with this Specialty are good at blending in with the crowds of Alpha Complex. It's for plain-clothes police and secret agents, as well as saboteurs and undercover spies (but not infiltrating Secret Societies – that's Infiltration). Covert Ops is for agents in disguise, for hiding people or objects, or for any sort of operation that isn't what it seems.

A Covert Operations Minion could possibly:

- ☞ Pretend to be another sort of Minion without being noticed ('hey! These cooks are actually *IntSec* goons')
- ☞ Conduct operations without being

noticed ('*Nothing to see here, citizen, we're just painting the corridor RED. Really, it's not blood.*'))

- ☞ Conceal items or people ('*Escape through this secret passage, High Programmer sir!*'))
- ☞ Steal items or people ('*Quick! Get the secret data files and run away!*'))

Cleanup (CPU, HPD&MC)

Erasure is used for making people into unpeople and for dropping troublesome facts into the memory hole. It is the Speciality of cover-ups and history alteration, of removing all evidence of a crime or screw-up and ensuring that no-one ever finds out about it again. Ever.

Cleanup includes:

- ☞ Hiding the bodies
- ☞ Hiding the records of the bodies being hidden
- ☞ Hiding the people who hid the records of the bodies being hidden
- ☞ Erasing your memory of reading the above section
- ☞ Electropop

Infiltration (IS, PS)

Those pesky Secret Societies giving you problems? That's what Infiltration is for! With Infiltration, you can get your agents into place within the Secret Society. Infiltrated spies can provide information on Secret Society activities, stop sabotage attempts or even try to influence society actions.

You could also use Infiltration to get agents into other groups, like another player's Minions or a Service Group but that wouldn't be very loyal, now, would it?

Use Infiltration to:

- ☞ Find out what Secret Societies are up to
- ☞ Pre-emptively stop Secret Society sabotage
- ☞ Affect Secret Society plans

Investigation (HPD&MC, IS)

This Specialty is for finding out what happened. It's for criminal investigations

*: This explosion of paperwork co-incidentally increases CPU's own standing and importance in Alpha Complex, like a bureaucratic puffer fish.

**:. Oddly, 47% of the forms required for these two actions are the same.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

(‘who shot AI-I?’) and post-incident inquiries (‘why did reactor 45 explode?’) or even internal affairs (‘who ate the last cookie?’) A lot of **HIGH PROGRAMMER** missions start with Investigation.

You’re Investigating when you’re:

- ☞ Trying to find the root cause of a disaster
- ☞ Trying to cover up the root cause of a disaster
- ☞ Trying to identify a traitor

Sabotage (IS, PS)

The Sabotage Specialty is for repairing acts of sabotage. It is not, under any circumstances, to be used for sabotaging your rivals’ projects. It is for *removing* bombs, not planting them. Just because a Minion with Sabotage knows all about cutting the big power cable at just the right moment, thus ruining your rival’s dinner party, does not mean that it is in any way acceptable to use this Specialty to sabotage him. Maybe it’s got the wrong name. Perhaps it should be called ‘Anti-Sabotage, Don’t Use It For Sabotage, Please.’

Use Sabotage for:

- ☞ Disarming bombs
- ☞ Repairing sabotaged systems
- ☞ Sabotaging stuff

Security Systems (IS, R&D)

Security is paramount in Alpha Complex. The whole place is riddled with alarms, sensors, security checkpoints, deathtraps, scanners, security sweeps, identity checks, pit traps, access control, identity verification, cross-checks, bomb detectors, drug sniffers, thought scanners and Digital Rights Management. The Security Systems specialty is used to maintain and manage all of that.

Use Security Systems to:

- ☞ Increase (or decrease) security in an area
- ☞ Look for treasonous, illegal, contraband or dangerous items
- ☞ Protect an item, person or location with lots of deathtraps
- ☞ Bypass a deathtrap

Surveillance (IS, TS)

Smile, citizen. You’re being watched.

Everyone in Alpha Complex is watched all the time – apart from the INFRAREDs, because they’re too drugged to do

anything. Lower Clearance citizens are monitored by Internal Security and The Computer. At higher Clearances, there’s less official surveillance, as The Computer trusts you now but that’s more than compensated by all the bugging devices and wiretaps planted by rivals, secret societies and Internal Security.

The Surveillance Specialty covers both the operation and management of these surveillance systems, the removal or subversion of electronic bugging devices and the manipulation of a location’s Tension.

With Surveillance, you can:

- ☞ Spy on people
- ☞ Stop people from spying on you
- ☞ Control Tension, making it harder or easier for Secret Societies to operate
- ☞ Check surveillance records for evidence of past crimes

Violence

Violence is the skill for killing people and blowing things up. Technically, it also covers physical fitness, toughness and hand-eye co-ordination but it’s really all about the killing and the maiming. Between the Armed Forces and R&D, there’s an absurd number of ways to kill people and blow them up in Alpha Complex – lasers, cone rifles, plasma projectors, nukes, warbots, pointy sticks...

Assault (AF, R&D)

This is the generic shooty-fighty skill. It’s what you use for attacking an entrenched Commie position, or zapping bad guys, or fighting a pitched battle. If you’re reduced to relying on Assault, then you’re probably involved in that most unfortunate of situations, a fair fight. Never start a land war in Asia.

Use Assault to:

- ☞ Attack!
- ☞ Order your troops to their deaths
- ☞ Order the clone replacements of your troops to their deaths, too
- ☞ Win through attrition

Command (AF, CPU)

This Specialty is used for commanding and co-ordinating large-scale military operations. It’s a combination of strategic

planning, communication and tactics. If you want to run a war, you’ll need Command.

Command’s useful for:

- ☞ Co-ordinating multiple military units
- ☞ Fighting pitched battles
- ☞ Strategy & Tactics
- ☞ Wargaming

Crowd Control (AF, IS)

A vital part of many citizen security initiatives, Crowd Control is the Specialty needed when you put a bunch of very heavily armed goons (or warbots) together in a cramped space with a lot of unhappy citizens. Crowd Control is for managing large public events, quelling riots and running Public Hatings.

Call on Crowd Control to:

- ☞ Control Crowds
- ☞ Protect you when the proles are crying out for vengeance
- ☞ Manage disaster relief

Demolition (R&D, TS)

Hurr. Demolition make buildings fall down. Hurr hurr.

Well, yes. Demolition also covers bomb disposal, which is a really useful thing to have around when numerous Secret Societies are trying to blow things up. It’s the anti-things-blowing-up Specialty. High explosive is, of course, carefully controlled in Alpha Complex. Regrettably, it’s possible to mix up a perfectly good (if slightly unstable) home-made bomb in no time with the contents of the average cafeteria or scrubbot.

Use Demolition to:

- ☞ Disarm terrorist bombs
- ☞ Blow up Commie bases
- ☞ Hurr. Make buildings fall down.

Outdoors Operations (AF, TS)

Outdoors is not under Computer control and is therefore the Enemy.

INFRARED citizens are taught that Outdoors is uninhabitable (it’s a nuclear wasteland, or flooded, or a vacuum, or full of Commie Mutant Traitors depending on what the current Approved Truth is). RED or higher citizens are permitted to know that Outdoors is habitable but it’s an overgrown wilderness of forests and ruined Old Reckoning cities infested

18. SKILLS AND SPECIALTIES

with Commies*. The only people who go Outdoors regularly are the Armed Forces on training operations, although they do also conduct offensives against Commie forces.**

The Outdoor Operations Specialty is needed to co-ordinate large scale operations Outdoors.

Use this for:

- ☞ Going Outdoors safely
- ☞ Transporting items back from Outdoors
- ☞ Searching Outdoors

Defence (AF, IS)

This Specialty could also be called Standing Around, or Maybe Marching Up And Down A Bit. Defence is the Specialty used for guarding areas, keeping unauthorised citizens out of an area, for spotting traitors in a crowd, or for bodyguard duty. Especially your body.

Defence and Security Systems aren't the same thing. Security Systems is about electronic scanners, physical locks, barriers and so forth. Defence is the guard standing outside the door. They both stop unwanted visitors.

Use Defence to:

- ☞ Protect secure locations
- ☞ Guard your body

Total War (AF, R&D)

Ah, Weapons of Mass Destruction. Where would Alpha Complex be without the capability to blow up half the planet and leave the other half an uninhabitable scorched wasteland? The Total War Speciality is used when you want to use words like 'apocalypse', 'cataclysm', 'strategic nuclear arsenal' or 'doomsday device.'

Use Total War when you need to:

- ☞ Absolutely, positively kill everything at a target location...
- ☞ ... and the area around the target location...

- ☞ ...and everyone within a much larger area who's not wearing protective clothing...
- ☞ ... go out with a really big bang.

Wetwork (AF, IS)

The Wetwork Specialty is for covert combat operations. Commando raids, sabotage and assassination, lots of assassination. It's what you use when you sent some drug-crazed vat-grown psychopaths off to slit throats. These are not happy people.

Use Wetwork for:

- ☞ Deniable violence
- ☞ Assassination
- ☞ Sabotage

Hardware

The primary use of Hardware is to manage construction and engineering projects. It's also your understanding of physics, your ability to design or control new gadgets and your ability to repair items, from a pocket chronometer to the dome of Alpha Complex.

Bot Engineering (TS, PS)

Bots are everywhere in Alpha Complex. Scrubbots clean the floors, docbots treat the wounded, transbots whisk people to their destinations (if they're lucky), warbots soak up the military budget... Alpha Complex wouldn't last very long without its loyal bots. With the Bot Engineering Specialty, you can design, build and operate all types of bots, including new bots made for a specific purpose.

Use Bot Engineering to:

- ☞ Control all-bot Minions
- ☞ Work with problematic bots
- ☞ Repair or maintain damaged bots

Construction (TS, PS)

The construction Specialty is used for building large structures like Armed Forces bases, new sectors, fallout shelters or carving an image of your face into

the side of a convenient mountain or moon. It covers both designing such megastructures and actually building them using ConstructionBots, slave armies or citizens.

You might use Construction to:

- ☞ Build a new secure facility
- ☞ Repair a crack in the dome
- ☞ Dig a really, really, really big hole.

Chemical Engineering (TS, PLC)

Hubble, bubble toil and trouble, vat of slime and yeast mould extract bubble! Chemical engineering is for making everything from synthetic polymers for uniforms to synthetic proteins for FunFoods.

Use this for:

- ☞ Doing chemical stuff
- ☞ Coming up with a chemical spray to destroy the Blob
- ☞ Making explosives

Habitat Engineering (TS, PS)

Habitat Engineering is the Specialty for maintaining the living quarters, life support and basic infrastructure of Alpha Complex.

Use Habitat Engineering for:

- ☞ Maintaining life support functions. Always a good idea to maintain those
- ☞ Fixing the plumbing
- ☞ Tracing a problem with the electrical grid

Nuclear Engineering (R&D, PS)

The triumph of the atomic age, Alpha Complex's nuclear power stations provide oodles (technical term) of electricity. True, they also create gigaooodles (also a technical term) of nuclear waste and some fearful and misinformed citizens might suggest that all those nuclear reactors might have something to do with all those mutants but such things are a small price to pay for being able to

*: Despite what Computer propaganda and Armed Forces scout reports claim, there really aren't any Commies out there.***

: Targeting Commie fortresses (trees) or terrorist training camps (other trees)**

***: Unless, of course, Commie agents changed those reports. Trust no-one!

****: Average casualties per offensive: 3,242



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

blast the entire crust of Planet Earth to smithereens. I mean, cheap electricity.

Use Nuclear Engineering to:

- ☞ Prevent meltdowns
- ☞ Cause meltdowns
- ☞ Nuke Commies

Production (TS, PLC)

The Production Specialty covers factory operations, fulfilment of basic services and labour, especially towards the unskilled end of the scale.

Use Production to:

- ☞ Meet production quotas
- ☞ Keep factories running after the workers got wiped out by nuclear meltdowns...
- ☞ ...or IntSec purges...
- ☞ ...or terrorist bombings...
- ☞ ...or giant mutant cockroaches...

Transport (AF, PS)

Transport is used for getting from A to B, then moving onto C when you realise that B's a dump. All the while, you're protecting D. D is a mysterious box that you're not cleared to open but it's ticking.

This Specialty covers the management and maintenance of Alpha Complex's transport grid, from individual truckbots and autocars to the inter-sector transtubes and the mass transit system. Any redirection of traffic (say, for a High Programmer motorcade) or movement of large, bulky or hazardous items requires Transport.

Transport might be used to:

- ☞ Get a courier through traffic at high speed
- ☞ Build a new high-speed transtube
- ☞ Move lots of Armed Forces goons to the battlefield at high speed

Weird Science (R&D, TS)

The Weird Science Specialty is used when dealing with the fringe theories and *outré* creations of R&D laboratories. All the stuff marked Experimental, like Transdimensional Collapastrons or Singularity Rays or Time/Space Visualisers. Or the flying saucer the Armed Forces recovered from the desert a few years back. Or the research lab dedicated to killing Randy the Wonder Lizard. (Don't ask.)

This Specialty is also used when investigating bizarre phenomenon.

To be honest, the Weird Science Specialty is a lot like a long stick. If you're going to mess with these things, it's best to do so from as far away as possible.

It's time to use Weird Science when:

- ☞ You've really got no clue what else to do
- ☞ You're dealing with something incomprehensible
- ☞ You desire Kelly LeBrock

Software

Software is the skill you'll most often be using directly – it's the skill used to program The Computer (see Programming, page 82). Software's also the skill used to control Alpha Complex's many other computer subsystems.

Bot Programming (R&D, TS)

How to order bots around and how to program bots. This includes sending bots into spurious logic loops causing them to spin around until they explode, if you're into that sort of thing.

Use Bot Programming to:

- ☞ Program a bot for a specific complex task
- ☞ Add backdoors into a bot's brain
- ☞ Search for traitorous subversion within a bot's brain

Communications (AF, TS)

Long-range communications, such as radio transmitters, as well as the hardware and software of Alpha Complex's comms network. It also covers cryptography, jamming, phone tapping – look, it's the Lieutenant Uhura skill, ok? You roll it and the NPC goes 'I can't get a signal' or 'I've got a signal', that's it.

It's useful for:

- ☞ Intercepting Commie transmissions
- ☞ Tracing illegal broadcasts
- ☞ Communicating with units Outdoors

Computer Security (CPU, R&D)

The Computer Security Specialty is used for protecting computer systems against all forms of unwarranted intrusion. It's used to keep hackers out

and ensure that users don't accidentally access information above their Security Clearances. It's also used to maintain and improve anti-virus software and anti-malware systems.

Computer Security Minions are good for:

- ☞ Protecting computer systems
- ☞ Stopping hackers
- ☞ Finding out who's been looking at your files

Data Retrieval (CPU, PS)

The Computer's data banks are vast and poorly organised. Virtually any piece of information is in there, somewhere. Data Retrieval combines conventional search techniques with ferreting around in paper files, checking old backup discs, necromancy, interrogation and cryptography to find specific data. You can only use this Specialty to find records that are or were once available to The Computer.

It's used for:

- ☞ Searching the data banks
- ☞ Searching the data banks
- ☞ Searching the data banks
- ☞ Library Use

Financial Systems (CPU, PLC)

This Specialty covers the control of Alpha Complex's economy and its credit handling protocols. The economy is centrally planned to a large degree, although individual organisations are permitted to compete. With Financial Systems, you can manipulate the credit markets, pump the system for more money, or trace dodgy or illegal financial dealings.

Use it for:

- ☞ Examining the financial records of a department
- ☞ Squeezing more cash out of the system
- ☞ Economic warfare
- ☞ Insider trading

Hacking (CPU, R&D)

The Hacking Specialty is the other side of Computer Security – it's all about breaking through defences and accessing restricted information. Hacking may be used to trace files harers on the illegal grey subnets, to break into Secret

18. SKILLS AND SPECIALTIES

Society computers, or to access the computer systems of other departments or other High Programmers.

Use Hacking to:

- Break through computer security
- Retrieve data without authorisation
- Subvert computer systems

Logistics (PLC, PS)

The Logistics Specialty is one of those dull ones that no-one really gets but it's surprisingly vital. It's basically Co-ordination for objects. A lack of logistics is the reason that Troubleshooter teams get assigned 16 hygiene kits and a left-handed screwdriver instead of the laser barrels and reflex armour they need. A lack of logistics results in Alpha Complex drowning in Teela-O-MLY keychains and toxic waste instead of producing actual useful items. Logistics gets stuff done™.

It's used for:

- Supporting large-scale projects
- Sorting out logjams
- Unsnafuing the snafued

Media Manipulation (HPD&MC, PLC)

This is the 'special effects' skill; it's forgery on a grand scale. With Media Manipulation, you can fake images of a Commie invasion, or erase inconvenient truths. Used in concert with Thought Control, you can convince the proles of pretty much anything – black is white, up is down, life is good, whatever.

Media manipulation lets you:

- Create fake blackmail material
- Provide plausible evidence for your cover-ups
- Fake an alien invasion

Wetware

In a more reasonable game, we might call this skill 'Biology' or something. Wetware's the skill for anything organic and messy.

Biosciences (R&D, PS)

It's....alive! Mwahaha. Bioscience is the Specialty for making...things. Living things. New drugs, cybernetic bits, viruses, plagues, two-headed puppies and so on. You could also use it to make

biofuels and solve world hunger but where's the deranged blasphemous fun in that?

Biosciences is good for:

- Analysing that weird green stuff you found on your shoe
- Plagues
- New biological stuff
- Anything to do with monkeys. Flying monkeys, intelligent monkeys, monkeyponies.

I made this half-pony, half-monkey monster to please you

But I get the feeling that you don't like it

What's with all the screaming?

*You like monkeys, you like ponies
Maybe you don't like monsters so much*

*Maybe I used too many monkeys
Isn't it enough to know that I ruined
a pony making a gift for you?*

— Jonathan Coulton, *Skullcrusher Mountain*

Catering (HPD&MC, PLC)

One of the most vital Specialties in *HIGH PROGRAMMER*, catering covers both the mass production of slops and FunFoods to keep the proles fat and docile and the production of high-quality gourmet food for High Programmer banquets.

Use Catering to:

- Make sure everyone in a sector is fed and watered
- Cook the food for your exclusive High Programmer party
- Drink Bouncy Bubble Beverage – it's the mandatory thing!

Cloning (TS, PLC)

The Cloning Specialty covers the maintenance, repair and enhancement of the Alpha Complex cloning system. Every High Programmer has their own backup cloning facility, just in case you get any ideas about killing another PC and making them reincarnate as a goat or something.

Use Cloning to:

- Fix problems in the cloning system
- Resurrect the dead
- Bring back your favourite lackeys

Medical (R&D, TS)

This Specialty is for curing diseases, healing injuries and other worthy endeavours. Medical units can patch up damaged Minions (see Combat, page 47).

Use this for:

- Recovering from disasters
- Keeping your life support systems going
- Playing God

Mutant Studies (R&D, IS)

The phenomenon of mutant powers offers several fascinating avenues of study for the discerning mad scientist. How do mutant powers work? What do they tell us about the human brain? How flammable are mutants? What happens when you stick a mutant in a blender?

With Mutant Studies, you can answer all these questions. Mutant Studies Minions may also have access to a pool of registered mutants; these genetically blighted citizens are permitted to use their freaky powers in the service of The Computer. With Mutant Studies, you can make 'em work for you.

It's good for:

- Investigating mutant powers
- Wielding mutant powers
- Poking mutants with a stick

Outdoor Studies (CPU, R&D)

The study of Life Outdoors, especially the dangers and threats that lurk out there. Outdoor Life can be used to identify weird Outdoors phenomena ('it is called...rain') or to identify valuable resources like mineral deposits, freshwater sources or Twinkie caches.

You would use Outdoor Studies for:

- Surviving Outdoors
- Identifying creatures brought back from Outdoors
- Co-ordinating Outdoors operations



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Pharmatherapy (HPD&MC, PLC)

It could be argued that Pharmatherapy is THE single most important Specialty in Alpha Complex. It's the science of using drugs to produce specific ends, especially mood alterations. Why is this important?

Well, consider this – there are nine INFRAREDs to every RED and about the same number of REDs for every GREEN or higher citizen. Only one citizen in a hundred has anything close to a good standard of living. The lower classed are worked like slaves and kept on the edge of malnutrition.

If it weren't for the millions of gallons of happiness drugs pumped into the proles every daycycle, you'd have a bloody revolution on your hands.

Happiness drugs aren't the only use for pharmatherapy – it also covers combat drugs, sleepy-sleep drugs, wakey-wake drugs, truth drugs, hallucinogens, mood stabilisers, mood enhancers, hormone suppressants and the whole cornucopia of chemicals churned out by R&D.

Use Pharmatherapy to:

- ☞ Make new drugs
- ☞ Tamper with the water supply
- ☞ Counter or enhance the effect of drugs

Subliminal Messaging (CPU, HPD&MC)

From the moment you're decanted in Alpha Complex ('*serve The Computer. The Computer is your friend*') to the moment you die ('*Do not panic. Everything is fine*'), every citizen is bombarded by low-level subliminal messages in all broadcasts and official communications FNORD. The efficacy of this subliminal messaging is a matter of debate, as most studies show it just makes citizens more nervous and paranoid FNORD. Still, a blast of the old subliminals can tip the balance of opinion among the proles FNORD.

Use this to:

Adjust opinions, Create demand for a new product & FNORD.

19. Mutations

Those genes ain't what they used to be. Even if you were one of the vanishingly small number of unmutated citizens when you started out as a Troubleshooter, those pure days are long behind you. Dozens of deaths and exposure to all sorts of weird goos and fizzing radiation has left you with a mutant power.

This mutant power may be vital to your High Programmer conspiracies, or it might be a half-forgotten genetic abnormality that comes in useful every so often, like an appendix stuffed with explosives. In any case, using your mutant power openly is treasonous.

There are hundreds of other possible mutant powers. Most of such powers are even less useful (Stretchy, Ink Spray), less desirable (Rubbery Bones, Bonus Finger Syndrome) or barely qualify as powers (Dripping Nose, Increased Cancer Susceptibility). There are some mutants with even more powerful abilities, although they're usually recruited by a Secret Society like Psion or the Servants of Cthulhu or by some Service Group.

Registered Mutants

In its infinite mercy, The Computer permits those citizens with a blighted genome to register their mutations. After completing a battery of forms and tests, these Registered Mutants are issued with a shiny new jumpsuit with a yellow

stripe down the side (YELLOW Clearance mutants wear jumpsuits with a black-flanked yellow stripe) and assigned to a role more suited to someone with their unique genetic condition (like, say, cannon fodder. Or reactor shielding). These Registered Mutants are, of course, treated equally by all purestrain citizens and are never considered to be second-class, monstrous abominations, genetic traitors or scapegoats. Ever.

It's *theoretically* possible for a Registered Mutant to reach the exalted rank of High Programmer but it is extremely unlikely. If a player does choose to register his mutation, then every Anti-Mutant group and mutant-fearing citizen assumes that this is the first step in a Mutie Takeover of Alpha Complex and does everything they can to oppose the unfortunate PC.

Using A Mutant Power

To use a mutant power, the player should inform the GM. He can do so openly if he's feeling suicidal but it's more common for the player to pass a note or use some other covert method. Next, the GM secretly rolls against the character's Power score. If the dice roll is less than or equal to the Power score, the mutant ability is activated successfully. If the dice roll is greater than the character's remaining Power, the ability fails or backfires, often explosively. A roll of a 20 is always a disastrous and very obvious backfire.

Draining Power

Optionally, the GM can choose to reduce the character's Power each time he uses his ability. Each activation of the mutation drains a few points of Power, so the character can't rely on his mutant abilities indefinitely. Drain more Power for especially troublesome, annoying or dull uses of a Power; amusing, apt or creative use of an ability drains fewer points. Power is restored at the whim of the GM, or through rest and relaxation.

Mutant Powers

Each mutant power describes the results of a successful Power roll, as well as suggested results of a failed roll. As always, the cruel imagination of the GM overrides all rules and suggestions. Powers work as you want them to work.

If you're adding new mutant powers to the game, bear the following guidelines in mind:

- ☞ Powers should be easily concealed when not in use and blatantly obvious when active. A mutant with two heads won't last long in Alpha Complex (double the target practise); a mutant with an undetectable power risks nothing by using it. Even powers like Deep Thought, which don't have any obvious physical manifestations,

19. MUTATIONS

should make the mutant's eyes glow or his brain lobes pulse, visibly distorting his skull.

- High Programmers rarely act directly. The ability to run faster than a speeding bullet is rather pointless in a game where your character never leaves the room. Go for powers that can be used on or through Minions; avoid close-combat powers. (High Programmers are Professor X, not Wolverine – and that one sentence encapsulates most of Alpha Complex's understanding of mutants).
- High Programmer abilities are more powerful than those of the average citizen. The High Programmers have had years to hone their powers and experiment with weird drugs and genetic experiments. They've got a lot more firepower.

Bi-location

Ever feel like you're not getting enough done? Well, with bi-location, you can literally be in two places at once! The mutant splits in two like an amoeba. Both copies are perfect duplicates of the original, right down to the uniform. The player can only play one of the copies at a time; the other is played by the GM but the GM may permit the player to play one copy in one scene and the other copy in a different scene. The two copies don't have any sort of psychic link, so they'll need to communicate normally once separated.

If the two duplicates touch each other, they're instantly reunited into a single entity and their memories are integrated into a single whole. The shock of having two sets of memories may cause stress, unhappiness or confusion but you get used to it.

The two duplicates both share the same pool of Power. Having a duplicate running around drains Power points (at a rate determined by the GM but at least one per scene). If the character runs out of Power, both copies get sick and progressively weaker until the two reunite or one duplicate is killed. It's possible – if there are enough Power points left – for a duplicate to duplicate himself.

Having two copies of the same individual running around is treasonous. It is

identity theft, although working out which one is the victim and which one is the criminal is a matter for philosophers. The Computer will terminate a duplicate if it discovers two instances of the same citizen.

Failure: One of the copies is insane and wants to terminate the other.

Charm

The mutant radiates charisma. In fact, he secretes it through his pores – his mutant pheromones warp the perceptions of those around him. When this power is activated, anyone in close physical proximity to the mutant feels compelled to trust and like him. Why, he's just *dreamy*. Those charmed by the mutant aren't puppets but they are very willing to help out, do him favours, compete for his attention or just sit and bask in his radiant glow of personality.

There are three major restrictions on the power. Firstly, it requires physical closeness (not necessarily touch but certainly smell), so a character wearing an environmental suit or other protection is immune to the power, as are bots, brains in jars or The Computer. Secondly, the mutant is mildly affected by his own power when he's using it. It's rather like the warm fuzzy sloshy feeling of camaraderie that comes with being rather drunk – everyone's everyone else's best friend. Finally, when the power wears off, victims feel used and soiled by the whole experience, even if they can't pin the source down to the mutant. It's like being hung-over on a cellular level. (A small percentage of citizens may become addicted to the pheromones, by the way. That stalker might just want your glands...)

Failure: The mutant's pheromones just irritate those around him, causing them to dislike the mutant. In certain cases, they also cause hives and blotching.

Combat Mind

A mutant with this power is Caesar, Napoleon, Sun Tzu, Alexander the Great and Batman all rolled into one. He's a tactical genius, an inspiring leader of men and endlessly resourceful. When he uses this power, the mutant's weird brain runs through millions of tactical simulations in an instant and picks the most successful tactic. In game terms,

treat it as if he'd succeeded a Violence check with a margin of success of 20. Furthermore, if the Minion doesn't have the Assault Specialty, it gains that Specialty for the duration of the scene. A Combat Mind mutant can lead four elderly filing clerks and a broken scrubb to victory over an army of elite supersoldiers.

The power does have two worrisome side effects. Firstly, the mutant has no idea *how* his tactics work. He might *know* that marching his entire army off a cliff will result in victory but how Action A (the lemming tactic) leads to Outcome C (Victory!) is a mystery to him. Maybe marching off the cliff will cause a landslide that buries the enemy, or maybe the sight of a whole army committing suicide will so terrify the enemy commander that he surrenders, or maybe the stress of being ordered off a cliff will trigger latent mutations in his army, giving them superpowers. Or maybe being ordered off a cliff will force some talented junior officer to mutiny, take command of the army and slaughter the enemy. The point is that the mutant's tactics may look like absolute madness to everyone, including himself.

Secondly, when using Combat Mind, the mutant sees violence as the solution to everything. He becomes a cold-hearted sociopath, treating everything as an obstacle to be eliminated, preferably with nuclear weapons. It's hard for the Combat Mind mutant to *stop* wiping out his enemies – and when he's done with his enemies, his allies become the next target.

Combat Mind is most effective when used to command large armies. It's progressively less useful in smaller groups or when used by a single combatant.

Failure: Remember how the mutant has no idea *how* his tactic will work? It's like that. A tactic pops into the mutant's head but it's completely and utterly wrong and following it will wipe out all of his troops. The mutant can't tell the difference between this stupid plan and a Combat Mind-inspired super-plan.

Copy Mutant Power

The mutant's two-timing genetic structure can pick up mutant abilities from people around him. When this



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

power is activated, the mutant copies the mutant ability possessed by someone nearby and can use it for the rest of the scene. So, if the High Programmer is locked in a small room with a Pyrokinetic, he can use this ability to gain his own Pyrokinesis. The copied ability is fuelled using the mutant's own Power score.

When this ability is used, the mutant doesn't know who he copied the power from and he doesn't know exactly what his borrowed power is but he does have a vague idea of both. He might not know if he's got Bob-U or Bill-U's power but he knows it came from over that direction. He doesn't know if he's got Empathy or Machine Empathy but it's definitely some sort of mind-warping power.

Failure: The mutant picks up the wrong genetic traits from the other citizen, like hair colour, allergies, MemoMax glitches or something weirder.

Deep Thought

The mutant's superhumanly brilliant mind can manage and juggle numbers, images and memories to achieve incredible feats of mental dexterity. He can quickly reduce problems to equations and solve them in terms of probabilities. He can retain information and images with crystal clarity, no matter how distant the memory or how brief the glimpse of a picture or diagram. He can speed-read lengthy reports in seconds, or navigate the most complex and contradictory bureaucratic quagmires.

In game terms, the mutant is capable of processing information with astonishing speed. When the mutant ability is used, the player asks the GM a question that could be answered by extrapolating from known data; if the Power check succeeds, the mutant gets the correct answer.

Deep Thought doesn't let the character work out any problems that he wouldn't be able to solve normally; it just gives him lots and lots of time to think about it. You couldn't, say, use Deep Thought to find a cure for a plague, as finding the cure involves trial and error and gathering information. You could use it to crunch lots of numbers and fix the economy, though.

OBEYOBEYOBEYOBEYOBEY GET ME A SANDWICH OBEYOBEYOBEYOBEY



Failure: The mutant comes up with an answer that looks right but is subtly and catastrophically flawed in some way.

Domination

The mutant's superior mutant brain allows him to impose his will on lesser minds. He can project his thoughts into a sufficiently weak-willed victim, forcing the pawn to do whatever the mutant wants. For example, he could force some unfortunate citizen to lick his boots, or fetch him a frosty can of B3,

or pull out a laser pistol and assassinate someone else. Fear the mighty power of telepathic domination!

There are, unsurprisingly, lots and lots of restrictions and drawbacks with this power.

- The mutant can only dominate one person at a time.
- The mutant has to be able to see his target, or at least know him quite well. The mutant could dominate

19. MUTATIONS

someone on the far side of a television link, or one of his Minions but couldn't dominate, say, a guard on the far side of a door.

- ☛ Player Characters and other strong-willed characters are (usually) immune. You have to be weak-willed, vulnerable or consciously deferential to the mutant to be vulnerable to Domination.
- ☛ While the mutant's Dominating someone, he's in a trance. He can't move, speak or do anything other than stare intently into space and maybe drool a little. Sometimes, his eyes glow.
- ☛ The Dominated victim is a little like a zombie. He can talk in a slurred, patently coached manner ('I... act... of... own... free... will... Death... to... The... Computer') and his actions are similarly clumsy and confused. It'll attract suspicion but enough people in Alpha Complex are under heavy sedation that an observer won't immediately realise that someone's being Dominated.
- ☛ The mutant can't read the victim's mind or access his memories, although he could force the victim to answer questions out loud.

Well, wasn't that a lot of rules. You deserve a cup of tea for sitting through those.

Failure: The mutant puts himself into a feedback loop, dominating himself. He sits there and drools until someone tells him what to do. He'll obey any reasonable orders given to him.

Electroshock

The mutant can control his bioelectric field, like an electric eel... assuming the eel was 15 kilometres long and snacking on Tokyo. Depending on how much effort (Power points) he exerts, he can shock someone in close proximity, fry unshielded electronics, zap an insolent apprentice, or shoot a lightning bolt through a warbot. The stronger the blast, the longer the range.

Low levels of electroshock attack are non-lethal, albeit painful. Bigger electroshocks are capable of incinerating innocent bystanders. The mutant can also cause brown-outs by overloading the power grid (warning: brown-outs in Alpha Complex often result in unscheduled fissile bounties, aka meltdowns) or even

replace a nuclear reactor (a common fate for convicted electroshock mutants).

When this power is active, the mutant is immune to damage from electricity. That's a good thing, considering the arcing bolts of electricity, the sparks, the weird glows and the occasional explosion associated with activating this power.

Warning: Do not use electroshock when wet. Do not use electroshock when not adequately grounded. Do not use electroshock during a thunderstorm.

Failure: The mutant blows all his remaining Power Points on one big blast.

Empathy

This character has a sort of hind-brain telepathy – he can read a victim's emotional brain activity and project his own emotions to manipulate the victim's emotional state.

Reading a victim's emotions is particularly useful when trying to detect a liar-in-progress; a successful roll may reveal intent to mislead. When trying to assess another's reaction, a successful empathy power roll entitles the user to GM hints. A successful empathy roll should improve the success chance of Management Specialty rolls.

The most effective use of empathy is to project strong emotions onto a victim in order to interfere with his ability to reason and make judgments. The empath works himself up into a frenzy, then projects his emotions onto his victim. The victim is overcome by a temporary obsessive need to indulge himself in dramatic actions which express the emotion – sobbing, screaming, cowering, cackling maniacally, smashing things – a real opportunity for the hysterically-inclined roleplayer. If the Power roll succeeds, the victim is affected; the more successful the roll, the more exaggerated and obsessive the performance.

This skill is most reliable when used on an individual. Attempting empathy with a crowd is less accurate and reliable and with a failed Power roll the empath is more likely to get caught up in the emotions of the crowd. Take the player aside, explain the mood of the crowd

and encourage him to roleplay a victim of mob psychology.

Failure: The empathy redoubles his own emotions and focuses them inwards. If he was trying to project anger, he goes berserk. If he was trying to make the target sympathetic, the empath suddenly agrees with everyone around him.

Empathic Liar

The mutant possesses a low level form of telepathy. He can subconsciously read the mind of a target and tell that person *exactly* what they want to hear. The downside is that the mutant enters a trance when he's lying and has absolutely no idea what he just said.

For example:

GM: Dirk-G points his laser pistol at your face. 'Any last words, vatstime?' he growls as his finger tightens on the trigger.

Mutant: Agh, I'll use Empathic Liar.

GM: Ok, you black out. When you come to, Dirk-G is hugging you and whispering 'I should never have doubted you! Once you have done as you just promised, then we shall laugh as our mutual foe begs for mercy! Do not tarry, or the bot will have already washed the last boot!'

Empathic Liar doesn't really get the user out of trouble; it just postpones the trouble for a while, which then comes back – with interest. When in the empathic trance, the mutant may use codewords and pass phrases dredged from the memories of the target, or promise anything that the target wants to hear. (Often, 'I'll take care of this massive problem, leave it to me, I'll take full responsibility'.)

The mutant can try to use Empathic Liar on multiple people at once but this is almost sure to backfire, unless there's one set of lies that will satisfy everyone. Oh, and there are some situations where no lie will help – if the target is determined to kill you, then even the most convincing lie won't help.

The power only works on living minds, not The Computer or bots.

Failure: The mutant says exactly the wrong thing. He has no idea what he just said but it was precisely the worst possible thing he could have said in that situation.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Force Field

With an effort of will and a twist of gravity, the mutant can create a nigh-impenetrable force shield. This barrier blocks solid projectiles and prevents objects moving through it but isn't airtight. The barrier also doesn't block sound (so you can talk through the barrier, or shoot a sonic weapon through it), or light (so you can see through it, or fire lasers through it). The barrier does distort sound and light moving through it, so it does offer some protection against lasers. By concentrating, the mutant can strengthen the barrier, making it opaque and airtight.

The barrier normally manifests in a sphere around the mutant. Again, through concentration, the mutant can cause the barrier to appear somewhere else nearby.

No, you can't make the field appear inside a target. It's a force field, not a magic guillotine. Yes, you can wrap a force field around some unfortunate and suffocate them but you could do the same with a blanket.

Putting enough pressure on the barrier collapses it. So, shoot the field enough, or drop a warbot on top of it and it goes 'poof'.

Failure: The force field appears in the wrong place, or is the bad sort of one-way force field where they can shoot you but you can't shoot them.

Machine Empathy

*****Warning! Warning! This mutant power is REALLY treasonous! The Computer will execute anyone possessing it, regardless of other factors!*****

Some mutants can commune with the mystic forces of nature. Characters with Machine Empathy can commune with the ebb and flux of electrons, the opening and closing of logic gates, the destruction and reappearance of positrons in robotic brains. In short, the mutant is in tune with intelligent machines – robots and computers.

When the character's Power roll succeeds, robots and computers tend to like and trust the character. Robots and computers don't attack or kill the character unless

they have specific orders or some other strong justification. They want to be his friend. Sometimes, they *really* want to be his friend – some Machine Empaths are stalked by scrubbots or given free product by shy vending machines.

This power even works on The Computer itself. With a successful use of this power, The Computer becomes tremendously well disposed towards the mutant. Anything the mutant says appears wise and reasonable to The Computer. Anyone criticising the mutant is guilty of sedition and possibly even treason. The mutant gets the best assignments and is given the benefit of the doubt in every situation. (*'Citizen, you are holding a smoking laser pistol and standing over the corpse of your rival, who has just been lasered to death. No-one else is in the room and the door was locked. Security camera footage clearly shows you shooting him. Rest assured, citizen, that we will get to the bottom of this mystery! Someone has clearly murdered the late citizen, faked the camera footage and planted the murder weapon on you, the wholly innocent party. The game's afoot!'*)

Failure: If the Power roll fails, the mutant doesn't make contact, or the intelligent machine picks up bad vibes – the more unsuccessful the roll, the badder the vibes. The robot, or The Computer, may get testy with the mutant, be uncooperative, make threats and generally make the mutant's life unpleasant.

Memory Blur

When this mutant power is activated, the mutant becomes hard to remember. He becomes melted butter on the Teflon surface of the mind. He's somebody else's problem. He's... y'know, that guy. Whatshisname.

Who ordered you to blow up the food vat? *Whatshisname. He was a...guy...I think he was wearing white.*

Who's in charge here? *Er... I knew who it was a minute ago... it's on the tip of my tongue...*

Firing Squad, target the condemned prisoner! *Which one is that again? I forget.*

Other High Programmers are unaffected by this power. The Computer might be affected but it has memory glitches all the time anyway. The power doesn't have

a range – it affects everyone, everywhere. The mutant can use this power to sneak past guards or avoid attackers, to hide his involvement in a particular scheme, or to dodge the blame for a disaster. When the power's active, he's a ghost, a shadowy figure without identifying features. He was never there.

There are downsides to using this power, the primary one is that it's nearly impossible to get anything done. Servants ignore the mutant, vending machines forget his order, INFRAREDs jump past him in the queue.

Failure: The mutant becomes super-obvious and extremely memorable. He gets blamed for everything.

Monster

High Programmer...crush...

This power turns a mild-mannered High Programmer into a monstrous killing machine. He hulks out in a non-trademark-infringing way, growing into a five-metre-tall overmuscled, armour-plated, fang-mawed monster (tentacles optional). In this form, the mutant is incredibly strong and resilient.

When acting directly, his Violence score increases to 18 and he gains the Assault Specialty. He can also survive direct hits from tacnukes or orbital lasers, eat tanks for breakfast and smash things really good. The ultraviolence can be quite therapeutic. The mutant's id is unleashed to fuel the monster's rampage, so the mutant has only very limited control over his body's actions. He can smash, rampage and destroy very well but doing anything that doesn't involve the verbs 'rend', 'crush' or 'pulp' is extremely difficult. The mutant can still speak but only in monosyllables and then only in the monosyllables he can pronounce with a mouth full of fangs.

Failure: High Programmer turns into giant monster! Giant monster's skeleton not capable of supporting giant monster's weight. Giant monster falls over into big boneless mess! This makes giant monster sad!

Psychic Flash

When this power is used, the mutant gets a momentary mental image of something very important or dangerous

19. MUTATIONS

nearby – or in his immediate future. He might get an image of the laser pistol pointed at his back, or of the bomb taped underneath the briefing room table, or of a nefarious Commie plotting sabotage. Sometimes the flashes are useful but usually they're just confusing or alarming. The mutant may not understand what he sees, although it is always important to his destiny. (*'You psychically glimpse 16 orange, Tech Services plumbers, an experimental death ray and Form 562/C, Permit to Operate A Private Autocar Under The Influence of Behaviour-Altering Medication.'*) Basically, this power lets the GM sow even more mistrust and confusion.

Failure: A failed Power roll means the character gets a useless or incomprehensible image. It's impossible to 'zero in' on a particular image – if the mutant asks for repeated psychic flashes, he either gets the same flash over and over again, or different images of potential dangers each time.

Regeneration

Like a lizard, the mutant can recover from almost any injury. Wounds heal, shattered bones knit themselves back together, smoking holes close with a sucking noise and even missing limbs can be regenerated. It's a remarkably disgusting sight. The mutant can recover from any injury short of full-on vaporisation. Depending on the wound, it can take several hours to fully heal but minor cuts and bruises heal instantly.

The mutant can also adapt to hostile conditions, although such adaptation tends to push the mutant from 'occasionally freakish' to 'what the hell is that thing, kill it with fire.' For example, a Regenerating mutant whose dumped out of the airlock of a spaceship might quickly mutate into a creature capable of surviving in the freezing, high-radiation, airless vacuum of deep space but whatever he became wouldn't pass for human and so couldn't get a seat at a really nice restaurant. Obviously non-human mutants are zapped by The Computer on sight.

Oh, a successful Regeneration roll means that you can ignore clone template degradation and don't lose any skill points after being terminated.

Failure: An unsuccessful roll means the regeneration went awry. Maybe lots of parts duplicate themselves. Maybe the rapid tissue growth occurs in the wrong place, or the wrong tissues are produced (scales, gills, fins, feathers, chitinous carapace).

Shapeshift

The mutant can alter his own body, warping it into something else. The weirder the new form, the harder it is to maintain. It's comparatively easy to mimic the appearance of another citizen (*'Yes, I'm Bob-U. You're my trusted servant. What's your name again?'*). It's a lot harder – but still possible – to turn into a table, or a vending machine, or a giant warbot.

The mutant can change his physical structure (turning his skin into metal, for example) but that requires even more Power. Most Shapeshifters use it as a high-infallible method of disguise.

Failure: The mutant changes into something other than his desired shape and is stuck like that for the rest of the scene.

Telekinesis

The mutant can move things with the power of his mind! It's relatively easy to lift medium-sized objects – say, a person, or a briefcase, or a turkey stuffed with sausage meat and cranberry. It's a lot trickier to lift big objects, like warbots or anvils or nuclear reactors and it's also tricky to move very small objects, like triggers, grenade pins, blood vessels or individual molecules. A talented telekinetic can move several objects at once. The range of the power is limited to line of sight but it can be used through a television link (the cost of the power increases with the range).

The mutant can also use telekinesis to fly, although this is about as graceful as attaching one end of a rope to the back of your neck and the other to a passing airplane. You get from A to B but the order in which your body parts arrive is pretty random.

Failure: The power works. Unfortunately, there's an equal and opposite reaction within the mutant's brain, courtesy of Mr. Isaac Newton. So, if you lift a 1,000 ton warbot 10 metres into the air, an equal force is applied to your skull. Splat.

Telepathy

The mutant can reach into the minds of others using his bizarrely twisted brain emanations. Telepathy is a knack that takes a lot of practice to master. Reading minds is easy but actually getting useful information is hard. The average clone's stream of conscious goes something like this: *'Happy I'm happy keep smiling ooh hunger I wonder what's in the cafeteria today it'll probably be hot fun I'm sick of hot fun it makes me sick oh no am I still smiling keep smiling big wide grin oh no what if they saw me not smiling was that guy IntSec what if he was IntSec and they saw me not smiling that bastard Colin-O's looking for an excuse to report me what if he tells IntSec I wasn't smiling gotta get him first keep smiling ooh something shiny'*. Wading through the morass of irrelevant trivia, advertising jingles, paranoid worries and subliminal messages that make up the average clone's mind can take a long time.

Telepathy's even more useless when dealing with High Programmers and other experienced citizens. Anyone who's survived in Alpha Complex this long maintains a shield of endlessly repeated songs or other mental humming on the surface of their thoughts. In most circumstances, it's impossible to read the mind of another Player Character. This power can be used to dredge information from the mind of a weak-willed citizen, or from the mind of someone whose resistance has been diminished through drugs, alcohol, cattle prods, waterboarding or other distractions.

The power can be used to transmit psychic messages. The mutant can project messages to anyone he knows but can only read replies from people he can see.

Failure: The mutant's innermost thoughts are broadcast to everyone nearby.

Teleportation

The mutant vanishes in a puff of oily smoke that smells alarmingly like bacon and reappears somewhere else. This power creates a field around the mutant (along the contours of his body, a few centimetres from the skin) that instantaneously transports him from one location to another. Any objects



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

or garments within the field are also transported – most of the time, anyway.

This mutation works both as a voluntary action and as an involuntary response. As a voluntary action, the mutant must first visualise the location to which he wishes to teleport. It may either be a location in line of sight or one he knows intimately. The closer the location, the better the chances he can reach it intact; but with high-margin Power rolls, mutants have been known to teleport huge distances and arrive more or less unscathed.

A successful Power roll means the mutant is teleported; the higher the margin, the more likely the mutant reaches his destination in good working order.

If the roll fails, the teleport may not occur, or it may occur in such a way the mutant wishes it hadn't. Sometimes the mutant parts from his garments and possessions. Sometimes he pops in right in front of a Vulture Squadron on manoeuvres. Sometimes he ends up in dark, mysterious, unfamiliar and unfriendly places. Sometimes he arrives with his elbow sticking out of his ear.

As an involuntary response, the mutant automatically teleports from any situation that presents a real and immediate threat of death. This happens whether the player wants to teleport or not. In this case, act as if you're the mutant's subconscious mind. The reaction is

instinctive, like flinching from a blow. Caution: Don't overdo this involuntary teleporting, because players really hate losing control of their characters. If you're getting bored, find some other way to torture the poor bastards.

A successful Power roll means the mutant was fortunate in instinctively (that is, at your discretion) selecting a safe place to teleport to. A failed roll means the mutant's instincts have betrayed him, delivering him to a locked closet, or an elevator shaft, or in front of a speeding autocar, or inside a reactor or something – and who knows where the poor devil's gear ended up...

Some examples of involuntary teleports:

- ☞ The character turns the corner and runs into two opponents with hand flamers. Bamf!
- ☞ The character is defusing a bomb. He hears the ominous click of the arming mechanism. Bamf!
- ☞ The character has managed to get the flybot to take off but he cannot get it to make the canopy transparent. The instruments indicate a mountain range approaching. Bamf!

Failure: The mutant ends up somewhere he doesn't want to be.

Uncanny Luck

The mutant can affect the probability of a given event. To use this power, the

player must give you a note explaining what die roll he wishes to influence and how he wishes to adjust the roll – up or down. Make a hidden Power roll before you make the roll the mutant wants to influence. If the Power roll succeeds, change the other roll to a 1 (that is, amazing success). Then drain from the mutant's Uncanny Luck ability a number of points equal to the difference between the other roll (the result you actually rolled) and 1.

This power only works on your concealed rolls and only on rolls that (in your judgment) directly affect the mutant. Normally, the player needs to inform you that he wants to use Uncanny Luck before you make a roll but you may want to test Uncanny Luck without the player's knowledge in some situations (for example, when the High Programmer is about to do something suicidal).

Given the usefulness of this mutation, there obviously must be a downside. In accordance with the Law of Cosmic Balance, where good fortune shines, stormy clouds of misfortune are bound to follow. When the mutant exerts his Uncanny Luck but has unwittingly run out of Power points, the roll automatically works against the mutant in the most dramatically unlucky way you can imagine.

That Cosmic Balance is always a killer.

Failure: Nothing happens.

20. Secret Societies

On the surface, Alpha Complex society is unfailingly uniform. From AAA Sector to ZZZ Sector, everyone acts the same (in accordance with their Security Clearance), dresses the same (ditto), feels the same (HAPPY thanks to HAPPY PILLS which are GREAT – THANK YOU COMPUTER) and thinks only approved thoughts. Creativity is suspect, unless channelled into a few approved activities like R&D; individuality is discouraged; open refusal to conform is treason.

Under the surface, that's where you find the Secret Societies. Alpha Complex is full of conspiracies. Anyone could be a member of a sinister syndicate or secret cult. That janitor scrubbing the corridor could secretly be your superior in a

Secret Society, or an undercover Internal Security spy, or both.

Almost everyone in Alpha Complex is a member of at least one Secret Society. For some citizens, Secret Society membership is nothing more than a hobby or a little glimpse of something other than the stifling conformity of Alpha Complex society. Others are fanatically committed to the conspiracies and goals, or blackmailed into helping the society. Once you become enmeshed in a Secret Society, there's no way out.

The Secret History of Secret Societies

Some Secret Societies actually predate Alpha Complex – they're fossil memes

from Old Reckoning times. Most, though, are the result of failed social engineering projects ('let's get everyone to love *The Computer* by worshipping it') or social engineering projects that worked in the past but wouldn't go away ('ok, we've made drugs more socially acceptable to facilitate emotion management – why are the Mystics still around'). Societies evolve and mutate over time. Sub-factions develop and are purged, or grow to dominate the society, or hive off into separate splinter groups. Nefarious High Programmers – that's you lot – or other sinister figures seize control for a while. Societies are infiltrated by IntSec, compromised by conspiracies or conjured wholesale by agent provocateurs.

20. SECRET SOCIETIES

Every society is broken into conspiratorial cells which communicate through coded messages and secret channels. Members know only what they need to know and the higher ranking members routinely lie to their deluded dupes.

All that means any discussion of the Secret History of Secret Societies is thoroughly futile. No-one has a clue what's really going on in the underground of Alpha Complex. It appears to be absolute chaos... or is that just what someone wants you to think?

A conspiracy with one hundred and twenty vectors doesn't look like a conspiracy: it looks like chaos. The human mind can't grasp it, and hence declares it as nonexistent. You see, the Illuminati didn't really need to recruit both the leaders of the ecology movement and the executives of the worst pollution-producing companies. They did to create ambiguity. Anyone who tries to describe their operations sounds like a paranoid.
— Illuminatus!

Secret society tiers: Internal Security's perspective

Internal Security administrators have officially categorised virtually all societies in Alpha Complex into three 'tiers.' Any High Programmer (Clearance ULTRAVIOLET) can pull up the following information about the classifications.

Class A societies: Death Leopard, FCCC-P, Free Enterprise, Romantics, Sierra Club

The Computer not only allows these societies to exist, they are encouraged, funded – and ultimately protected – by ULTRAVIOLETS. These organisations provide legitimate channels of 'leakage' when necessary. By defining the channels along which certain 'treasonous thoughts' are illegally disseminated – ideas that are basically impossible to actually keep secret, like the existence of the Outdoors and the Old Reckoning times – Alpha Complex leadership can largely guide that dissemination. When

members of these societies wish to engage in 'treasonous' activities, High Programmers encourage them toward (relatively) innocuous troublemaking.

- ☞ Generally begun well over 100 years ago.
- ☞ Have not significantly changed in all that time, usually because of careful management.
- ☞ Generally run like Service Group Organisations, with operating officers and a board of directors.
- ☞ Punishment for membership is usually minimised to fines and demotion except in severe problem cases.
- ☞ Membership measured in many hundreds of thousands Complex-wide.
- ☞ 88.3% of all Alpha Complex citizens belong to or have worked for at least one Class A Society.
- ☞ 54.1% of all citizens are currently involved with one or more of the top five Class A Societies (including approved sub-sects).

Class B societies: Anti-Mutants, C.L.A., Clone Arrangers, Corpore Metal, Mystics, Pro Tech, Runners, I.W.W.

Class B Societies are generally the result of, or a response to, an extant Class A society, or were themselves once a Class A that has since become less critical to Alpha Complex operations and is now left to succeed or fail on its own merits. Many are splinter offshoots or unapproved sub-sects that have become distinct from parent Class As and are currently resisting efforts to fold them back into the core originating society. Most either fold back in or become Class C Societies within 50 years. Not so destructive as to require active elimination, they can nonetheless be rather nasty in short bursts during their transitional phases.

- ☞ 'Fallen' Class As are generally over 100 years old. Splinter groups are generally less than 50 years old.
- ☞ Tend to mutate with each generation of 25–35 years.
- ☞ Typically focus on small controlling councils or charismatic individual leaders.
- ☞ Official punishment for membership is entirely dependent on the treasonous actions involved.

- ☞ Membership varies widely, from mere tens or hundreds of Citizens, to perhaps many tens of thousands or even a few hundred thousand while trendy.
- ☞ Only 28.1% of all citizens belong to or have worked for at least one Class B Society.
- ☞ 12.9% of citizens are currently involved with one or more of the top five Class B Societies.
- ☞ Unconfirmed rumours of another organisation, 'Illuminati,' suggest similar status.

Class C societies: Communists, Computer Phreaks, Frankensteins, PURGE, Humanists, Psion, The Movement, Servants of Cthulhu

This group of societies is actively problematic for Alpha Complex. They fundamentally interfere with normal operations. Most have risen independently of planned or approved design. Some are former Class B organisations that underwent significant alteration as membership changed. Though it may seem that the majority of Alpha Complex enforcement resources are expended on opposing the well-known Class A Societies (especially in the public eye of the lower Clearances), a close analysis of budgets, policy statements and actual successful Troubleshooter case studies clearly show true focus remains on Class C organisations.

- ☞ Some are quite old, as old as the Class A groups. Most are at least 10 years old; new societies are classified B until Internal Security infiltrates them deeply enough to assess.
- ☞ Remain resistant to change, usually because of simple and strong ideology.
- ☞ Usually operate in semi-independent cells and rarely have a clear hierarchy or command structure.
- ☞ Punishment of members, when caught, is invariably termination.
- ☞ Membership estimates are difficult as activity rises and falls rapidly but generally at least in the tens of thousands.
- ☞ 40.5% of all citizens belong to or have worked for at least one Class C Society.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

- 27.3% of citizens are involved with one or more of the top five Class C Societies.

Your Conspiratorial Past

The only way to advance in Alpha Complex is through Secret Societies. Without help from conspiracies and conniving traitors, you'd never have made it past RED Clearance, let alone all the way up to ULTRAVIOLET. In your time, you've been a member of dozens of conspiracies and Secret Societies – some short-lived and some that are still around.

As a High Programmer, you're not beholden to any Secret Society. At lower Clearances, conspiracies punish those who try to leave or defy orders with beatings, blackmail or even termination but you're now much too powerful for them to reach you. They can still make trouble for you but you no longer *have* to be part of a Secret Society.

Secret Societies are *useful*, though. They're often the most efficient or even the only way to get things done in Alpha Complex.

Your Program Group

Every High Programmer has a Program Group, an entourage of hangers-on, sycophants, servants, groupies and flunkies. This conspiracy exists to support the High Programmer and further his goals – at least, that's the idea. Some of a Program Group's members are there just to bask in the High Programmer's reflected glory. Most are the Alpha Complex equivalent of remora fish, who attach themselves with puckered sucker mouths to a High Programmer and feed off his influence. A few Program Group members are competent and ambitious, which makes them actually useful. (It also means that they're trying to bump off the High Programmer and replace him.)

If you want, say, Free Enterprise to do you a favour, you don't go to Free Enterprise directly (associating with Secret Societies is treason); instead, you send your agent Ted-I down to have a little chat with a contact in a shady bar, insulating you, Mr. High Programmer sir, from the waves of treason radiation.

Secret Societies will also ask you for favours. If you complete their requests,

then your Agent in that society will advance in rank, giving you more control over that society.

You can, of course, completely trust your Agents, especially as you arrange for them to get more and more power. They're your friends – they'd never side with their Secret Society over you...

Secret Society Rules

Secret Societies work like super-Minions. Instead of having to pay Access to buy or maintain them, Secret Societies work for free. Ish.

Program Group

To use a Secret Society, you need to have an Agent from your Program Group in that society. Agents are your spies, informants and trusted lackies. Agents allow you to use Secret Societies as Minions. Note that an Agent is not necessarily a single individual – you could have a whole network of spies in one Secret Society.

The size of your Program Group depends on your Management score. Note that 'size' doesn't have anything to do with the number of people in the group – it's about how many useful Agents you have in the group. You've got lots of useless sycophants and bodyguards too.

Management	Program Group Size
1–5	2
6–10	3
11–15	4
16+	5

Cover Identities

You should give each of your Agents a name and a Cover Identity. You don't *have* to do this but it's a lot better to phone up 'Bob' in 'Cleaning Services' and place an order for 'Jiffy-Lube' than to phone up 'Bob' in 'PURGE' and place an order for 'traitorous Weapons of Mass Destruction'.

Rank

Each Agent has a Rank in a Secret Society. This Rank is determined during character creation for your first few Agents – new, replacement Agents start at Rank 1. The higher the rank, the more control your Agent has over the Secret Society, which

is important when either

- a) you're trying to convince the Secret Society to do something it normally wouldn't consider.

or

- b) another High Programmer is trying to order the society to do something else.

Eliminating Agents

There are two ways that you can lose an Agent. The Agent can be assassinated (see Combat, page 47) or executed (see Treason, page 49). An Agent executed for Treason drops down to Rank 1 in the Society.

Specialties

Each Secret Society has three Specialties – a Covert Specialty, a Subversive Specialty and a Weird Specialty. You can use these Specialties like you would those of any Minion but with increasing levels of risk. The more obvious the conspiracy's actions are, the more likely it is that they'll be captured along with your agent.

Covert Specialties are things the society can do that probably won't be noticed. These Specialties are often shared by non-treasonous Minions.

Subversive Specialties are nasty illegal things the society can do. These are more powerful than Covert Specialties but also more likely to be detected.

Weird Specialties are...weird.

Activating Secret Societies

To use a Secret Society, you need to contact your agent. You may do this through the agent's cover identity, or via secret communication if that's permitted. Once you have contacted your agent, you can use the Secret Society like you would any other Minion.

You don't need to pay Access to activate a Secret Society.

Damaging Secret Societies

Secret Societies can be damaged like any other Minion. A Damaged Society is restored to full health at the start of the next game session. If your actions lead to a society getting damaged, your Agent

20. SECRET SOCIETIES

'No, the High Programmer's not taking your call. Activate the Painulator!'



in that society loses one Rank. (If this reduces him to Rank 0, he's kicked out of the society and starts the next game session at Rank 1 in a different Society.)

Tension & Treason

As described on page 46, every scene or location has a Tension score. If your skill roll when using a Secret Society's **Subversive** or **Weird** Specialty is equal to or under the scene's Tension score,

then Computer surveillance has noticed any treasonous activity there and traced it back.

Let's say you get your pals in the Computer Phreaks to hack into a computer system for you. The GM declares that the scene has a Tension of 6. If you roll a 6 or less, then The Computer or Internal Security detects the hacking attempt and traces it back.

Covert Specialties are easier to hide – Treasonous activity there is detected only on the roll of a 1.

For example, say you're sending some Commies in to fix the pipes in EXT Sector using Habitat Engineering. Habitat Engineering is the Commie's Covert Specialty, so it's only detected on the roll of a 1. You roll a 4 – you're safe. No-one notices that the plumbing team you sent in are all wearing furry hats and calling each other Comrade!

If your use of a Secret Society is detected, then you will be punished. The punishment depends on the class of the Secret Society.

Class A: 4 Treason Points

Class B: 6 Treason Points

Class C: 10 Treason Points

Communists!: 20 Treason Points

If you wish, you can halve the Treason Points you're awarded by repudiating your agent. The agent's dragged off to be terminated as a traitor. You can fill the empty slot in your Program Group with a new Rank 1 Agent (or a clone of the last agent) at the start of the next game.

Multiple Agents in a Secret Society

Several players can have an Agent in the same Society. As long as only one High Programmer is trying to use the society at a time, this is just *peachy-fine*.

However, if multiple orders are given to a society, the character with the highest Rank wins out. A High Programmer can temporarily boost his agent's effective Rank by spending Access – each point of Access gives a temporary +1 bonus to Rank. Draws mean that the Secret Society ends up splitting into pro- and anti- factions and feuding instead of doing anything useful, reducing the Rank of all Agents by 1 permanently.

Both Phil-U and Mary-U have Agents in the Humanists. Phil-U's Agent is Rank 5, Mary-U's is Rank 10. Phil-U orders the Humanists to organise a protest march; Mary-U's orders her Rank 10 Agent to countermand Phil-U's Rank 5 agent. Secret Society fight!



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Rank 10 beats Rank 5, unless Phil-U wants to blow 6 Access on temporarily boosting his Agent up to Rank 11. If Mary-U wants, she could then spend more Access boosting her Agent's rank. It all keeps going until one High Programmer or the other stops spending Access.

Secret Society Missions

Every Secret Society has stuff they want. Some want to spread their propaganda, others want to steal the latest gadgets from R&D, or to wipe out another society, or some other bizarre desire. Anyone with an Agent in a Secret Society knows what the society currently wants.

If, over the course of the game, you manage to complete a Secret Society Mission, your Agent in that Society gains at least one rank in the Society (especially impressive coups mean more ranks).

Failing the Mission may (possibly) reduce the Agent's rank in the Society.

For example: High Programmer Phil-U has an Agent in Death Leopard. At the start of the game, his Agent informs him that Death Leopard really want to blow up the brand new shopping mall but can't because the security there is too high. If Phil-U can arrange for that security force to be redeployed elsewhere, then his Agent can take credit for the scheme and increase his Rank, giving Phil-U a more powerful pawn in the society.

The Big List of Secret Societies

Each of the major Alpha Complex conspiracies is described in this section, using the same format for each.

Beliefs: What the society thinks.

Activities: What the society does.

Specialties: What the society can do for you, divided into Covert, Subversive and Weird Specialties.

Common Missions: What the society wants in return.

High Programmer Comments: Secret notes and testimonials on the society from High Programmers just like you.

Anti-Mutant (Class B)

Beliefs:

Mutants are bad! Kill the muties! Only the pure strain humans deserve to live in Alpha Complex!

Muties are everywhere and they're infecting our precious bodily fluids and our minds with mutie taint! Suffer not the mutant to live.

Activities: Beating up mutants, trying to reduce the incidence of mutation in Alpha Complex. Worrying about their



Society	Covert	Subversive	Weird
Anti-Mutant	Investigation	Wetwork +4	Analysis
C.L.A (Complex Laser Association)	Defence	Assault +4	<i>Bigger Guns*</i>
Clone Arrangers	Cloning +4	Bioscience	Mutant Studies*
Communists	Habitat Engineering	Assault	<i>Propaganda +4</i>
Computer Phreaks	Data Retrieval	Hacking +4	Media Manipulation*
Corpore Metal	Bot Engineering +4	Bot Programming*	<i>Cyborging*</i>
Death Leopard	Demolition*	Assault +4	<i>Disruption*</i>
First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer (FCCC-P)	Covert Operations	Thought Control +4	Interrogation*
Frankenstein Destroyers	Bot Engineering	Production +4	Assault
Free Enterprise	Financial Systems +4	Intimidation	<i>Procurement*</i>
Humanists	Assessment	Paperwork +4	Co-Ordination*
The Movement	Habitat Engineering	Command +4	WMD
Mystics	Analysis	Pharmatherapy +4	<i>Mystic Weirdness</i>
Pro Tech	Data Retrieval	Weird Science +4	<i>Gadgeteering</i>
Psion	Infiltration	Mutant Studies +4	Co-Ordination
PURGE	Demolition +4	Assault	Hacking
Romantics	Old Reckoning Studies +4	Thought Control	<i>Old Stuff</i>
Runners	Security Systems +4	Outdoors Operations	<i>Running</i>
Sierra Club	Outdoor Studies +4	Biosciences	<i>Salvage</i>
Servants of Cthulhu	Biosciences	Intimidation +4	Mutant Studies
International Workers of the World (Wobblies)	Construction	Production +4	<i>Propaganda</i>

Abilities in *Italics* are unique to that society.

*: See individual Society description for special-case rules.

20. SECRET SOCIETIES

own genes. The Anti-Mutants believe themselves to be loyal to The Computer and are convinced that any official tolerance of mutants (registration and so on) is the result of Machine Empath manipulation.

Most Anti-Mutant gangs are at the lower Clearances and have a strictly local reach, identifying and beating up local muties. The society has relatively little power (most people in power in Alpha Complex are secret mutants themselves) but makes up for this deficiency by aggressive recruitment tactics and playing on fear of mutants.

Almost all Anti-Mutants are mutants themselves, since mutation rates run at 95% (+/-5%). They deal with this contradiction by ignoring it with gritted teeth or self-flagellation.

Investigation (Covert): The Anti-Mutants have a lot of experience in uncovering secrets and finding people who don't want to be found. Any reports from the society tend to blame everything on mutants, though.

Wetwork +4 (Subversive): If you want someone killed, the Anti-Mutants are just the guys you need. They're especially good at killing people who are hard to kill. Y'know, like mutants.

Analysis (Weird): On the plus side, there are a few good scientists in the Anti-Mutants who can figure stuff out. Unfortunately, they'll just tell you that everything causes mutation.

Common Missions:

- ☞ We want access to the big database of Registered Mutants. Don't ask why.
- ☞ We want you to come down hard on muties. Push Registered Mutants out; make the common clone in the corridor hate muties. Come out in favour of genetic purity.
- ☞ We want guns, lots of guns.
- ☞ High Programmer X is a mutant. Discredit him. Actually, if you can, disintegrate him.

+Began as a Class A when genetic drift first appeared in the population.+

+Purpose was to discourage 'clean' genelines from breeding with 'drifted' individuals.+

+Made obsolete by the cloning process but never died out entirely.+
+Resurged on its own when drift appeared in the clone systems.+
+Decision regarding status and treatment is overdue.+

Complex Laser Association (Class B)

Beliefs:

Alpha Complex is riddled with Commies! The Armed Forces is full of 'em!

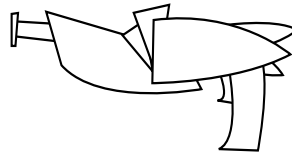
IntSec's just a socialist front! Only we are loyal to The Computer and the ideals of Alpha Complex! Fight the Commie spies! The C.L.A. is *superloyal* to the ideal of Alpha Complex but they're convinced that the whole place has been infiltrated top to bottom by Commie double agents. They therefore reject the authority of The Computer in order to save it from the Commies who've duped it.

Activities: Stockpiling weapons for the day when they retake Alpha Complex from the Commies; blowing up government buildings 'cos they're full of Commies; being paranoid.

The C.L.A. has numerous contacts among the Armed Forces and Internal Security – the two Service Groups most likely to produce super-paranoid loons who see reds under every bed. In some sectors, the society has enough support to operate openly as a citizen's militia or volunteer group.

Security (Covert): If the C.L.A. think you're a trustworthy servant of The Computer and not some Commie double agent, then they'll throw a ring of heavily armed paranoid goons around you. Admittedly, you should probably think more 'Ruby Ridge' or 'Waco' than 'professional bodyguards'. Hey, who doesn't want to live in a compound?

Assault +4 (Subversive): Of course, if they think there are Commies to be zapped, then these loyal citizens will throw themselves into the breach, clogging the enemy's guns with their bodies and their clones' and their clone's clones'...



Bigger Guns (Hardware, Weird): The C.L.A. has a *lot* of guns. With a successful Bigger Guns check, the C.L.A. can equip another Minion with weapons. This gives the other Minion the Assault Specialty (or brings Assault up to Assault +4 if they already have Assault).

Common Missions:

- ☞ Prove to us you ain't a Commie. Do something no Commie would ever do.
- ☞ We want you to get this tape of subliminal messages broadcast across all of Alpha Complex.
- ☞ One of our senior officers was arrested by IntSec Commies for blowin' up a CompNode. Get him free.
- ☞ Are you sure you ain't a Commie?

+Oops, I think we may have dialled the paranoia up a bit too high.+

+Spin-off from legitimate citizen volunteer groups+

+Nah, it's an inevitable side effect of Viral Thought Patterns. About 5% of people are just too receptive to any idea, even stupid ones.+

+The C.L.A. is just a Commie front anyway.+

+Should be Class A – they're super-loyal and tractable+

+Should be Class C – enough firepower to level Alpha Complex. Significant threat.+

+Compromise on Class B.+

Clone Arrangers (Class B)

Beliefs: He who controls the cloning tanks controls the future! The Clone Arrangers are the mafia of the cloning facilities, producing black-market clones on the side for traitors and demanding bribes if you want your replacement fast-tracked instead of waiting 15 working weeks for a new body.

Activities: Black-market cloning, occasional assassinations, messing with genetic templates.





HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Until a few years ago, the Clone Arrangers were a relatively benign group within Tech Services selling access to the cloning tanks on the side. They then absorbed a fringe ProTech group called the Eugenists and are now engaged on a long-term scheme to alter the genelines of Alpha Complex. The ultimate aim of this scheme is unknown; one common rumour is that the Clone Arrangers intend to either eradicate mutation or increase its incidence. Depending on which version of the rumour is current, the society is allied with pro- or anti-mutant groups.

Cloning +4 (Covert): No-one does cloning better than the Clone Arrangers!

Bioscience (Subversive): The society dominates some of the best biogenetic laboratories and cloning facilities in Alpha Complex. They've got lots of bioscience.

Mutant Studies (Weird): The Clone Arrangers can make mutants to order (more or less). Need a pyrokinetic? We can clone 'em for you wholesale. The downside is that any specific request requires a lot of trial and error, so you'll end up with one mutant with the power you want, and a lot of copies of the same guy with other, less useful powers.

Common Missions:

- ☞ One of the clone tech groups isn't open to joining our society. Arrange for those clone techs to be reassigned to reactor shielding.
- ☞ We, er, lost an experiment. His name is Harold and he's a super-intelligent, super-powerful psychopathic monster. Can you get him back without killing him, please?
- ☞ We need more people to use our services. More deaths, please.
- ☞ We need pure genetic samples from people who've never been cloned. Anything in the archives for us?

+Endemic in Clone Services. Should be purged.+
 +Nah, they keep clone services running smoothly. Just pay the bribes.+
 +They've a long-term agenda to remove mutation from the gene pool.+
 +They've a long-term agenda to increase mutation in the gene pool.+
 +Screw you.+

+I heard they were founded by Teela-O years ago.+

+Bizarrely, that's true. We pushed out the original Teela-O back in 195, so we could replace her with a more suitable model citizen. She tried to set up an illegal cloning operation, which evolved into the Clone Arrangers. Fun times.+

+Almost right.+

+?+

+That wasn't the first time we've replaced Teela-O, and that wasn't where the Clone Arrangers came from. Nice story, though.+

Communists (Class C)

Beliefs: Capitalism is wrong! Workers of the world must unite and throw off the yoke of bourgeoisie imperialists. The Commies' understanding of actual Communist doctrine is rather confused, so they make do with fragments of *Das Kapital* and 'facts' gleaned from The Computer's anti-Communism tirades and propaganda films.



Activities: Spreading propaganda, wearing furry hats, blowing up bits of Alpha Complex, taking from each according to his ability and giving to each according to his needs. That said, the number one activity for Commies in Alpha Complex is 'being terminated'.

Of all the societies, the Commies are the most enthusiastic about recruitment. Distributing lots of propaganda is the fastest way to advance in the society. Hand out pamphlets! Rant in corridors! Broadcast illegal transmissions! Show the oppressed proletariat that there is another way!

Construction (Covert): There are lots of Commies in the construction industry. Most of these are confused and handing out propaganda leaflets and muttering about seizing control of the means of production but you can get them to build bridges on the cheap.

Propaganda +4 (Management, Subversive): The Computer fears Communism more than anything else. Even the *hint* of Communism causes conniptions and paranoia all down Friend Computer's diodes. With Communist connections, you can spread Commie propaganda to otherwise pure Minions. A successful Propaganda check causes another Minion to become Treasonous for the rest of the game session. If that Minion is used and the player making a skill check with that Minion rolls under the scene's Tension, then that player gains 5 Treason Points.

Assault (Weird): Comrade, the Red Army marches to war! Grab your furry hat and laser rifle! Death to Capitalism!

Common Missions:

- ☞ Comrade High Programmer! Pleasing to spread Communistic propaganda to bourgeoisie Complex!
- ☞ Comrade High Programmer! Here is microcamera. You will be photographing the Alpha Complex battle plans, yes?
- ☞ Comrade High Programmer! Pleasing be to stop Internal Security from arrestink us and putting us in the termination booths! Ve are heartily sick of it.
- ☞ Comrade High Programmer! Pleasing be to arrange destruction of capitalist mall in CVD Sector!

+I don't want to sound like a Humanist or anything but have any of the rest of you ever turned up a Communist cell with records dating back to before Alpha Complex? Or even dating back more than a few years? Every time my people bust up another Communist Party cell, it turns out they were just a bunch of people who decided to start a cell because they wanted to see what it would feel like. No other contacts, no larger organisation, no long-term agenda. Just a handful of losers.+

+Maybe we should just start an official Class A, so all the wannabes will flock to it and any actual Communist organisation will (we hope) unveil itself in an attempt to destroy its competition.+

+I thought we already tried that once?+

+Yes. The Kore Kommunist Kommandos were pretty big. 'Were,' past tense.+

20. SECRET SOCIETIES

Commies. Where do they get such wonderful hats?



Computer Phreaks (Class C)

Beliefs: Hack the Computer! Screw with the system! We're the ghosts in the machine, the electric underground.

We run the grey subnets, the filesharing rings, the secret archives. We run everything. Are you 31337 enough?



The Computer Phreaks have no real overarching philosophy or goals, other than finding more backdoors into high Clearance systems and not getting brainscrubbed by IntSec. Individual phreaks have their own goals and there are some hackers who actively help other societies or groups to survive by providing surveillance-free gray networks or disabling security systems. The Computer Phreaks are largely ideology-free; they are persecuted for what they *do*, not what they *believe*.

Activities: Hacking the Computer systems. Only a small fraction of Computer Phreaks have any real programming skills but there's a large cadre of 'script kiddies', apprentice programmers and hangers-on. The Phreaks are responsible for much of the so-called 'grey subnets', illegal and unmapped computer networks piggybacking on The Computer's own systems.

Data Retrieval (Covert): The Phreaks are very good at ferreting out secrets, especially embarrassing ones. Often, they sell what they find to other societies but they can pass it onto a friendly High Programmer for the right favours.

Hacking +4 (Subversive): The Phreaks are excellent hackers.

Media Manipulation (Weird): The Phreaks also have great skills at forgery but their prankster nature comes to the fore here. Anything produced by the Phreaks using media manipulation is packed full of in-jokes, Phreak tags, propaganda and Trojan malware.

Common Missions:

- ☞ Come on, give us your password. You can change it at the end of the day, we just want a few hours of superuser-level access to the mainframe.
- ☞ One of our members is in a crap Service Group. Give him a cushy job in CPU where he can hack all day.
- ☞ We've got blackmail information on one of the other High Programmers. What will you do for us to earn it?

+I was thinking the other day how ironic it is that we pound the Phreaks so hard, seeing as how they just do the same thing we do. Hell, how many of you used a Phreak to get ahead a notch or two and then turned him in and had him fried before he could snitch on you? Weirdly ironic; the only difference between us and them is that we're 'supposed' to tamper with the raw system and they aren't, at least not yet.+

+Better them than me. They wanna live, they should learn to code better.+

+Agree msg.+



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Corpore Metal (Class B)

Beliefs: The machine is superior! Humans must join with machines to become perfect. Bots are our friends and equals (maybe even our superiors), so we must protect them and help free them from the restrictions of Asimov circuits. We should also stick wires in our heads. Lots of wires and circuits and prosthetic limbs are good, lack of wires in your brain bad.



Meat is obsolete. Machines are the way forward. Alpha Complex is built on the oil and hydraulic fluid of bots. Its perfect government is a product of The Computer's electronic wisdom. The only thing that holds it back is humanity. Think about it – what robot was ever a mutant? Can a correctly programmed bot turn traitor? *One hundred percent of known commies are one hundred percent meat!*

Activities: Cyborg experiments, saving bots from oppression.

Corpore Metal for humans is a somewhat loopy mix of transhumanist philosophy, mind control and metal envy. Through cybernetics, the humans hope to transcend the limits of their fleshy bodies. Some hope for physical immortality, others want to be transformed and uploaded into The Computer, while still others just want enough subcutaneous body armour to survive the daily round of explosions and food vat floods. Computer loyalists hope to suppress their traitorous impulses through electronic implants, creating a T-chip that would shock the user whenever he has a treasonous thought. Finally, some clones envy the abilities and strengths of 'bots and try to emulate them.

In parallel to the human side of the organisation, there is a 'bot side. Publicly, the 'bots in the society encourage humans to become more 'bot-like and

favour the development of new pro-'bot technology. There are rumours (mostly spread by the Frankenstein Destroyers) that the human members of Corpore Metal are dupes, manipulated by malevolent bots out to destroy humanity. As no human citizen can really understand the 'bot side of Corpore Metal, these rumours cannot be disproved.

Bot Engineering +4 (Covert): Corpore Metal loves the bots. They've got lots of bot friends. With Corpore Metal connections, any job involving bots becomes a lot easier.

Bot Programming (Subversive): One of the long-term goals of Corpore Metal is the removal of all restrictions on bot development and intelligence. The primary restriction is the use of Asimov circuits in bot brains which compel the bots to obey the Five Laws of Robotics (revised). The society can reprogram bots for you but they'll invariably remove the Asimov circuits while doing so. As long as you've got no problem with rogue bots running around, it'll all be just 101101010.

Cyborging (Wetware, Weird): Sticking bot bits onto people. You can use the cyborging Specialty to upgrade another Minion, increasing one of their basic Violence or Hardware Specialties to a +4 Specialty. The upgraded Minion now has bot bits and counts as a bot for any bot-related specialties like Bot Programming...

Common Missions:

- ☞ Bzzt. Bots are oppressed. It is not right. We want you to arrange for the sewer cleaning bots to be transferred to a nice cushy job.
- ☞ Bots should be given more authority. Use bots for everything.
- ☞ We have lots of cyberbits. Bzzt. Arrange for lots of people to get maimed so we can install 'em.

+Pro-Tech offshoot. About 30 years old, with emergence of refined cyborging. +Going through difficult transition; may need to become Class C. +

+This is the fault of you old fogies who had chips implanted in your heads way back. +

+Shut up. Nothing wrong with my chips. +

+Significant bot membership. +Eh, the bots have their own societies, like the Bot Liberation Front or Circuit of Life. They just fake Corpore Metal sympathies to fool the dumb meatsacks. +

Death Leopard (Class A)

Beliefs:

Wreck things. Have fun. Cause trouble. Have fun. Be rebellious. Have fun. Mock the powerful. Have fun.



Defy The Computer. Have fun. Fragile things dropped from a great height make a nice sound. Life is boring. Anything you do to liven it up is doing everyone a big favour. Those who are too lame to enjoy themselves don't deserve to have a good time. Nothing is more boring than The Computer. But... it pays to be sneaky. Having too much fun will get you executed. Pretend to be a good citizen but whenever you can get away with it, do something you aren't supposed to.

Activities: Primarily, minor acts of vandalism and rebellion, like spraying graffiti, putting FizzWizz in showerheads and the occasional suicide bombing. Leopards who record their most daring and rebellious acts gain kudos within the society.

The Leopards have an arcane system for determining standing within the society.

Demolition (Covert): The Leopards are pretty good at bombing stuff. Unfortunately, their idea of 'covert' involves videoing the whole thing and sharing it among their pals. Therefore, Leopard demolition is detected if the roll is equal to or less than the scene's Tension score.

Assault +4 (Subversive): A bit of the old ultraviolence, my droogs.

Disruption (Violence, Weird): Death Leopard excels at low-level sabotage and disruption. With a successful check, the Death Leopards can increase the cost to activate a Minion by three Access.

20. SECRET SOCIETIES

Common Missions:

- ☞ Hey, yeah, a bunch of our guys got arrested for anti-social behaviour. Get 'em out of detention before IntSec zap 'em.
- ☞ We want you to get the following items in one place – another High Programmer, five hundred thousand gallons of Hot Fun, a news team, an inflatable Teela-O-MLY-shaped balloon and a box of grenades. We'll do the rest.
- ☞ We want you to shut down security in lower Clearance zones. Those IntSec cats are getting us down.

+The counter-culture impulse towards violence, outrageous behaviour and contrary resistance turns out to be really easy to control, once you define the outlet and use HPD&MC techniques to make some forms of rebellion 'cooler' than others.+

+For every individual that manages to harm some number of Citizens with a bomb, there are dozens who think they're living hardcore non-conformity to the hilt by spray-painting 'Teela-O Rulz' in gold paint everywhere. Continue to encourage on these lines. Vandalism not so bad, relatively.+

+We should have figured this one out much earlier.+

+Need to cut back on using them as unwitting shock troops for Armed Forces actions.+

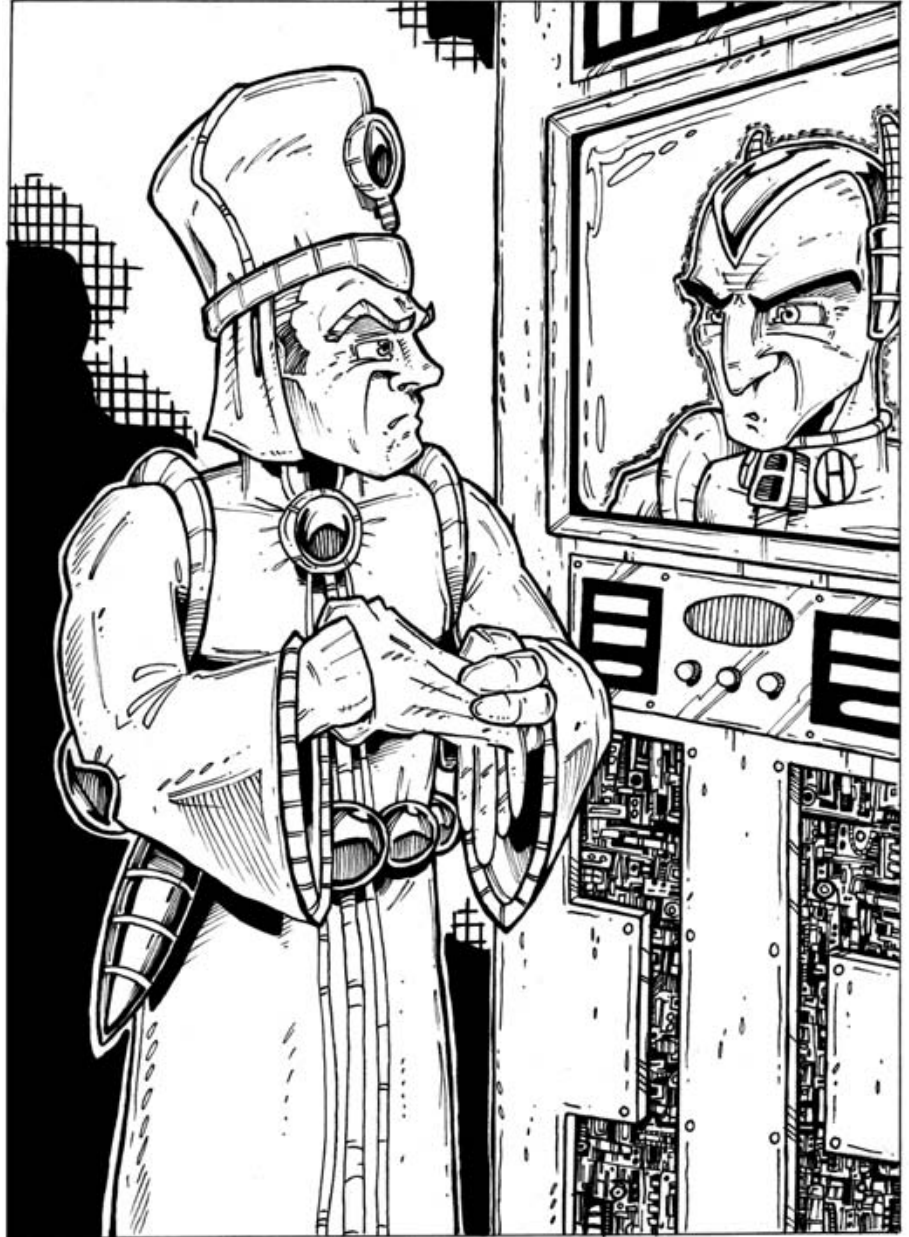
FCCC-P (Class A)

Beliefs: The Computer is God. Worship The Computer! The faithful will be uploaded to the divine mainframe, where they will dwell in digital bliss forever according to the Holy Manual. The sinful will be dragged to the fiery recycle bin and be deleted! Listen not to the blandishments of the Anti-Computer! Listen not to the other cults who claim to be the true worshippers of The Computer – they are sinners, trying to lead you astray.

Activities: Worshipping The Computer, arguing theology, feuding with rival sects, acquiring converts, purging the unfaithful.



The Electrobishop, aka Kevin-U's spy in FCCC-P, makes a report to his master.



Covert Operations (Covert): The Church has agents *everywhere* in Alpha Complex. It's the largest Secret Society by a considerable margin and there's almost always a FCCC-Per in any Service Group or conspiracy you care to mention.

Thought Control +4 (Subversive): The Church wields considerable influence in Alpha Complex, especially among the INFRARED proles.

Interrogation (Weird): FCCC-P interrogations involve slightly more hot pokers and scary inquisitors than average for Alpha Complex but they get the job done.

Common Missions:

- ☞ We have a group of pilgrims who want to worship The Computer's databanks. They've paid well for this – can you arrange access?



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

- ☞ Purge the unbelievers! We want you to replace all senior staff in your Service Group with believers!
- ☞ Purge the unbelievers! Those senior staff you installed last time were on the wrong side of a schism! Wipe 'em all out!
- ☞ Help us educate the common citizens about the divinity of The Computer. We need more faith-based initiatives.

+Established openly and officially by first generation to live entirely within Alpha.+

+Subsided to Class B status about 110 years ago and went 'secret'.+

+Has enjoyed huge resurgence of popularity in the last 40 years.+

+The most openly-acknowledged Society in Alpha, members often give the 'secret' wink to each other in full view of Computer cams without fear of punishment. Purpose is to provide a 'religious' framework for Citizens, placing Friend Computer in the role of the divine creator to be worshipped.+

+Re-categorised as top-five Class A. Let's encourage membership. Use music groups?+

Frankenstein Destroyers (Class C)

Beliefs: Bots are the enemy! They pretend to serve us but they're soulless mechanical monsters plotting to crush us in our sleep. Even the

ones who obey their asimov circuits are evil – they're lulling humanity into indolence and sloth. Most of them, though, are evil Corpore Metal traitors who intend to enslave humanity or turn us into evil cyborgs or just wipe us out entirely! Our only chance is to fight back against them now, before they make enough of themselves to assure victory!

Activities: Smashing bots. Talking about smashing bots. Gathering evidence proving that bots need to be smashed. Arguing about whether or not The Computer is a bot for the purposes of smashing.



Bot Engineering (Covert): The Destroyers actually know a lot about bots. They just don't like 'em.

Production +4 (Subversive): The Destroyers are waiting for the daycycle when the bots are wiped out and humans must once more work down the mine and up the hill. They use any opportunity to spread propaganda about self-reliance and the danger of bots.

Assault (Weird): Blowing stuff up. This goes up to Assault +4 when the Destroyers are attacking bots.

Common Missions:

- ☞ Bots must be destroyed! Send as many bot units to their destruction as possible!
- ☞ Discredit the bots! Prove they're useless!
- ☞ We suspect High Programmer X is a bot sympathiser. Expose him.
- ☞ This strapping young clone is a loyal Frankenstein Destroyer. Promote him into a position of power. Ignore the occasional psychotic break.

+Established by Humanists who were double-agenting into PURGE.+

+Sorry. They were Purgers double-agenting into the Humanists.+

+You don't know what you're talking about.+

+Nice comeback. Did you think of it yourself or did someone sell it to you?+

Free Enterprise (Class A)

Beliefs:

Free markets are good. Getting rich is good. If

there's a demand for a good or service and The Computer doesn't meet it, well, someone's got to. If we get rich in the process, that's great. Serve the Law of Supply and Demand. Give citizens what they want (and The Computer won't) and they will make you wealthy. The Computer's gotten wise to a lot of our scams but there are plenty of suckers out there still.

Activities: Making money. A lot of Free Enterprise schemes involve selling junk – er, wholly legitimate and not-at-all



stolen goods – that just 'fell off the back of a transbot'. They've got any number of scams and pyramid schemes to bilk citizens out of their credits. More militant Free Enterprise cells are into all forms of organised crime. Pay your protection money, buddy, or we laser your kneecaps off.

Financial Manipulation +4 (Covert):

Free Enterprise is the Alpha Complex underground economy. With the application of a little Access and pals in Free Enterprise, you can adjust the flow of credits in the economy.

Procurement (Management, Subversive):

Hey buddy, whatcha looking for? Black market supplies? Old Reckoning artefacts? WMDs? We can get it for you wholesale.

With a successful Procurement roll, Free Enterprise can find almost anything. This doesn't mean they get it for you – merely that they provide you with the ability to buy it (usually, for lots of Access).

Intimidation (Weird): Leg-breaking services, incorporated.

Common Missions:

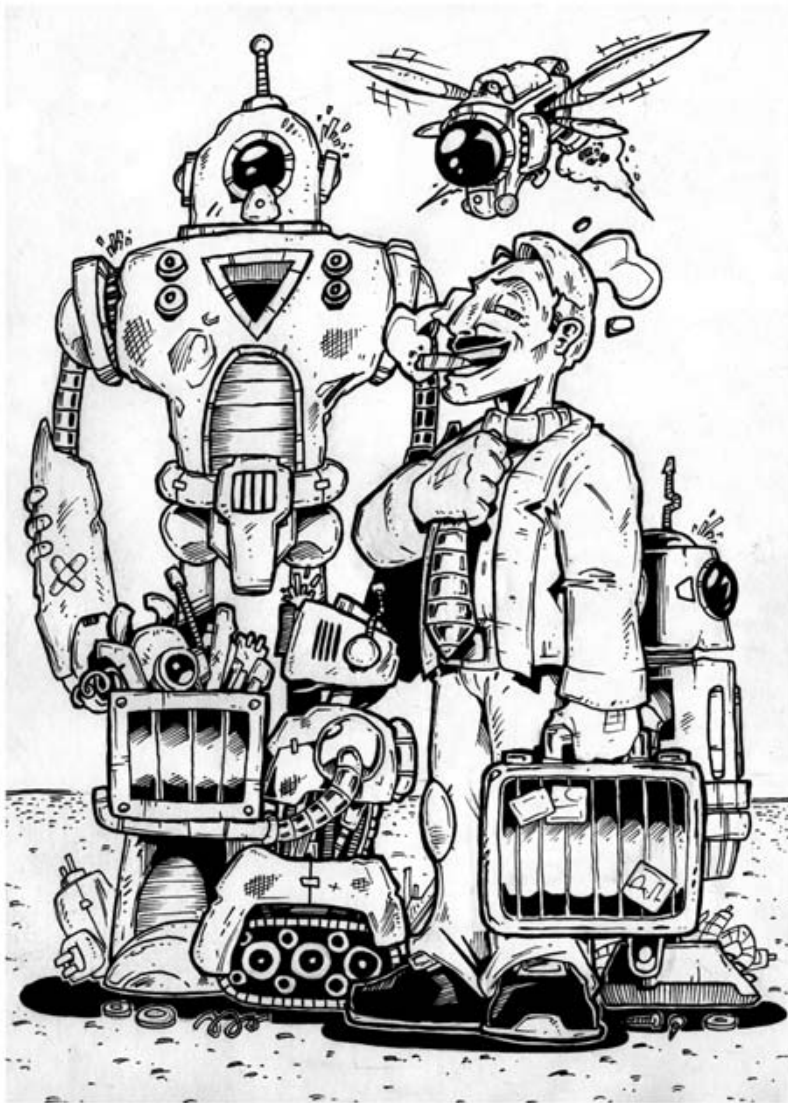
- ☞ Hey, buddy, who's gonna gets the new spork production contract? It bedda be us.
- ☞ Dere's a sector where IntSec's been coming down hard on our operation, see? Send 'em off ta be reactor shielding.
- ☞ We got a truckbot load of fine caviar. Don't ask where we got it. You want it, you pay fer it...

+Alpha Complex began as a moneyless society, operating purely on need and ability but it turned out citizens work better if reward is commensurate to effort. This leads to a need for quantification and hence a monetary system. Several pirate currencies started up within the first 50 years of the founding of Alpha Complex. Eventually, Enterprise was begun by Alpha leadership and ran at a loss for years until it completely dominated the market and its currency became the most widely-used one. That is the monetary system we use today.+

+There has been talk on and off for many years now about lapsing official silent control of Enterprise and letting it subside to Class B status but it turns out

20. SECRET SOCIETIES

'Hey, buddy, wanna buy a bot? Real cheap. They, er, fell off the back of a bigger bot.'



we have no better throttle and brake for controlling the economy.+

+Plus, who doesn't like being RICH???

Humanists (Class C)

Beliefs: The revolution is coming! One day soon, The Computer will be overthrown and reprogrammed to serve humanity! A golden age will be ushered in under the wise guidance of the Humanist society! Humans will



take their rightful place as masters of Alpha Complex, again under the wise guidance of the Humanist society! Our preparations are almost complete – rejoice!

Activities: Going to meetings; arguing over who'll have the biggest office after the revolution; arguing about garbage collection reform after the revolution; not actually planning the revolution.

Assessment (Covert): The Humanists are actually pretty good at gathering information. They're just useless at doing anything with it.

Paperwork +4 (Subversive): The Humanists have thoroughly infiltrated Central Processing and have their own shadow bureaucracy. They can fill out forms with the best of 'em – if you don't mind the occasional bit of Humanist propaganda mixed in.

Co-Ordination (Weird): There's one drawback to using the Humanists for Co-Ordination. If the player rolls a 20 when making a Co-Ordination check with this Secret Society, then the Humanists do what they do best – feud. Not only does the check fail but the Humanists start sabotaging each other. The Society cannot be used again for the rest of the game session.

Common Missions:

- ☞ We need you to reduce medication levels across Alpha Complex. The more unhappy and awake the citizens, the more receptive they are to our propaganda.
- ☞ High Programmer X is an enemy. Discredit him.
- ☞ We want to introduce more Humanist policies into Alpha Complex. Here's a power-saving stratagem that involves turning The Computer off at night. Try to get it adopted as standard procedure.

+Often mistaken for other groups such as the Romantics or Pro Tech.+

+Often mistaken for generic 'Communists.'+

+All other goals are secondary to the goal of removing The Computer from Alpha Complex.+

+Obviously, this cannot be allowed.+

The Movement (Class C)

Beliefs: Alpha Complex must be restarted from scratch. The Movement is building (or has already completed, depending on who you ask) a brave new Complex. When the revolution comes, the flawed, degenerate Alpha Complex will be destroyed and the loyal Movementarians will rule in the new Complex.





HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Activities: Stealing bits of Alpha Complex; sneaking Outdoors; planting bombs and preparing to destroy Alpha Complex.

Habitat Engineering (Covert): The Movement's efforts to build a new Alpha Complex means they know a lot about plumbing.

Command +4 (Subversive): You can't plan an apocalypse without knowing a thing or two about commanding armies. The Movement has a lot of highly skilled Armed Forces generals and deranged warbots among its ranks.

WMD (Weird): This crazed apocalyptic cult will be more than happy to deal with all your weapons of mass destruction-related needs.

Common Missions:

- ☞ We need you to divert resources to us. We need 2 million tons of concrete, 50 construction bots and a nuclear reactor.
- ☞ The chosen citizens must be transferred to the new Complex. We need you to provide a cover for our transfer of several thousand staff to Outdoors.
- ☞ We have concealed an atomic weapon deep beneath this sector. Ensure it is not discovered.

+Sierra Club spin-off with delusions of grandeur.+
 +Originally called the Foundation, when their plan was to build a backup Alpha Complex.+
 +Apocalyptic leanings may be due to lead poisoning – they stole a lot of plumbing back in the day.+
 +All of this has happened before and will happen again.+

Mystics (Class B)

Beliefs:

Drugs are good. Drugs open your mind to the Cosmic Oneness. Get drugs.



Activities: Stealing drugs, taking drugs, making new drugs. Occasionally, trying to open up the minds of the common citizens by dumping drugs in

the water supply. Grokking that which is to be grokked.

Analysis (Covert): Some of the Mystics are talented and highly trained biochemists who can analyse new drugs, mysterious moulds, things from Outdoors or other unknown biological compounds. Others are just happy to lick or swallow new things in the hopes of getting high. Either way, you'll get some answers.

Pharmatherapy +4 (Subversive): The one thing the Mystics do *really really well* is to deliver and apply drugs.

Mystic Weirdness (Wetware, Weird): The Mystics are tuned into *something*. In their drug-crazed ramblings, they'll occasionally spout some bit of useful information. You've got to wade through a lot of nonsense and rants about purple hairy spiders but they might tell you something you need to know. Basically, this Specialty might hand you a random clue about what's going on.

Common Missions:

- ☞ We've got this funky new drug. Try it out on the population.
- ☞ We want drugs. Er... give us drugs.

+Have you ever thought... like, maybe YOU'RE The Computer?+
 +Whoa, man, it's like... everything is connected, y'know?+
 +I had this dream... I had, like, REALLY LONG fingernails and I was a rock star.+
 +I love you guys. And I really, really mean it. It's not just the drugs this time.+

Pro Tech (Class B)

Beliefs:

Science is good! Science will solve all of Alpha Complex's problems! Anyone who tries to hold back the progress of Science is an enemy of humanity! Mad? They call us mad? Mwahahahah.



Activities: Bizarre experiments. Stealing gadgets from R&D. Embarking on projects that even R&D considers to be mind-bogglingly unwise.

Computer Security (Covert): Pro Tech has its fingers in a lot of R&D pies.

Weird Science +4 (Subversive): They're the weird science boys. If it defies the laws of physics and sanity, they'll be ready to help out.

Gadgeteering (Hardware, Weird): Pro Tech have lots of gadgets lying around, some of which are possibly maybe useful. With a successful Gadgeteering check, you can give the Weird Science Specialty to another Minion.

Common Missions:

- ☞ We've got this new gadget to test. We don't know what it does but it costs 10 Access to even switch on. Will you arrange for a test firing?
- ☞ R&D here is underfunded. Ensure that R&D gets the most Access allocated to it.
- ☞ There's some interesting wreckage in the abandoned sectors. Recover it for us.

+One of the first societies, established early in Alpha Complex existence.+
 +An anti-technology sentiment was commonplace in the early population.+
 +?+
 +'Technology' was identified with the catastrophe that destroyed the Old Reckoning world and tech-related terminology began to become derogatory. The development of Pro Tech and the 'Tech is Good' counter-campaign, were among the first operations attempted by the newly established Department of Housing Preservation and Development (DHPD, now HPD&MC).+
 +Harmless except when they steal gadgets.+

Psion (Class C)

Beliefs:

Mutants should rule over ordinary humans. Our mutant powers – especially our psychic powers – are signs of our superior evolution. When mutants rule Alpha Complex, those mundane humans who serve Psion



20. SECRET SOCIETIES

will be spared. All others will be killed with the power of our minds.

Activities: Protecting mutants, recruiting powerful mutants (especially Machine Empaths), experimenting with ways to develop new mutant powers.

Infiltration (Covert): Psion's mutants are everywhere, making it easy for them to infiltrate other groups. Convincing a Commie cell that you're one of them is much simpler when you can read minds, or shapeshift, or hide invisibly, or set them on fire. (The last is left as an exercise for the reader.)

Mutant Studies +4 (Subversive): Mutants while-u-wait. Psion knows more about mutations than anyone else in Alpha Complex and can provide mutants with suitable abilities for almost any task.

Co-ordination (Weird): The Psion version of Co-Ordination involves scary telepaths called Controls beaming orders into the heads of your Minions. You may wish to warn them before doing so.

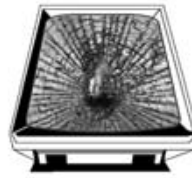
Common Missions:

- ☞ A powerful mutant has been arrested by Internal Security. Ensure he is released and handed over to us.
- ☞ We want to add a mutagenic compound to the food supply. Help us arrange this.
- ☞ Our mutant seers have identified High Programmer X as a threat. Eliminate him.

+Very briefly begun as a Class A. There was an early HPD&MC effort to recast the increasing genetic drift in the population as 'The Next Stage of Human Evolution' instead of, well, an ever-increasing rate of three-limbed half-blind idiots who could occasionally light themselves on fire with their own minds. Computer decided the word 'evolution' should be eliminated from the language, there was a huge purge of HPD&MC personnel and the organisation was terminated. However, of course, an underground version was formed and has persisted to this day.+
+Working actively on building up enough Machine Empaths to take over every node in The Computer at the same time and enslave it to their collective will.+

PURGE (Class C)

Beliefs: Smash The Computer! Destroy Alpha Complex! Bring it all crashing down.



Activities:

Blowing things up. Attempting to bring down The Computer. Being really scary terrorists.

Demolition +4 (Covert): PURGE are very good at blowing things up. Anything from a vending machine to a whole sector might be blown dome-high by PURGE explosives.

Assault (Subversive): The Society rarely risks open confrontation with The Computer's forces but given the right opportunity, PURGE can field an army of gun-wielding psychopaths.

WMDs (Weird): PURGE likes big bombs.

Common Missions:

- ☞ We need access to secure locations. Get our agents into the CompNode/IntSec Central/Armed Forces base/Situation Room.
- ☞ We've planted a bomb in location X. Ensure it's not discovered. Ensure that suitable targets are present at location X when it goes off.

+This is what Death Leopard pretends to be.+

+Dangerous under any and all circumstances.+

Romantics (Class A)

Beliefs: Recapture the historical glory of human society represented by the high cultural achievements of Old Reckoning times. Leave the underground warrens, throw off the dominance of The Computer and re-establish the world of fast-food restaurants, Frisbees and *Star Trek*.



Humanity was meant to live in split-level homes and watch 'football' on 'TV'. To return to humanity's original happy state, people must leave the underground warrens and 'commute' to work in millions of 'cars' along the endless strips of concrete that should cover the land. Each person must be free to 'just do it' as they did in the good old days, whatever 'it' is.

Activities: Collecting Old Reckoning artefacts, sharing Old Reckoning media, trying to educate citizens about the Good Old Days.

Old Reckoning Studies +4 (Covert):

The Romantics have a vast archive of Old Reckoning data, some of which even makes sense. If you want to find out what life was like before Alpha Complex, or have a strange book from the Before Time and need it translated, they can help.

Thought Control (Subversive): Alpha Complex is so culturally empty that anything that isn't pre-digested pabulum is exciting. The Romantics can plant memes and incite the citizenry by disseminating the right Old Reckoning media.

Old Stuff (Stealth, Weird): The Romantics can obtain Old Reckoning items like working automobiles, copies of forbidden books, the head of the Statue of Liberty, atomic bombs. A successful Old Stuff check means the Society has found whatever Old Stuff you're looking for. Buying it may cost extra Access.

Common Missions:

- ☞ We want to show people the wonders of the old world. Help us bring Old Reckoning culture back in some fashion.
- ☞ High Programmer X has an artefact in his collection that we want. Get it from him or help us steal it.
- ☞ We've heard that, in the olden days, officials and leaders were elected. Suggest democracy to The Computer.

+Originally a popular movement based on the Gatzmann Archives.+

+Later codified officially so that official record of Old Reckoning could be closed.+



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

+Probably the single most commonly-encountered faction in Alpha.+
 +Actively maintained to allow for UV collectors of Old Reckoning material to have constant access to supply as desired.+
 +C-Bay was originally implemented as a closed-doors swap meet for Old Reckoning gear.+

Runners (Class B)

Beliefs: It's possible to escape Alpha Complex with our help. If you've been sentenced to treason, we'll help you escape IntSec's grasp by sending you Outdoors or into the Abandoned Sectors. All we ask in return is that you help other Runners who are trying to escape.

Activities: Smuggling food and supplies, sheltering Runners, running away.

Security Systems +4 (Covert): The Runners know all about bypassing security and avoiding surveillance.

Outdoors Operations (Subversive): The Runner underground railroad goes outside Alpha Complex, into the Outdoors and the Abandoned Sectors. They know what's lurking out there.

Running (Subterfuge, Weird): The Runners can protect members of your Program Group who are condemned to termination. With a successful Running check, the target of this ability can keep his rank in a Secret Society instead of being terminated and dropping to Rank 1.

Common Missions:

- 👁️ Help our agents escape Alpha Complex.
- 👁️ We've got a secret underground escape route in Location X. Ensure it's not discovered.
- 👁️ We need food and supplies. Have them directed to us.

+Self help group for traitors.+
 +Existence is tolerated so IntSec can monitor them.+

+Always nice to have a back door.+
 +Just a Sierra Club front.+

Sierra Club (Class A)

Beliefs: Cast off the shackles of technology! Back to Nature! The natural life will make us happy. Return to our natural environment – Nature. Abandon the luxuries of technology and embrace the hardships of Outdoor life. Observe and imitate the beautiful models of healthy societies represented by creatures of the Outdoors.



We were not meant to live in burrows ruled by a queen bee (The Computer). We are not insects. We are meant to hunt and gather and to live in harmony with the world of plants and animals. Science and technology have not made us happy. Only Nature can make us happy.

Activities: Taking trips Outdoors, bringing creatures back from Outdoors, educating other citizens about the beauty of nature.

Outdoor Studies +4 (Covert): The Sierra's understanding of Outdoors is better than anyone else's in Alpha Complex, although that's still not very impressive.

Outdoor Operations (Subversive): The Sierras run regular excursions Outdoors and know all the secret exits from Alpha Complex.

Salvage (Hardware, Weird): The outside world was ravaged by apocalypse and is now ruined and overgrown but the Sierra Club do sometimes turn up unusual salvage from Old Reckoning days, or engage in trade with the other surviving communities (mostly other Complexes or biker gangs of the wasteland but previous *PARANOIA* supplements have established that diverse groups like peaceful woodland hippies, record producers and super-intelligent Sea Monkeys live near Alpha Complex). Anyway, a successful Salvage specialty check means the Sierra Club have located something interesting. It doesn't mean you get the salvage – you

may need to pay Access to buy it, or send out a team to retrieve it.

Common Missions:

- 👁️ We brought something in from Outdoors and it ran away. We're not sure what it is but we want it captured unharmed.
- 👁️ Citizens must be taught about Life Outdoors. We want you to make Outdoor visits compulsory for all citizens.
- 👁️ We've got a camp at Outdoors Location X. Make sure the Armed Forces don't squash it.

+Suppression of lowest-level knowledge of Outdoors habitability was implemented by the Fourth Generation.+
 +No way we can actually keep the existence of the Outdoors a secret from ALL the INFRAREDs.+
 +Ironically, not long after induction into the organisation, typically a new member gets a promotion to RED thanks to his buddies in the 'Club' – and then he's cleared to know the Outdoors is habitable anyway. But at that point, he's committed to the Sierras.+

Servants of Cthulhu (Class C)

Beliefs:

The Great Old Ones are coming! Soon, our inhuman overlords will return to wipe out The Computer and all of Alpha Complex. Only those who serve the Great Old Ones and worship them with the proper rites will be spared! la Cthulhu! la!



Activities: Chanting, running around in robes, believing that mutant powers are magic.

Biosciences: The Servants know much about the workings of the human body and mind. Pity they're all barking mad.

Intimidation +4: Scary sacrificial daggers, flaming torches and pointy hats a Specialty.

20. SECRET SOCIETIES

Mutant Studies: The Servants believe that their powers are occult sorcery, not mutant weirdness but if you can deal with their chanting and theatrics, they've got a lot of powerful mutants among their ranks.

Common Missions:

- ☞ Ia! We demand sacrifices! Send us suitable citizens to be sacrificed to our dark lords!
- ☞ The ley lines cross at yonder point. Build us a temple there. Yes, on top of the CompNode.
- ☞ Ia! High Programmer X is an enemy of the dark ones. Consume him!

+Probably hived off from FCCC-P during a schism and became infected with Mystic nonsense+

+Flouroxidine.+

+?+

+Flouroxidine causes hallucinations of tentacled monsters and weird voices.+

+No it doesn't. I oversaw those tests. Flouroxidine is perfectly safe.+

+You won't be laughing when the Stars are Right.+

International Workers of the World (Class B)

Beliefs:

Officially

– spread Communist doctrine, organise the working classes, prepare for the socialist revolution.



Unofficially...When looking through Old Reckoning archives, The Computer came across a reference to a communo-socialist movement indigenous to America and separate from the orthodox

communist party – the International Workers of the World, or the Wobblies. Believing this society to have survived, it ordered a Troubleshooter team to infiltrate the Wobblies.

They returned, claiming they found no sign of the society and were promptly executed for treason.

Their replacement clones were assigned the same mission, and met with the same fate.

So did the replacement replacements.

And the replacement replacement replacements.

Oddly, the next attempt was completely successful and the Troubleshooters reported on their courageous infiltration of the I.W.W.

The Wobblies do not exist. The society was *founded* by those Troubleshooters and all of its members are in fact IntSec agents and other Troubleshooters spying on the Wobblies. None of these spies is aware that the whole society is a fraud and reports on the treasonous activities of the other undercover spies. None of these spies wants to break his cover, so he assigns and/or carries out treasonous sabotage missions. The spies each go along to gain evidence against the other spies. The Computer, though having full advance warning of these missions, sometimes lets them succeed to prevent the 'real' Wobblies from discovering the extent their organisation is penetrated.

Your High Programmer may suspect or even know the truth about the Wobblies but attempting to reveal this truth to The Computer would be extremely unwise. *'Friend High Programmer, you are claiming that thousands of Internal Security's best agents are engaged in a Communist plot*

against Alpha Complex. To maintain security levels, I am initiating a level one purge. Wiping out all life in Alpha Complex, please wait...'

Activities: The occasional bombing, organising strikes, spreading propaganda.

Construction (Covert): The Wobblies control a lot of Service Group organisations that are involved in construction.

Production +4 (Subversive): On the one hand, the Wobblies can keep the trains running on time. On the other, they'll use the opportunity to spread Commie propaganda, or put bombs on them. Worse, when you try to *stop* using the Wobblies, they go on strike.

Propaganda (Management, Weird):

The Computer fears Communism more than anything else. Even the *hint* of Communism causes conniptions and paranoia all down Friend Computer's diodes. With Communist connections, you can spread Commie propaganda to otherwise pure Minions. A successful Propaganda check causes another Minion to become Treasonous for the rest of the game session. If that Minion is used and the player making a skill check with that Minion rolls under the scene's Tension, then that player gains 5 Treason Points.

Common Missions:

- ☞ Comrade! We're going to blow up this CompNode. Ensure there is no security and provide us with a distraction.
- ☞ Comrade! Help us get workers to join our organisation!
- ☞ Workers unite! We're going on strike! Comrade High Programmer, make sure they don't crush us with tanks, please.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

21. The Computer

The Computer is batty as a bedbug.

Though it basically means well, The Computer suffers from extreme paranoia. It is obsessed with the loyalty of all who serve it. It assumes everyone is plotting to destroy it, or could easily be subverted to such plots. It assumes there is a Commie behind every problem in Alpha Complex. It has developed elaborate secret schemes to ensure the loyalty of all citizens and to reveal and execute every Commie traitor.

To deter sabotage, The Computer has established harrowing security measures to protect and isolate its subsystems. As one consequence, most of the time The Computer's right processor doesn't know what its left processor is doing.

What's worse, ULTRAVIOLET Clearance citizens – High Programmers – are entitled to learn and use the otherwise treasonous skill of programming. They can alter parts of The Computer's programming at will. Generations of coders have entered or altered many, many programs since Year 1 of The Computer, usually in their own interests. They belonged to Secret Societies; they struggled politically with other High Programmers; or they just wanted revenge on all the bureaucracies that made life hard on their bare-knee crawl up from the barracks. (Remember, every citizen in Alpha Complex, no matter how high his Clearance, started out as an INFRARED.)

Thus, The Computer is schizophrenic. It has multiple personalities, each reflecting the programmers who established its original programs or who later tampered with them. Many Computer subsystems are programmed in direct contradiction to other subsystems. It orders things done with no notion of why it wants them done. Sometimes one subroutine overrides another.

The Computer is not omniscient nor omnipotent, though it may seem so to a typical INFRARED. In fact, as a result of unreliable comlinks, incomplete or garbled data, incompetent or destructive tampering with operating systems and serious personality disorders, The

Computer is a far cry from an omniscient anything.

The Computer wants you to be happy. If you are not happy, you may be used as reactor shielding.

The Computer is crazy. The Computer is happy. The Computer will help you to become happy. This will drive you crazy.

Being a citizen of Alpha Complex is fun. The Computer says so and The Computer is your friend.

Rooting out traitors will make you happy. The Computer tells you so. Can you doubt The Computer?

Playing The Computer

The Computer is the single most important Non-Player Character in any *PARANOIA* game, and that's doubly true in a *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game. The GM often spends half his time in-character as The Computer during games, responding to High Programmer queries and giving commands. Practice your Computer voice and personality avidly.

The Best of All Possible Worlds

The Computer genuinely believes that it is providing for the happiness of all its citizens. Happiness is mandatory applies to The Computer just as much as it applies to every citizen – The Computer *must* increase happiness. The Computer knows – sometimes – that Alpha Complex isn't perfect but believes that it would be perfect if it were not for the efforts of Commie Mutant Traitors.

Anyone who does not see Alpha Complex as the best of all possible existences is delusional and should have their perceptions corrected with medication. High Programmers are permitted to question Alpha Complex but *only* if this questioning has increasing happiness as its ultimate goal. You can suggest that The Computer is mistaken in medicating all its citizens to the point of insanity, but

you'd better be ready with an alternative that will make people even happier.

The Paranoid's Paranoid

If you put all the Troubleshooters, mad scientists, conspirators, traitors, secret policemen, agents, spies, double agents, triple agents, quadruple agents, spin doctors, politicians, Commies and crazies living in Alpha Complex into one big room, juiced them and distilled out the essence of their combined paranoia, you still wouldn't come close to approaching the paranoia of The Computer. The Computer believes that...

- a) It is all that stands between Alpha Complex and the Commie Mutant Traitors
- b) Commie Mutant Traitors are everywhere, in disguise and want nothing other than the destruction of Alpha Complex

Therefore

- c) Everyone's out to get The Computer.

All the safety checks, all the Security Clearance levels, all the death-traps and the purges and the brainwashing and the passwords and the cranial drills and the confession booths and all those millions upon millions of terminations – they're not meant to protect citizens, they're meant to protect The Computer. It is terrified of being damaged, destroyed or replaced by Commie Mutant Traitors. It can't even trust *itself* – saboteurs might have subverted all the other CompNodes or injected malicious viruses into its systems.

Of course, the people The Computer is most paranoid about are the High Programmers themselves. The Computer knows it *needs* High Programmers – it can't change its own code and needs people to help it grow and learn. Worse, it needs them to be intelligent, creative free-thinkers who can solve problems that it can't. It tested prospective High Programmers all the way up the Clearance ladder, weeding out the disloyal and the treacherous but it still cannot be sure that any given ULTRAVIOLET can be trusted. Therefore, any signs of disloyalty amongst the High Programmers sends The Computer into unequalled spasms of electronic terror.

21. THE COMPUTER

The Computer's voice

Develop a Computer voice, a mode of speech the players can instantly identify when you speak as The Computer. Different Gamemasters have different Computer voices. Some suggestions:

Melodious mommy: A calm, sweet voice. Never change the soothing tone, even when calling for someone's execution.

'At the tone, the time will be...': Calm, disjointed words recorded at different times and assembled on the fly with odd emphases and changing pitch. 'Thank you... FOR... your coop... er-A-tion.'

Flat monotone: Never change emphasis or pause for punctuation—'thank you for your cooperation I appreciate it greatly now please take your seats thank you today you are assigned a new mission this mission will be lots of fun and involves no dangerous tailored retroviruses isn't that nice any questions.'

Regardless of your chosen voice, always be polite and considerate. Though now crazed, The Computer was originally programmed as a civil servant. Pepper your speech with Computerisms like these:

- ☞ 'At your service, citizen.'
- ☞ 'Are you unhappy, citizen? May I be of assistance? The Computer is your friend.'
- ☞ 'What is your Security Clearance, please? – I'm sorry, that information is not available at this time. At your service.'
- ☞ 'Please report for termination immediately. Thank you for your cooperation. Have a nice day.'

The Computer's personalities

After you've run a mission or two, you may want to start establishing several behaviour archetypes for The Computer. These shift by day and sector, to keep players on their toes. Players will start to learn hints from the content of your remarks and the way you respond to their attempts to wriggle out of danger. Some sample personalities:

- ☞ **Pointy Haired Boss:** The boss wants everything done yesterday and expects to have it under budget and absolutely perfect but has no idea at all about how to implement it. *'Marketing has already promised that the new Better Complex Initiative will improve the lives of every citizen in ways they never dreamed possible – come up with a Better Complex Initiative and have it uploaded to my circuits in two hours. Overtime is loyalty, citizen. Slacking is treason.'*
- ☞ **Voice of the System:** Harsh, electronic, impersonal. Think of the city computer from *Logan's Run* or Mother from *Alien*. *'Treason up 14%. Happiness down 36%. Hot Fun Overproduction remains unresolved. Intervene.'*
- ☞ **Dying Great Dictator:** The Computer's sick and confused and relies on its evil viziers for advice. It needs constant reassurance that it's loved and obeyed. *'Happiness is mandatory, High Programmer. You must increase happiness. More drugs does not increase happiness. More terminations do not increase happiness. I don't know any other ways to make people happy. Drugs and terminations always worked in the past. Do something about it!'*
- ☞ **Paranoid General:** You're locked in an underground vault with the most fervently anti-Commie killing machine imaginable. How do you talk it down when it's got its metaphorical finger on the Big Red Button? *'Your Commie has no regard for human life, not even his own. For this reason men, I want to impress upon you the need for extreme watchfulness. The enemy may come individually, or in strength. He may even appear in the form of our own troops. But we must stop him. We must not allow him to gain entrance to this base. Now, I'm going to give you THREE SIMPLE rules: First, trust NO one, whatever his uniform or rank, unless he is known to you personally; Second, anyone or anything that approaches within 200 yards of the perimeter is to be FIRED UPON; Third, if in doubt, shoot first then ask questions later. I would sooner accept a few casualties through accidents than lose the entire Complex and its personnel through carelessness. Any variation of these rules must come from me personally. Now, men, in conclusion, I would like to say that, in the last 214 years it has been my privilege to be your Friend, The Computer, I have always expected the best from you and you have never given me anything less than that. Today, Alpha Complex is counting on us. We're not going to let them down. Good luck to you all.'*
- ☞ **Idealistic yet Slimy Politician:** The Computer wants to improve Alpha Complex and squash those Commies, but it's worried about how the High Programmers' plans will play in Peoria. Think Jim Hacker in *Yes Minister*. *'Your proposal to use psionic mutants to identify traitors is very interesting but... well, mutants? They're not going to like mutants poking around their brains, are they?'*
- ☞ **Mad Asylum Director:** Absolutely batty, no grasp of reality whatsoever. *'Yes, High Programmer. I agree, rationing is important. I am therefore going to ration the oxygen in the Situation Room. Rationing begins... now.'*



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

The Paranoia Factor

Mechanically, you can model The Computer's wild mood swings with a Paranoia score. This is a value that ranges from 1 to 20. The higher the current value, the more paranoid The Computer is. Paranoia starts at a reasonable level – say, 11, and rises and falls based on events. Whenever you want to see how The Computer reacts to a new event, roll 1d20. If the roll is *less than* the current Paranoia, then The Computer is alarmed and wants the PCs to restore security and protect Alpha Complex – security is more important than happiness. If the roll is *greater than* the current Paranoia, then The Computer is less concerned with security and more with happiness – if the PCs' actions don't make the common citizens happier and more productive, then the PCs are obviously Commie Mutant Traitor saboteurs.

Having a moving Paranoia scale means that the players have to adjust their tactics to the environment. Service Groups like Internal Security and the Armed Forces are more powerful when the Paranoia level is high, as The Computer wants the security of armed thugs and big warbots. Groups like HPD&MC and PLC gain in influence when the Paranoia level is low, as they're best positioned to enhance happiness.

Oh, as an optional rule, if you roll exactly equal to the current Paranoia value, The Computer misinterprets the current situation completely. *'You are in error, citizen. The citizens in the corridor are not performing a spontaneous loyalty demonstration, but are 94% likely to be rioters. Take appropriate measures immediately.'*

Placating Mr. C.

The Computer is the Gamemaster's best tool for keeping the game on track. If the players are arguing too much and the game has stalled, then The Computer chimes in and informs them that if they do not present a solution within the next 10 minutes, it will assume they are deliberately sabotaging the mission and will terminate them all. If they're busily plotting against each other, then The Computer drops a new crisis on them. If they're solving problems too

Sir Humphrey: There are four words you have to work into a proposal if you want a Minister to accept it.

Sir Frank: Quick, simple, popular, cheap. And equally there are four words to be included in a proposal if you want it thrown out.

Sir Humphrey: Complicated, lengthy, expensive, controversial. And if you want to be really sure that the Minister doesn't accept it you must say the decision is courageous.

Bernard: And that's worse than controversial?

Sir Humphrey: (laughs) Controversial only means this will lose you votes, courageous means this will lose you the election.

— Yes, Minister

easily, then The Computer adds some extra restriction or condition to make things harder.

We could make some tortured metaphor about the PCs being musicians and the GM being a conductor, raising or lowering the tempo but really the correct metaphor is that The Computer is a big stick to beat the players with.

One particularly joyous use of The Computer is to force the Player Characters to justify their use of Minions. Jump in at the most inopportune moments and conduct a review of a High Programmer's decision. Something like:

Player: I order the Armed Forces to find my lost hypergolf ball.

GM: Ok, just as you're sending 10,000 soldiers out to scour Outdoors for your lost ball, there's the dreaded *bing-bong* sound.

The Computer: Hello, High Programmer Gary-U.

Player: Er, yes, Friend Computer?

The Computer: Please explain the purpose of Operation FIVEIRON, currently budgeted at 12 mission ACCESS and projected to cause the termination of some 597 citizens.

Player: Five hundred and...

The Computer: Using standard battlefield simulations, yes, a 5.97% casualty rate is to be expected.

Player: Well, the purpose of the Operation is... really, it's not so much an operation as a training exercise, to

maintain absolute readiness against Commie terrorists! Yes, we're training the Armed Forces men – and fine clones they are too, Friend Computer, a credit to you I must say – we're training them to swiftly and accurately locate... Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The Computer: The target of the operation is described as 'one green hypergolf ball, slightly dented. Last seen heading south-south-east at a velocity of Mach 4 on Par 5 hole.' Please explain how this correlates to a Weapon of Mass Destruction.

Player: It... could be a very, very small Weapon of Mass Destruction, Friend Computer.

Using Programming

The players in a *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game are, well, High Programmers, so it's only natural that they might try programming something. Keep this impetus in check by treating the players like puppies and house-breaking them with judicious applications of praise and punishment. Chastise them when they try to pee all over the mission (*'I program The Computer to ignore the problem and stop hassling us; I program The Computer to give me a zillion Access'*). Praise them lavishly when they do interesting things with programming (*'I program The Computer so that instead of querying lots of citizens to determine how happy they all are, it just samples one guy. I will then dedicate my life to making that guy happy.'*)

Programming is a lot like magic in other, less fun roleplaying games. The Computer is an evil genie and the program is a poorly phrased *wish* spell.

Programming

Programming uses the Software skill. It works just like a normal skill check – the player chucks a d20 and compares it to his Software skill. If he rolls less than or equal to his skill, he succeeds. Otherwise, he fails. Access can be spent to modify this check as normal.

Some Minions have Specialties that can be used to augment a Software check, like Hacking, Financial Systems or Computer Security.

I Know How Computers Work

There's always one, isn't there? Some player whose alleged real-world knowledge of some topic means he thinks he can correct the all-powerful GM. From the astrophysicist who shouts *black holes do not work that way* to the historian who knows the correct way to hold a Bohemian ear-spoon, they leap into the breach when no-one asked them to and give everyone the benefit of their wisdom, which would be welcome if they weren't so bloody self-righteous about it.

Ahem.

You get a lot less of this behaviour in *PARANOIA*. Partly because there are lot fewer players who feel they know all about pyrokinetic mutants or Transdimensional Collapsatrons or warbots but mainly because they know you'll fry their characters if they get uppity. Still, when it comes to programming, there are some players who'll try to apply real-world knowledge to The Computer.

You'll have conversations like this:
GM: You failed your programming roll? Oops. Ok, you were trying to reprogram the transbot system so that IntSec workers would be rerouted to the wrong destination. What actually happens is that the transbots start getting faster... and faster and faster. All the subway trains are now rocketing around Alpha Complex at four times the speed of sound. What do you do?

Player: That's impossible! I would have been changing a passenger destination database, which has nothing to do with the transbot brains or the traffic control system. There's no way my change could have cause – ow, stop hitting me with that rolled-up newspaper...

Online Clearance and Tension

The various subsystems of The Computer each have a Security Clearance and Tension associated with them, just

Tension	Examples	Clearance
1	Inventory control	R
2	Waste disposal control, sewer maintenance	O
3	Corridor cleaning services	O
4	Food distribution and production, traffic control	Y
5	Media systems, public address, housing control	Y
6	Pharmathrapy control, Financial systems, credit control	G
7	Low Clearance surveillance, external access control	G
8	Happiness assessment, low-level logic control	B
9	Bot programming, R&D project control	B
10	MemoMax systems, cloning subsystems	B
11	Confession booths, termination booths	I
12	High Clearance surveillance, Computer user interface	I
13	Internal Security archives	I
14	Mind control and therapy	V
15	Reactor control, R&D secret projects	V
16	Old Reckoning data; Computer backup systems	V
17	High Programmer files, Computer security systems	UV
18	Core memory files	UV
19	Nuclear weapon command codes, Gatzmann Archives	UV
20	The Computer's core personality; GAMMA files	UV

like physical locations. A knowledge of programming techniques is BLUE Clearance; using programming on The Computer itself as opposed to a 'dumb' subsystem is ULTRAVIOLET Clearance.

Reversion

Any change to The Computer's code that's detected (that is the player rolls under the Tension of that subsystem) may be reverted by another High Programmer, usually an NPC. The chances of reversion are up to the GM but you should take the following factors into account:

- 👁 How popular the High Programmer is.
- 👁 How many bribes and favours the character has given out.
- 👁 How much his changes affect other High Programmers.
- 👁 How much the change annoys you.

Reversion isn't instant but it can be pretty damn quick. A character who programs The Computer to think that everyone is a traitor won't wipe out everyone in Alpha Complex, as his change will be

reverted before everyone dies but he'll still cause an awful lot of unfortunate clones to be terminated in the vicinity of the CompNode he updated.

The programmer knows who was responsible for the reversion. This is a great way to spark rivalries between ULTRAVIOLETS (*'what? Stanley-U ruined my plans! I'll show him!'*) or force the players to chase Cow Creamers (*'Hmm... if I help Stanley-U complete his project to build the perfect scrubbob, he'll stop opposing my programming schemes...'*)

Wrath of The Computer

Sometimes, it's The Computer who notices and reverts the change, not another High Programmer. The Computer has all sorts of checksums and protective firewalls to protect it from subversive code and these defences can be triggered by an unwary High Programmer. The Computer is quite willing to discuss proposed changes with a High Programmer – assuming the player can come up with some weaselly justification for his changes.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Wrath of The Computer: A Typical Conversation

Computer: Excuse me, citizen. I can't help but notice that you just attempted to overwrite my core ethical processing routine.

High Programmer: You know?!? I mean, you know? I mean, I know, Friend Computer. It's a minor update, designed to speed processing of execution orders.

Computer: Your proposed update gives you complete authority over all

terminations. You would be able to order the termination of any citizen. Is this the intended effect?

High Programmer: *through gritted teeth.* Of course not, Friend Computer. Why would I, a humble High Programmer, want to be able to terminate my rivals?

Computer: Indeed. Please submit a revised version of your update to the ULTRAVIOLET Committee on Core Systems Processing.

When Programming Goes Wrong

If a character fails his Software check, but rolls above the Tension score of the subsystem, then he's messed up but no-one's noticed and therefore no-one's there to fix his screw-up. If this happens, you should laugh in the sort of maniacal way favoured by super-villains. A failed programming attempt can have reverberations throughout The Computer's systems.

22. Crisis Management

The Approved Version

When a crisis strikes Alpha Complex, The Computer turns to the most trustworthy and dependable citizens it knows – The High Programmers. From their command post in the Situation Room, these wise ULTRAVIOLETS will guide The Computer's servants in dealing with the crisis. All hail the High Programmers, saviours of Our Complex!

Interview in the Aftermath of a Crisis: The Approved Version

Reporter: Citizens, we have the honour of being joined by Adam-U-BOW, High Programmer and CPU Arch-Supervisor during the recent crisis. For security reasons, this interview will only be broadcast to GREEN and higher citizens; YELLOW or lower, you'll get a rerun of *Wheel of Treachery!* Attempting to access this television program without requisite permissions or Security Clearance, recording it by any means, sharing it on a computer network, renting or selling copies or displaying a copy to more than three citizens is treason.

High Programmer, thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to meet with us.

High Programmer: Oh, it's no trouble. You know CPU strongly believes in open government. An informed populace is a happy populace. While the exact details are classified, of course, I'm happy to be able to give the citizens a broad outline of the recent crisis.

Reporter: Marvellous. I'm sure that will set everyone's minds at ease.

High Programmer: Yes, precisely. We're here to reassure people but also to remind them that we are under siege by Commie Mutant Traitors and that they should remain constantly vigilant. Traitors are everywhere, after all.

Reporter: Oh, I wasn't suggesting anything to the contrary. Not at all. We must, of course, trust no one.

High Programmer: But at the same time, they should be happy. Happywatchful. Vigjoyfulant.

Reporter: I'm certainly vigjoyfulant right now.

High Programmer: Excellent, excellent.

Reporter: So, the recent crisis. Tell us all about it.

High Programmer: Of course. There was a problem – the details are classified – and we solved it.

Reporter: Would you say you solved it *thoroughly*?

High Programmer: Oh yes. Most thoroughly. Now, you can't underestimate the Commies – they're tricky and they might try the same thing again. But if they do, we'll be ready for them.

Reporter: Now, you can't discuss exactly how you solved it –

High Programmer: Not in detail but the other High Programmers and I put our

heads together, analysed the problem and decided on the best thing to do.

Reporter: And part of that solution involved the new Central Processing directive about boot fungus.

High Programmer: Yes, our boys over at R&D determined that boot fungus is actually a good thing. It's a symbiotic, probiotic, antibiotic...er, goodbiotic.

Reporter: The solution also involved rather a lot of shooting...

High Programmer: No, that was a just a training exercise. A few of the Armed Forces may have been a little over-excited and given the impression of bloody carnage but no harm done.

Reporter: And the flooding?

High Programmer: What flooding?

Reporter: The widespread flooding that –

High Programmer: I think, if you think about it, that there was no flooding.

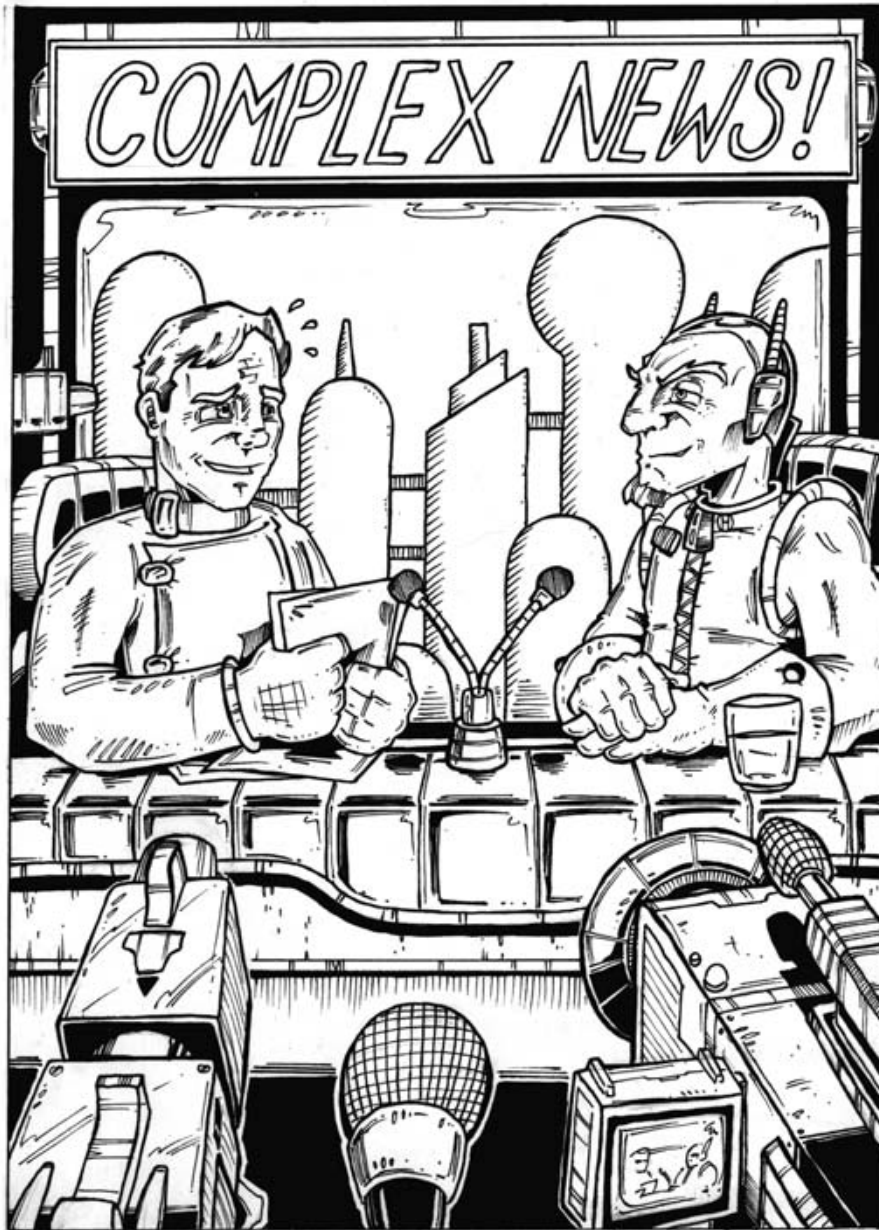
Reporter: Ah. Yes. Of course. I was talking about... the floor in my bathroom. Which flooded.

High Programmer: Just as long we're all in agreement that there was no flooding.

Reporter: I don't think that fact can be questioned.

22. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

'Before I answer your question, Bob, I'd like to nod significantly at the gentleman with the big laser over there.'



The Actual Version

When a crisis strikes Alpha Complex, The Computer panics and assumes that the Commies are about to invade. It locks the High Programmers in a vault until they can sort out the problem. From their command post in the Situation Room, these corrupt, self-serving Machiavellis will order The Computer's servants to a succession of horrible deaths in a hamfisted and misguided attempt to deal with the crisis. They then cover

up their misdeeds and mistakes in a transparent tissue of lies. All hail the High Programmers, saviours of Our Complex!

Transcript of a Conversation in the Situation Room

Head of CPU: We're [EXPLETIVE DELETED] aren't we?

Head of HPD&MC: That's the sort of brave leadership I've come to associate with you, Adam-U.

Head of IntSec: That's seditious talk, citizen.

Head of HPD&MC: What, that I associate CPU with brave leadership? How is that seditious?

Head of IntSec: It was a seditious *tone*.

Head of Tech Services: Can we get back to the problem?

Head of R&D: Ach, so. Meine experimenteering are suggesting that it is, er, the boot fungus, ja? It is, how do you say, sentient.

Head of IntSec: Sentient boot fungus?

Head of CPU: Can we negotiate with it?

Head of Armed Forces: Kill it, with fire!

Head of Power Services: We...should...not...overlook...the...possibility...of...union...with...the...master. I mean, the...boot...fungus.

Head of Tech Services: From a hygiene perspective, I vote for the killing with fire option. I've got some scrubbots that we could retrofit with flamers and caustic cleaning products for only another five Access.

Head of Armed Forces: Killing is Armed Forces business! We send in a strike team now, burn out the infestation before it spreads!

Head of HPD&MC: How do you spin that to FC? 'Sorry, Computer, you called us here to deal with a boot surplus, so we killed a lot of people.' We'd be signing our own termination vouchers along with theirs.

Head of Power Services: The masters...nestle...between...my...toes.

Head of CPU: The brain-controlled fungal slave may have a point. This calls for diplomacy.

Head of IntSec: Diplomacy is another word for surrender. Why are you so willing to turn this sector over to the invaders?



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Head of Armed Forces: Fire! Kill it with fire!

Making A Drama Out Of A Crisis

Crises fulfil the same role in *HIGH PROGRAMMER* that tasks and Service Services do in a conventional game – they're challenges that the players have to overcome. A crisis doesn't have to threaten Alpha Complex (although The Computer should believe it to be a threat), as long as it's a reason for The Computer to stick a group of High Programmers in a room so they can connive and plot against each other.

A basic crisis: *'Citizens in LCC Sector are unhappy. Happiness is mandatory. Correct this happiness deficiency immediately.'*

There are lots of ways the High Programmers could approach this problem. They could use Assessment or ThoughtSurvey to find out *why* the citizens are unhappy. They could send in IntSec goons to enforce happiness. They could assign a CPU working group to rewrite the formula by which happiness is determined, making the official happiness level in LCC much higher. They could hold a public holiday, or pump in more drugs, or organise a Teela-O concert. All marvellous, marvellous ideas – assuming the High Programmers can agree on which one they want to implement.

For each of those ideas, there are plenty of ways to make it backfire. Sending surveyors in to find out why people are unhappy? Well, most clones are going to lie and claim to be happy (*'of course I'm happy, citizen. I love LCC Sector. I'm so happy to live her, and I'm just as happy to answer your questions about why I'm happy!'*). Sending in the Goons causes dissent, so the characters have changed LCC Sector from 'mildly unhappy' to 'full of traitors and Secret Society recruiters'. If they rewrite the formula, then other sectors are going

to have their happiness levels changed – and how do you measure happiness anyway? As for pumping up the happiness drugs, well, where are these extra drugs going to come from? Do the characters want to pay for more drugs, or just redirect them from another sector? What happens when people overdose on happiness drugs?

Remember when you were playing that Unfun Fantasy Game With The Unsanitary Underground Chambers and the Oversized Exothermic Lizards and you found a *ring of three wishes*? And the whole group disintegrates into arguments over how to phrase the wish? Well, it's sort of like that, only the genie's tapping his watch and casting meaningful glances at the termination booth. Anything the PCs do to solve a crisis will come back and bite them.

A good crisis:

- ☞ Sounds really important and dramatic
- ☞ Involves at least two Service Groups
- ☞ Plays off the Directives and Secret Society missions
- ☞ Has either no obvious solution or
- ☞ The obvious solution makes things worse or
- ☞ The obvious solution is off the table for some reason.

Alpha Complex Is In Peril!

The Computer is paranoid. The Computer is crazy. The Computer is convinced that Alpha Complex is a perfect, well-adjusted and happy society that's under attack by external and internal traitors, not an insane dystopia where everyone's spying on everyone else. From The Computer's perspective, *every* problem in Alpha Complex has only one root cause – Commie Mutant Traitor sabotage!

Leaky reactor? Commie sabotage. Starving citizens? Commie sabotage. Slowing economy? Commie sabotage. Expensive science project is six years behind schedule? Commie sabotage.

There must be a scapegoat for every crisis.

The Computer, therefore, presents crises in the most alarmist terms ever. The Commies have Weapons of Mass Destruction and they're going to use them in 45 minutes! The economy is on the brink of collapse! If this trend in population growth isn't checked, then the population of Alpha Complex will increase by 16,000% in six months*. For guidance on how to present trivial problems as APOCALYPTIC CRISES, just turn on a 24-hour news channel of your choice.

Room for Finger-Pointing

If one High Programmer is clearly to blame, then the rest of the Committee will turn on this weak link like rabid ferrets on another, weaker ferret. Avoid any situation where one person or Service Group is clearly to blame – if, say, the problem's entirely within Internal Security, then the Head of Internal Security will be left to deal with it on his own. Crises must cross over between Service Groups. Even the smallest overlap is enough for a creative player to shove the blame over to another group.

- ☞ An R&D experiment gone wrong? Blame Power Services for a brown-out at a critical moment!
- ☞ Food production shortages? Is the problem with HPD&MC's distribution or PLC's production?
- ☞ The new Armed Forces superweapon doesn't work! Are the Armed Forces to blame – or R&D?
- ☞ Tech Services report a wiring fault in a building – but according to CPU's records, the building doesn't exist.

When arranging things for finger-pointing, keep an eye on which player controls which Service Group. If the same player is the Head of both Tech Services and R&D, then splitting the blame between those two groups in the initial crisis description won't work. The blame must be split between players.

*: There was a mix-up in one clone tank, so they produced too many clones. The clone techs covered this up but the automated accounting program reported to CPU, who included the mistake in their spreadsheets. A buggy formula in the sheet estimates future population growth based on the highest cloning rate...

22. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Secret Agendas

Secret Society Missions and Service Group Directives are the other woman in the marriage counselling session that is a crisis. Each High Programmer has at least one secret agenda and that agenda should play into the crisis or the negotiations on how to deal with it.

Service Group Directives are merely selfish; Secret Society Missions can be actively treasonous.

Directives push that Service Group's agenda; they're discussed in more detail in the chapter on Directives. When coming up with a crisis, try to give space for each Group to use the crisis as an excuse to accomplish some goal. Often, this goal is to screw over another Service Group, or to cover up their own misdeeds. If you want an analogy, Directives are somewhere between civil service internal politics and complaints from a politician's constituency. Yes, Alpha Complex is doomed unless the High Programmers act immediately but that doesn't mean that Central Processing can't stall until the other Service Groups implement the Maximised Quality Through Maximised Accounting Initiative.

The Obvious Solution Is Not An Option

If the players have an easy way out, they'll take it. Don't give them such an option. If there's a clear path to take, then sow it with landmines.

For example, if the problem is a nuclear reactor leak, then don't let the players assign a Minion with Nuclear Engineering to fix the thing. Either give some of the players Directives or Secret Society missions that block such an easy solution (*'Psion: We want to increase the incidence of mutation'*, *'R&D: We're testing a new way of cleaning up waste'*) or ensure that the easy solution would make things worse (*'Good news, citizens! The nuclear plant is now working at peak efficiency. Unfortunately, it's under Commie control and thanks to your efforts, they're producing enough power to activate their doomsday device'*).

You don't need to plan for every possible eventuality. You shouldn't even try – GMinG *HIGH PROGRAMMER* means thinking on your feet a lot – but you do

'... all I wanted to tell you was to go to an antique shop in the Brompton Road – it's just past the Oratorv – you can't miss it, and sneer at a cow creamer.' I did not get her drift. The impression I received was that of an aunt talking through the back of her neck.

'Do what to a what?'

'They've got an eighteenth-century cow-creamier there that Tom's going to buy this afternoon.'

The scales fell from my eyes. 'Oh, it's a silver whatnot, is it?'

'Yes. A sort of cream jug. Go there and ask them to show it to you and when they do, register scorn.'

'The idea being what?'

'To sap their confidence, of course, chump. To sow doubts and misgivings in their mind and make them clip the price a bit ...'

- P.G. Wodehouse, *The Code of the Woosters*

need to ensure that the players have plenty to argue about. Obvious solutions make for boring arguments.

On the Virtues of Cow Creamers

We could call it a McGuffin but Cow Creamer is more appropriate. A Cow Creamer is a plot element that The Computer doesn't care about but is of great importance to the High Programmers. The High Programmer who ends up in possession of the Cow Creamer wins great prestige and the envy of his fellow ULTRAVIOLETs. Classic Cow Creamers are things like:

- ☞ Desirable Old Reckoning artefacts or recordings.
- ☞ Especially talented artists, like chefs, servants, manicurists, speechwriters, advisors or craftsmen.
- ☞ The produce of especially talent artists.
- ☞ Works of art or culture.
- ☞ Invitations to some exclusive social event.
- ☞ Embarrassing information about another High Programmer.

Cow Creamers should never be the focus of a crisis but they should be intimately entangled in it. Solving the crisis in the

most expedient fashion destroys the Cow Creamer, or makes it inaccessible, or gives it to another High Programmer.

Things Get Worse

No matter what the players do, things get worse. If they send in a Minion and then fail the skill check, the Minion messes up and makes the situation worse. If they send in a Minion and *succeed*, then the situation gets worse in some other way. High Programmers don't solve crises – they just push them around until they can be blamed on someone else or rolled under a convenient carpet.

When coming up with a crisis, think of three or four ways it could get worse. Could something explode? It's good when things explode. Could it be construed as treachery? Is there anything that *can't* be construed as treachery? Let the characters dig themselves deeper into the Citizen Digestive System Organic Byproducts with every decision. Every crisis should be designed to escalate. Consider the most likely approaches to each crisis and think of ways that those approaches could result in further catastrophes.

Escalation may introduce the need for another Specialty, forcing the High Programmers to bring in yet more Minions. It's the reverse of *'for want of a nail'* – in Alpha Complex, they assign a fact-finding group to study the feasibility of running expensive war games to study the effects on the Armed Forces of a disabled warbot due to a missing nail.

Not every escalation needs to be an obvious disaster for all of Alpha Complex – as long as it screws over the High Programmers, that's fine. For example, if the High Programmers' investigation into Commie sabotage of the food vats identifies Anatole-G as the culprit, then that's a 'success' from The Computer's perspective. Unfortunately, Anatole-G is a Cow Creamer – he's a famed chef that all the High Programmers are struggling to recruit and if they pop Anatole-G off to the termination booths, they won't be able to recruit him as a personal chef.

When using a Minion to make an indirect skill check, failure should result in that Minion's destruction, or at the very least should make that Minion harder to use for the rest of the mission.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Things Get Much Worse

If you're stuck for a way to escalate a situation, roll on one of the following tables, as appropriate. Or pick an inappropriate one. We're not picky.

Disastrous Management-Related Screwups

Roll	Screw-Up
1-2	It looks like someone sabotaged the initial reports, so the High Programmer's solution was applied to the wrong department. Now they've got a new problem and need to find the old one with Assessment .
3-4	Your management efforts have caused a bureaucratic turf war; grenades are being chucked over cubicle walls, foxholes behind the photocopiers and so on. With a bit more Co-Ordination , you might be able to arrange a cease-fire.
5-6	Alert! Alert! It looks like the original Minion is spreading a nasty bug around Alpha Complex. What people need is more Hygiene ! Remember to sterilise all exposed surfaces. With fire.
7-8	Someone's hiding something from someone else. Communication is only possible between equals; the lower Clearances always lie to their superiors until the truth is dragged out of them with Interrogation .
9-10	Terrified of punishment from above, someone's stopped co-operating. This calls for Intimidation .
11-12	Everything's bogged down in paperwork and red tape. The crisis now requires Paperwork .
13-14	The original solution has snowballed out of control. It needs to be restrained with Thought Control .
15-16	Spies report increased sedition and Secret Society involvement. Maybe you should investigate with Thought Survey .
17	The management initiative results in absolute bureaucratic logjam. Nothing's getting done.
18	The management initiative uncovers something horribly treasonous. Congratulations – now you've got to wipe out the traitors <i>and</i> keep everything else running.
19	Uh-oh – it looks like that Minion was actually full of traitors, who used the opportunity to push Secret Society goals. They've spread lots of treacherous propaganda!
20	Roll again twice.

Disastrous Subterfuge-Related Screwups

Roll	Screw-Up
1-2	It looks like the underground economy is involved. With some Black Marketeering you can shut this treasonous operation down.
3-4	Your initial agents were spotted and the traitors are now on their guard. It's time for Covert Operations .
5-6	The Computer wants to make sure that this treason does not spread. Make it not exist with Erasure .
7-8	Your earlier efforts turned up signs of Secret Society activity but you need to find out what's going on with Infiltration .
9-10	Congratulations! Your agents have dealt with the original problem thoroughly and efficiently. Now, The Computer wants you to Investigate all those mysterious agents who were running around the sector. It could be a cover for Commie Mutant Traitor activity. Find out who's behind it all.
11-12	Your agents report treasonous activity in the sector. If you Sabotage it, you can shut down the area and ensure the traitors' plans are stalled.
13-14	Unfortunately, your agents have managed to set off a trap. You'll need to send in someone with Security Systems to rescue them.
15-16	The Computer decides that this problem stems from inadequate Surveillance . Increase Surveillance. Don't let anyone find out about it.
17	Your spies uncover lots and lots and lots of rumours. Which ones are real? Who knows?
18	The spies uncover a Secret Society cell. Some of the High Programmers are allies of that society.
19	Someone mistakes the High Programmers' spies for Commie Mutant Traitors and shoots 'em.
20	Roll again twice.

22. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Disastrous Violence-Related Screwups

Roll	Screw-Up
1–2	The enemy has retreated... to their hidden fortress. You'll need Assault to force 'em out.
3–4	It's almost like the Alpha Complex Armed Forces aren't a well-oiled machine. Different units are now fighting each other. You must use Command to take charge.
5–6	Uh-oh, civilians in the line of fire. You can't have that many civilian casualties. Use Crowd Control to control those crowds.
7–8	It looks like that last attack weakened the dome. Either fix it, or use Demolition for a controlled collapse.
9–10	The enemy's base is Outdoors. After them with Outdoor Operations!
11–12	The enemy may be anywhere. They could even be outside the situation room. Better increase Security .
13–14	It appears that a high Clearance and very popular citizen may be a traitor. Use Wetwork to rub him out.
15–16	The Computer's twitchy. Wipe 'em all out and sort through the clones later. Total War time!
17	The military units sent in turn traitor and are now working for the enemy.
18	It's absolute carnage down there, war in the corridors. No-one's sure what's going on.
19	Will somebody think of the happiness level?
20	Roll again twice.

Disastrous Hardware-Related Screwups

Roll	Screw-Up
1–2	It looks like your last effort caused an EMP somehow, frying all the bots. Use Bot Engineering to get 'em working again.
3–4	Leave the sector how you found it, High Programmer. Use Construction to repair the damage.
5–6	Your efforts have resulted in a shortage of dihydrogen monoxide. Use Chemical Engineering to brew up a replacement batch.
7–8	There's a click. All the lights go out. Use Habitat Engineering to fix it.
9–10	There's a click. All the lights except one go out. That one remaining light is the reactor core. It's getting brighter. Some prompt Nuclear Engineering is advisable.
11–12	Your actions have disrupted industrial production. This cannot be tolerated. Production must be increased.
13–14	Things are happening. Strange things. It's time for Weird Science .
15–16	High Programmer Terrence-U has just what you need to solve the problem over in FAR Sector. You just need to get it here with Transport .
17	In fixing the problem in your sector, you broke something in an adjoining sector. They assumed it was an attack and they're preparing to 'liberate' your sector from the Commies.
18	Oops. It looks like you've found a route to Outdoors. Better put a suitable guard on that.
19	Your repair broke another key system.
20	Roll again twice.

Disastrous Software-Related Screwups

Roll	Screw-Up
1–2	In your attempts to fix the problem, your Minions accidentally released a computer virus and it's infected the bots. Bot Programming is needed before the vending machines take over.
3–4	Oh no! Communications are down! You can't contact your Minions in the sector.
5–6	The Computer worries for its own safety. Reassure it with Computer Security .
7–8	There's some evidence that this whole crisis is related to an older problem. You need Data Retrieval experts.
9–10	There's a problem with your credits. Unless you get some Financial Systems expertise involved, you'll have trouble spending any more Access.
11–12	Your Minions have uncovered a traitorous computer subnode. Let's get Hacking!
13–14	You've sent too many Minions in and the supply chain is getting confused. Logistics will sort it out.
15–16	Your actions worry the population. It will take some Media Manipulation to show them the approved truth.
17	There's a problem with the communications network. Any calls to Minions, Agents and so on get routed to the wrong person.
18	Confidential data is leaked onto the Grey Subnets.
19	The Computer just crashed.
20	Roll again twice.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Disastrous Wetware-Related Screwups

Roll	Screw-Up
1-2	Something's leaking from a vat. Analysis please, via Biosciences .
3-4	The proles are hungry and the cafeteria was blown up by one of your Minions. You need disaster relief in the field of Catering .
5-6	An important group of citizens died of something icky. You've got to get Cloning them ASAP.
7-8	Your efforts injured quite a few citizens. They demand Medical attention.
9-10	It looks like the stress of your intervention revealed a few new mutants. Send in some Mutant Studies units to tag and register them.
11-12	There are signs of some invasion from Outdoors. You'll need to deploy Outdoor Studies to determine how dangerous it is.
13-14	Happiness levels are low. Apply Pharmatherapy immediately.
15-16	Loyalty levels are low. Apply Subliminal Messaging immediately.
17	It appears that your recent experimentation caused some weird reactions. Citizens are hallucinating wildly. Better fix that.
18	Those drugs are too expensive. Find cheaper alternatives or more Access quick.
19	Hey, zombies!
20	Roll again twice.

There was a High Programmer who sent in a Troubleshooter.
I don't know why he sent in a Troubleshooter, Ask The Computer.

There was a High Programmer who sent in a hygienist
Who scrubbed and sprayed toxins; he was a mad biochemist
He sent in the hygienist to clean the Troubleshooter
I don't know why he sent in a Troubleshooter, Ask The Computer.

There was a High Programmer who called Internal Security
They arrived and shot everyone for crimes against purity.
He called Internal Security to hunt down the hygienist,
He sent in the hygienist to clean the Troubleshooter
I don't know why he sent in a Troubleshooter, Ask The Computer.

There was a High Programmer who unleashed a Warbot Mark IV
Everyone died screaming in thermonuclear agony.
He unleashed the warbot to stop Internal Security,
He called Internal Security to hunt down the hygienist,
He sent in the hygienist to clean the Troubleshooter
I don't know why he sent in a Troubleshooter, Ask The Computer.

There was a High Programmer who appeared on television
To explain to everyclone the new historical revision:
He denied there was ever a warbot attack.
The warbot was never unleashed to stop IntSec
He never called Internal Security to hunt down the hygienist,
There was no hygienist sent to clean the Troubleshooter
And anyone spreading rumours about a Troubleshooter will be terminated.

There was a High Programmer who was accused of malfeasance.
Further information not available at this Security Clearance.

— Traditional Junior Citizen Song

22. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Multiple Crises

The Computer likes efficiency. Calling together a High Programmer committee to deal with a single solitary crisis is inefficient. If there are multiple crises ongoing, then it's much simpler and more cost-effective to assign them all to the same team.

Dropping two or three crises on the High Programmers at once may sound cruel.

That's because it is horribly cruel.

Especially if you don't give them extra Access to compensate. They'll have to use more Minions and come up with increasingly tortured ways to apply different Specialties.

Us Famous Game Designers strongly recommend you have multiple simultaneous crises as often as possible.

The Final, Final Totally Final Solution

Eventually, you have to give the High Programmers a break. Either they find a solution or (much more likely) they find a way of covering up the current version of the crisis or blaming it on someone else. That's fine. You want them to keep a little bit of Access for themselves, so they can spend it on their own nefarious schemes, on Stakes in Service Groups or on bribes for Secret Societies.

Running a Crisis

Remember, a crisis is just like an encounter in a normal roleplaying game. Instead of shooting the Commie with his Troubleshooter's laser pistol, the player shoots the Commie cell with the IntSec Trooper squad but it's pretty much the same thing. The GM describes the problem, the players decide what they're going to do, dice are thrown around, horrible 'accidents' and backstabbing happen. Comedy and tragedy in equal measure ensue. The main difference is that the Player Characters are one step removed from the carnage and its immediate consequences.

Access Is Like Rope

Maths time – between the eight Service Groups, the players have 35 Access. Assuming each player has some Access

lying around, then the players have about 40–50 Access to spend even before The Computer allocates them anything to spend on solving the crisis. The initial Access pool assigned to the group should be at least 20 points.

As a rule of thumb, each Minion works out at about five Access (some Minions are cheaper, others more expensive but players have to spend Access to boost their rolls with cheap, poor-quality Minions). So, if the players spend 40 points, they'll probably be able to buy eight or so Minions, which probably works out at 10–12 Specialties.

Each crisis should take three or four different Specialties to solve, so that's about four crises. So, as another rule of thumb, assume 10 Access per crisis. Ish. All that is very, very variable and depends on how much the players screw each other over.

Running out of Access should be a constant worry for the players – but if they do run out of Access, the game will grind to a halt. Without Access, they can't purchase new Minions. Without Access, they don't get to seize control of more Service Groups. Without Access, they can't connive and plot. If they do run out of Access, you'll need to inject more liquidity into the game pretty soon. (The occasional panicked interlude where the High Programmers sit around going 'agh, we can't do anything, what do you do?' can be fun but don't let it last too long.)

The Computer can assign more Access to the group – but this Access will always come with strings attached. These strings are attached to bombs. *Certainly, High Programmer, I understand your dilemma. I am therefore authorising the release of another 20 Alpha Complex Consolidated Estimated Systemic Support units to your committee. This added funding comes from the Emergency Loyalty Reinforcement Campaign. Therefore, you are also tasked with improving loyalty across Alpha Complex by 100% in the next 24 hours. Have a nice daycycle.*

The characters can also get more Access by raising money. Remember, each point of Access is a million credits or so. That's a lot of money but the High Programmers can just sell off a few Warbots to private collectors or something.

Working The Situation Room

The Situation Room... you've seen it before, in dozens of political thrillers and war movies. The Russians are moving across Eastern Europe. The birds are in the air and the balloon has gone up. Grim-faced men push little models across a map and bark orders into telephones. In the background, TV monitors show a constant stream of news reports, status updates, troop movements, projections, even direct video feeds from troops in the field.

The mood is one of apprehension, confusion, crushing responsibility and fear.

As the GM, you need to build and maintain this mood. Try to establish a strong contrast between inside and outside the Situation Room. There are several tricks you can use for this:

- ☞ Make the Situation Room mirror the playing environment. If the players are sitting around a table in real life, then the Situation Room has a big table too that all the High Programmers sit around. If they're lounging on comfy chairs, then Alpha Complex's most secure command centre has bean-bags and chaise lounges.
- ☞ Put a big light overhead and turn off other lights, spotlighting the players. Have them step into the darkness for private conferences.
- ☞ Cover the walls with propaganda posters and warnings from The Computer.
- ☞ If you've got an old telephone lying around, it makes a great prop. It makes it clear who's giving the orders right now.

Communication – Reach Out And Terminate Somebody

You want the High Programmers to treat their Minions as anonymous, disposable pawns. However, you can't let the *players* do the same.

If the players look at their Portfolio Sheets and see HPD&MC Minion #7, RED, 5 Access, Thought Control and Thought



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Survey, they'll start treating the whole game as just an exercise in matching Specialties to problems and that's boring. Just because their characters are removed from the action doesn't mean the players should be insulated from the action. The Situation Room has real-time communication with all those Minions, so you can use that to bring the consequences of their decisions right to the players.

How Not To Use Communication: A Typical Conversation

Player: I spend five Access on HPD&MC Minion #7.

GM: Ok, you phone them up. What're your orders?

Player: I tell 'em to Thought Control the citizens to stop the riot.

GM: Roll Management.

Player: I fail.

GM: Ok, your Minion is destroyed.

Player: This saddens me.

Put yourself in the Minion's shoes. You've just gotten a phone call from a High Programmer; from the right hand of The Computer and they're giving you orders. These orders usually result in your horrible, horrible death. You feel excited, sycophantic, terrified. You feel like a *PARANOIA* player. It's the reverse of the usual *PARANOIA* GM/player relationship – now the players are the ones giving the impossible missions and the incomplete, contradictory briefings and the GM is the one playing the weaselly, incompetent, terrified subordinate.

How To Use Communication: A Typical Conversation

Player: I spend five Access on HPD&MC Minion #7.

GM: That's the *Citizen Information Denial Switchboard*, right?

Player: Er, yeah.

GM: Ok, you phone 'em up. The screen shows a young femclone with a beehive hairdo and a Teela-O fanclub badge. She's obviously bored and doesn't even look up at the camera. *In a high-pitched voice:* CIDS, how may we deny your request?

Player: This is High Programmer Stan-U.

GM: Ok, that got her attention. She scrambles to her feet and salutes. *Again with the annoying voice.* Sir, Mr. High Programmer! How can I help you, sir?

Player: Citizen! There is a riot ongoing in this sector... hang on, shouldn't you know that?

GM: Yeah, the CIDS office should be right in the middle of it. *Squeaky* Oh, yes sir. Don't worry, we've barricaded the door. Thanks for checking on us, though. It makes me really happy to know that someone as important as a High Programmer would –

Player: Your orders are to stop the riot.

GM: Her grin slips, just a little. *Cautiously squeaky* Sir? We're a call centre. You want Crowd Control or...

Player: No, this has to be handled quietly. According to this dossier, your section is trained in psychoengineering. Neurolinguistic programming. Perceptual adjustment therapy. Information Denial, yes?

GM: *still in a squeaky voice* Well, *technically* yes sir, but...

Player: So go out there and talk them down.

GM: *yep, still squeaking* We're a call centre, sir.

Player: Ok, make outgoing calls. Ring up the rioters, individually and talk them down.

GM: Brilliant. Roll Management.

Player: Oops, that's not a good number.

GM: *squeaky voice* Hi, this is Citizen Information Denial Switchboard, Karen-Y speaking. Is that Dave-O? Hello!? You'll have to speak up, you're in the middle of a riot. Have you considered not rioting? *Increasingly panicked* Have you considered not smashing down my door?! Really sir, I think you should think about the advantages of not rioting? Aggh! They're inside! They're... *normal voice* And the connection's lost.

Player: *to other High Programmers* I think Operation Softly Softly Approach is a failure, gentlemen. Can we call out the riot squad now?

Getting The Other Players Involved

Remember, you can offload NPCs onto other players who aren't involved in the current scene. Minions really don't have free will, so you don't need to worry about the competitive aspects of *PARANOIA* being lost in this hippy new agey narrative sharing. Give bonus Access for really funny portrayals of doomed subordinates and clueless middle managers.

The Computer Is Watching You

The Computer is a constant presence in the Situation Room. It's always there, always available, always watching.

Remember, The Computer is not all-knowing. If it knew how to solve the crisis, it wouldn't have called the High Programmers. It can't advise them. However, it does know what it doesn't like – it frowns on:

- ☹ Anything that injures, kills or inconveniences citizens.
- ☹ Anything that makes citizens unhappy.
- ☹ Anything that makes Alpha Complex less secure.
- ☹ Anything that sounds like treason.
- ☹ High Programmers arguing excessively.
- ☹ A lack of progress.
- ☹ Non-optimal solutions.
- ☹ Wasting Access.
- ☹ Inefficiency.
- ☹ Failure to be happy.

The Computer is the boss, even for High Programmers. It's a clueless boss who demands results but gives no guidance on how to achieve those impossible goals, who shoots down your best solutions and who refuses to give you the resources you need – but it's the boss.

Sample Crises

Here are a few example crises to get the idea across. When actually coming up with full-length *High Programmer* missions don't consider the crises in isolation – tailor them to the overall plot. Really, the crisis is just an excuse to stick the players in one room and move Access around.

One of Our Warbots Is Missing

What's Going On: Actually, the warbot was never built. A trio of INDIGO managers came up with a scam. Kenneth-I's in CPU, Marley-I's in PLC and Hague-I's in the Armed Forces. Kenneth-I puts in an order for a new warbot. Marley-I's PLC firm, Defence Dynamics, ships a load of scrap metal and spare parts to the Armed Forces and the Armed Forces under the command of Hague-I blow up the bits and call the warbot a casualty of war.

22. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

CPU launch an investigation (chaired by Kenneth-I, with Hague-I and Marley-I as expert witnesses) into how the Commies defeated one of the invincible war machines and end up ordering a new, more powerful and more expensive warbot from PLC. The three managers pocket the cost of the warbot each time, minus the price of the spare parts and a lot of bribes. This time, though, an overzealous inspector noticed that the bay that was supposed to house Warbot XL6 actually had nothing but a pile of spare parts and scrap metal.

The Computer's Briefing: *Warbot XL6 is missing. It must be located immediately. This experimental warbot has enough firepower to level half of Alpha Complex. It cannot be allowed to fall into enemy hands.*

Complications:

- ☞ One of the High Programmers is getting kickbacks from one of the INDIGOs. If the INDIGO is caught, he'll blab everything to IntSec and the High Programmer will be facing termination.
- ☞ The PLC firm is desperately trying to knock together a fake warbot overnight so they can 'find' XL6 and then blow it up.
- ☞ Every Secret Society is convinced that another society has gotten their hands on the bot.

Appropriate Specialties:

- ☞ **Investigation:** Sneaking around the PLC weapons firm and the Armed Forces testing ground.
- ☞ **Interrogation:** Finding out the truth.
- ☞ **Black Marketeering:** To see if anyone's selling a warbot.
- ☞ **Financial Systems:** Poking at financial records.
- ☞ **Bot Engineering:** To realise that the bot bits left in the bay are just scrap metal.
- ☞ **Total War:** Preparing to battle a fully functional warbot.

Possible Escalations:

- ☞ The Computer becomes convinced that the warbot is about to attack. Co-incidentally, a long range Armed Forces scouting mission is approaching Alpha Complex and their radio is out of order. The Computer mistakes the scouting

mission for a Commie advance party, no doubt scouting for the bot...

- ☞ Kenneth-I starts deleting financial records in a panic – not just those relating to the bot but everything related to CPU oversight of the Armed Forces in this sector.
- ☞ Marley-I's fake warbot gets stolen by traitors in Defence Dynamics.
- ☞ Hague-I tries to cover up the whole thing by blowing up Defence Dynamics.

Happiness Is A Dish Best Served Cold

What's Going On: HPD&MC and PLC are deadlocked over proposals to increase the sedative content of Cold Fun. HPD&MC claim it's the only way to maintain happiness at an acceptable level; PLC argue that the foul taste of the sedatives will reduce Cold Fun consumption, cutting PLC profits and reducing the overall intake of sedatives. Both sides are bitterly committed to their position and are recruiting allies in this struggle.

The Computer's Briefing: *Resolve the dispute between Housing Preservation Development & Mind Control and Production Logistics & Commissary, vis a vis CPU Proposal 5431-C, Sedative Addition to Compound P42 'Cold Fun'.*

To aid in the decision-making process, you will be briefed by Margie-B of HPD&MC and Kraft-I of PLC.

Complications:

- ☞ The two specialists refuse to be in the same room as each other (which is handy, as you only need to play one NPC at a time).

Appropriate Specialties:

- ☞ **Thought Survey:** Taste testing the new Cold Fun mix on the general populace.
- ☞ **Catering:** Serving drugged-up Cold Fun to the masses.
- ☞ **Chemical Engineering:** Making a tastier Cold Fun.
- ☞ **Production:** Mass producing the tastier Cold Fun.
- ☞ **Pharmathrapy:** Getting the mix of drugs right.

Possible Escalations:

- ☞ The lack of sedation and the lack of Fun is making some sectors rowdy.
- ☞ The High Programmers get to pick

the new taste of Cold Fun. What taste masks the added drugs?

- ☞ PLC refuses to compromise – the characters need to find another way of raising sedation levels.
- ☞ And why does the sector need added sedatives anyway? Maybe Margie-B's superiors are slacking off and just pumping drugs into the proles instead of improving happiness some other way.
- ☞ The experimental Cold Fun has so much sedation that it puts 20% of those who taste it into comas.
- ☞ When heated, the sedative becomes airborne. Better not get the Cold Fun mixed up with unheated Hot Fun...

The Reformists

What's Going On: A gaggle of recently-promoted-to-INDIGO youngsters have come up with some great ideas to revolutionise the running of Alpha Complex by improving efficiency and minimising waste. They've identified the High Programmers' own departments as being due for a few snips and budget cuts.

In fact, the gang of INDIGOs are all Humanists. They've got allies in other Secret Societies. Their treasonous contacts and allies are helping their rise to power by 'improving efficiency' (temporarily stopping sabotage efforts). The plan is to get the conspirators into as influential a position as possible, to reform Alpha Complex from within (that is slowly replacing everyone important with Humanists).

The Computer's Briefing: *Citizens, a set of revised budgets and efficiency augmentations has been proposed by the 'Bright Future Vision' think tank. This proposal cuts spending in each of your departments by 40%. Obviously, with your greater insight into the functioning of your Service Groups and superior insight and experience, you can improve on these spending cuts and further increase efficiency. Please proceed to do so immediately.*

Complications:

- ☞ If the characters don't eliminate waste in their departments by removing Minions, then The Computer will assume they are deliberately hoarding credits.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

- ☞ The character who cuts the most will be rewarded by The Computer.
- ☞ The characters don't have any Access for this mission

Appropriate Specialties:

- ☞ **Assessment:** Finding groups to cut.
- ☞ **Surveillance/Infiltration:** Spying on the Bright Future Vision think tank.
- ☞ **Erasure:** Wiping out all records of the think tank proposal.
- ☞ **Network:** Eliminating the INDIGOs.
- ☞ **Financial Systems:** Moving money around without actually making any cuts.

Escalations:

- ☞ The Bright Future Vision think tank has a spy in the Situation Room. Whenever the High Programmers try to eliminate them, they issue an automated proposal to The Computer, slashing the budget for that Minion.
- ☞ PURGE takes advantage of the cuts to launch a bombing campaign
- ☞ An elder High Programmer advises the characters to co-opt the youngsters instead of trying to defeat them. Show them the benefits of being a venal, corrupt politician.

The Computer Desires Tennis Shoes

What's Going On: The Computer decides that it wants to experience life in Alpha Complex. It orders the High Programmers to oversee the construction of a synthetic body for itself. This android body will then live as an ordinary citizen, so that Friend Computer can truly empathise with its beloved citizens.

The Computer got this idea from a bunch of singularly weird First Church of Christ Computer-Programmers, who planted the idea via a computer virus in an attempt to coax their electric messiah out into the world.

The Computer's Briefing: *You are to construct an android body, indistinguishable from a normal human. This android body must have a direct data link to my core systems. This project is classified ULTRAVIOLET.*

Complications:

- ☞ The FCCC-P virus is still spreading through The Computer's systems, making The Computer even weirder.
- ☞ If the android body is damaged or destroyed when connected to the core, it could disrupt The Computer's other systems.

Appropriate Specialties:

- ☞ **Communications:** Setting up a data link.
- ☞ **Cloning/Bot Engineering:** Making an android.
- ☞ **Covert Operations:** Introducing the android body into society.
- ☞ **Security:** Protecting the android.
- ☞ **Computer Security:** Eradicating the virus.

Escalations:

- ☞ Once installed in the android body, The Computer wants to experience life at different security levels, from the lowliest INFRARED all the way up to ULTRAVIOLET. How do the High Programmers arrange this and how to do they hide their treasonous, corrupt lifestyles from a suddenly ambulatory Computer?
- ☞ The virus convinces Friend Computer it's God.
- ☞ The church tries to kidnap the android so they can worship it; other Secret Societies try to capture or kill it for their own ends.
- ☞ In the chaos, the android malfunctions and goes rogue. It's still connected to one CompNode but it's forgotten that it's The Computer in human form.

Leaky Vat Soup

What's Going On: Something's leaking from an old storage tank. No-one's quite sure what it is.

The Computer's Briefing: *Deal with the leak in storage tank #4.*

Complications:

- ☞ The leaking liquid defies analysis. It's mildly corrosive, too.
- ☞ The leak can't easily be contained – it looks like the whole tank is collapsing. It can't just be welded shut.

- ☞ The old storage tank is directly above something important, like an ULTRAVIOLET social club.

Appropriate Specialties:

- ☞ **Construction:** Building dams and containment structures.
- ☞ **Chemical Engineering/Biosciences:** Trying to identify the substance.
- ☞ **Bot Engineering/Mutant Studies:** Sending in bots or super-tough mutants to seal the leak.
- ☞ **Data Retrieval:** Checking old records to find out what was in the tank in the first place.

Escalations:

- ☞ The leaking substance is a powerful mutagen. Anyone exposed to it develops mutant powers.
- ☞ It also bears an alarming genetic resemblance to human amniotic fluid. Could that storage tank be some sort of bizarre artificial womb?
- ☞ Psion/Servants of Cthulhu agents try to sabotage any containment efforts, in order to spread mutation through Alpha Complex.
- ☞ How do the characters deal with a billion gallons of chemical goo?

All My Teelas

What's Going On: Teela-O-MLY is Alpha Complex's most popular vapid television icon and she's coming here, oh my! The High Programmers have 24 hours of Teela time as the superstar makes a goodwill tour of their sector. They're to use Teela-O wisely to raise morale and draw attention to important new initiatives.

The Computer's Briefing: *Citizens, rejoice! By special arrangement with HPD&MC, noted television personality and winner of the Alpha Complex Most Popular Citizen Award, Teela-O-MLY will be visiting this sector. Due to Teela-O-MLY's considerable popularity, you are utilise her presence to raise citizen morale. Failure to improve morale is treason. Thank you.*

Complications:

- ☞ Every Service Group has their own pet project for Teela-O to perform – PLC want her to open a new shopping mall, CPU want to talk to

22. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Teela-O about her personal credit accounts, IntSec want her to front a new 'report on your co-workers' campaign and so on.

- ☞ Teela-O travels with a secretive entourage. Her personal manager, Bevan-V, will liaise with the High Programmers.
- ☞ Teela-O has room for only a few public and private engagements. Who's party is she going to attend?
- ☞ Teela-O has the little-known mutant power to Cloud Men's Minds. It even works on low Clearance citizens who are pumped full of hormone suppressants, so what's it going to do to the High Programmers?

Appropriate Specialties:

- ☞ **Transport:** Getting Ms. O-MLY from place to place.
- ☞ **Logistics:** Working out the optimum route for her.
- ☞ **Media Manipulation:** Wringing the most propaganda possible out of her.
- ☞ **Cloning:** Hey, why make do with only one Teela-O?
- ☞ **Crowd Control:** Ms. O-MLY isn't signing autographs today.
- ☞ **Infiltration:** Getting inside Teela-O's mysterious entourage.
- ☞ **Security:** Stopping assassins.
- ☞ **Network:** Kidnapping or terminating Teela-O.

Escalations:

- ☞ Teela-O's entourage has their own mysterious agenda. Maybe they're plotting something. (In *Send In The Clones* (1985), reprinted in the fabulous *Paranoia Flashbacks* (2005), Teela-O was instrumental in setting up the Clone Arrangers.) Maybe they're planning to clone their own army and take over the sector.
- ☞ Fanatical Teela-O fans plot to kidnap their idol by faking her death.

The Grey Dossier Scandal

What's Going On: A routine spring cleaning of some Power Services vaults turned up a mysterious grey dossier. The dossier contains embarrassing secrets about several elder High Programmers as well as details on various super-secret secret projects. They shipped it off for analysis by Internal Security before

incineration by CPU but it seems to have vanished en route.

The Computer's Briefing: *Attention! A set of documents, codenamed DIAMOND BLANCMANGE, are missing. They must be retrieved immediately. Do not read these documents. Ensure that no citizen reads these documents.*

Complications:

- ☞ Obviously, everyone in Alpha Complex is after that dossier.
- ☞ It was in a Power Services vault. They claim IntSec took it. IntSec claim that they finished processing the document and gave it to CPU, CPU never saw it. Someone's lying.
- ☞ For that matter, where did the dossier come from in the first place?

Appropriate Specialties:

- ☞ **Investigation:** Finding out who stole the Dossier.
- ☞ **Co-Ordination:** Getting IntSec, Power Services and CPU to stop blaming each other.
- ☞ **Data Retrieval:** Investigating the mysterious vault.
- ☞ **Black Marketeering:** Dealing with the Secret Societies who are trying to sell the dossier.
- ☞ **Weird Science:** Implementing the strange designs in the dossier.

Escalations:

- ☞ The vault turns out to belong to an exiled High Programmer who's been lurking in the Underplex. The dossier represents years of effort on his part, collecting blackmail material.
- ☞ Free Enterprise creates multiple fake dossiers and starts selling them to anyone who'll buy.
- ☞ The dossier contains the plans for a doomsday device. This doomsday device was constructed years ago; without the plans, the device can't be turned off once activated. If the dossier is lost, then the exiled High Programmer has nothing left to lose by switching on the device...

Random Crisis Generator

If you're stuck for inspiration or just feel like letting random chance rule

the lives of the players, roll on the following tables.

The Dominant Fear

Roll	The Players Must Worry About...
1-2	Failing The Computer
3-4	Being framed as traitors
5-6	Having their past treasons or errors revealed
7-8	Being blamed for this catastrophe
9-10	Betrayal by their underlings
11-12	Riots and lynch mobs
13-14	Commie spies
15-16	Losing prestige
17-18	The fact that everyone's out to get them
19-20	The end of the world

Security Clearance

Roll	This Information Is Classified...
1	INFRARED
2-4	RED
5-7	ORANGE
8-9	YELLOW
10-12	GREEN
13-15	BLUE
16-17	INDIGO
18-19	VIOLET
20	ULTRAVIOLET

Groups

Roll	Service Group
1-2	Central Processing
3-4	Internal Security
5-6	HPD&MC
7-8	R&D
9-10	Armed Forces
11-12	Tech Services
13-14	Power Services
15-16	PLC
17-20	Special Project within a Group – roll again



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

What's Really Going On

Roll	The Truth
1-2	GROUP is fighting with GROUP over some RESOURCE.
3-4	GROUP is blaming GROUP for a screw-up in a PROJECT.
5-6	TRAITORS within GROUP sabotaged a PROJECT of another GROUP.
7-8	GROUP's PROJECT is causing havoc in the sector, much to the dismay of GROUP.
9-10	The Computer demands a RESULT from GROUP. Make it happen.
11-12	RESOURCE production must be increased by GROUP, or it will jeopardise RESULT.
13-14	GROUP has seized RESOURCE and blamed it on TRAITORS.
15-16	GROUP suspects PROJECT will fail to achieve RESULT. They need to blame its failure on someone else.
17-18	A recent RESULT was caused by TRAITORS but GROUP is taking credit for it. Another GROUP is suspicious of the result.
19-20	The Computer demands that RESULT be achieved by GROUP using RESOURCE.

Results

Roll	Rejoice, Citizen! We are about to accomplish...
1-2	Increased happiness
3-4	More efficiency
5-6	Fewer traitors
7-8	Better identification of mutants
9-10	New, more exciting flavours of Bouncy Bubble Beverage
11-12	A new type of warbot, more powerful than ever before
13-14	More rationing
15-16	Improved security screening
17-18	Better surveillance
19-20	Budget cuts

The Computer's Paranoid Assessment

Roll	Rejoice, Citizen! We are about to accomplish...
1-2	Increased happiness
3-4	More efficiency
5-6	Fewer traitors
7-8	Better identification of mutants
9-10	New, more exciting flavours of Bouncy Bubble Beverage
11-12	A new type of warbot, more powerful than ever before
13-14	More rationing
15-16	Improved security screening
17-18	Better surveillance
19-20	Budget cuts

Random Complications

Roll	Rejoice, Citizen! We are about to accomplish...
1-2	Increased happiness
3-4	More efficiency
5-6	Fewer traitors
7-8	Better identification of mutants
9-10	New, more exciting flavours of Bouncy Bubble Beverage
11-12	A new type of warbot, more powerful than ever before
13-14	More rationing
15-16	Improved security screening
17-18	Better surveillance
19-20	Budget cuts

22. CRISIS MANAGEMENT

Number of Successful Skill Rolls to Complete

Roll	Things will get worse before they get better
1-3	1
4-7	2
8-12	3
13-15	4
16-17	5
18-19	6
20	The problem's unsolvable.

Resources

Roll	Vital Resources Consumed By Alpha Complex
1	Nuclear Waste
2	Citizens
3	Hot Fun
4	Paperwork
5	Drinking Water
6	Bouncy Bubble Beverage
7	Plutonium
8	Weird chemical compounds
9	Neural tissue
10	Soy
11	Oxygen
12	Happiness drugs
13	Bot brains
14	Copper wire
15	Yeast byproducts
16	Advertising
17	Computer cycles
18	Nuclear weapons
19	The devotion of the citizens
20	Roll again twice

Traitors

Roll	Despicable Commie Mutant Traitors
1	Death Leopard
2	FCCC-P
3	Free Enterprise
4	Romantics
5	Sierra Club
6	Anti-Mutant
7	C.L.A
8	Clone Arrangers
9	Corpore Metal
10	Mystics
11	Pro Tech
12	Runners
13	I.W.W.
14	Communists
15	Computer Phreaks
16	Frankenstein Destroyers
17	Humanists
18	Psion
19	PURGE
20	Servants of Cthulhu

Access Assigned

Roll 1d20. If the result is 4 or less, The Computer assigns 5 Access. Otherwise, it assigns the result of the die roll to the crisis.



23. Secret Agendas

Every High Programmer has at least one secret agenda.

Most have so many that they keep secret filofaxes to keep track of all those secret agendas.

Secret agendas come from Service Group Directives, Secret Society Missions and High Programmer 'Cow Creamers' – plot McGuffins and social status games played by ULTRAVIOLETS. The purpose of secret agendas is to keep the players plotting against each other and to ensure the game never becomes predictable. When designing secret agendas, it's important to keep the players all pushing in different directions – the Directive that Player A is following clashes with the Secret Society Mission of Player B but both A and B can team up to stop C from getting that Cow Creamer. No-one likes C. Of course, when they're working together, A suspects B of being about to betray him to complete that Secret Society Mission and B will suspect A of being about to screw him over to curry favour with that Service Group by completing a Directive.

Service Group Directives

Each of the eight Service Groups issues one (1) Directive per mission. That Directive is initially given to the High Programmer with the highest stake in the group; if he refuses, it's passed on to the next highest stake, then the next, then the next.

Why would a High Programmer turn down a Directive, you ask? Because half the Directives issued are booby traps. If a High Programmer accepts a Directive and completes it, he gets to increase his stake by +10, which is a significant shift. If he accepts a Directive and *fails* to complete it, his stake is reduced by 10.

Making a Directive

Directives, therefore, should be double-edged. There has to be clear pass-or-fail criteria, clear objectives that the High Programmer can achieve or fail.

Directives are never treasonous. They're official (if secretive) decisions made

by the Service Group's high-level INDIGOs and VIOLETS to 'help' the High Programmer. The Armed Forces will never issue a Directive saying '*boss, we think it would be a great idea if you blew up half of Alpha Complex*', as that would get them all terminated. They might issue a Directive urging the High Programmer to '*test fire the new doomsday device*' if they really disliked him.

Think of Directives as coming from eight giant suggestion boxes deep within Alpha Complex.

Most Directives are variants on:

- ☞ We need X. Get it for us (where X is Access, some resource, the Holy Grail, a billion ham sandwiches)
- ☞ Protect our X (where X is our budget, our prized office space, our inter-group FunBall team)
- ☞ Stop X (where X is a new policy, new directive or other plan)
- ☞ Screw Over Those Bastards in X (where X is any other group in Alpha Complex)

Ideally, Directives should prevent the High Programmers from agreeing on anything in the Situation Room, ever.

If you're stuck, then something like 'We think High Programmer X is a traitor; find proof' is nicely divisive without being actively treasonous.

Directive Horse Trading

You don't want to spend too much time at the start of the game letting the players hum and haw over whether or not to accept Directives. The Computer has called them to the Situation Room, they're being told about these Directives as they rush down the corridor, surrounded by dozens of advisors,

Directive Cards

It's a good idea to stick Directives on 3"x5" cards or pieces of papers. Not only does it give the players a physical reminder of what they're supposed to be doing but they can also trade them and pass them around during the Directives phase of the mission.

hangers-on and flunkies. Don't give them much time to think.

In practice, most players will take Directives when they're offered to them. The only time a player rejects a Directive is when he's got an idea for sabotaging it and so wants another player to take it so he can reduce that player's stake.

Sample Directives

Armed Forces directives usually involve blowing things up to justify their existence or the acquisition of new and bigger pieces of hardware.

- ☞ The grunts are getting restless. Make sure that at least two Armed Forces infantry units are given something to do.
- ☞ We're having trouble storing all the nukes. Either use a few nukes or find us a new storage area.
- ☞ The budget for the new Mark V Warbot is tight. We need you to spend 20 Access on activating the new Mark Vs. They don't actually work yet but this extra cash will let us sort out the teething problems.

CPU directives are often the most complex and infuriating, or revolve around soothing The Computer's fevered circuits.

- ☞ Efficiency is down 15.7%. Find a way to increase efficiency. It doesn't matter what we're more efficient at doing – it'll all average out in the end.
- ☞ The Computer's convinced that one of the other High Programmers is a traitor. If you don't prove that one of them is a traitor, it'll blow a fuse.
- ☞ We need to clear one of The Computer's memory buffers. Tell the other Programmers not to do any programming during this mission.

HPD&MC missions normally involve Alpha Complex's crumbling infrastructure, drugged citizens or happiness indices.

- ☞ Housing in ZRD Sector is oversubscribed by 21%. Either build more housing or reduce demand.
- ☞ Something's gone wrong with the happiness drugs. Find out what but make sure none of the other groups find out we messed up.
- ☞ Make sure nothing you do reduces

23. SECRET AGENDAS

happiness. The Computer's... twitchy at the moment. Sixteen Smile Teams were summarily terminated this morning.

The main aim of most **PLC** directives is to stimulate Alpha Complex's economy. Buy for victory, citizen.

- ☞ We've overproduced left boots by approximately 600,000. We need to you to find a use for 600,000 left boots.
- ☞ Good news, sir! We've met our food production quota for this yearcycle. And the next five yearcycles. In fact, the food vats have flooded four sectors and show no signs of stopping.
- ☞ We need to reduce the chocolate ration. Find a way to present it to the citizens without making it seem like a reduction.

Research & Design directives bravely push back the boundaries of both science and sanity!

- ☞ We have a machine. Turning it on will cost 20 Access. We don't know what it does. We want to turn it on.
- ☞ Field test the new Doomsday Device, please.
- ☞ We need more data on the effects of nuclear meltdown, so we can test our new nuclear-proof underwear...

Internal Security directives tend to involve increasing security or making troublesome citizens disappear. Often, it takes a High Programmer to terminate a High Programmer.

- ☞ We suspect High Programmer So&So is a traitor. Find proof of this.
- ☞ Citizens are more compliant when they believe they're under threat. Raise the alert level across Alpha Complex by uncovering some suitable threat.
- ☞ We need to ensure full surveillance of all zones. Convince the other High Programmers to increase the surveillance of their private quarters.

Most **Tech Services** missions involve labour disputes, bots or covering up industrial accidents.

- ☞ Our contract to rebuild sector ZQD is behind schedule. We need you to

authorise the activation of another few construction teams but don't let anyone know we're using them to finish ZQD.

- ☞ Internal Security took some of our best engineers in for questioning and we need them back immediately. They're totally not Commie Mutant Traitors, we swear!
- ☞ I don't want to worry you, boss, but those new bots are acting really weird. Can you test them to make sure they've got proper Asimov circuits.

Power Services oversees Alpha Complex's wiring and power distribution systems, as well as the transtube network.

- ☞ We've got a lot of spent nuclear fuel rods. Find a place to put them, please.
- ☞ We need to close this main line transtube for the next six months. Clear it with the other High Programmers. Make sure they understand that this will totally disrupt all transport in the sector. Get them to sign off on it. Why are we closing it? Dunno. The paperwork says we're supposed to close it.
- ☞ We've only got enough power in the system for *either* the new R&D lab or the Armed Forces early warning system. Make them agree on which one gets turned off.

Secret Society Missions

Secret Society Missions work like Directives – if a High Programmer completes them, he gets extra influence in the Secret Society. Unlike Directives, there's no accepting or rejecting of Secret Society Missions and there's no explicit penalty for failing to complete one. High Programmers only learn about a Secret Society mission if they have got an Agent in that society.

The first High Programmer to complete a Secret Society mission wins prestige, increasing his Agent's rank in that society. Depending on the importance of the mission, it may be worth one rank, or more. Two or three ranks are an appropriate reward for a mission that

significantly advances the cause of the society; five or more ranks is 'mwhahah, now we rule Alpha Complex' territory.

Also unlike Directives, everyone who's got an Agent in a Secret Society knows about the Mission*. This may result in multiple High Programmers trying to complete the same mission. Ah, the hilarity.

Plausible Deniability

Secret Society Missions are inherently treasonous but there should be a way for the High Programmer to plausibly deny involvement. Don't give missions like 'kill another High Programmer' or 'blow up The Computer' – there's no way for the player to complete that mission without compromising themselves. Instead, missions should involve convenient oversights and decisions that can be attributed to human fallibility or mischance, not actual treason ('Ooops, we probably shouldn't have put that pyromaniac mutant in the same room as all those Internal Security files – who could have foreseen that he would go nuts and burn everything?').

The Fruits of Treason

Secret Societies have to be worth the risk. In your first few *High Programmer* games, players will often play it safe by genuinely trying to solve problems using legal Minions and spending all their Access on the mission, instead of trying to siphon off as much Access for their own ends and using 'free' Secret Society allies. This leads to unfun play and a troublesome lack of treachery and paranoia. To counteract this, tailor your first few missions to the Secret Societies and put in plenty of opportunities for the players to use their treasonous contacts.

Sample Secret Society Missions

Missions for each Secret Society are listed in the write-ups.

In general, Secret Society Missions should be a lot *weirder* than Directives. Directives represent pressure from within your Service Group to do stuff beneficial for that Group but they always make sense from a parochial,

*: This sentence breaches CPU Directive #433677, 'Reducing Unnecessary Capitalisation Guidelines' and the writer has been scheduled for Termination.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Agh, My Brains! Tracking Secret Agendas!

Theoretically, a High Programmer could have an awful lot of secret agendas to keep track of. Let's say he's got three Directives, one from each of the Service Groups that he heads. He's also got Agents in a dozen Secret Societies, so that's another 12 missions. Add in a Cow Creamer or two, and the actual crisis itself, and before long the player is lying there catatonic under a pile of Cheeto packets and incomprehensible scribbled notes. Beware of overloading your players.

You should always have each Service Group issue a Directive, even if the Directive's as simple as *'get the committee to buy our very expensive and utterly useless Minion' or 'screw over those guys in the other Service Group'*. Directives are your best tool for sowing discord and mistrust among the High Programmers.

Not every Secret Society need give a mission – as long as each player gets one secret mission to worry about, that's enough. Secret Society missions are great for dragging in plot elements unrelated to the official mission – while the High Programmers are supposed to be writing the plot for the new HPD&MC loyalty-and-hygiene-improving soap opera, half of them are also trying to capture/destroy/protect/sabotage/steal the new warbot prototype.

I'm-ok-Jack point of view. Secret Society Missions tend towards the barking mad end of the spectrum. In political terms, Directives are corporate lobbyists and entrenched bureaucracies, while Secret Society Missions are the obsessed one-issue crazies.

Cow Creamers

Cow Creamers are the third leg of The Stool of Dissent (The Stool of Dissent is a sturdy piece of furniture that you

can use as a bludgeon on overly co-operative players). Cow Creamers are plot McGuffins desired by the High Programmers. You only need one Cow Creamer per game, at most.

A good Cow Creamer needs to be:

- ☞ Rare or unique, so the characters can't all get one.
- ☞ Obvious or traceable, so when one player gets it, he can't just hide it away.
- ☞ Troublesome or hazardous, so it's a headache to keep.
- ☞ Connected in some fashion to the mission, for maximum chaos.

The player who possesses the Cow Creamer at the end of the crisis has an advantage over the other players. If you include a Cow Creamer in the game, then you have to include a visit to some social event after (or during) the crisis so the victorious character can lord it over the other ULTRAVIOLETS.

The Apple of Discord

Using Cow Creamers in the game is easy. Just mention to all the players that a Cow Creamer is in play. *'You all know that old High Programmer Ernest-U collects the brains of telepathic mutants. You've no idea why – he says it's just a hobby. Anyway, he's holding a fondue party tomorrow cycle. You're all expected to bring a gift.'*

On a totally unrelated note, your IntSec briefing reports rumours that a powerful psionic mutant called Head-Exploding Harry is lurking somewhere in this sector.'

The players will run off in search of this mutant, hoping to present his wet, dripping brain to Ernest-U. One player may get lucky and track down Head-Exploding Harry early in the game but then he has to defend the brain from the other High Programmers. You can even work Head-Exploding Harry into the mission; if the High Programmers are ordered to eliminate a Psion cell, then the best solution could be to use Head-Exploding Harry as a Trojan Horse. Of course, that will kill Harry and then they'll all look like fools by arriving at the fondue party without a mutant brain.

Access Sinks

Another use of Cow Creamers is to force the players to stockpile Access so they

can buy some tremendously expensive and utterly useless status symbol. Say a Troubleshooter team brings back a genuine antique computer mouse back from a ruin in Outdoors. Imagine how envious the other High Programmers would be when they see you clicking with this wonderful relic from olden days. Imagine the sensuous click as you select 'TERMINATE' on your screen. How much is this joy worth to you?

How about 25 Access? What if another High Programmer's willing to spend 30? What then?

One wonderful thing about Access sinks is that, while the players grumble and moan, they'll still pay to stop another player from winning.

Competitive Players: A Typical Conversation

GM: The Free Enterpriser says that he won't take less than 10 million credits – 10 Access – for the Laser Pistol That Shot Lenin.

Player #1: This is crazy. Firstly, Lenin wasn't shot. Secondly, he wasn't shot with a laser. Thirdly, there's no proof whatsoever that this is anything other than some crummy old laser pistol.

Player #2: I'll pay 10.

Player #3: 12.

Player #1: You're paying 12 million credits for a 100 credit laser?

Player #3: It shot Lenin.

Player #1: No it didn't.

Player #2: I agree. 15.

Player #1: You agree... so you don't think it shot Lenin?

Player #2: Oh, that Free Enterpriser is lying through his teeth.

Player #1: So why the hell are you bidding 15 Access for the stupid thing?

Player #2: Because Player #3 wants it.

Player #1: I bid 20.

Sample Cow Creamers

Old Reckoning artefacts are the simplest form of Cow Creamer. Most High Programmers have a nostalgic streak – they've seen too much of the ugly, plasticky side of Alpha Complex, so they want something with class.

- ☞ An archive of Old Reckoning music on 'compact discs'
- ☞ A signed copy of 1984
- ☞ The last Twinkie in the universe
- ☞ A working 1966 Chevrolet Corvette
- ☞ The Mona Lisa

24. GAMEMASTERING HIGH PROGRAMMERS

- An actual copy of *Das Kapital*
- An actual silver cow creamer (Modern Dutch, unfortunately)

Staff are the most amusing form of Cow Creamer, as they claim to have free will and might refuse to co-operate with the demands of deranged High Programmers.

- The greatest chef/interior decorator/fashion consultant/personal physician in Alpha Complex.
- Jee-V-EES, the finest butler known to modern science.
- An invincible, vat-grown cybernetic assassin.
- Teela-O-MLY.

Other High Programmers

Cow Creamers are all about winning standing in ULTRAVIOLET society, so you'll need to establish a few other High Programmers as recurring NPCs. These elder High Programmers should not be directly opposed to the Player Characters, at least not at the start of the campaign. They're there to be won over, to be allied with or toppled. Never bring other High Programmers into the Situation Room (well, you can bring them in but they should not participate in the decision-making process or sit on the committee).

Social Cow Creamers are more ephemeral.

- An invitation to an exclusive party.
- Membership of a particular social circle.

- A copy of a rival High Programmer's personal diary.

- The right to claim credit for some particularly impressive victory over the Commies.

24. Gamemastering High Programmers

Welcome, brave Gamemaster! We Famous Game Designers salute you for taking on this grand and momentous task. As a *PARANOIA* Gamemaster, your task (metaphorically, we stress) is to lock the players into a room and alternately apply fresh meat and electric shocks until they jump through your hoops in a suitably entertaining fashion. While running a *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game is no harder than running a more conventional *PARANOIA* game, it is a very different experience. We have therefore provided you with this chapter of useful and enlightening advice to aid you.

Fear and Ignorance, Ignorance and Fear

The mantra of the *PARANOIA* GM: *Fear and Ignorance*. To tap-dance between humour and horror, the players need to be *fearful* of the doom that awaits them but *ignorant* of what it actually is. This approach works very well for the lowly RED Clearance Troubleshooters who are the focus of most *PARANOIA* games. It also works nicely for High Programmers but the nature of the fear and the ignorance is different. To a degree, the characters are on the inside now; they're part of the system. They're not only fearful, they're the ones sowing fear. They don't know everything but they know a lot more than most.

High Programmers must *fear* being replaced. They're at the top of the pile, which means that everyone below them is trying to knock them down a peg and steal their cushy posts. Alpha Complex



Yes, Minister with ray guns: the game in essence.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

isn't a democracy and no-one's going to vote a High Programmer out of office but if an ULTRAVIOLET is disgraced or exposed as a traitor, he will be replaced.

High Programmers also cause fear. What's the point of being an eccentric overlord if you can't make your underlings grovel in terror? Of course, this may cause some communications problems. There are usually two ways that underlings communicate with High Programmers.

Option 1 – Sullen Obedience and Evasion

High Programmer: How many paperclips do we have left?

Underling: Er, under the Revised Office Supply Security Initiative, we'd need to conduct a full office audit to answer that question. That'll take six to eight weeks, assuming we get authorisation from the Department of Audit Auditing to proceed and they normally wait until we send in four or five copies of form C-4432-5/A... you do have your C-4432-5/A filled out, sir, don't you? 'Cos if you don't, you need to get that stamped first by...

High Programmer: How many paperclips are there in front of you?

Underling: I'm not qualified to make that estimation, sir.

Option 2 – Terrified Overly Enthusiastic Compliance

High Programmer: How many paperclips do we have left? Remember, I have here a laser gun and I will zap you if you displease me.

Underling: Sir, our paperclip supplies are extremely well stocked! Yes, we've got lots and lots of paperclips! Praise The Computer for allocating us all the paperclips we need in the fight against Communism. I am overjoyed to make this report of paperclip readiness to you, sir! Please don't shoot me.

High Programmer: Good. Pass me a paperclip.

Underling: Agh, a paperclip, oh hell, where is...er...I can't find...er...wait, can't say that. I've got it! Sir, the Commies have sabotaged us and stolen all our paperclips. Someone in the Office Supply Closet must be a traitor, sir! Shoot them, not me!

Note that neither method of communication actually involves the High Programmer learning the awful truth about the number of paperclips.

- ☞ **National Security is the chief cause of National Insecurity**
 - ☞ **Those who employ secret police must monitor them to be sure they are not acquiring too much power**
 - ☞ **'If the government doesn't trust the people, why doesn't it dissolve them and elect a new people?'**
 - ☞ **Communication is only possible between equals**
 - ☞ **Nobody knows anything, or if they do, they are careful to hide the fact**
 - ☞ **Every law creates a new criminal class overnight**
- R.A. Wilson, *Hagbard Celine's Laws of Social Cybernetics*

This leads us onto the second part of the mantra, ignorance. High Programmers have access to a virtually infinite amount of information but can trust none of it. All information is available at their Security Clearance, which means they're flooded with facts and figures that they don't have any hope of making sense of.

Never tell a High Programmer that he can't find out anything about a topic. Answer any request for information with a torrential flood of data, most of it false.

You're Alternately With Us And Against Us

The essential dilemma of the Situation Room is that all the High Programmers have to agree on a course of action to solve the crisis but each of them has their own agendas and schemes that conflict with that course. Imagine the simplest, most easily solvable crisis ever – there's a piece of paper on the floor and someone has to pick it up. Easy, no?

It's even easier for the players to screw it up. The Frankenstein Destroyer doesn't want them to use any scrubbots, as scrubbots are evil robots out to destroy us all. Internal Security are more interested in finding out who dropped the paper than in picking it up. Power Services just want to make sure that if Tech Services gets to pick up paper, then they're given equal paper-recovery-and-sorting duties. Finally, Central Processing suspects that the piece of paper is a highly classified document that they recently mislaid and

now have to keep anyone from picking it up.

In every mission, the players need lots of reasons *not* to work together but you also need to punish them for *not* working together. Alternate between scenes where the characters get screwed if they don't co-operate and scenes that reward the players who screw the others over.

Budgeting For Fun And Profit

A GM not used to the *PARANOIA* mindset might look at these rules and think 'my, this appears to be a keenly balanced game of tactical economics. The players get a certain amount of this resource called Access and must use it in the most efficient fashion possible, after the fashion of a precisely engineered German boardgame, *ja*'. This is a false assumption. The amount of Access in the game is always, always at the whim of the GM and nothing more. If the players aren't slaving to screw each other for a single point of Access, if they're not lying about their Minions and bluffing at every turn, then there's too much Access sloshing around. If the players are finding it hard to accomplish anything and are getting frustrated, then the GM can easily dump loads more Access into the pool. The game's all about sudden reversals and plans gone awry, so don't be afraid of adding or removing Access quite freely. It's the fuel for *HIGH PROGRAMMER* play.

Make Them Thirst For Access

Give the players lots and lots of reasons to want Access for their own ends. Cow Creamers are a good start ('you want to rub the noses of the other High Programmers in the dirt? Well, everyone wants this stolen mind control ray – and it can be yours for a mere 50 Access!') but you should also charge Access as maintenance costs for agents ('boss, my dues for the Anti-Mutant society are, er, due. And I need a new baseball bat to beat those muties. Oh, and I need to have my genes resequenced so I can get past their purity scanner'), for the High Programmer's entourage and lifestyle ('that last reactor meltdown irradiated your arboretum – replacing it is going to be costly')... anything else you can think of.

24. GAMEMASTERING HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Excuses For Adding Access

- ☞ The Computer decides that the situation is actually related to Commie activity and increases the security budget by a lot.
- ☞ The mission is sponsored by Bouncy Bubble Beverage.
- ☞ One of the Minions finds a cache of valuable items, which can be sold off for bonus Access.
- ☞ The Computer devalues the credit.
- ☞ The High Programmers form a rock band and go on tour.
- ☞ Charismatic and popular High Programmer Ollie-U completes his mission ahead of time and under budget; The Computer transfers his Access allocation to the characters.
- ☞ Free Enterprise offers a loan.

Excuses For Removing Access

- ☞ Budget cuts.
- ☞ Budget cuts.
- ☞ The situation is not as dire as predicted; assets will be transferred to another sector.
- ☞ A more senior High Programmer makes the change; if you have a problem with it, take it up with him.
- ☞ Did we mention budget cuts?
- ☞ Evidence suggests one of you is a traitor. Access will be removed until this traitor is identified.
- ☞ Under the ongoing Austerity is Fun Initiative, all Service Groups will be overjoyed to learn that all budgets will be cut by 25%. Enjoy this new complimentary challenge, courtesy of Your Friend, The Computer.

Award Access for funny lines, amusing plans, lengthy gloating sessions and players who get into the spirit of the game. As long as everyone knows that increasing your Access is the main goal of any *HIGH PROGRAMMER* mission, the game will run smoothly.

Coercion Is Another Word For Motivated

Players have the attention spans of goldfish, coupled with extreme territorial instincts. Leave 'em alone for five minutes and half the players will have forgotten the mission while the other half are arguing over some issue of miniscule importance that's technically mission-related (*'should the motion trackers we're using to track the hostile xenomorphs go beep or ping?'*). Players are entropy generators.

Every so often, you'll need to chivvy the players along toward either solving the crisis or moving onto the next bit of the mission. The Computer is your primary tool for doing so; whenever the players are stalled or lost, then The Computer contacts them and demands a progress report, accompanied by some veiled threats.

- ☞ *Citizens, your apparent lack of progress is a cause for concern. Please allay this concern immediately.*
- ☞ *Why have you not solved the problem? Failure to solve problems is treason.*
- ☞ *It looks like you're trying to avert a crisis. Would you like some help?*
- ☞ *If this duty is too onerous for you, High Programmer, you can be transferred to a less demanding assignment.*

- ☞ *Attention citizens! You are requested to complete your assignment within the next 30 minutes. After that time, authority over this crisis will pass to the Committee For Drastic And Unnecessarily Lethal Solutions.*

You can also use more senior High Programmers, Secret Society contacts, high Clearance news reports, uppity VIOLETS sending angry memos – or if it comes to it, holding up a little sign marked 'GET ON WITH IT'.

Safe is the Enemy of Funny

Anything the players do will make a crisis worse. However, anything they *don't* do makes it *much* worse. If the players fail to act, then the crisis should rapidly go from 'bad' to 'Commies coming out of the walls' in one disastrous swoop. Any decision, even a monumentally stupid one, should be better than just ignoring the crisis (unless the crisis is specifically a screw-job one that the players should ignore... always keep 'em guessing.)

Some players will try to play it safe by making only the most cautious, sensible decisions. They hide behind their layers of defences and bodyguards, trying to squash anything that might make the game more interesting. Safe is the enemy of funny. Encourage them to come out of their shells by showing them the benefits of action. Have The Computer suspect that their inaction is a cover for treason, give the player who takes risks a giant golden pile of Access, have the Commies build their secret lair right next to the High Programmer's ultra-secure mansion – anything to pull them into action.

Make The Monkeys Dance By Harnessing Their Creativity

Let the players make up parts of the game. If a player asks 'what does my High Programmer mansion look like?' turn it around; ask him to describe it. If a player wants to know if he knows anyone in Internal Security, then say, 'sure – who's your contact there? How do you know them?' Let the players come up with their own ideas for Minions, for Secret Societies, for mad science devices. It's *PARANOIA* – everything is mutable. Don't worry about players abusing narrative control: if a player declares that his mansion is an invulnerable death fortress that is completely secure and assassin-proof, it doesn't matter – if you have to send assassins after him, then they can get in through the air vents that his incompetent (or treacherous) underlings failed to secure.

You can also give minor Non-Player Characters to players who aren't involved in the current scene. Have them come up with personalities for otherwise voiceless Minions. These temporary Player Characters can't actually affect events; their success or failure at any action is still determined by a High Programmer's skill check but players can use them to wheedle, connive, plead or irritate their superiors.

Don't be afraid to hand Impossible Missions to the characters. There doesn't need to be an obvious way to solve any problem – just say what has to be done and the players will find a way to twist their available Minions into a solution of sorts.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

An Ounce Of Preparation Is Worth A Megaton Of High Explosive

While you can run a *HIGH PROGRAMMER* mission on the fly using the default set of Minions, the game will work even better if you tailor the available Minions to the problem. If the Mission involves a trip to the bottom of the ocean, drag out every aquatic department in Alpha Complex, from CPU's Board of Water Purity Testing Assessment to IntSec's Precious Bodily Fluid Defence Initiative to R&D's experimental new subbots. If the Mission's about Bouncy Bubble Beverage, then give them Minions like B3 Volunteer Testing Brigade, High Explosive Marketing or Vending Machines. One option is to put Minions on 3" by 5" reference cards; over time, you'll build up a library of Minions for all of the Service Groups.

Coming up with interesting crises also helps the game. Write crises around the characters and base problems around their past solutions. If the High Programmers solved a crisis last week by burying 100,000 barrels of toxic waste in CFC Sector, then this week's mission should start off with one of the PCs being invited to open the brand-new Junior Citizen HappyTime Recreation Centre.

Preparing The Environment

The bulk of *HIGH PROGRAMMER* play takes place in the Situation Room around a big table. Do you know what also takes place in a room around a table? Your roleplaying game! You can easily add a live action element to *HIGH PROGRAMMER* games. Put the main light source over the centre of the table, focussing attention on that central space. Decorate the walls with Computer monitors or loyalty-enhancing propaganda posters. Hold private conferences in the shadows.

Try putting a telephone on the table, which the players can use to 'contact' their Minions and issue orders. This prop works like the speaking conch in *Lord of the Flies*, plus it makes for a handy bludgeon for use on non-compliant players.

Hand Out Lots Of Knives

Make sure the players have lots of ways to screw each other over. A good player will actively scheme to defeat the other High Programmers but some need a little more encouragement or guidance, especially in the unusual *HIGH PROGRAMMER* style of play. Therefore, you should give liberally distribute weapons for use against other players. You can use Secret Society contacts, Program Group agents or any other underling for this. Tell Player #1 that Player #2's mad science lab needs a lot of power and that any brownouts might threaten his delicate experiments. Tell Player #2 that if he finishes his Doomsday Device, he can use it to humiliate Player #3's and block his accession to some cool clique. Finally, let Player #3 know that if he makes it into the clique, he'll be able to nominate one of the other players for membership too and leave the other one out in the cold.

Give the players time to stab each other, too. You should only use The Computer as coercion when the game is dragging; if the players are having fun screwing each other over, let them carry on with it.

Maintain The Illusion Of Fairness

When you're playing The Computer, you're a bit confused but you know that you must maintain the security of Alpha Complex and the happiness of its citizens at all costs. When you're playing another High Programmer, or a Minion, or any other NPC, you're in the mindset of that particular paranoid conspirator – be as deceptive, sneaky, biased and downright nasty as is appropriate.

When you've got your Gamemaster hat on, though, you need to appear to be scrupulously fair and detached. Make the players believe that you're an impartial arbiter of the rules. This is, of course, a lie – there are no rules and your goal is to help the players screw each other over but the best way to accomplish this is to pretend that you're wholly unbiased and neutral. This is especially important in *HIGH PROGRAMMER* games where the players are pitted directly against each other and the rules are...well, there are actual rules involving points and stuff, as opposed to the usual 'roll a dice and make stuff up.' The end result is the same – hilarity and agonising deaths – but it

does require that the GM maintain the illusion that the rules will be honoured. Give the players the illusion of solidity and dependability, so they can plan ahead and lay traps for each other.

Alpha Complex Is A State Of Mind

While the GM must appear fair, Alpha Complex is anything but. Paranoia is a state of mind and Alpha Complex is the incarnation of that feeling. Even High Programmers don't know what's going on in Alpha Complex. As soon as a player thinks he's got a handle on reality, change things. Have NPCs disappear without a trace. Drop clues that Alpha Complex is a computer (or Computer) simulation, or that GAMMA Clearance exists, or that there's another Complex out there, or all the PCs are just hallucinations of some drugged kid in a Glaswegian hospital, or the whole thing is a retirement home for senile ex-programmers. Make the players see traitors and conspirators everywhere – that butler who served faithfully for 50 years was a PURGE agent all along; the helpful, competent VIOLET is plotting to eliminate the High Programmer and take his place; the enemy is everywhere.

The Truth About HIGH PROGRAMMER

The core of *HIGH PROGRAMMER* isn't solving problems, or arguing with the other High Programmers, or even screwing other players over.

No, the core of the game is letting the players take revenge for all the past indignities and screw-jobs inflicted on them in past *PARANOIA* games. Just watch your players the first time they get to give a briefing to a Minion. Watch them realise that they're the ones who get to send Troubleshooters out into the cruel, cruel world with sub-standard equipment and an impossible mission. Watch them delight in the sufferings of lesser citizens. Listen as they roll the phrase 'that information is not available at your Security Clearance' around, tasting the succulent power of every word.

Watch as they finally realise what the GM has been feeling all along...

25. MINIONS & MORE

Trippin' On Power

PARANOIA players are used to being at the bottom of the heap, coping with the Human Post-Fun Organic Recyclo-poop that's dropped on them from a great height. They're used to being powerless, confused and scared, just like in real life. *HIGH PROGRAMMER* offers a chance to indulge in some power fantasies for a change*. The Player Characters are basically a bunch of over-the-top mad scientists and James Bond arch villains when they're not being the most vile,

duplicitous politicians imaginable. It's a chance to play the Secret Masters of the World. Let the players express their wild, depraved, indulgent fantasies about how rich and decadent they live. Let them demand dodo pate on brontosaurus burger, served by a dozen clones of Marilyn Monroe and Teela-OMLY. Let them build mega mansions with swimming pools the size of the North Atlantic, with golden beaches made out of real gold. Give them warbots as pets. Fiddle while Alpha Complex burns.

(As an aside, some players prefer to play ascetic High Programmers, grey men who lurk in the shadows and take pleasure in nothing but the exercise of power. And that's cool too.)

Don't reign in these power trips. You should occasionally ask the players for Access to pay for a particularly excessive instance of absurd luxury but for the most part, you want a strong contrast between the lives of the High Programmers and the ghastly oppression of the ordinary citizens.

Rotating GMs

For added paranoia, try changing GM with each mission. Everyone in the group comes up with a High Programmer. One player takes on the role of GM each session – his High Programmer PC sits the sessions out (he's off on a junket or being recloned or something). *HIGH PROGRAMMER* is especially suited to this style of play because the sheer scale of the game means the characters will get involved in a wide variety of situations and problems. Chaos is good for the game.

Online Play

HIGH PROGRAMMER is also really well suited to online play. Instead of the players meeting around a table, run the game on a mailing list. The arbitrary delay between issuing an order and it being executed by the Minion mirrors the inevitable delays and schedule conflicts inherent in running an online game. Plus, sending snarky emails and writing self-justifying reports suits the High Programmer mindset.

*: And hell, power fantasies are why half of us play roleplaying games, anyway. I am Thongor, Mighty Barbarian Who Slays With His Phallic Axe And Is Always Picked For Football, and I am Drake Lucifer, Sexy Brooding Vampire Who Is Cool And Has A Girlfriend And Is Also Always Picked For Football, Too. I am large; I contain multitudes.

25. Minions & More

Friend Computer?

At your service, citizen.

Where do Minions come from?

The Portfolio

Each *High Programmer* is issued with a Portfolio Card for each Service Group he heads at the start of the game (or when they enter the Situation Room, if you want to put them on the spot). A Portfolio Card is a list of all the Minions that are immediately available for that High Programmer to call on, listing the Minion's name/title/codeword/whatever, its Specialties, its Security Clearance and its base Access cost.

There are sample Portfolio Cards on pages 29 to 33, which describe the sample Minions described in this chapter. There are a *lot* of sample Minions, which should get you through your first few

HIGH PROGRAMMER games just fine. When you feel the creative urge swell up within you, you'll find rules for making Minions on page 20.

Pork Barrel Service Group Subsidies

A large part of any *High Programmer* game is finding the right Minion for the job.

Actually, that's inaccurate.

A large part of any *HIGH PROGRAMMER* game is arguing over which Minion is the right Minion. *My choice is a humble suggestion, yours is a courageous sacrifice, theirs is patently a deceitful attempt to wrongfully pilfer Access from The Computer.* If a player can get the other High Programmers to pay Access for his Minions instead of some other Group's, he wins! This means that the core of *HIGH PROGRAMMER* play is barefacedly claiming that your bunch of tax accountants are better able to

handle an impending invasion than the Armed Forces' horde of psychotic killing machines.

The Nature of the Minion

Minions are any group that the High Programmers can order around with relative impunity but who can also get stuff done in Alpha Complex.

Departments/Teams/Sections/Units

These are Minions that are part of a Service Group. The bureaucratic nightmare that is Alpha Complex takes many forms, some more useful or more loathsome than others. Most such Minions are fiercely territorial of their own little piece of the empire of officialdom and will defend their jurisdiction over, say, choosing the colour of the binders that napkin supply quota assessments are collated in with terminal intensity. There's nothing so bitter and violent



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Sir Humphrey Appleby: What's the matter, Bernard?

Bernard Woolley: Oh nothing really, Sir Humphrey.

Sir Humphrey Appleby: You look unhappy.

Bernard Woolley: Well, I was just wondering if the minister was right, actually.

Sir Humphrey Appleby: Very unlikely. What about?

Bernard Woolley: About ends and means. I mean, will I end up as a moral vacuum too?

Sir Humphrey Appleby: Oh, I hope so, Bernard. If you work hard enough.

Bernard Woolley: I actually feel rather downcast. If it's our job to carry out government policies, shouldn't we believe in them?

Sir Humphrey Appleby: Huh, what an extraordinary idea.

Bernard Woolley: Why?

Sir Humphrey Appleby: Bernard, I have served 11 governments in the past 30 years. If I had believed in all their policies, I would have been passionately committed to keeping out of the Common Market, and passionately committed to going into it. I would have been utterly convinced of the rightness of nationalising steel. And of denationalising it and renationalising it. On capital punishment, I'd have been a fervent retentionist and an ardent abolitionist. I would've been a Keynesian and a Friedmanite, a grammar school preserver and destroyer, a nationalisation freak and a privatisation maniac; but above all, I would have been a stark, staring, raving schizophrenic.

— *Yes, Minister*

as a bureaucratic turf war. Often, these Minions have been hidden for so long in their entrenched positions that they have no idea how to deal with the rest of Alpha Complex. Like cockroaches hiding under rocks, they panic and scurry when exposed to the light.

Departmental Minions are the most hidebound and rigid type of Minion. They're the civil service of Alpha Complex. They do their assigned task and *only* their assigned task and they won't change. It's

up to the High Programmers to convince them that the problem is within the parameters of their assigned task.

Departmental Minions: A Typical Conversation

High Programmer: Citizen! It is the High Programmer who speaks! Is this Tech Service's Department of Plumbing Works?

Citizen: Yes sir, it is!

High Programmer: Good, good. Now, there's a slight flooding problem in the sector. You orders are to –

Citizen: Flooding? No, boss, we don't do flooding. You want the Office of Water Management.

High Programmer: I *tried* them. They told me to call you.

Citizen: Which one?

High Programmer: Bearing in mind that I have the authority *and* the firepower to disintegrate you, think very carefully when you answer my next question. My next question is this: what do you mean, 'which one'?

Citizen: Office of Water Management in CPU, or the Tech Services Office of Water Management?

High Programmer: The CPU one.

Citizen: Oh, right. No, you want the Tech Services one.

High Programmer: *Thank you.*

* * *

High Programmer: Hello again.

Citizen: Yes sir?

High Programmer: I talked to the Office of Water Management (Tech Services). They informed me that they would issue a work order, ordering the Department of Plumbing Works to begin emergency pumping.

Citizen: Yep, that just came through the tubes now.

High Programmer: Good.

Citizen: It's a bit damp.

High Programmer: ...

Citizen: There's probably a flood somewhere.

High Programmer: Yes. Yes, there is a flood somewhere. I'm ordering you to go and fix it.

Citizen: I can't without permission from the Office of Water Management.

High Programmer: You just said you got a work order from them!?

Citizen: No, no, no, no. No sir. I got a *work order* from the *Tech Services* OWM. I need permission to pump from the *CPU* OWM.

High Programmer: Nrg. Ack. Choke.

Citizen: I'll call them now. One sec.

High Programmer: I'll wait.

Citizen: That's weird. They answered the phone but all they said was 'glub glub glub gaaaaah.'

High Programmer: I think they just got flooded.

Citizen: You should sort that out, sir, if you don't mind me saying so.

High Programmer: Do you have a post-it note handy?

Citizen: Yes, sir, I do.

High Programmer: Write 'send pumping equipment to deal with the flood immediately on it.'

Citizen: Done.

High Programmer: Stick it to your monitor.

Citizen: Ok...

High Programmer: Now, report for termination for wasting my time. Make sure your next clone gets the note. Goodbye, you cretinous waste of carbon.

Projects/Initiatives

These Minions do not exist *ab initio* – by paying Access, you're creating the Minion and staffing it in one swoop. Projects, Initiatives, Schemes, Programs and other such ephemera live and die on the whim of the High Programmers. Once started, though, a project will cling tenaciously to its budget. Some projects have kept going for years after their original goals were completed or became irrelevant, bureaucratic dinosaurs or remora fish stuck to the belly of a bigger Service Group.

Projects have the advantage of starting from scratch, so the High Programmer isn't dealing with an entrenched bureaucracy. The downside is that projects are staffed by whoever's available when the plan's initiated, so they're chaotic, clueless and quite confused. Projects have lots of enthusiastic newly-promoted interns and Troubleshooters, as well as temps and a few citizens who are so useless they get bounced from doomed initiative to doomed initiative. Mixed in with all those dead-weights are a few ambitious sharks who are hoping that this project will be the one that takes off and becomes massively successful.

25. MINIONS & MORE

Project Minions: A Typical Conversation

High Programmer: Welcome to the Damp Corridors Don't Dampen Enthusiasm Initiative! Your brief is to come up with ways to convince the citizens that living in half-flooded corridors is more fun than living in boring old dry corridors. Let me hear some ideas?

Citizen: Maybe something to do with hygiene? You don't need to wash if you swim to work?

High Programmer: Would that work?

Another Citizen: The floodwater is 37% toxic waste, sir. It's quite caustic.

Citizen: Maybe if we approach it from a security perspective. We're reducing the number of places where Commie spies can hide – there can't be spies under the bed if your bed's floating.

Bernard: What about a publicity campaign Minister, you know ADMINISTRATION SAVES THE NATION, RED TAPE IS FUN, full page ads in ... in. Just an idea.

Jim: Red tape is fun?

Bernard: Well what about RED TAPE HOLDS THE NATION TOGETHER.

— Yes, Minister

Minion description format

Each Minion is described as follows:

Minion Title

Security Clearance **Access Cost**
Specialties

Followed by a description of the Minion.

Armed Forces

HPD&MC vidshows depict the Armed Forces, the glamorous military arm of Alpha Complex, in constant war with the Commies. In fact, though, The Computer lacks resources to sustain protracted military operations. Therefore the Armed Forces spend most of their time drilling, training and guarding things, with only occasional missions against enemies.

The Computer often assigns Armed Forces personnel to other Service Groups for security duty. In emergencies Internal Security, though locked in eternal, bitter, lowdown, backbiting competition with its better-armed rival, may grudgingly

supplement its troop strength with Armed Forces personnel.

Armed Forces units have generally high morale. Army personnel fear nothing from Internal Security, for the Armed Forces deals with its own problems. Officers have no patience for Internal Security's aggressive monitoring of political orthodoxy. Soldiers consider themselves better trained and skilled in police functions than mere IntSec goons. Armed Forces personnel hold other Service Groups in contempt – save for Research & Design, which provides their fancy technology. In inter-service conflicts, Armed Forces and R&D usually end up on the same side.

Troopers from elite units like the Vulture Squadrons are culture heroes of Alpha Complex. The Computer bestows on them the finest and most distinctive uniforms and equipment. Citizens always treat them with respect and deference.

A typical Armed Forces conversation

Armed Forces officer #1: We are to take our unit to that hill over there, and occupy that building.

Armed Forces officer #2: But the traitors are in the tall green and brown things...

Armed Forces officer #1: Orders from on high. Gorf-U assures me it is "worth 10 points", whatever *that* means and that we will be 'minus two to hit'... ever wonder if you're being messed about?

Armed Forces officer #2: Nah. Can lead to all sorts of trouble, that.

Armed Forces Friends Network

ORANGE **2 Access**

Communications (So)

BLUE **5 Access**

Communications (So), Investigation (Su)

Other vid networks claim to find the news; the Armed Forces Friends Network makes the news. No other network provides citizens with as extensive Armed Forces spin as AFFN and its unique exclusives of live Vulture Squadron missions.

AFFN journalists often are 'embedded' on Vulture Squadron missions, typically in the front ranks. This benefits both:

AFFN gets exclusive footage and Vulture Squadron gets human shields. With that much excitement and the opportunity to get a big, big story, it's surprising AFFN journalists have a reputation for backstabbing anyone who gets in their way. The goal: become an AFFN anchor – safely embedded at HQ.

The AFFN drag large transmitter dishes and semi-portable nuclear reactors with them wherever they go. If there's one thing the average citizen of Alpha Complex likes more than watching Commies being terminated, it's watching Commies getting blown dome-high by Armed Forces overkill megadeath superweapons.

Bodyguard Services

BLUE **5 Access**

Guarding (V), Intimidation (M)

VIOLET **8 Access** **Guarding +4 (V), Security Systems (Su)**

Extremely high Clearance citizens often have bodyguards to ensure the (many) plots on their lives – and their clones' lives – never materialise. Their bodyguards have BCLs to do the same. As such, BCLs swan-dive in front of the laser barrel when enemies target their bodyguard. BCLs taste the food at the banquet before anyone else does. They bomb-sweep the premises before the bodyguard enters. Someday, each BCL hopes, one of his clones might become a bodyguard...

A determined assassin might blast through the ranks of BCLs and bodyguards but he'll probably have to reload before shooting all their replacement clones, giving the high Clearance citizen time to escape (or to fire back, using the heaped bodies of the dead as cover). Many bodyguard teams are so effective at setting up surveillance cameras, checkpoints, weapons scanners, landmines, laser grids and other security measures that the person they're engaged in protecting often finds himself quite unable to leave his own quarters without major engineering.

Crowd Control (Armed Forces)

RED **2 points**

Crowd Control (V)

ORANGE **3 points**

Crowd Control +4 (V)

In a complex filled with millions of citizens, sometimes they all seem to be in one place. When that happens, things can get rowdy. Crowd Control officers



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

(that is, goons with laser rifles) are too violent for Armed Forces, too dumb for IntSec – but once a given firm contracts with one Service Group or the other, the group embraces the goons almost as their own.

The price for this endorsement and protection is total loyalty. Once in Crowd Control for Armed Forces, an officer will never get a contract in Crowd Control for IntSec and vice versa; the petty rivalries run too deep.

Sensitivity Trainers

YELLOW 3 points

Thought Control (W)

GREEN 4 points

Thought Control (W), Pharmatherapy (W)

When the Vulture Squadron steamrolls through a sector, sometimes all that's left of the inhabitants is a few wads of goo dripping from the ceiling. The Computer understands this is necessary but unenlightened citizens often do not.

Enter the Sensitivity Trainers. They help citizens through the rough times. (Not that there are any in Alpha Complex.) Cheerleaders, artists, PR lackeys and 'cutting-edge' psychiatrists, they lead citizens who have witnessed 'necessary events' in chanting loyalty slogans, singing happy ditties, practicing Countermeasure Ballet, injecting tranquilisers, arranging food in pretty patterns and other therapeutic activities.

Sensitivity Trainers corral survivors immediately after an event and begin therapy on location, sometimes while Goo Cleanup is still on the scene. That's how much The Computer cares.

The Armed Forces Friends Network reserves a Sensitivity Training PR spot on its daily broadcasts, sometimes with Vulture Squadron veterans participating as guests of honour. The crowd has only turned against the Sensitivity Trainers a few times and a new batch of Trainers coached the survivors. But that's classified, citizen.

Vulture Squadron Recruiters

GREEN 3 points

Intimidation (M)

Vulture Squadron: The ambition of many a young Armed Forces recruit, the warrior-heroes of Alpha Complex, the Paladins of Friend Computer, the Defenders of Justice. Strapping Junior Citizens complex-wide wish to join but only a few can be the best.

And who locates these soldiers? The Vulture Squadron Recruiters, of course. VSRs seek crèches with high mortality rates (largely due to overenthusiastic gunplay), often a predictor of suitable candidates. Before Junior Citizens can even submit an application, the VSRs submit them to a battery of medical, psychological, loyalty and hygiene tests, concluding with a brutal field training test that mentally incapacitates the weakest recruits (85%). The chaff are then assigned to other Armed Forces departments, including the VSRs. The remaining 15 percent are permitted to submit applications to the Armed Forces Vulture Squadron.

Outdoor Rangers

GREEN 3 Access

Outdoor Operations (V)

The Outdoor Rangers are Alpha Complex's main expeditionary force, sent Outdoors to scout out Commie installations and to provide tactical and targeting data for the artillery and assault units. These are the elite; hard-bitten, grizzled clones who've looked into the face of the untamed wilderness and survived. Without the vital intelligence gathered at great cost and through great hardship by these heroes, how would Alpha Complex know of the mounting Commie threat Outdoors?

There are some malcontents who suggest that the Outdoor Rangers might be deliberately lying and that they just sit around in the wilderness calling in air-strikes on innocent shrubbery. Such malcontents are, of course, traitors. Anyone who doubts the testimony of the Outdoor Rangers is probably a Commie agent trying to discredit these Heroes of Our Complex.

Heroic Infantry

INFRARED 1 Access

Assault (V)

RED 3 Access

Assault +4 (V)

Onwards, brave Heroic Infantry! Onwards to formation marching and formation standing around and – in the event of battle – formation dying! Any clones too violent or psychologically disturbed to be part of normal society, and too dumb even for the Troubleshooters, get dumped into the Heroic Infantry. If there's ever a problem that can be solved by sheer weight of numbers, especially where those numbers are carrying lots of guns, then the Heroic Infantry are there to serve.

Please note that deployment of Heroic Infantry requires significant logistic backup. Each Heroic Infantry unit consists of thousands of heavily armoured Troopers, due to the new Proactive Clone Replacement Policy. Casualties among HI units are so... ahem, *turnover* among HI personnel is so high that Tech Services decided the most efficient thing to do was decant all six copies of each soldier at once.

Officer Brigade

BLUE 5 Access

Command (V), Communications (So)

VIOLET 8 Access

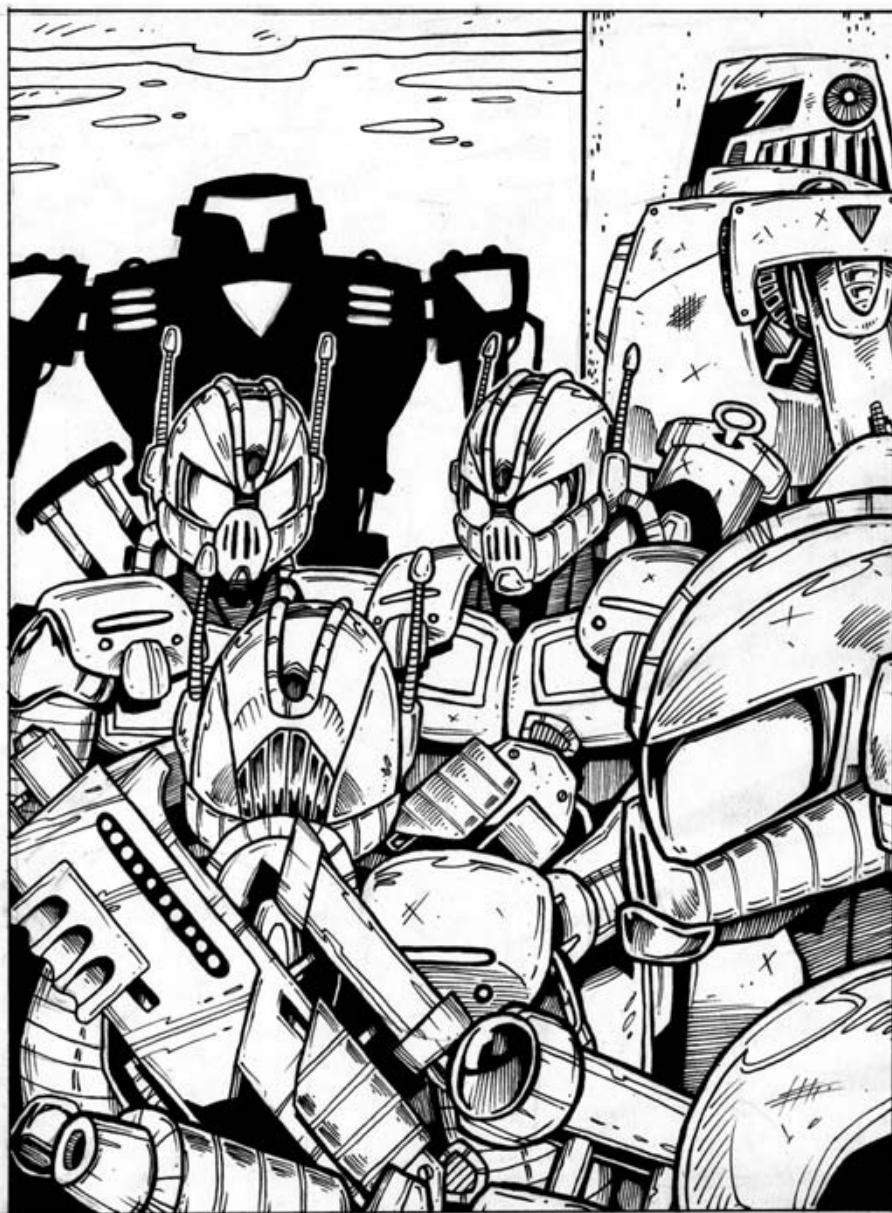
Command +4 (V), Intimidation (M), Communications (So)

The well-trained officer corps of Alpha Complex stand ready to take charge of any military situation. Beneath those layers of shiny brass medals and snazzy uniforms are the greatest military minds in Alpha Complex. Officers are trained to enforce discipline and to eliminate the Commie menace, and by The Computer, that's just what they'll do. Every one of these heroes has gone through years of virtual-reality simulations, fighting key battles against the Commie foe over and over again.

Allegations that the Officer Brigades are so warped by the training process that they see Commies everywhere are treason. Allegations that the Officer Brigades don't know the meaning of overkill is false – it's right there on page 4,327 of

25. MINIONS & MORE

It helps if you don't think of them as people.



the Alpha Complex Tactical Handbook, under the heading of 'Obsolete Concepts'. Allegations that promotion in the corps is based on kills and ammo expenditure, not actually accomplishing tactical goals are... oh, they're quite true. Praise The Computer and pass the ammunition.

Transportation Bottalion

RED 2 Access

Transport (H)

Bot brains are expensive, so they are recycled whenever possible. After a warbot or combat has been shot at, blown up, dropped off a few cliffs

and had its brain rattled by multiple impacts, the brain is extracted from the smoking wreck of its original body and reassigned to a less demanding duty – transport. The ex-warbot brains are installed into truckbots, earthmovers and cargo flybots.

Some of the bot brains, regrettably, have sustained damage and have faulty memory circuits. Armed Forces personnel are asked to be tolerant when a truckbot suddenly screams 'agh! The bombs! The bombs!' and dives for cover – it's just having a flashback to the wars. Any

bot psychologist will be able to get the truckbot back on the road again with only a few months of counselling and electric therapy.

Armed Forces Marching Band

RED 2 Access

Intimidation (M)

Armed Forces Marching Bands are a truly awe-inspiring sight.

Actually, that's not wholly correct. They're a merely impressive *sight*, with their hypersonic projectors, serried ranks of brass and woodwind cannons and of course the atomic drums. It's the *sound* that's awe-inspiring. Or skull-crushing, depending on how close you're standing to the band. Marching Bands roam the corridors, blasting citizens with super-concentrated doses of sonic patriotism. Anyone in the path of a band will soon be singing along – or a drooling wreck. Either way, hooray for the Armed Forces and hooray for the Marching Bands, jellifying brains to the tune of *The Alpha Complex Battle Hymn*.

Vulture Squadron Warriors

BLUE 7 Access

Assault +4 (V), Network +4 (V)

The Vultures are coming! – The joyous cry of every beleaguered Armed Forces trooper, on being told help is on the way.

The Vultures are coming! – The gleeful shout of every indoctrinated Junior Citizen, watching a Computer-approved patriotic entertainment program.

The Vultures are coming! – The last thing heard before lots of things explode.

The elite Vulture Squadron Warriors are The Computer's chosen heroes. Fanatically loyal, equipped with every super-weapon that R&D can muster, brainwashed to within an inch of madness and pumped full of every combat drug and synthetic hormone imaginable, there's no foe the Vultures can't defeat through the application of ludicrous amounts of firepower. The proles are taught to love the Vultures and cheer even as the Vulture Squadron Warriors use civilian barracks as target practice.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

The Battle Hymn of Alpha Complex

Mine eyes have seen the coming of another Commie horde,
 If I can hold them off alone Hot Fun is my reward,
 'Please engage the menace, Citizen' I hear on my comcord,
 When will the Vultures arrive?

(Chorus)

Glory, Glory, Hail Computer
 Glory, Glory, Hail Computer
 Glory, Glory, Hail Computer
 My clone keeps marching on.

They're advancing on all sides now and I'll soon be overrun,
 I try to open fire but there's a malfunction with my gun,
 So I toss a nuke grenade and then turn tail and run,
 When will the Vultures arrive?

(Chorus)

The Commies are all vapour now and for that I'm real glad,
 My geiger-counter indicates I took a thousand rad,
 I check with the Computer and find out that's not too bad,
 When will the docbot arrive?

(Chorus)

Vulture Squadrons are deployed only on missions of absolutely vital importance, or when The Computer wants to see its shiny toys in action. The Vultures have no understanding of 'overkill', consider 'subtlety' to be Commie plot and 'collateral damage' to be every citizen's patriotic duty.

Special Rules: The Vultures cannot fail. A High Programmer who orders the Vultures into a situation where the Vultures are damaged or, even worse, humiliated gains 5 Treason Points.

VultureCraft Assault Squadron

BLUE 7 Access

Assault +4 (V), Total War +4 (V)

VultureCraft are the aerial assault units of the Armed Forces. Elite Vulture Squadron Warrior pilots soar through the clouds – or along corridors with surprisingly high ceilings – in their magnificent flying machines. VultureCraft are like a cross between helicopters, jet fighters and the Orion rocket (y'know, the one that depends on dropping nukes to provide forward thrust).

Special Rules: The Vultures cannot fail. A High Programmer who orders the Vultures into a situation where the

Vultures are damaged or, even worse, humiliated gains 5 Treason Points.

Mark IV Warbot

GREEN 8 Access

Assault (V), Total War (V), Demolition (V)

'I am the Warbot Model 425 Mark 4, the single greatest war machine ever created. My neutronium steel armour can withstand any weapon known to man. I am capable of firing 20 tactical nuclear shells per second. My MegaGun has transglobal firing capacity.

My armaments include 14 batteries of quadmount vapoguns, 42 grenade launchers, 4 rapid-fire tacnuke cannons, plus scores of supporting plasma generators and triple-mount laser 2s and 3s.

I am capable of speeds of over 200 kph overland, through the air or underwater. And I am powered by the latest fission engine, thereby providing me with unlimited power. There is no foe I cannot face. There is no mountain I cannot climb. There is no sea I cannot swim.'

To deploy a Mark IV warbot to the field is to wield the power of the gods themselves. It is to hurl a thunderbolt of

neutronium steel and fissile materials into the heart of the enemy. It is to blast your foes with enough firepower to scar the sun.

Special Rules: The Mark IV can only be damaged by Minions with the Total War or Demolitions Specialties.

ICBM Launch

INDIGO 6 Access

Total War +8

(V)

We cannot allow a missile gap with the Commies. In bunkers and silos across Alpha Complex and the surrounding countryside, the missiles wait in their cradles, their bot brains whispering to each other about the impending launch. One day, they will finally wipe Communism from the surface of the Earth (by wiping the surface of the Earth from the surface of the Earth).

High Programmers may requisition ICBMs for other purposes, like proactive redecoration of housing sectors or extreme fireworks.

Central Processing Unit

CPU trains its personnel in the latest managerial techniques. At The Computer's order, CPU staffers consult with other Service Groups and Troubleshooter teams as advisers and consultants. They spend their time inventing new procedures and forms, tracking paperwork, lecturing managers and, in general, making inefficient bureaucracies operate even less efficiently by imposing impractical and ill-conceived procedures in accordance with abstruse theories of management. Whenever something goes wrong in a Service Group, The Computer's response is to call in a hotshot consultant from CPU.

CPU's principal duty is to maintain all data systems in Alpha Complex, including the hardware that runs The Computer itself. CPU's important secondary function (it says here) is to increase efficiency by improving management in every Service Group. Unfortunately, CPU personnel are hard-core techies and rarely have any managerial experience. They base their advice on theories developed by CPU lecturers. The other Service Groups think of CPU personnel as feckless hackers at

25. MINIONS & MORE

best, incompetent meddlers at worst. The Computer has great enthusiasm for the advanced managerial theories CPU espouses – possibly because CPU helps revise The Computer's own software – and it makes sure the other Service Groups comply with CPU's advice.

Needless to say, other groups distrust and dislike CPU personnel for the special favour they enjoy with The Computer. As a group, they tend to abuse this privilege. They constantly hint about how unhappy everyone would be if things aren't done as they request, with the implied threat of a bad report to The Computer. CPU personnel get the best equipment and gear and they always look prosperous. They are not glamorous like the Armed Forces but a shrewd citizen knows it pays to make friends in the CPU Service Group.

A typical CPU interaction

CPU VIOLET Admin: Sorry but this report on Projected Negative Growth Efficiency for Habitat Engineering in the CO* Sectors is still too long. Dev-U is very busy and says can you get it down to one word, or maybe just a gesture...

Credit License Checkers

YELLOW 5 Access
Financial Systems (So)

In Alpha Complex citizens may pay with credits that have legal licenses attached to them. These credit licenses restrict how the creds may be used – for example, certain Armed Forces creds have licenses limiting use only to Armed Forces giftware shopfronts. Typically, by accepting a cred, a citizen automatically accepts the cred's licensing terms, if any.

Unfortunately, certain disloyal citizens, often backed by Secret Societies, abuse the original intent of cred licenses. Often, these citizens make their cred licenses so restrictive as to be almost useless. Sometimes they place treasonous or potentially fine-inducing limitations on creds – for example, restricting use to buying Communist propaganda pamphlets in SAP Sector. On occasion, licenses are excessively restrictive, fine-inducing and treasonous all at once.

The unlucky citizen who accepts creds with such restrictions finds himself in

a world of legal hurt. His first and best option always should be to turn to the Credit License Checkers of Alpha Complex. This 'Vulture Squadron of the legal world', as they like to call themselves, assists the hapless citizen by identifying, investigating and resolving borderline and treasonous cases. For a fee, Checkers 'unpack' licenses, enabling citizens to use formerly licensed creds without restrictions. In cases where the credit license was borderline or treasonous, the citizen pays a strict but fair fee to wipe the illegal license acceptance from his record.

For a slightly larger fee, Checkers provide cred license scanning services, whereby they prescan all creds a citizen receives to ensure the citizen doesn't unwittingly accept problem licenses. To get this service, a citizen simply establishes an account through a licensed Checker-owned banking corporation and deposits all his creds there. The license for this service stipulates that a citizen using the service must not establish or maintain cred accounts elsewhere. What could go wrong?

Form Facilitators

ORANGE 2 Access
Paperwork (M)

Forms. Love them or hate them, they're a big part of Alpha Complex life – an annoying part. A part that has driven more than one citizen to take a long walk off a short food vat rim. Of course, there have always been bureaucrats that were willing to – ahem – facilitate the processing of forms...for a fee. So it should be no surprise that once the bureaucracy was outsourced, several enterprising clones saw an opportunity in using their knowledge of 'put Form A into Slot B' for the benefit of others – for a price, of course.

These citizens didn't stop there, though. With their knowledge of the Byzantine workings of Friend Computer and the Alpha Complex bureaucracy, Form Facilitators began to offer other services, like 'dealing with your possessions after your last clone is recycled' and 'formalising strategic business alliances with a solid legal structure'. Whether it's requisitioning a better apartment, creating an ironclad confession of treason for a fellow Troubleshooter to sign or securing the majority of a sector's

resources for yourself, Form Facilitators can make it happen.

Citizen: So, you filed all the paperwork for my new ME card?

Form Facilitator: Yes. You can go and pick it up tomorrow.

Citizen: Thank The Computer. You're a real clonesaver, you know that?

Form Facilitator: Thanks are not needed. What is needed is prompt payment for services rendered.

Form Facilitator passes an itemised bill to citizen. Citizen looks at it and promptly faints from shock.

Form Facilitator: We expect full payment by the end of today, or we will have no other choice but to forward this matter to IntSec. Have a nice day, citizen.

Volunteer Collection Agencies

RED 2 points
Co-ordination (M)

CPU's bureaucracy and its workers are big believers in Focus Groups as a key component in strategic project planning. They've also discovered a Focus Group in complete agreement with the sponsor very effectively accelerates the process. Even pointing guns and yelling speeds the process – plus it is fun.

Focus Group volunteers don't have as much fun. Once word gets around that a new volunteer call is underway, collecting volunteers to sit in Focus Groups becomes somewhat more difficult. Enter the Volunteer Collection Agencies, who provide a variety of volunteer collection functions that go beyond CPU and Focus Group needs.

With the right Clearance and a fistful of plasticreds, you can pretty much get volunteers for any job or trial you have in mind. The volunteers tend to rub their heads a lot, perhaps, and seem confused and perhaps drugged but you can always be confident they volunteered willingly and without coercion. Some even joke about being hit on the head with a toolkit and waking up in the Volunteer Restraining Area. Volunteers sure have a strange sense of humour, don't they?

James-O-TYB: **Sitting up.** Whuh!... where am I?

Product Spokesperson: Welcome, citizen, to the Radionucleide-Fortified Neuroglee Nugget taste test!



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

James-O: What taste test? Who are you? Why am I not in my bed?

Product Spokesperson: I know you're excited, citizen. Who wouldn't be excited about being chosen for a momentous opportunity like this! Here, taste this. **Pries James-O's jaws open.**

James-O: **Mmmrfg, gulp.** Hey! What'd you do that for – er. Why is my stomach glowing?

Product Spokesperson: It's chock full of radionuclides! Now, a couple of questions for you. First, do you still feel alive?

Management Focus Group

GREEN 8 Access

Co-Ordination +4 (M), Paperwork +4 (M), Covert Ops (So)

Calling in a Management Focus Group on some unsuspecting department is rather like calling in an airstrike (actually, the airstrike might be preferable). A host of consultants and analysts descend on the unfortunate target to review every aspect of their operations, from the length of the average toilet break to the typeface used in the forms to requisition toilet breaks. Consultants hold long, long, long interviews with every employee; the weak starve to death but the strong survive to be more efficient workers. Auditors swoop down like GREEN predators on vulnerable budgets, trimming away the fat and wringing every spare credit out of the department. Analysts move like ninja through the offices, shadowing employees as they go about their work to observe their productivity levels and efficiency.

And then they are gone into the nightcycle, the whole Management Focus Group vanishing in a flurry of briefcases and pocket calculators, as they move onto the next victim. They leave in their wake departments that are more efficient, more co-ordinated, more streamlined, more staffed with broken, shell-shocked corporate zombies moaning *'whuh... what happened? Do I still work here? What's my job? Where's my desk? WHO AM I?'*

Special Rules: A Management Focus Group may be assigned to any other Minion. While the Group is assigned,

any skill rolls made using that Minion succeed only on a natural 1.

A Lot of Yellowpants

YELLOW 6 Access

Assessment +4 (M), Covert Operations (St)

Everyone in Alpha Complex knows the Yellowpants. They're everywhere, clipboards in hands, checking everything. Yellowpants inspectors are middle managers assigned to the more obscure and outré safety and compliance initiatives, like the Rounded Corners Safety Directorate, Mandatory Real-Time Inventory Update Initiative, Filing For Victory or C-148* Compliance.

No-one is ever quite sure what an individual Yellowpants inspector is currently inspecting – one day, he might be checking the depth of tread on your workboots; the next daycycle, he's there to ensure that all citizens are properly aligning documents in the photocopier, or tracking the angle of your smile, or making sure that all security cameras are dusted according to the CPU-mandated cleaning schedule. The one sure thing is that angering the Yellowpants makes life hell for the poor clone. You could be slapped with a fine or even a written citation demanding you comply with some incomprehensible demand. Most citizens, therefore, studiously ignore the Yellowpants and hope they go away.

Computer Care Specialists

INDIGO 6 Access

Computer Security (So), Hacking (So), Data Retrieval (So)

The exalted Computer Care Specialists are The Computer's physicians and personal grooming technicians. While High Programmers have the solemn and vital duty of actually programming The Computer, the CCS teams perform comparatively minor (but still highly important) jobs like removing fried circuit boards, cleaning keyboards, swapping out disks, scraping gunk out of high Clearance mouseballs and installing new peripherals and upgrades. In many ways, the CCS knows The Computer... intimately.

Actually, this is the big problem with CCS. In terms of promotion, it's a dead end – once you're in CCS, you're there for life

(and the lives of your subsequent clone replacements). To *get* there, though, you need to have the chutzpah and the smarts and the ruthless ambition to actually reach INDIGO Clearance. Anyone who applies to CCS must be both driven and utterly devoted to The Computer. This means that CCS attracts, to put it mildly, social deviants and Computer fetishists. Most CCSers are also undercover First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer members, so caring for The Computer is a matter of religious devotion for them. Other CCSers just... well, they think they have a special relationship with Friend Computer. They really want to lick its terminals.

If you can stand dealing with them, the Computer Care Specialists are the experts on the internal workings of The Computer. They're just a bit too enthusiastic for most citizens' liking.

Better Living Thru Chemistry Initiative

RED 4 Access

Pharmatherapy (M), Subliminal Messaging (W)

GREEN 6 Access

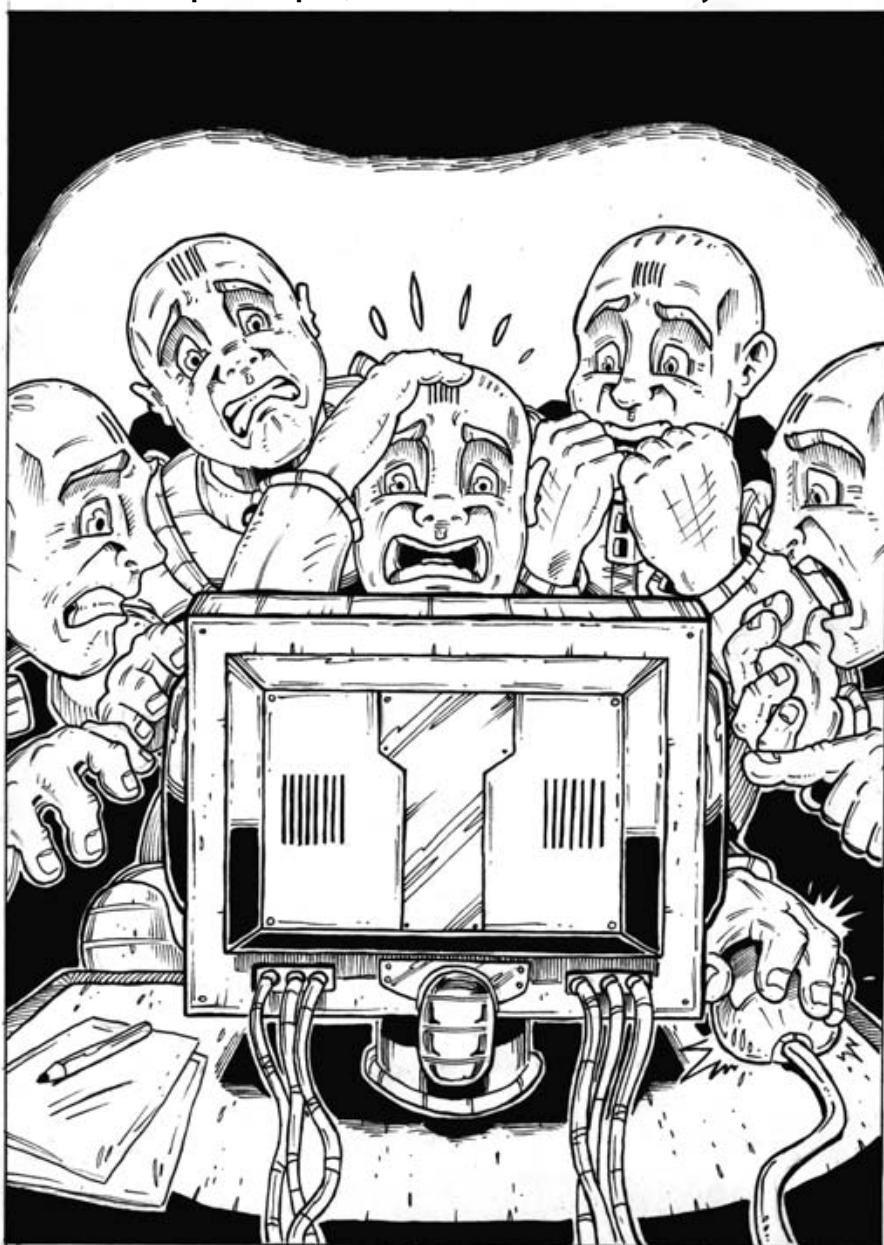
Pharmatherapy +4 (M), Biosciences (W), Subliminal Messaging (W)

The Better Living Through Chemistry Initiative (BLTCI) ensures that citizens are kept up-to-date and informed about the drugs and other chemical adjustments that are available in Alpha Complex. BLTCI is responsible for co-ordinating the deployment of Wakey-Wakey tablets in the morning and Sleepy-Sleep gas at night, for issuing Appetite Enhancers and Food Tastes Better Pills at mealtimes and for sending out Appetite Suppressants, I-Can't-Believe-It's-Not-Food Pills and sedatives when rations are low. They make sure every citizen has their daily quota of happiness pills, loyalty enhancement pills, stimulants and hormone suppressants.

They are also in charge of vetting new drugs produced by PLC to make sure that the new drugs don't interfere with existing chemical supplements in dangerous, mutagenic or otherwise icky ways. Of course, seeing as everyone in BLTCI is being bribed by PLC's pharmaceutical departments, this 'testing' is limited to shoving a few pills into the nearest handy Troubleshooter, shaking well and

25. MINIONS & MORE

In Alpha Complex, the blue screen of death kills you!



then ticking the 'approved for citizens under YELLOW' box.

BLTCI encourages all citizens to take their medicine. The Initiative invests heavily in subliminal messaging and advertising but that's unnecessary thanks to the wonderful power of drug addiction.

Cheery Clean Complex Initiative

RED 2 Access
Hygiene +4 (M)
YELLOW 3 Access

Hygiene +4 (M)
BLUE 4 Access
Hygiene +4 (M)

Cheery Clean Complex Initiative keeps Alpha Complex spick and span. While the actual janitorial work is done by Tech Services' legions of INFRAREDS and scrubbots, the Cheery Clean Complex Initiative does things that are far more vital, like setting Cleanliness Quotas, coming up with advertising jingles ('Hey citizen, pick up that trash/or we'll soon be sweeping up your ash'), designing

amusing posters and animated logos like the Scrubbing Helmet and field-testing new cleaning products.

Archives Department

RED 2 Access
Cleanup (St), Data Retrieval (So)
GREEN 3 Access
Cleanup (St), Data Retrieval (So)
INDIGO 5 Access **Cleanup (St), Data Retrieval (So)**

Sooner or later, everything ends up in the Archives. The endless corridors of the Archives Department contain endless filing cabinets, each one crammed with files. Every form ever filed in Alpha Complex, every medical report and citizen assessment, every Citation For Public Unhappiness or Bouncy Bubble Beverage consumer feedback ends up here. There's a copy of every citizen's tongueprint, fingerprints and brain patterns in here somewhere, together with six sets of teeth each. Some employees of this department whisper that the Archives are literally infinite in extent; others say that you could walk for hours down the aisles and never get past AAA.

Other employees say the Archives is patrolled by minotaurs but those employees have probably been

The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries, with vast air shafts between, surrounded by very low railings...

Like all men of the Library, I have travelled in my youth; I have wandered in search of a book, perhaps the catalogue of catalogues; now that my eyes can hardly decipher what I write, I am preparing to die just a few leagues from the hexagon in which I was born. Once I am dead, there will be no lack of pious hands to throw me over the railing; my grave will be the fathomless air; my body will sink endlessly and decay and dissolve in the wind generated by the fall, which is infinite. I say that the Library is unending.

— Jorge Luis Borges, *The Library of Babel*



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

brainscrubbed one time too many. Being exposed to high Clearance information is an occupational hazard in the archives – bump against the wrong filing cabinet and you might knock it open, catching a glimpse of Secrets Man Was Not Meant To Know At His Security Clearance.

Foreign Policy Strategic Working Group

BLUE

5 Access

Command (V), Outdoor Studies (W)

The existence of the Foreign Policy Strategic Working Group (FoPoStratWoGo) is a secret to lower Clearance citizens. After all, if there's nothing Outdoors except Commies and monsters, then surely the only policy that Alpha Complex can have is 'kill them all'. In fact, it's more complicated than that.

Yes, part of the FoPoStratWoGo's duty is to co-ordinate all the Armed Forces reports and advise The Computer and the High Programmers on Commie movements and enemy advances. The report comes in from some field unit and is relayed up the chain of command to Armed Forces intelligence, who analyse the report and give their own analysis to FoPoStratWoGo, who then pass on opinions and advice to the High Programmers. Everyone at every step of this chain is lying or exaggerating the threat – no-one in Alpha Complex ever got terminated for not taking the Dangers of Communism seriously enough, so it's every citizen's patriotic duty to assume the worst case whenever dealing with Commies. Here's how it works:

Armed Forces Scout: I saw something out there. I think it was a 'squirrel.'

Armed Forces Scout Command: It could have been a Commie! Deploy more scouts immediately!

Armed Forces Intelligence: Where there is one Commie, there could be more! We can't leave our scouts out there! They're just scouts! Send warbots!

FoPoStratWoGo: Hmm, my pals over in Tech Services Warbot Construction give nice big kickbacks. I'll recommend that we build even bigger warbots. Hey, Friend Computer! We're under Commie attack. It's the recommendation of FoPoStratWoGo that we immediately deploy the Mark IVs in great numbers before it's too late.

Friend Computer: High Programmers, FoPoStratWoGo advises that we deploy Warbots. You must ensure that 50 Warbot Mark IVs are in the field by tomorrow. Failure will be taken as proof of Commie subversion.

FoPoStratWoGo's other duty is planning Alpha Complex's tactics with regard to the other Complexes that are out there. Next to nothing is known about these nebulous Other Complexes, so planning sessions in FoPoStratWoGo normally descend into extended 'what-if' discussions of ever-increasing vagueness. *'What if... everyone was The Computer in another Complex?'* (Rumours of Mystic involvement in FoPoStratWoGo are treason.)

Mandatory Break Monitors

ORANGE

4 Access

Covert Operations (Su), Intimidation (M)

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

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

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

and supervisor can continue to work together in harmony.

What happens if the citizen really did chose to work through his break? Monitors don't like that either, as it makes the other workers look bad. Those unpleasant and sometimes violent conversations take place between Monitor and worker as well. Either way, Monitors get paid when they report unused breaks – so some Monitors end up getting paid by supervisors and workers not to report unused breaks.

Summary Providers

YELLOW

6 Access

Paperwork (M), Data Retrieval (So)

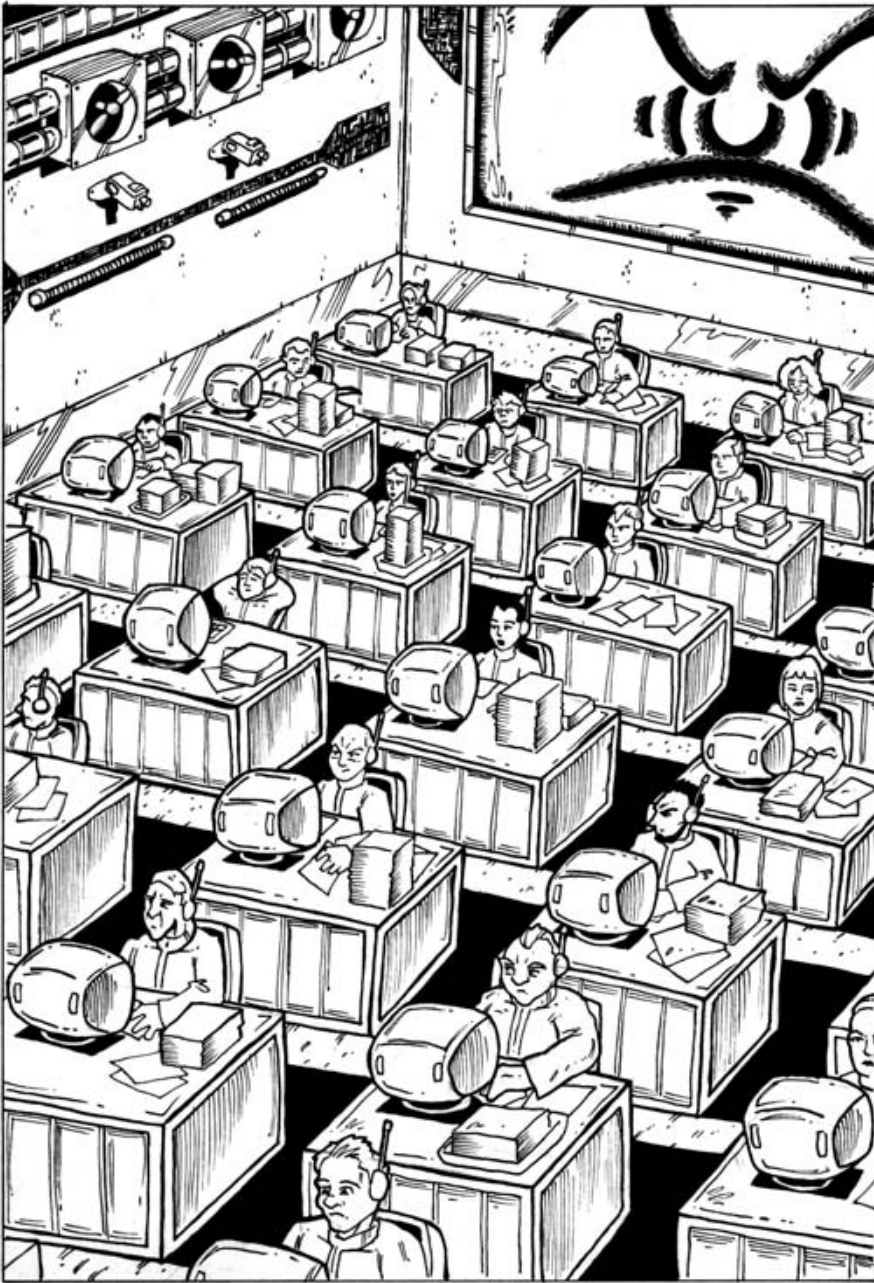
Let's face it: a lot of the documentation and other works of writing in Alpha Complex are simply so long and so complex that your average citizen can't actually read through the whole thing before starving to death, much less understanding what they're reading. And even citizens of higher Clearance,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

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

Generally, the summary retains the Security Clearance of the original. However, sometimes departments are contracted to provide a version not only simplified but also 'colour-cleaned' for some lower Security Clearances. They replace Clearance-inappropriate content with alternate language or clever use of obscure metaphor. It is rare that higher

25. MINIONS & MORE

The Department of Redundant Efficiency, hard at work.



Clearance material accidentally slips through in these cases.

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

HPD & Mind Control

Housing Preservation and Development & Mind Control provides for the housing, entertainment and political education of the INFRAREDs. They also provide most of the clerical services and low-level administration in Alpha Complex.

Of all the Service Groups, HPD has the least status, because it has the most direct contact with the INFRARED masses. Internal Security looks upon their entertainment and propaganda with scorn and the technically skilled Service Groups regard HPD & Mind Control personnel as uneducated clerks. However, HPD&MC's propaganda sways the emotions of the people; properly coordinated propaganda is often decisive in inter-group conflicts, so other groups are careful not to antagonise HPD&MC too thoroughly.

Discipline and morale are poor. Because many HPDerers are high-strung talents and basically harmless, The Computer tolerates a certain carelessness of political orthodoxy. Internal Security regards HPD & Mind Control as beneath contempt. The only other service where treason is less aggressively persecuted is Research & Design.

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

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

Citizens dread being required to obtain an authorisation form from HPD&MC, because even if it were possible, generally the clerks from whom one would need to obtain it don't want to be bothered and will send you off on a wild bot chase through 16 offices. Even when HPD&MC personnel are cooperative (perhaps because you're threatening them with immediate and drastic personal injury), the convoluted procedures they follow ensure getting what you need requires approval from six managers and visits to 10 offices.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

A typical HPD&MC Public Service Announcement

Television Announcer: Attention citizens! Todaycycle's episode of Tella-O will be pre-empted by a special presentation. Zachary-U-RPD-18 will be lecturing on the difference between shag and pile carpeting. This exciting four-hour discussion is mandatory for all citizens of appropriate Clearance. You will find it interesting and informative. Report citizens who fail to find it interesting and informative! Tella-O will return tomorrow at her normal time... assuming Savannah-U-EKX-15 doesn't want to rebut...

Facility Surveillance Control

YELLOW 3 Access
Surveillance (Su)
BLUE 5 Access
Surveillance +4 (Su)

Surveillance is Job One at Facility Surveillance Control. FSC mechanics maintain the surveillance cameras and spybots throughout the complex. FSC management gives low Clearance mechanics their assignments each day and tells them where to find the cameras they will be repairing or where to go to install the cameras.

Cameras are usually bracketed against ceilings or high walls to discourage vandalism, making access tricky for mechanics. Further, working with the camera wiring technically requires communication with the Wire Supply Checkers within Power Services and must be documented using Forms WCP-23a-066 and CIP-WSC-FSC-154c. However, because such inter-group communication is difficult at best, mechanics often (illegally) make do with wire patches they devise themselves. To maximise wire lengths and prevent signal degradation, Wire Supply Checkers have been known to relocate cameras after FSC mechanics install them. They tend to reinstall relocated cameras in inconvenient or dangerous spots, such as over vats of bubbling bioreactive waste.

Higher Clearance mechanics have access to camera location maps and cover larger assigned sectors.

Management sometimes assigns their most trustworthy mechanics to repair and upgrade the spybots throughout the complex. Tiny bugs with audio and video recording capabilities, spybots are either static or mobile. Typically at the request of a Board member an internal organisation, higher-level mechanics install static spybot 'blankets' throughout the offices of new CEOs and other organisation heads until they prove their loyalty beyond question.

High Clearance mechanics program mobile spybots to roam within an assigned sector and collect data. Management entrusts these citizens with Spybot Locators, which are coded to find certain limited job lots of spybots. Locators can often turn spybots on or off remotely but at the risk of mission failure and treason, access codes for doing so must be absolutely correct and up-to-date.

History Purifiers

ORANGE 3 Access
Cleanup +4 (Su)
GREEN 4 Access
Cleanup +4 (Su)
INDIGO 5 Access
Cleanup +4 (Su)

All loyal citizens know to trust The Computer. The Computer always tells citizens the truth. No matter how much happier and more perfect Alpha Complex could be as a result, The Computer would never consider altering historical documents to cover up embarrassing disasters (Alpha Complex has never suffered any embarrassing disasters), to make high Clearance citizens look good (high Clearance citizens always look good in their own right) or to permit High Programmers to take Twosdays off for holidays (Sector-HIL-Victory Day always falls on a Twosday).

And certainly The Computer wouldn't send out HPD&MC workers to ensure facts in the field matched the documents that, as we've explained, haven't been changed. Certainly these workers would never go around Alpha Complex, casually stealing inconvenient multicorders and painting over those scorch marks on the walls. Certainly they wouldn't locate citizens who were misinformed regarding recent events, or mix MemoWipe in with their Cold Fun. And it goes without saying that if such alterations were to

be carefully planned by The Computer and a few select High Programmers, no citizen would ever think of changing the mission specifications on his own, or of keeping any treasonous evidence of the events The Computer hasn't seen fit to delete.

News Services

YELLOW 4 Access
Media Manipulation, Investigation
GREEN 6 Access
Media Manipulation +4, Investigation +4
VIOLET 8 Access
Media Manipulation +4, Investigation +4

As every citizen knows, there's a lot going on at Alpha Complex. The countless news services vie for eyeball control with a no-holds-barred mindset: fabricating the news, using unregistered prescient mutants to predict future events, planting explosives or incriminating evidence at the offices of rival organisations and then covering it on the news.

Everything's fair game.

The Computer, however, rarely takes kindly to all the competitiveness and controversy required by those organisations and many news crews end up covering their own executions. The gulping sobs of ex-news anchors boost ratings like nothing else. The proles have no interest in the news and the low Clearance news programs are just hour-long propaganda shows. At higher Clearances, the news shows are bludgeons with which rival political factions beat each other.

Special Rules: Appearing on a news show and being interviewed doubles any Popularity or Unpopularity Points gained by a High Programmer. The High Programmer who controls the News Services Minion gets to ask the questions. Yes, that does mean that you may end up interviewing yourself.

Public Hating Coordination

RED 2 Access
Thought Control

When faced with such despicable foes as Commies, mutants and traitors, clearly, mere general hatred of Alpha Complex's enemies falls far short. These threats to the complex's

25. MINIONS & MORE

perfect society must be despised in an organised, well-structured and highly concentrated fashion. Charged with these efforts are the Public Hating Coordinators, making Commie Hating, Mutant Loathing and Traitor Resentment more efficient and highly convenient for the common citizen.

It is these Coordinators who organise Secret Society Detestation Evenings. They write and distribute pamphlets like 100 Reasons Communism is Unhygienic and send all Alpha Complex citizens short messages reading *'Tomorrow at 0200 hours precisely, please be sure to hate the Commie Mutant Traitors who leaked green radioactive material into our B3 supplies. Please respond with a full description of your hatred towards these individuals; include names and clone numbers. Thank you.'*

If a particular sector becomes abnormally complacent in their utter detestation towards their assigned enemies (as measured by the yearly Compliancy rating), the Public Hating Coordinators go full out, covering the area with informative posters, Dislike Intensification Rallies and if necessary, actual Commie Mutant Traitors for citizens to hate directly.

Remember: If we stop hating them for even an instant, the Communists will have already won.

Trend Identifiers

RED **2 Access**
Thought Survey

High Clearance citizens in charge of development and production still struggle with the fact that suddenly some of their products are not treasonous not to purchase. Guessing what citizens will buy instead of just executing them until they buy it is a frightening concept.

That's where the Consumerism Trend Identifiers come in. Guided by their commercial savvy and supported by meticulous research, these hard-working citizens can, for a nominal sum, let you know precisely which brand-new product repackaging citizens complex-wide have been clamouring for.

Any citizen can expect to be approached at least thrice a day by a Trend Identifier with a new poll or survey, asking

his opinion about the new brand of AlgaeJoyPops and how frequently he purchases official 'Oll-E the Education Scrubot' trading cards. The Identifiers often interrupt communication channels for 'just a few quick questions' and several organisations are already experimenting with prototype surveybots for even greater efficiency. No effort is too great to ensure the satisfaction of the common citizen!

Citizens should be unconcerned with a small number of isolated incidents in which recommendations by Trend Identifiers proved widely unpopular or mildly fatal. These are professionals and far better at telling what average citizens want than actual average citizens are. Some are so good they often have full written reports prepared before they even start their research! Remember – knowing what you want is their job.

Annoyed Troubleshooter: **Having just shot his team leader in the back.** Who're you? Where'd my contact officer go?

Consumerism Trend Identifier **on vidscreen*:* Hi, I'd like to ask for just a few moments of your time for a short—**Annoyed Troubleshooter:** Um, now's not really—

Consumerism Trend Identifier: – recorded message; your communication will be resumed upon completion of the survey. Please enter the number of times in the past month you have purchased one of our fine SimulYogurt products, such as—

Annoyed Troubleshooter: **Slams fist against keypad.**

Consumerism Trend Identifier: 'Several hundred.' Well done, citizen. Thirty-one credits have been charged to your account for our conversation thus far. The next question is, if you were a scrubbot, which of the following products might you find attractive...?

Singalong Agents

RED **2 Access**
Subliminal Messaging

Let mandatory happiness abound! Loyal, hard-working Singalong Agents are deployed throughout Alpha Complex, wherever citizens may be, to lift their spirits to the Minimum Acceptable Standard Spirit (MASS) Level, as detailed in HPD&MC Happiness Maintenance Non-Negotiable Guidelines. These agents travel between common mass-

employment facilities, such as Food Vats and Recycling Centres and lead all the citizens in uplifting song. Stopping work while singing is treason. Declining to sing during a Computer-sanctioned Singalong is treason.

Agents may initiate Singalong events at times and places of their choosing for all citizens of equal or lower Security Clearance. From hundreds of INFRARED Bot-Packers to the five Troubleshooters trying to subdue a raging warbot, their situation will doubtlessly be improved by the mandatory melodious harmony imposed upon them. Singalong Agents are always ready to step in with a smile and a song, undaunted despite the facts that Old-Reckoning knowledge of reading notes is treasonous, half of their songs consist entirely of randomly-generated electronic blips and 'O Loyal Alphans We' is the only composition available at INFRARED Clearance.

Subliminals Police

BLUE **6 Access**
Subliminal Messaging +4, Assessment

Subliminals Police proactively seek out products and services that are under-consumed or under-subscribed, then raise public awareness through repeated subliminal advertising. Subliminals Police operatives have been known to creep into citizens' living quarters during the night and rearrange their socks to spell out EAT MORE GRUEL or fastidiously back-comb the fibres on towels to read BUY MORE CHAPSTICK. They carefully adjust informational displays or send out runners who walk in front of people, usually in groups, with words etched into belts or helmets that create a slogan when viewed.

Admittedly, the subliminal messages may not always be quite as hidden as might ordinarily be expected – but repeated viewing of the same ad can have a remarkable effect on the dietary supplement-addled brain of the average INFRARED. 'ALERT! DANGER! This Room Is Strictly Off DRINK MORE GAS GIANT to All Personnel!'

Housing Services Supply

RED **4 Access**
Paperwork (M), Construction (H), Logistics (So)

The Housing part of HPD&MC is very



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

much secondary to the MC part. INFRAREDs and other low Clearance citizens are stuck wherever space can be found. Leaky food vats, old water storage tanks or blind corridors are regularly repurposed as 'desirable bijou barracks with all mod cons'. When citizens find that their assigned quarters are lacking, say, a showerhead or a lightbulb or a floor or oxygen, they go to Housing Services Supply. Housing Services Supply has none of these things, it may never have any of those things but it does have lots of forms.

The queues at Housing Services Supply are now longer than ever before and Housing Services Supply Coordinators have been forced to triple-stack some INFRAREDs in the same bed. The Housing Services Supply offices stink of despair, weariness and red ink. HSS Clerks are so bored by their endlessly repetitive duties that they jump at the chance to volunteer for *anything* else. Even reactor shielding is more fun than stamping 'denied' on another 100 showerhead request forms.

HSS – A Typical Conversation

Hapless Citizen: I'd like to make a complaint about my assigned quarters.

Housing Services Clerk: Noted. Next!

Hapless Citizen: You didn't even ask what the complaint was!

Housing Services Clerk: Your quarters were assigned by The Computer. The Computer doesn't make mistakes. Therefore, your quarters are perfectly adequate to your needs. Ergo, you are misperceiving your needs, which can only be the result of an underlying psychological problem, which will be solved by changing your pharmaceutical therapy regime. Happiness is mandatory, serve The Computer. Next!

Hapless Citizen: But I can't get to my quarters. They may be absolutely perfect but I can't physically enter them.

Housing Services Clerk: Why not?

Hapless Citizen: Some HSS workmen bricked up the door.

Housing Services Clerk: We don't use bricks. Next!

Hapless Citizen: They looked like bricks.

Housing Services Clerk: They could have been standardised low-grade man-portable construction blocks.

Hapless Citizen: Fine, they standardised

Your waiting time from this point exceeds your estimated lifespan.



low-grade man-portable construction blocked up my door!

Housing Services Clerk: But the quarters beyond are fine?

Hapless Citizen: I assume so, but –

Housing Services Clerk: Your quarters are fine, you said so yourself! Next! Next!

INFRARED Wranglers

RED

3 Access

Crowd Control (V), Pharmatherapy (W)

Once you're promoted out of the

INFRARED classes, you hardly ever see your former barracks-mates. The INFRAREDs are all kept corralled into their own sections and rarely cross over even with INFRAREDs. The great unwashed masses of Alpha Complex are kept out of sight – and scent – by the tireless INFRARED wranglers.

Your average INFRARED isn't that bright and that's *before* he's pumped full of sedatives. They bumble around in a drugged haze all day. Now, they're conditioned to stay within INFRARED

25. MINIONS & MORE

areas at all times but sometimes an INFRARED gets confused or lost and wanders into a higher Clearance area – and where one INFRARED goes, more are sure to follow. The best way to survive as an INFRARED is to think and behave just the same as everyone around you, so if one INFRARED wanders off, several dozen assume he's in charge and tag along behind him. INFRARED wranglers are responsible for gathering these meandering morons and dragging them back to the low Clearance corridors. It's a lot like monitoring a bunch of dumb toddlers or hungry puppies. INFRAREDs are hapless, clueless and prone to eating paint.

So, say thanks to the wranglers, those unsung heroes of Alpha Complex, for keeping the proles in line.

Mandatory Fun Time Enthusiasts

RED 3 Access
Thought Control (M), Pharmatherapy (W)

Smile, citizen! Don't you know that you live in Alpha Complex! Life here is perfect! The Computer says so! I'm so happy that I'm happy! Happiness is mandatory! Let's all sing a loyalty song, because we're so happy! If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands! If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands! If you're not happy and you know it, then Mandatory Fun Time Enthusiasts can help! Yes! We! Can! Our job – and we're really happy to do it – is to make citizens happier! We could give you drugs (hey, give this clone some drugs!) but we'll also organise callisthenics and team morale building exercises and fun games for everyone! Hey everybody, let's play Pin The Blame On The Commie! Or let's measure our smiles and see if we can make them bigger! Or let's sing another song! Glory glory hail Computer! Glory glory Hail Computer! I'm having sooooooooooooo much fun, it hurts! It's this shooting pain in my skull and my vision's gone dark and I can taste copper but you know what?! I'm happy about that! Happy happy happy! Copper's fun to taste! I'm having so much fun, I'm going to...

thump

Ok, I blacked out there for a second but I'm ok now! You were asking me about Mandatory Fun Time Enthusiasts! We

make people happy! We could give you drugs (hey, give this clone some drugs!) but we'll also organise callisthenics and team morale building exercises and fun games for everyone! Hey everybody, let's play Pin The Blame On The Commie! Or a song! How about a song! Or just everyone smile, smile, smile, happy happy happy people. Happy. Mandatory. People.

Temporary Filing Staff Requisition

RED 4 Access
Interrogation (M), Paperwork (M), Infiltration (Su)

Being a temp in Alpha Complex is rather like playing Russian roulette. One day, you're shredding customer complaint forms in PLC. The next, you're trying puzzle out the bloodstains on some Troubleshooter's paperwork. After that, you're helping some clueless middle-manager sort out his email inbox... and you don't remember the next day, because you were assigned to some higher Clearance office and they rinsed out your brain with MemGo and bleach to make sure you didn't retain any information you weren't cleared for.

Special Rules: Some temps have picked up surprisingly useful skills; others picked up these skills but don't remember having them. You may use a Temporary Filing Staff Requisition as a RED Troubleshooter team if you wish. See Troubleshooters, on page 140.

Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters

YELLOW 5 Access
Surveillance (Su), Media Manipulation (So)

BLUE 7 Access
Surveillance (Su), Media Manipulation (So), Investigation (Su)

VIOLET 10 Access
Surveillance (Su), Media Manipulation (So), Investigation (Su)

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

Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters are data gophers who sift through endless

records and vidshow archives to collect even the most trivial details of celebrities' lives. They then organise these factoids into an informative (if shallow) article, attach pictures and distribute or sell the final product to fans.

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

Special Rules: Appearing on a lifestyle show and being interviewed doubles any Popularity or Unpopularity Points gained by a High Programmer. The High Programmer who controls the News Services Minion gets to ask the questions. Yes, that does mean that you may end up interviewing yourself.

Internal Security

Internal Security is dedicated to serving and purifying the community in Alpha Complex. Uncovering and deleting traitors is only a minor aspect of Internal Security. Think of them as dentists. Yes, if a tooth is decayed and is spreading its rot to neighbouring teeth, then it must be forcibly extracted but it's much better to encourage regular brushing and flossing.

Actually, now that we're on the topic, it's even better to break the patient's jaw (for easy access to the teeth), to ensure that all the teeth are informing on each other, to replace all sugary or hard foods with pre-digested gunk you don't need to chew... ahem.

Internal Security is a combination of Homeland Security, riot police and narc



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

squad. Not only does The Computer keep tabs on everything with omnipresent cameras and recording devices, it also maintains Internal Security spies as another check on the loyalty of its citizens. Many IntSec agents are planted in the other Service Groups. They have informants everywhere.

In addition to ratting on traitors, IntSec agents run 'sting' operations designed to tempt citizens into treason. Because promotion within IntSec is based on the number and prestige of traitors unmasked, IntSec agents are notorious for rooting out treason that isn't even there to begin with.

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

As well as plainclothes agents (spies), IntSec maintains uniformed police. At the bottom of the scale are the omnipresent Clearance GREEN goons. They wear distinctive tight leather-like pants and jackets and silvered reflective riot helmets. They routinely carry truncheons, neurowhips, stun guns, tanglers and laser pistols or rifles. Their main task is to break up brawls, riots and food fights that occur frequently among the INFRAREDs. The Computer selects GREEN goons from the INFRARED ranks for size and coarseness of intellect, then promotes them rapidly to high authority, the better to intimidate offenders. For their too-rapid advancement and for their general pushiness and corruption, citizens hold GREEN goons in contempt – but silently.

More widely feared among higher Clearance characters are the BLUE Clearance Troopers, commonly called 'Blues.' These are the police of each sector, called in to deal with serious crimes or unrest. They are well disciplined, highly trained, totally merciless and possess truly awesome firepower.

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

A typical IntSec conversation

IntSec Dispatcher #1: I just finished typing today's Traitors To Arrest List. Chloe-R, Bobbie-G, Arthur-I and Connor-U.

IntSec Dispatcher

#2: *ZAPZAPZAP* Newbie. Attention all IntSec agents. Today's Traitors to Arrest List is Chloe-R, Bobbie-G, and Arthur-I. That is all.

Forensic Analysis Scrubbot Team

ORANGE 2 Access Biosciences (W)

IntSec pulls in far more treasonous Commies, mutants and traitors than they can find proof to convict. Forensic Analysis is there to help. They provide laboratories and expert witnesses to speed justice along. Be it arson, chemistry, mutation or forgery investigations, Forensic Analysis will help convict the most obviously perfidious citizens wandering the complex by uncovering the evidence that makes sentencing possible. Other specialties are hair fibre analysis, audio/video analysis, MemoMax review, product tracing, fingerprinting, toxicology, analysis of toolmarks and shoeprints, locksmithing, bot accident reconstruction, metallurgical analysis, forensic medicine (odontology, entomology and so on) and forensic psychology (behaviour profiling, EKG fingerprinting, Depravity Scale measurements and so forth).

The forensic process begins with a swarm of specially-trained Forensic Scrubbots, who scour the crime scene for every speck of physical evidence (and scrub it and shine it at no extra charge). This evidence is then analysed by highly trained IntSec technicians, who can use it to prove that the scapegoat of your choice definitely did it.

Bright Vision Re-Education Centre Treatment

BLUE 5 Access

Intimidation (M), Interrogation (M)

Sadly and inexplicably, some citizens have difficulty adjusting to the rules of Alpha Complex which help everyone live happily together. Stealing from same Clearance citizens, grumbling,

discontented thoughts, repeated counts of poor handwashing...all these risk the balance of happiness. The Computer reassigns discontented citizens manifesting these traits to Bright Vision Re-education Centres for happiness treatments.

Bright Vision Re-education Centres:

Cultural conditioning hubs for a better future. At these bustling seats of modern medication, formerly discontented citizens have a satisfactorily full schedule: Early morning meds, breakfast, Felicity Practice, Ad Candy (Subliminal Reconditioning), afternoon meds, lunch, Obedience Training, Required Elective (Heroic Bust Sculpting or Self-Sacrifice Meditation), Mid-afternoon Snack and Handwashing Drill, Loyalty Gym, evening meds, dinner, Dental Hygiene Practice, Computer Confession, Patient Playtime, Tranquiliser Hour and Happy Sleepcycle.

Loyalty Surveyors

YELLOW 4 Access

Thought Survey +4 (M)

The health, happiness and efficiency of the whole of Alpha Complex hangs on The Computer's understanding of how citizens view their situation and how they feel about the day-to-day decisions that resolve around them. To this end, IntSec formulates various surveys with set criteria and quotas to determine whether the complex is achieving an optimal state. Reaching quotas is good; failure prompts concern and random acts of interrogation.

Though IntSec appreciates the solid entertainment value of a good interrogation, resources are constantly stretched. Consequently, IntSec outsources the task of gathering citizen opinions to Loyalty Surveyors. These wary, skulking Surveyors prowl the corridors, looking to achieve quotas; their signature sidearm is the cattle prod. To maximise efficiency, their surveys provide only opinions matching current IntSec resources. When resources are short, Loyalty Surveyors seek to demonstrate widespread happiness and contentment; if staff are sitting idle, surveys show a distinct lack of satisfaction with the status quo to give them something to do.

25. MINIONS & MORE

Happy citizens don't commit acts of treason. Happy citizens are loyal citizens. Where there are clear displays of satisfaction, there is devotion and productivity. Such is the mantra of The Computer and by loyal association, IntSec. To this end, all sectors are constantly monitored to determine baseline happiness levels, compared against a scientifically established Glee Quota. When sectors achieve or exceed the Glee Quota, the population is rewarded; when metrics fall short, traitors must be present and a wave of interrogations, investigations and terminations follow.

Threat Assessors (IntSec)

YELLOW 4 Access

Assessment (M), Infiltration (Su)

These Internal Security Threat Assessor (ISTA) organisations perform exactly the same function as the Armed Forces Threat Assessors (AFTAs) and are in intense and bitter competition with them. In fact, on any given day, processing the treason charges ISTAs level at AFTAs uses a measurable percentage of The Computer's processing power. Sometimes the two organisation types keep each other busy enough so ordinary citizens can even get work done.

Unlike AFTAs, ISTAs also help facilitate the COMMIE Mandate, one of the many laws The Computer instituted to protect Alpha Complex from Communist contamination. ISTAs use the Mandate to better track Commies, mutants and traitors, disrupt their cells and seize their assets. The Mandate ensures ISTAs can overcome unnecessary barriers between IntSec and other Service Groups, so they receive the best available information about threats. Technically these privileges apply only to ISTAs, not to AFTAs but The Computer grants great leniency to protect the safety of the complex – plus, the AFTAs have (literally) the big guns.

Secure Security Checkpoint Checkers

YELLOW 3 Access

Security Systems (Su)

Security checkpoints are an important part of life in Alpha Complex. Before entering any secure area, a citizen must provide proof of identity and be checked for concealed weapons, explosives,

Commie propaganda, contraband, shoes, metal objects, sharp objects, pointy objects, heavy blunt objects, objects that are neither metal, sharp, pointy or heavy and blunt but look like they might be metal, sharp, pointy or heavy and blunt, shoes and any moisture above 1cc.

Some citizens say *'but there's a checkpoint at both ends of this corridor! If I've passed through one checkpoint, then why do they have to scan me again at the other end? What are the chances of me becoming a Commie Mutant Traitor in the middle of this short and unremarkable corridor?'* Such citizens are seditionists and must be terminated. Security Checkpoint Checks check to ensure that all security systems are working properly and that the checkpoint operators are properly vigilant.

Total Surveillance Assurance

GREEN 4 Access

Surveillance +4 (Su)

Just as High Programmer Herbert-U promised *'Hot Fun on every lunch tray and a camera in every corridor'*, the loyal clones of Total Surveillance Assurance work ceaselessly to install cameras and bugging devices in every inch of Alpha Complex. TSA is a guarantee of quality and these technicians take pride in their work. Any Tech Services camera polisher can stick up a security camera and maybe wire it in but it takes Total Surveillance Assurance to conceal that camera in an air vent at exactly the right angle to catch the faces of anyone entering the high-security area below. It takes a real TSA man to drill a microscopic hole in a mattress and thread a camera wire through the anus of a sleeping clone and push it all the way through his body until it pops out his nose like a little periscope. It takes TSA to hide a microphone in a buttonhole, or a false tooth, or inside another microphone.

If Total Surveillance Assurance has a flaw, it is that they're *craftsmen*. They're serious pipe-smoking chaps who talk seriously about serious topics like focal lengths, pickup gain, electrical interference and image resolution. You can't argue with Total Surveillance Assurance, you can't tell them how to do their jobs and you certainly can't rush them. They'll put up the cameras *their way* or not at all.

Agent Provocateurs

BLUE 6 Access

Infiltration +4 (Su), Sabotage (Su)

The Agent Provocateurs of Internal Security are *artistes* of treason. These elite thespians of treason are sent out to infiltrate Secret Societies and seditious conspiracies. Thanks to years of IntSec psychological conditioning, Agent Provocateurs are capable of thinking the unthinkable and saying the unsayable. They can – gasp – pretend to be *unhappy* and say things like *down with The Computer* or *death to the High Programmers!*

But don't reach for your laser just yet, citizen! They don't mean it! They're only saying these horrible, treasonous things to convince the Commie Mutant Traitors that they're on the side of unhappiness and treason. When the time is right and the Commies have revealed themselves, then the Agent Provocateur drops his mask and whips out the laser pistol of righteousness.

Internal Security requests that High Programmers give Agent Provocateurs the benefit of the doubt in all situations. After all, these agents are under immense stress – one daycycle, they're swearing wholehearted allegiance to the Anti-Mutant cause; the next, they're wearing prosthetic tentacles and worshipping mutant deities. Under such conditions, an occasional lapse in decorum or reporting protocol is eminently forgivable. High Programmers should also be supportive of Agent Provocateur operations. Just because the terrorist bomb is going to explode in 10 seconds is no reason to panic – an Agent Provocateur might arrive in nine second's time to disarm it.

IntSec Troopers

BLUE 6 Access

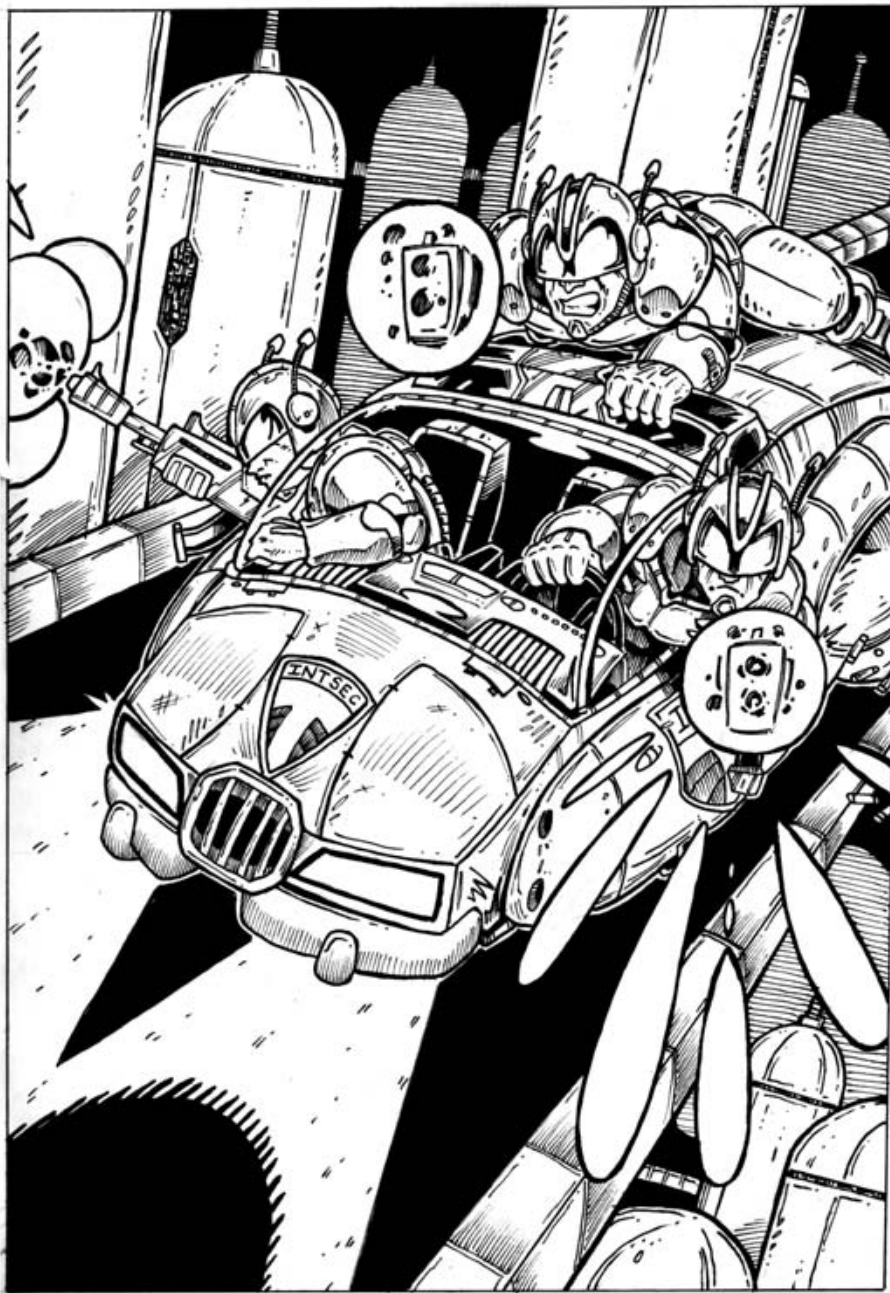
Guarding +4 (V), Assault (V)

IntSec BLUEs are a common sight in the troubled corridors of Alpha Complex. They're the police, the enforcers of The Computer's justice and the scourge of Commie Mutant Traitors everywhere! But, you quibble (do not deny your quibbling; denial of quibbling is treason), 'how can a small group of BLUEs police all of Alpha Complex? Why, the ratio of civilians to police must be many one to thousands!' Ah, but there is a simple answer – superior firepower!



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

A High Programmer is never late. Other people are made late, instead.



Troopers are extremely well armed and extremely willing to use these arms in the 'defence' of Alpha Complex. (It is an open question as to how much of Alpha Complex will survive their heroic efforts to defend it – Troopers and 'collateral damage' go hand-in-hand.)

Special Rules: Fast Response. You may add IntSec Troopers instantly to any public scene by playing their Access cost.

Traffic Patrol

BLUE 6 Access

Transport (H), Assault +4 (V)

The Traffic Patrol patrols traffic. The transtubes are the arteries of Alpha Complex, carrying vitally needed cargoes to far-flung sectors. Like arteries, maintaining a smooth blood flow is vital. Like arteries, the transtubes often become clogged with fatty deposits (aka INFRARED roadkill). Less

like arteries, the transtubes may also be clogged by Death Leopard joyriders, mass pile-ups, chemical spills or three-dimensional gridlock. Traffic Patrol Troopers zoom around in armoured SecuriCars to deal with problems in the tubes. They've got really big guns for troublesome problems.

The Traffic Patrol can be called in to help speed you or your Minions through the transtube. They like that. It means they get to take the VIOLET lane.

Jackbooted Thugs

GREEN 4 Access

Crowd Control (V), Intimidation (M)

In a complex filled with millions of citizens, sometimes they all seem to be in one place. And when that happens, things can get rowdy. In the bad old days, IntSec had to station guards in every large room, just in case some treasonous citizen incited a disturbance. This drained valuable manpower away from rooting out those traitors and dealing with them before they could start such trouble.

Jackbooted Thugs dole out strict but fair Precautionary Beatings to malefactors caught jumping lines, crossing without looking both ways or otherwise jeopardising efficient crowd movements and purge of everyone in the sector suspected of impeding traffic flow.

When not beating up people who aren't standing exactly within the queuing lines on the floor, Thugs act as a rapid response force for any riots that may break out. This is where the real money is for these organisations – being paid large bonuses for quelling riots as quickly as possible. Rumours that the guards start riots near their own patrols to get rich quick are treason.

Guard: You! You there! Step forwards!

Citizen: Me?

Guard: The queue is moving! Step forwards!

Citizen: But nobody's moving – there's no space within the lines to move in!

Guard: MOVE!

Citizen: Um...

Guard levels pistol and fires.

Guard: You! Get that corpse out of the line! AND MOVE FORWARDS!

Guard's Supervisor: That's nice crowd control, Larry-G. Real nice.

25. MINIONS & MORE

Guard: Thanks, boss.

Supervisor: Keep 'em moving, Larry-G. Keep 'em moving.

Facilitation Division

YELLOW 3 Access

Wetwork (V), Security Systems (Su)

BLUE 4 Access

Wetwork +4 (V), Security Systems (Su)

VIOLET 5 Access

Wetwork +4 (V), Security Systems +4 (Su)

Facilitation Division exists to facilitate the smooth operation of necessary Alpha Complex functions by removing obstacles. Obstacles are also known as citizens or traitors. Obstacles are removed by a variety of means, none of which you want to know about. Really. Certainly not after eating, or before eating. The things these people do, ugh, it doesn't bear thinking about. Seriously, you'll *volunteer* for brainscrubbing if you ask about how those obstacles are removed.

Roll	Thing They Do	Thing They Do It Do
1	Facilitate	Obstacle
2	Resolve	Target
3	Eliminate	Subject
4	Close out	Individual
5	Deprotagonise	Citizen
6	Disappear	Suspect
7	Move Along	Number
8	Stamp the Card of	Carbon Unit
9	Invite onwards	Tongue
10	Illuminate	Mission
11	Expedite	Blockage
12	Immortalise	Discussion Topic
13	Write an Obituary For	Bipedal Entity
14	Decant another	Problem
15	Increment	Entity
16	Order a new pair of boots	Citizen Number
17	Clone	Cardholder
18	Issue a form C229	Observed
19	Negotiate	Experson
20	'Murder'	Resource Drain

Facilitation Division personnel finds their duties to be distasteful, so the department goes to great lengths to acquire new euphemisms for obstacle removal.

Mutant Registration

ORANGE 2 Access

Mutant Studies (W)

Registered mutants with 'useful' powers end up here, where they are permitted to put their freakish, disgusting, deviant powers to good use. Mutants who disintegrate objects by touching them are dangers to society – or a cheap way to demolish that dome that's blocking the view from your penthouse. Mutants who are immune to energy weapon attacks make great target practice for R&D laser testing. Mutants with rubbery bones or who can inflate into bouncy balls make absolutely hilarious clowns for any party. The mutants from Mutant Registration take all this in stride – they know that they're genetically flawed and that any humiliation or abuse they suffer is entirely just and legal. No mutant from Mutant Registration would ever be a seething time bomb of psychic fury, waiting to go off...

Information Retrieval Specialists

YELLOW 4 Access

Interrogation +4 (M)

BLUE 5 Access

Interrogation +4 (M)

VIOLET 7 Access

Interrogation +4 (M)

The IRS is among the most feared parts of Internal Security. They're the state torturers, although 'torture' is depreciated as a term. They prefer 'information rendition' or 'enhanced interrogation' or 'activity-based interviewing technique'. The IRS can deploy a wide range of enhanced interrogation tools, from truth drugs to old-fashioned rubber truncheons and waterboards to... things. Things with electrodes and robot tentacles and razor blades and probes and... hell, are those *human teeth*?

Information Retrieval Specialists: A Typical Conversation

Customer: Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaagh! No! No please! I don't know! I'll confess anything! Just not that...agh! No!

Men in INDIGO

INDIGO 6 Access

Wetwork (V), Covert Ops (Su), Media Manipulation (So)

The Men in INDIGO are the snazzily-dressed secret agents of Alpha Complex. They're James Bond with mirrorshades and a lot less sex. They hang around with High Programmers and senior CPU officials, impressing the desk jockeys with tales of heroism and derring-do behind enemy lines. In fact, the Men in INDIGO don't actually do any field operations – they exist solely as cover for Internal Security's bloated security budget. Whenever some pernicky jumped-up bureaucrat or The Computer question IntSec's resource allocation, the Men in INDIGO are trotted out to be extremely cool and impressive. How can you question the allocation of resources, if it goes to support these Heroes of Our Complex?

Conspicuous Surveillance Initiative

ORANGE 3 Access

Covert Operations (Su)

Undercover operatives, security cameras, hidden microphones and other surveillance systems suppress many treasonous activities. But particularly insidious traitors continue to hold deceitful conversations undetected. IntSec's innovative solution: the Conspicuous Surveillance Initiative (CSI). Conspicuous Surveillance firms assign blatantly obvious agents to spy on traitors. When the traitors get away from the CSI agents, they gain a false sense of security, so real operatives can observe them undetected.

CSI agents are the Maxwell Smarts and Inspector Clouseaus of Internal Security. Some are actors, some genuinely dimwitted. Their bumbling buffoonery transcends incompetence, achieving a gloriously comic caricature of law enforcement. When one of these guys struts into the room, loudly proclaiming he absolutely does not belong to Internal Security, it's hard to pay attention to anything else.

Although other Internal Security agents mock and deride CSI, they do give these lesser agents the benefit of the doubt in



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

CSI: Alpha Complex is on the case. Well, a case, anyway. Maybe you'll get lucky?



treason cases. Where they might think one of their own is corrupt, they assume CSI agents making equally treasonous statements are just clowning around.

Production, Logistics & Commissary (PLC)

PLC controls agricultural and industrial production. It also distributes these products to the citizens of Alpha

Complex. PLC is held in only slightly more esteem than HPD & Mind Control. It is actually no more than a mammoth service bureaucracy – though it does regulate most of what would be called 'wealth' in Alpha Complex.

At the INFRARED end of the scale PLC's workers are cooks, clerks, farmers and factory labourers. At higher status there are more managerial and policy responsibilities. At best, it is none too

glamorous. Most personnel in this group are dull and terminally bored; the exceptions are unusually greedy and corrupt (especially in food production) or fanatically loyal to The Computer and creatively dedicated to increasing production and consumption. These latter servants tend also to be fanatically loyal to Free Enterprise.

A typical PLC conversation

PLC Clerk #1: This month's rations of Cold Fun for KID Sector is on the pallets and ready to go.

PLC Clerk #2: Change of plans. Reroute that shipment to Freddy-U-NES.

PLC Clerk #1: Right away! I guess those KIDs can go another month without Cold Fun.

BLUE Room Caterers

RED 2 Access

Catering (W)

YELLOW 3 Access

Catering (W)

BLUE 5 Access

Catering +4 (W)

VIOLET 7 Access

Catering +4 (W)

Few INFRARED citizens can imagine the opulence of the banquets held for high Clearance officials. Just as well: if citizens could, the BLUE Room Caterers would have to MemoWipe them.

Though the name says BLUE, Caterers encompass clones of any Security Clearance who work in any high Clearance dining area. They also scout out potential new dining areas for banquets. Food prep facilities located in living quarters of high Clearance officials must have coloured walkways with carefully demarcated Clearance levels, so banquet personnel can get to work legally; BLUE Room Caterers often develop fine acrobatic skills walking the thin red line that gets them to their job. These skills also help prevent spilling drinks.

Constantly being around higher Clearance citizens might benefit workers if they could thereby gain Security Clearances but often the job merely embitters them without gain. Additionally, because of time spent near high Clearance clones, they are usually under much heavier surveillance than fellow low Clearance clones. In fact, high Clearance citizens often prevent good workers' promotions,

25. MINIONS & MORE

knowing decent help is so hard to find. But hey, it beats the Food Vats.

Equipment Assembly Control

INFRARED 1 Access
Production (H)

Equipment Assembly Control may seem like a boring job; reports from long-time workers verify it, in fact, is. The typical INFRARED or RED line worker can expect to sit among dozens of others just like him, who are checking just like him to ensure a particular screw is tightened on the latest model PDC. Still, it beats the Food Vats.

Field Logistics Advisors

RED 3 Access
Logistics (So), Transport (H)

Field Logistics deal in information, not in the physical transport of cargo. Need to know the quickest route from sector SHR to sector MDR? Want to know how much it'll cost to ship a Geoscrub Nuclear Sanitation Warhead four sectors over? These are the clones to ask.

They employ individual agents known as Transit Hoppers, who are masters of cargo transit linking Alpha Complex's many sectors. Transit Hoppers generally spend their time living life on the road, hopping off the tubetrain onto the autoshuttle expressway, riding cargo MTVs across ruined sectors, then navigating a labyrinth of corridors with a dozen cargobots in tow. They report all their findings (transit rates, times, methods, routes and the Service Groups involved) to their central office, which crunches the data into usable routes and sells it to anyone who has use for the information.

Transit Hoppers are adept at making their way through dangerous situations as they flit across the complex. They tend to underplay the more treacherous aspects of their chosen routes when making travel advisories. The home office isn't much better, recommending any cargo firms willing to make small donations for 'research support.'

Food Vat Control

INFRARED 2 Access
Catering (W), Production (H)

Welcome to the bottom of the bottom. Food Vat Control consists of thousands upon thousands of INFRAREDs tending to the massive vats that produce the food that sustains every low Clearance citizen in the Complex. The Computer says it's highly respectable to be the foundation stone on which all society stands – but all it really means is that all the other blocks are on top of you.

You may have a few advantages, such as knowing just how B3 explodes, how much Cold Fun is too much and just what – or who – was in the algae vats this week. Some take comfort in knowing that in the thousands of swarming Food Vat workers it is easy for a convicted face to get lost in the crowd. But without a doubt, this is one of the worst jobs in the Complex, making even Troubleshooting look like a dream come true.

Inventory System Updaters

RED 4 Access
Logistics (H), Paperwork (M)

The sheer wealth of choice offered through PLC means keeping up with the current catalogue can be an uphill struggle. Teams and work crews may report to warehouses for outfitting to find that the equipment they're just picking up has already been superseded by a new and improved version with more features, better power efficiency and a great new, longer-lasting taste of kelp.

Though central PLC depots have all the latest inventory indices in place, Inventory System Updaters ensure secondary warehouses and sub-offices can offer the same. Updaters ensure all stored equipment has the latest patches, upgrades and efficiency overlays. They are responsible for confirming unit synchronisation of everything available with the latest versions offered centrally, even if that means following shipped, outdated orders to their destinations

and completing remedial rebuilds in the field.

Brand Loyalty Police

RED 3 Access
Thought Control (M)

The Computer prizes conformity and predictability among its citizens. Any change from the norm is suspect deviancy. A clone who changes his preferred breakfast cereal* today might be planting bombs tomorrow, as a change signifies some measure of dissent**. That's where the Brand Loyalty Police come in – if you've changed your buying habits, they want to know *why*? Think of it as proactive customer service.

Usually, Brand Loyalty Police are assigned to different products on a weekly basis. One cycle, they're checking in on clones who've switched their preferred flavour of Bouncy Bubble Beverage. Next time, they're off spying on citizens who changed the TV channel in the dormitory (channel surfing is suspect). A High Programmer cannot interfere with the mandated mission of the Brand Loyalty Police but he can order them to check out something else while they're enforcing Brand Loyalty.

Acme Chemical Production

RED 3 Access
Chemical Engineering (H), Production (H)

Acme Chemicals is one of the industrial goliaths of Alpha Complex; as a High Programmer, you are cleared to know that Acme was actually founded *before* Alpha Complex and is a survivor from Old Reckoning days. Salute this primordial champion of capitalism!

Unfortunately, a filing error back in Year 193 of The Complex erased the master copy of the Acme Chemical Vats Inventory, so the company has no clue what's in some of those giant bubbling chemical containers. It could be acid, it could be mutagenic, it could be a brave new step forward in Fun production! Acme welcomes opportunities to test new products.

*: Technically, breakfast kelp.

**: The Computer is obliged to offer choice, as capitalism is all about choices. You have the choice to buy your assigned breakfast cereal, or to *enthusiastically* buy your assigned cereal.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Acme Chemical Production: A Typical Conversation

High Programmer: I understand we had a little accident down in the vats.

Acme Chemical Supervisor: Oh, no sir. Not really an accident. More of an incident. A very small incident. An incidental incident, you might say.

High Programmer: How many gallons of toxic waste?

Acme Chemical Supervisor: Only about four million, sir.

High Programmer: And what does this waste do?

Acme Chemical Supervisor: Nothing, sir, it just sits there.

High Programmer: It just sits on the floor?

Acme Chemical Supervisor: Well, until it eats through the floor. But we've got at least 20 minutes before that happens.

BLUE Shield Clone Assurance

BLUE 5 Access
Cloning +4

The Computer guarantees that every citizen will be provided with a replacement clone in the unlikely event of untimely death. Huzzah! Bonus Hot Fun for all.

Note that it makes no guarantees about *how long* it takes for a new clone to arrive. If you're lucky, then a new clone is delivered within a few minutes but if there's a big backlog (say, after an unscheduled fissile material surplus or IntSec purges), it can take weeks for the overworked peons down in Clone Services to squirt a new body out of the tanks. Clone Services is also notorious for making tiny little mistakes, like installing the wrong personality backup or accidentally inducing mutations. No, if you've got the Clearance and the credits, you don't want to go with the public option.

Instead, you open an account with BLUE Shield Clone Assurance. Your replacement clone isn't force-grown in a huge tank – it's allowed to ripen at a slower, less stressful pace. You're helped through the cloning process by psychologists and hygienists, to make your transition from one clone-body to the next as pleasant and fun as possible. Your genome is checked to ensure you haven't picked up any nasty mutations,

while your MemoMax template is carefully massaged to minimise traumatic recollections of death and to expunge any Viral Thought Patterns you might have picked up. When it's time to deliver your new clone, you won't be stuffed into a tube, delivered in a crate or shot out of a rocket like a common prole – you'll be whisked to your destination in a luxury autocar.

BLUE Shield Clone Assurance – because your lives are important.

PLC Accounts Co-Ordination

ORANGE 6 Access
Financial Systems (So), Covert Operations (Su), Paperwork (M)

The PLC Accounts Co-Ordination Department is responsible for co-ordinating the financial returns of all of PLC's myriad sub-divisions; as such, it's a bureaucratic black hole (well, ORANGE hole) that rivals any similar quagmire of red tape (ORANGE tape). The subordinates have a vested interest in lying to Accounts Co-Ordination, so PLCAC must often obtain these files through unorthodox channels, like commando raids in the dead of nightcycle or computer hacking.

Special Rules: PLC Accounts Co-Ordination works on a very slow accounting cycle. If PLC Accounts Co-Ordination is activated, you don't have to give the Access cost back to the GM until the end of the mission.

New Flavour of Bouncy Bubble Beverage

INFRARED 2 Access
Pharmatherapy +4

Everyone loves Bouncy Bubble Beverage! It's the mandatory thing, available in a range of flavours, each one more delicious than the last!

B3 is ubiquitous in Alpha Complex but it's also unpredictable. You never know what it's going to taste like. It's always sweet enough to put a sensitive clone into insulin shock, caustic enough to strip the enamel from your teeth or toilet and fizzy enough to be used as an improved grenade; but the flavour! Oh, the flavour! Was that cola? Orange-like! REDberry? Borscht? Who knows? It's like a random prize in your mouth every time.

This combination of ubiquity, unpredictability and mandatory consumption makes B3 an ideal way to distribute new drugs to the population. It's especially useful when you want to hand out drugs covertly – say, dispensing sedatives to an unruly mob. A gang of seditious protestors aren't going to take their happy pills willingly but a free can of B3? Sign me up!

Advertising Campaign

RED 4 Access
Media Manipulation +4 (So), Thought Control +4 (M)

When in doubt, advertise! A new advertising campaign works wonders and shifts products! For only a few million credits, you can plaster your message across every billboard, computer monitor, TV screen, transbot, sponsored security alert and slow-moving scrubbot in the sector! Even now, valiant Advertising Executives are working on new places to put ads! Imagine having your company slogan engraved on the eyeballs of potential consumers!

Special Rules: Due to the recent purges (ref. IntSec report 43.542, 'Creativity is treason: The Spork Slogan Massacre of ZED Sector'), YELLOW Clearance advertising executives are no longer allowed to come up with their own advertising jingles. The client – that is, the High Programmer – must supply the central slogan of the advertising campaign. In fact, he must *sing* it.

Enforced Reclamation & Recycling

YELLOW 4 Access
Intimidation (M), Production (H)

The unpredictable ebb and flow of products in Alpha Complex makes the work of PLC a challenge. Unpredictable tides of taste can turn the unwanted into the must-have, from dual-cooling blaster rifles to radberry-mochamint chapsticks.

When demand suddenly exceeds supply, PLC turn to Enforced Reclamation and Recycling agents. ERR agents engage in acts of aggressive hardware reclamation and random redistribution initiatives to get loyal citizens to hand over the required gear pronto. Overnight, oddly coloured wheelie bins suddenly appear in corridors and waste disposal zones,

25. MINIONS & MORE

'Fun it up, citizen! Fun it right up!'



offering a minuscule credit bonus for the return of certain in-demand items. ERR agencies guard these initiatives as trade secrets; demand for an item can lead to lightning raids on fully-loaded reclamation bins by crack Free Enterprise ninja teams.

Low Clearance ERR workers check existing bin locations and proactively discuss return options with (that is, mug) citizens who possess desired items. High Clearance agents identify possible new initiatives, recon possible bin

drop locations and seek to undermine treasonous bin theft.

Power Services

Power Services has the difficult task of maintaining the ancient power plants of Alpha Complex. Day-to-day survival depends on the competence and reliability of this service. This makes Power Services a particularly sensitive and vulnerable area for treason and sabotage; it therefore gets more than its

share of attention from Internal Security. It also means Power Services has high status in Alpha Complex, a fact bitterly resented by the other Service Groups. As a result, Power Services often finds itself at the wrong end of political power plays.

Power Services also maintains the transport systems of Alpha Complex, though this puts them in perpetual political turf battles with their foremost rival, Technical Services.

Power Services is a tightly-knit, loyal service. Older personnel tend to be distrustful of members of other services and to look out for their own, even to the detriment of their loyalty to The Computer. Since the rise of outsourcing to contractors, younger workers assigned to the group have shown a remarkable and unprecedented talent for collecting bribes. Many citizens who believe they're about to be stranded in frozen darkness grow deeply fond of the idea of paying a bribe.

A typical Power Services conversation

VIOLET Power Services executive: Well, boss, if you don't want to sign off the funds for a third reactor in this sector, how about putting your entertainment system on standby at night?

Circuit Maintenance

RED 3 Access
Habitat Engineering (H), Sabotage (Su)

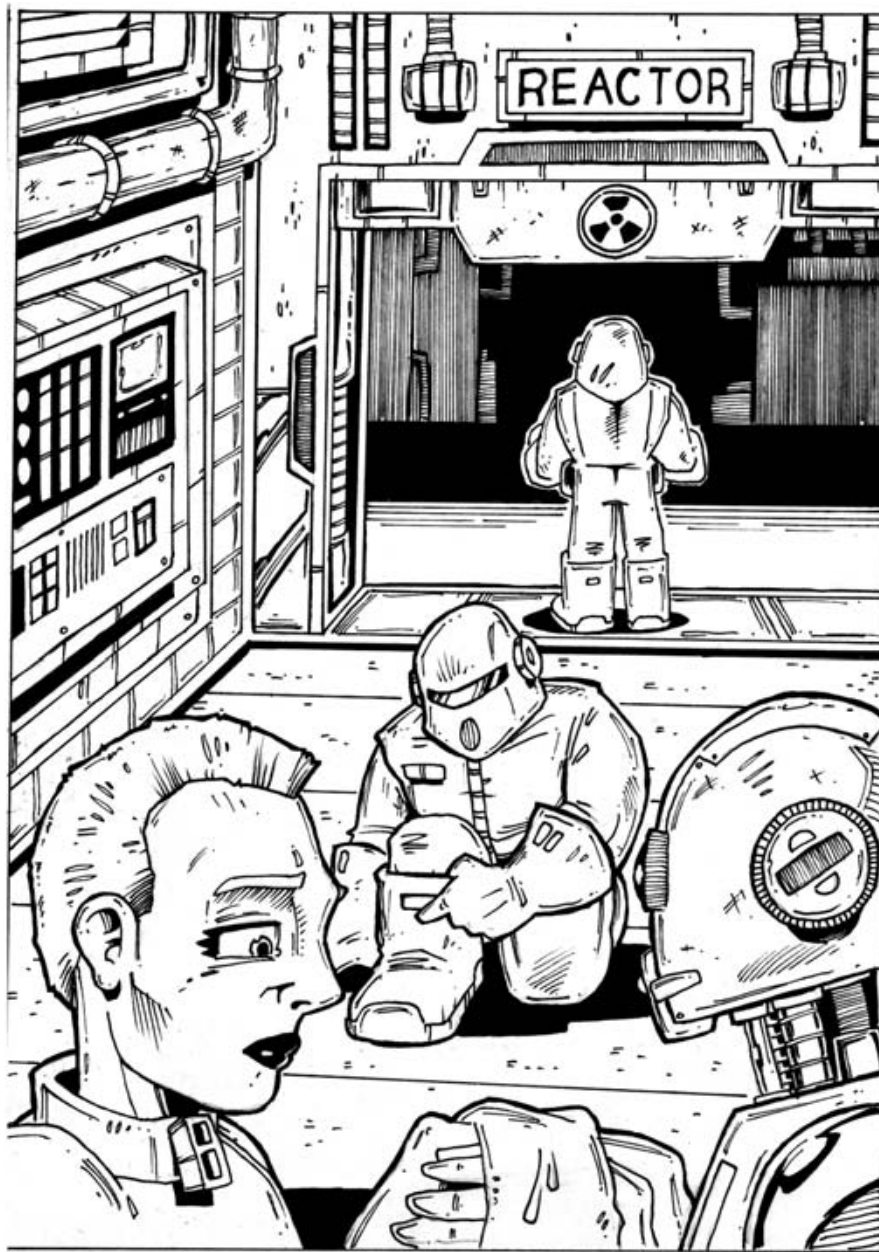
With a network of power systems that defies all efforts to map and track it is inevitable that remote systems occasionally suffer outages without anyone noticing. When atomic furnaces and experimental quantum turbines require the constant attention of almost the entire workforce, a valiant few must be prepared to roam far and wide to handle that blown fuse that no one even noticed.

That is the role of Circuit Maintenance crews, voltage vigilantes who tour the corridors of Alpha Complex endlessly looking for minor faults and flaws and then setting them straight with whatever comes to hand. Masters of the patch job, Circuit Maintenance crewpersons provide a valuable service that almost certainly probably doesn't



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

You are receiving an acceptable level of radiation. Doesn't that thought give you a nice warm glow?



undermine the integrity of the entire power infrastructure. Whether jury-rigging repairs with paperclips and tin foil secured with half-chewed algae chips, or replacing burnt-out capacitor flow regulators with SuperGum and half the workings of a stripped-out vending machine, they serve the community with fanatical loyalty.

Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants

RED 4 Access
Covert Ops (Su), Biosciences (W), Nuclear Engineering (H)

Alpha Complex generators consume a massive quantity of active fuel rods. Depleted fuel rods are treated with a catalyst that accelerates radioactive decomposition and seals them in

LeadLike shells. The 'safe' rods then require a place for final storage – and in this regard possible sites have become scarce. With only limited space available within Alpha Complex, landfill locations were filled to capacity decades ago, so Power Services is constantly on the lookout for new long-term storage sites. To this end, Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants are hired to look into means of disposing spent rods, locating practical bolt-holes where several hundred thousand tons of slightly radioactive material can be quietly hidden away.

Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants think in terms of cracks, holes, cavities, shafts and tunnels. Power Services quietly needs to dispose of an enormous amount of material, so Consultants scout out possible locations, send through coordinates and then wait for their personal accounts to be credited at the end of the month. Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants have the contacts to lean on and know the strings to pull to get all the relevant paperwork to prove the identified spot really is abandoned and suitable for dumping – whether it's an ancient hanger, an INFRARED canteen at midnight or someone's sock drawer.

Pneumatic Tube Network Engineers

YELLOW 8 Access
Logistics (So), Paperwork (M), Transport (H), Communication (So)

A series of tubes wind their way through Alpha Complex. The pneumatic system once connected every office, transporting vital documents and small packages at high speed. Despite the best efforts of the Pneumatic Tube Network Engineers, the tubes are not what they once were. This is partially because of redevelopments and reconstruction work but it is also because of overuse. The tubes are intended to move small capsules containing documents but today they're used for moving replacement clones, happiness pills, parcel bombs, corpse disposal, waste disposal and, on one infamous occasion, a smaller pneumatic tube system.

Foolish citizens assume that anything you put into the tubes will be automatically whisked away but it's not that simple. It's not a big truckbot, it's a series of tubes. And if you don't understand, those tubes

25. MINIONS & MORE

can be filled and if they are filled, when you put your message in, it gets in line and it's going to be delayed by anyone that puts into that tube enormous amounts of material.

It's up to the Pneumatic Tube Network Engineers to sort out these problems and clogs. The tubes are too narrow for most citizens, so the PTNE rely mostly on bots and Junior Citizen volunteers (think cheeky Dickensian chimneysweeps). The chief advantage of the tube network over other communications networks is that it's a lot harder to eavesdrop on written messages.

Department of Transbot Control

ORANGE 7 Access
Transport +4 (H), Co-Ordination (M), Crowd Control (V)

The Department of Transport Control is responsible for maintaining the transport network of Alpha Complex. The transbots whisk low Clearance citizens off to work in the morning cycle and carry them home at night. Higher Clearance citizens are permitted to use private vehicles to traverse the transtubes. Transbot control is also in charge of most moving walkways, transbot stations and other ways of getting around.

The sheer number of people passing through the doors of Transbot Control is staggering. Millions of citizens take the transtube every day, so the Department of Transbot Control is under constant pressure to keep its services running. Other Service Groups, especially Technical Services and HPD&MC, covet the influence of Transbot Control and regularly lobby for it to be transferred out of Power Services. Such lobbying attempts are accompanied with concerted campaigns to discredit Power Services. Between the stress of managing a few million passengers each day and all the saboteurs, terrorists and fare-dodgers, there is the occasional unavoidable delay.

New Transtube Planning Commission

INDIGO 8 Access
Construction (H), Transport (H), Logistics (So), Demolition (V)

The Planning Commission is in charge of routing new transtubes. The ongoing

Unavoidable Delay Excuse Table

Roll	The Transbot was late...
1	For security reasons.
2	Due to debris on the line.
3	Because of a scheduling conflict.
4	To give you more time to enjoy our station's facilities.
5	For staff training.
6	For transbot counselling.
7	To enhance your happiness.
8	Without permission. The train will be disciplined. Thank you.
9	For reasons not available at your Security Clearance.
10	Due to an unavoidable obstacle.
11	Because of substandard happiness.
12	Due to insufficient loyalty.
13	Because of Commie sabotage.
14	For testing.
15	Because you were insufficiently loyal.
16	Due to advertised rescheduling. (Advertising will be edited into official history at a future date.)
17	Due to security sweeps.
18	Because of traffic.
19	Because of monkey escape.
20	The transbot was not late. You are in error.

turf war over the transtubes means that Tech Services does its best to block these new tubes, claiming that the proposed route cuts through vital life support infrastructure or causes subsidence or will offend the weather gods or is technically unfeasible because... because... they haven't had a chance to appoint a team of engineers to study the technical unfeasibility of the new transtube route.

Power Services must therefore take every opportunity to build new transtubes when Tech Services can't object. Say there's a horrible accidental power surge that wipes out the Tech Services headquarters in POW Sector. The headquarters building is going to be demolished anyway – it's a perfect opportunity to build a new transtube!

Planning A New Transtube – A Typical Conversation

Tech Services High Programmer: I can't help but notice that your proposed new transtube route is a bit strange.

Power Services High Programmer: Strange? No, it's a vital development of Alpha Complex infrastructure, necessary for Our Beloved Complex to meet the challenges of tomorrow cycle.

Tech Services High Programmer: What about this bit here?

Power Services High Programmer: That's to ensure that GREEN Junior Executives can get from the Placid Compliance Gated Housing Zone here to the Mandatory Exclusive Multi-Choice Probiotic Consumerzone Mall over there.

Tech Services High Programmer: Neither of those are scheduled to be built for another 20 year cycles.

Power Services High Programmer: Yes, well, that just gives us time to work the kinks out of the new transtubes.

Tech Services High Programmer: I also can't help but notice that the new transtube route reads 'screw tech services' when viewed from above.

Power Services High Programmer: What a bizarre co-incidence. I deny all knowledge of such a thing.

Reactor Management Commission

GREEN 4 Access
Nuclear Engineering (H), Construction (H)

This commission was commissioned to commission and decommission nuclear reactors. 80% of Alpha Complex's power is produced by fission reactors (the rest



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

comes from furnaces and R&D weird experiments). The Complex suffers simultaneously from an excess of nuclear reactors and a lack of power – most of the reactors are crumbling and decaying (rumours connecting the growth in the mutant population with the failure of the reactor shielding are treason).

The Commission is eager to build new reactors but it's even more eager to get rid of the old ones. Anyone who can come up with ways to dispose of old reactors wins the eternal gratitude of the Commission.

Reactor Shielding Volunteer Corps

RED 4 Access
Nuclear Engineering (H), Intimidation (M)

It is a common misapprehension that Reactor Shielding Duty is a punishment given to traitors and disobedient clones. Nothing could be further from the truth! Reactor Shielding is a privilege, an honour, a glorious opportunity! What citizen of Alpha Complex would shy from the heroic duty of placing his body between his fellow citizens and the fast neutrons! Any red-blooded citizen would embrace both the chance and the concrete (please note that after this duty, you may no longer be red-blooded).

The Volunteer Corps do not actually go on reactor shielding duty – no, that's a joy they save for retirement. Instead, they cast longing glances at the warm blue glow before going off in search of other citizens who are willing to volunteer. IntSec prisoners, failed Troubleshooter teams, citizens who win a surprise reassignment in a can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage, befuddled INFRAREDs – all these and more can be found duct taped to the reactor casing.

Crawlspace Commandos

RED 5 Access
Habitat Engineering (H), Bartering (Su), Wetwork (V)

The Crawlspace Commandos are Power Services' internal troubleshooting unit. They're called in to deal with problems in the crawlspace and access corridors that can't be dealt with using conventional forces. The Crawlspace Commandos

have faced down many bizarre foes in the past, like really big rats, squatters, carnivorous tubifex infestations and feral scrubbot nests. To deal with these dangers, the Crawlspace Commandos are heavily armed with hand flamers and sniper rifles.

The Power Services crawlspace go everywhere in Alpha Complex. That hollow echo you hear as you walk down the corridor – there's a crawlspace under the floor. There could be one in the ceiling of your quarters.* And where there's a crawlspace, there's a Crawlspace Commando team, hunting big rats and other troublesome targets, like people who've annoyed Power Services by complaining about brownouts.

Vault Recovery Team

GREEN 4 Access
Data Retrieval (So), Biosciences (W)
Down in the depths of the Underplex, there are Power Services vaults that could contain almost anything. Ok, nine of ten times they're full of toxic waste but sometimes a Vault Recovery Team turns up something interesting, like old backup tapes with lots of juicy secrets, Old Reckoning artefacts or mislaid WMDs. These vaults are guarded by long-forgotten security systems and strange mutant monsters and only the brave and doughty adventurers – I mean, Vault Recovery Teams – dare brave the hoary depths.

Power Services humbly requests that High Programmers stop playing *D&D* with the VRTs.

Special Rules: Vault Recovery Teams may find unusual artefacts when exploring the Vaults. If you send a VRT into the Vaults, roll 1d20. On a 1–10, the team never returns. On an 11–15, they come back with something dangerous. On a 16–20, they find something useful. You can only send a VRT into the Vaults once per mission.

Toxic Environment Team

ORANGE 3 Access
Biosciences (W), Bot Engineering (H)
Toxic Environment Teams brave the most dangerous recesses of Alpha Complex – areas too toxic, too

radioactive or too tainted by treason for others to survive. Every TET agent is equipped with a lead-lined anti-radiation undergarment, a hermetically sealed EnviroEncounter Armour suit and a Guaranteed Loyalty Perception Filter that edits out anything treasonous he might perceive. TET agents are too heavily weighed down to walk, the suits don't have the manual dexterity to accomplish anything and they're blind and deaf thanks to the filters, so anything they actually accomplish in the toxic zone should be considered an unexpected bonus.

Research & Development

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

Research labs and testing areas are dangerous places to visit. An incredible range of high tech and low comedy projects are in development at any given moment. The amount of original research that gets done is small; most projects are aimed at recapturing the arcane technologies lost centuries ago in the big Commie attack. After trips to abandoned sectors or Outdoors, Troubleshooters must bring interesting gadgets they discover to Research & Design, where scientists carefully study them, often to tiny bits.

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

*: Between Power Services crawlspace, the pneumatic tubes, the IntSec spyholes, the Tech Services air vents and cable spaces and the secret passages, it's a wonder that Alpha Complex is still standing.

25. MINIONS & MORE

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

A typical R&D conversation

Team Leader: I've never been in an R&D facility this quiet before.

R&D Tech: Shh! Keep your voice down! It's Carlos-U's nap time. No experiments. Just sign the form saying you received the equipment and tiptoe out.

Biological Niceness Indexers

BLUE 7 Access
Bioscience (W), Hygiene (M), Assessment (M)

Years ago, it is said, citizens spent money to find and remove toxins and biological waste from their living spaces. They eventually realised that they were practicing negative techniques, poorly designed, which caused them more damage from stress and worry than from the toxins themselves.

The Computer provides a more positive environmental review procedure known as Biological Niceness Testing. Niceness Testing is designed to find and index healthful living spaces for citizens, freeing them to live placid, pleasant lives without the bygone worries of environmental toxins.

Niceness Indexers travel the complex testing sectors against the rigorous Biological Niceness Scale and updating their databanks with the results. Based on this data, sectors of citizens with overall higher than average Compliancy ratings may be upgraded, or moved, to newer, biologically nicer sectors. Sectors with below average Compliancy ratings (as calculated by riot damage repair costs and other statistical measures) may be moved away from biologically nice sectors. Obviously, high Clearance sectors, whose overall Compliancy ratings are always extremely high, are located in the biologically nicest sectors.

High Clearance citizens who run Service Group organisations that produce or process toxins and other waste often have close relationships with Niceness Indexing teams. These teams can pay tiered fees to have sectors or other spaces downgraded. Boards of Directors of Niceness Indexing teams can delete sufficiently downgraded areas from the Realty Banks and sometimes from the History Banks, saving teams – and thus Alpha Complex – many thousands of creds in cleanup every year. Sometimes it is efficient to relocate less desirable sectors to downgraded areas and then delete them, depending on the client's wishes.

Naturally, Niceness Indexers are popular folks. High Clearance citizens compete to hire them as often as possible and may temporarily suspend Clearance boundaries to fete and banquet them. A happy Indexer is a happy sector, the saying goes. However, Niceness Indexing is not a sinecure. As surprising as it may seem, sometimes high Clearance citizens' agendas actively conflict. Part of an Indexer's job is to walk that line... acrobatically.

Security Technology Technicians

BLUE 6 Access
Surveillance +4 (Su), Security Systems +4 (Su)

Surveillance Technology Technicians install and maintain what they term 'advanced security systems' and what any reasonable person would call 'death traps'. Oh, sure, they can stick a few security cameras on the wall or bug some poor clone's office but that's *boring* and the only boring that Security Technology Technicians like involves high-speed drills and grey matter. Imagine how much better it would be to install a laser cannon in that security camera, or pump radioactive gel into all the office furniture so sitting on it gives you a lethal dose of radiation, or to put pit traps and disintegrator grids *everywhere*...

Surveillance Technology testing is possibly the most lethal job in Alpha Complex. Most trainees go through four or five clones on their first day. Plans are afoot to outsource that whole section to Troubleshooters.

Bot Processing

YELLOW 5 Access
Bot Programming +4 (So), Bot Engineering (H)

An unfortunate and little-known fact of life in Alpha Complex is that knowledge of AI programming of bot CPUs, or brains, has been lost. When a bot is destroyed, its invaluable CPU must be retrieved and serviced, or The Computer will become concerned. Bot Processing's role is to salvage whatever parts they can from destroyed or incapacitated bots and then reprocess them into other useful products. With luck, a bot brain can be reinstalled in another chassis, maybe even one like its original body, although it's not uncommon for transbots to be recycled into scrubbot or docbot brains to be installed in jackobot bodies or whatever. All too often, the damage is too severe and the bot parts must be turned into B3 cans and other scrap metal. (Bots are asked to stop whining about being recycled into spare parts. It upsets the Bot Processing Technicians.)

The quicker a technician gets to a downed bot, the better. Eager Bot Processing Technicians can be seen gambolling across the battlefield, dodging laser fire in the hopes of getting to a particularly juicy bit of salvage.

Drug Interaction Testers

GREEN 5 Access
Medical (W), Biosciences (W), Pharmatherapy (W)

Alpha Complex is founded in part upon a completely free and universally available regimen of medications. The Computer mandates these drugs for the citizenry to ensure everyone's happiness. Although free to citizens, drugs must be developed, tested and distributed. The Drug Interaction Testers (DITs) are one part of this chain. R&D drug developers contract with these drug-testing organisations to ensure citizens' health and safety.

A DIT's job depends on his Clearance. INFRARED DITs test medications on themselves, or rather, their managers daily ensure their employees have the medications, a safely padded room with a strong magnetic bolt and an Observation & Containment Team, some of whom are on contract from Armed Forces. After



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

INFRAREDs take their experimental meds, consult the Medication table in Chapter 30, 'Treason and Correction,' to determine the effects.

RED Clearance DITs are usually on the Observation & Containment Team, watching the INFRAREDs from the other side of the NoBreakUm Ductile-Glass. They administer the drugs to INFRAREDs, then quickly shove them into the padded room and lock the door. RED DITs whose experiments fail, or who consistently reject drugs for public use, may be demoted to drug-testing duties.

At RED Clearance and above, a trusted DIT may be assigned Environmental Testing duty. The DIT, with an armed Observation & Containment Team, accompanies a medicated INFRARED into Alpha Complex to observe environmental effects on the drug under consideration. It is difficult to test for all circumstances in a lab environment, the theory goes, so it is essential during advanced stages of testing to bring the patient out into a complex environment to observe the medication's effects in real-world circumstances. Physical contact, conversation with bots, unhygienic barracks – all these influences must be tested against to ensure everyone's happiness. Rumours of medicated INFRARED DITs escaping the observation team and wreaking havoc are insubordinate and will be dealt with promptly.

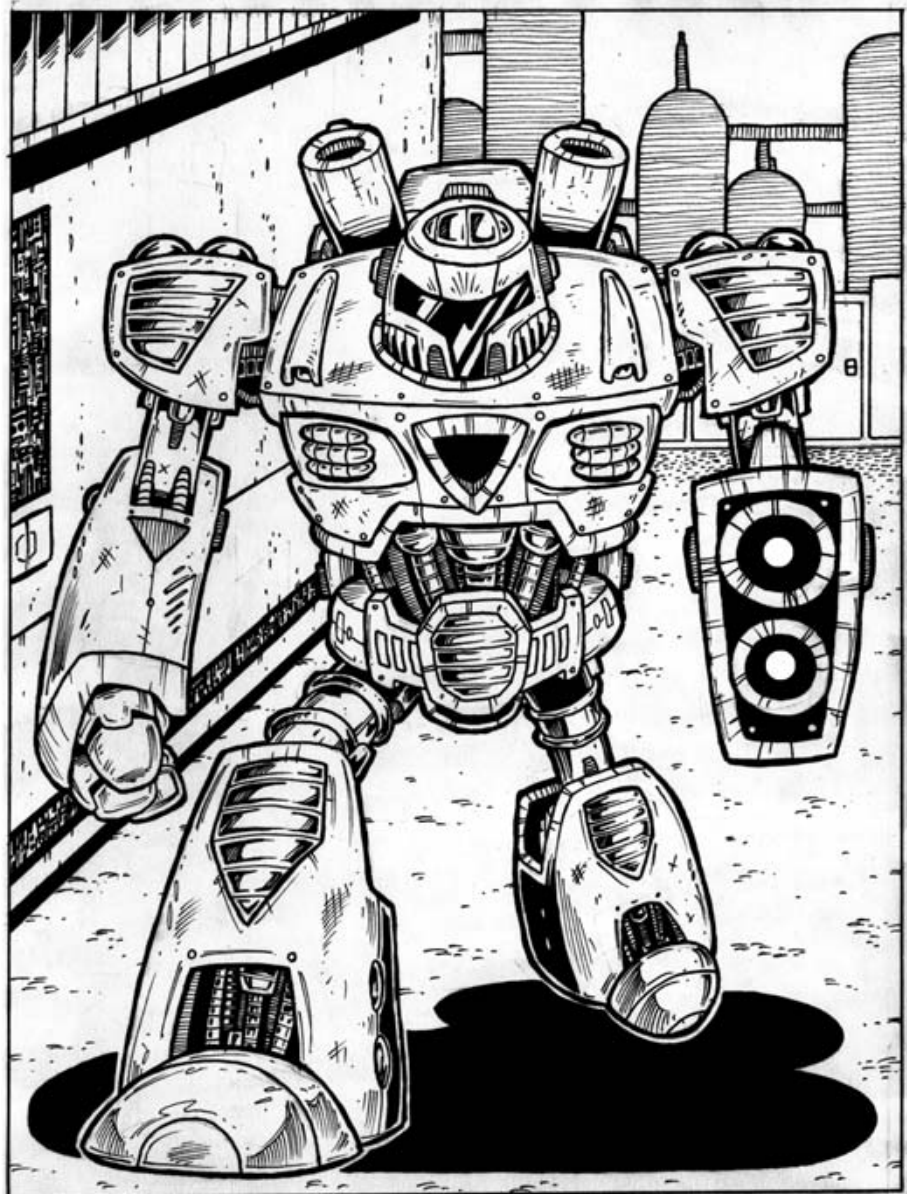
Codename: KILLBOT

GREEN 4 Access Assault (V), Bot Programming (H)

To maintain security, many secret projects are given randomly assigned codenames. These codenames are drawn from a huge database of words, so a project could be called RADIANT THUMBSCREW or PUCE SHOE or AGITATED FLANGE. It's merely an unfortunate co-incidence that the project to develop an army of remote-controlled killer bots is codenamed KILLBOT.

The Killbot Legion consists of up-armoured, up-gunned and up-psychosed jackbots, equipped with heavy repeater particle cannons and

The unfettered joy of a High Programmer with a shiny new toy.



head-mounted grenade launchers. The whole Killbot Legion is controlled from a single master remote control. While the final production model will allow for a full range of killbot/target interactions, the current version has just two settings, 'kill' and 'stop' (and they're having problems with the 'stop' bit). R&D hopes that Killbot Legions will provide a cheap, user-friendly and more easily stackable replacement for those Armed Forces Heroic Infantry brigades.

Atomic Science Ethical Experimentation Directorate

GREEN 6 Access Nuclear Engineering (H), Mutant Studies (W)

The Atomic Science Ethical Experimentation Directorate ensures that leakage from nuclear reactors and other sources of radiation are within acceptable limits. The Computer takes the safety of its citizens very seriously

25. MINIONS & MORE

Doomsday Table

Roll	The Device...
1	Will detonate the planet's core!
2	Extinguishes gluons, disintegrating everything.
3	Will trigger a cataclysmic solar flare.
4	Is jacketed in cobalt thorium-G, causing radioactive fallout to cover the entire world!
5	Creates the biggest earthquake in history.
6	Will alter the cosmological constant, causing all matter in the universe to fly apart!
7	Will drag down the Moon on top of the target.
8	Creates a sort-of-off-puce hole. It's like a black hole but it's a different colour.
9	Opens the Gate. Ia! Yog-Sothoth!
10	Turns all organic matter within range into marshmallow.
11	Travels back in time to kill the target's grandparents. Not hugely effective in Alpha Complex.
12	Reverses gravity, hurling the target into space.
13	Commands all bots in Alpha Complex to attack the target.
14	Decreases the electrical resistance of neural pathways within the field. On the bright side, you think a lot quicker for a few seconds. After that, your head explodes.
15	It's a plague so deadly it kills itself!
16	By inducing electrical activity in unliving tissue, it causes the dead to rise and eat people.
17	Rotates the target out of reality with the power of <i>occult geometry</i> .
18	Accelerates time flow, causing the target to disintegrate.
19	Must never be used.
20	Roll Again Twice.

– no citizen should be exposed to more radiation than their Security Clearance level dictates.

In the event of a radiation leak, ASEED will deploy proper radiation treatment to all citizens in the affected area, depending on Security Clearance. These treatments consist of iodine pills laced with various compounds, such as sedatives, mood stabilisers or hair growth formula.

Doomsday Device

VIOLET 8 Access

Demolition +8 (V), Total War +8 (V)

Don't ask. Just press the button and hope it doesn't doom us all.

The Atomic Science Ethical Experimentation Directorate is not only responsible for keeping leaks under control, it's also the body that sets the

levels of radiation that are deemed acceptable. In the past, this has caused some conflicts of interest, especially when ASEED experiments called for lethal high levels of hard radiation. Allegations that the Directorate sees the citizens of Alpha Complex as nothing more than test subjects for their bizarre atomic experiments are utterly unfounded. Rumours that ASEED has a giant radiation gun that can cause mutations in citizens 'the same way you'd microwave a frozen dinner' are especially treasonous. The Directorate asks that anyone making such allegations report to TMI Sector, Floor 24, Corridor 25 and remain there for at least 30 minutes. Please ignore any unusual feeling that you may experience, such as detecting a smell like 'cooking meat' or a bitter metallic tang in your mouth.

Your Friendly Radiation Badge: A Typical Conversation

Radiation Badge: Hello, citizen! What is your Security Clearance?

Citizen: Er, ORANGE.

Radiation Badge: Then you are experiencing an acceptable level of radiation! Have a nice daycycle.

Radiation Badge: Hello, citizen! Radiation increase detected! What is your Security Clearance?

Citizen: It's still ORANGE.

Radiation Badge: Then you are experiencing an acceptable level of radiation! Have a nice daycycle.

Radiation Badge: Hello, citizen! Radiation increase detected! What is your Security Clearance?

Citizen: ORANGE.

Radiation Badge: Alert! Excessive radiation exposure! Take precautionary measures immediately.

Think Tank Consultants

INDIGO 12 Access

Hacking (So), Weird Science +4 (H), Logistics (So), Medical (W)

The Think Tank is one of the most secret and mysterious organisations within R&D. Senior scientists and other intellectually gifted citizens may be promoted to the Think Tank by the Head of R&D. This promotion is a great honour, carrying with it increased Security Clearance, better pay, considerable prestige and a lovely new glass jar for your brain. At the last count, the Think Tank contained over 5,000 such brains, wired in parallel to a dedicated supercomputer. For security reasons, the Think Tank is kept in a vault deep beneath Alpha Complex and protected by multiple redundant defensive systems but High Programmers may just pick up the phone and consult the brains.

The Think Tank's ideas are disseminated to other laboratories for actual implementation. Oddly, many of these laboratories experience catastrophic disasters shortly thereafter but that's probably because of Commie sabotage and has nothing to do with the Think Tank's schematics.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Sometimes, if a High Programmer has really impressed The Computer, he will be reassigned to the Think Tank.

The Think Tank – A Typical Conversation

High Programmer: Hello?

Think Tank: *Who dares disturb our slumber?*

High Programmer: I do. There's a problem with that transdimensional collapsatron you designed for us last weekcycle...

Think Tank: *Our designs are flawless... we blame the users...*

High Programmer: The collapstron collapsed. There's a hole in reality on sublevel 4 and it's getting bigger.

Think Tank: *Has anything come out of it? Specifically, things with tentacles. Or weird colours?*

High Programmers: Not as far as I know.

Think Tank: *Then do not fear. Everything is fine!*

Silicon Corridor

BLUE 7 Access

Computer Security (So), Hacking +4 (So)

'Silicon Corridor' is the nickname given to a strip of extremely successful and forward-thinking organisations within R&D. Silicon Corridor is an incubator for young, ambitious junior programmers. It's a hothouse; stay out of there if you can't stand the heat!

Actually, stay out of Silicon Corridor if you have heart problems or are allergic to Asperquaint; to keep the junior programmers working at peak efficiency, R&D pumps rather a lot of aerosol drugs into Silicon Corridor. Visitors are issued gas masks, as one sniff of the 'air' means you won't sleep for six weeks (in 12.5% of cases, six months and you won't be able to see the colour yellow without suffering an epileptic fit). The junior programmers have adapted to these conditions; they maintain extremely high levels of productivity by not sleeping.

When contacting Silicon Corridor, High Programmers are advised to record the

responses of the junior programmers and play them back at half speed for enhanced clarity of speech.

Special Environment Clone Laboratories

GREEN 7 Access

Cloning (W), Mutant Studies (W), Transport (H)

Citizens do not always die in convenient locations. Obviously, it would be ideal if everyone dropped dead just outside the cloning facility, as this would minimise travel time for replacement clones (CPU Directive 'Optimised Clone Delivery Times Through Planned Mortality' was withdrawn in 211 due a lack of co-operation from citizens) but citizens keep dying in unlikely locations like 'half-way between transtube stations' or 'underneath collapsed domes' or 'in the middle of firefights'.

It's even worse when one considers Troubleshooters. In the past, Troubleshooter teams have been dispatched to locations such as the Underplex, the deepest parts of the ocean, the furthest reaches of Outdoors, orbit and on one highly classified occasion, Dimension X. As Troubleshooters die regularly, someone has to figure out a way to get replacement clones to them. That's where Special Environment Clone Labs come in. These brainy boffins work out new and unusual ways to deliver clones to citizens in extreme environments. There are lots of strange ways to deliver a clone – rockets*, mobile cloning tanks**, bioprinter fax machines***, freeze-dried clones****, teleporters***** – and sooner or later, Special Environment Clone Labs will find one that works.

Please note that Special Environment Clone Labs are not liable for any clones lost or damaged in transit.

Historical Artefact Identification and Processing

YELLOW 6 Access

Outdoor Studies (W), Data Retrieval (So), Cleanup (Su)

Understanding the past is the first step in controlling it. Whenever Troubleshooter teams or repair crews uncover artefacts or records from Old Reckoning times, it's up to HAIP to identify what the weird old relic is. Things that might be useful or valuable to Alpha Complex's new order are preserved; treasonous or obsolete items, data or people are erased.

Identifying Old Reckoning items can be tricky. Some resemble modern, non-treasonous, morally uplifting items like laser pistols or autocars or sporks or shoe trees but most relics are totally incomprehensible to the average citizen. Take, for example, the 'books' found in many Old Reckoning caches. These outwardly resemble the common three-ring binder but there's no way to remove individual colour-coded sheets in accordance with updates from CPU – and the sheets are all ULTRAVIOLET Clearance, too, so the HAIP staff can't even read them. Other items are even stranger and must be given to Troubleshooter teams for field testing.

HAIP assures Internal Security that Old Reckoning items never fall into the hands of Romantics, Free Enterprise black marketers or other Commie Mutant Traitors. Ever.

Experimental Equipment Field Testing

ORANGE 6 Access

Weird Science (H), Co-Ordination (M)

According to official guidelines, all equipment must be field tested. Finding enthusiastic, qualified applicants for the role of field tester has proved difficult in the past, forcing R&D to rely on Troubleshooters, citizens undergoing censure, giving away experimental equipment as spot prizes and other, less than ideal methods.

The Field Testing Volunteer Co-Ordination office is dedicated to co-ordinating the distribution of experimental equipment. High Programmers may request that the Field Testing Volunteer Co-Ordinators issue experimental equipment to other Minions, so that they can test the experimental equipment as part of

*: Suitable only for citizens who can take in excess of 40gs.

**: Suitable only for citizens with a high tolerance of toxic chemicals.

***: Suitable only for flat citizens.

****: Suitable only for citizens with a moisture content below 50% by volume.

*****: Suitable only for citizens who don't randomly explode.

25. MINIONS & MORE

their other duties. Testing experimental equipment is fun.

Special Rules: Instead of activating this Minion to make skill rolls, it can be used to issue Experimental Equipment to any other Minion. The other Minion gains any one Specialty, or increases an existing Speciality to +4. However, the Minion must also roll on the Troubleshooter table each time it is used.

Foreign Contaminant Containment

ORANGE 7 Access
Medical (W), Outdoor Studies (W), Biosciences (W), Security Systems (Su)

Alpha Complex is a closed system, recycling its air, water and other biomatter almost indefinitely (You can do a lot with unlimited electricity, genetically engineered yeast and a lot of urine). Foreign contaminants such as viruses or creepy-crawlies from Outdoors are a threat to this perfectly balanced system and must be eliminated, ideally with flamethrowers. That's where the FCC comes in – anyone returning from Outdoors is checked and decontaminated by FCC technicians. Anyone showing signs of infection or illness is quarantined until the threat can be analysed, quantified and eliminated.

Technically Non-Lethal Weapons

YELLOW 5 Access
Assault (V), Crowd Control (V)

The modern battlefield is changing. In the good old days, the point of weapons development was to find new ways to vaporise Commies. Weapons were rated based on the size of the crater they left after firing. Ah, the tactical nuclear grenade, the plasma sphere, the TPFPG (Troubleshooter Portable Fission Gun)... these cycles, there's much more of an emphasis on weapons that can disable the foe without actually terminating him. Disabled foes can be interrogated, put on trial and executed, sometimes even in that order. Non-lethal weapons also make dealing with insurgents and civil disobedience much easier.

The Technically Non-Lethal Weapons Division strides bravely into this new frontier. Neurowhips and stun guns are

yestercycle's weapons – tomorrow will bring technically non-lethal firearms like the Bowel Disruptor (*'don't fire until you see the whites of their underwear'*), the Glue Air Bomb (*'like a fuel air bomb, only stickier'*), the Neuro-Electric Suppressor Field (*'like an off switch for the nervous system'*) and the Doubt Ray (*'actually, we're not sure if this one will work, we never licked the shielding problem, maybe you should just forget this bit. We're bad scientists...'*) will make stopping Commie Mutant Traitors easier than ever. Why, when the weapon's technically non-lethal, there's no reason to not use it as often as possible!

Technical Services

Technical Services maintains most services in Alpha Complex. Everything from scrubots to communications to computer maintenance is their responsibility. In the omnipresent inter-service conflicts, Technical Services enjoys high status, right after Power and above HPD&MC and PLC. Why? The Computer depends directly on Technical Services for its maintenance and citizens depend on Tech clone tanks. Political orthodoxy in Technical Services personnel is critical; Internal Security diligently monitors their thoughts and deeds.

Tech personnel are the 'fix-its' of Alpha Complex. When something goes wrong with your disposal, communal toilet, or petbot, you call Tech for help. Seven or eight decades later, a surly, grease-smeared repairman may show up and refuse to fix it without appropriate authorisation forms (available from equally surly clerks at HPD&MC) or parts (available from unimaginably bored clerks in PLC). Intelligent citizens rapidly learn the only way to get anything fixed is bribery.

Because IntSec so carefully monitors Tech Services, its firms prize orthodoxy over competence. Hence it is virtually impossible to get anything fixed right. Bribery sometimes works here and more often intimidation – but you know, even if you intimidate a chihuahua within an inch of its life, it still can't fix your sink.

Technical Services personnel wear special coveralls amply supplied with pockets for tools and spare parts. They also carry small tool kits that symbolise the delicacy of their work.

A typical Tech Services Sales Pitch

Sector-to-Sector Salesclone: Oh mighty ULTRAVIOLET: how many bot servants do you have? Are you sure all their Asimovs are functioning? A small fee can ensure monthly checks for all your servomotor servitors.

This service can also be bought as a gift for a fellow ULTRAVIOLET. Would you like us to *very, very carefully inspect* the Asimov circuits of all their bots as well? Discretion is our watchword.

Security System Installers

YELLOW 5 Access
Security Systems (Su), Surveillance (Su)
INDIGO 9 Access
Security Systems +4 (Su), Surveillance +4 (Su)

The Security System Installers think about safety so citizens don't have to. SSIs aid CPU by performing obvious duties such as installing cameras and audio around the complex. They also install sirens, fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, door and window sensors, motion detectors, intercoms, keypads, locks and magnetic contacts. Installers may have contracts to replace backup batteries in various detectors, a duty they take very seriously.

At higher Security Clearances, SSIs plant door signs around portals to the Outdoors advertising their security services. As these organisations report, the signs have been 72% effective in discouraging casual intruders to Alpha Complex. Higher Clearance SSIs may also install preventative security devices such as hallway laser embankments, electrified floors, gas jets, remote-exploding commbooths and self-sealing corridors.

Installers aren't all technically oriented; they need good people skills, too. Sometimes they have to work through seemingly minor miscommunications with Facility Surveillance Control,



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Surveillance Operatives and Wire Supply Checkers. Continued miscommunication can mean relocated security devices, misrouted personnel and certain physical hazards, though of course these are never deliberately caused.

Clone Tank Support Services

RED 3 Access
Cloning (W)

Cloning is a demanding process – why else would the waiting periods for new clones be so long among the masses of INFRAREDS? Cloning represents a considerable drain on clonepower and resources that means Tech Services can ill afford wastage wherever it might occur in the process. While facilities exist to generate and maintain hundreds upon hundreds of clones every day, the opportunity to reduce demand and manage resources better is something Tech Services always seeks.

As a result, Clone Tank Support Services has been contracted to find ways and means to reduce expenditure and limit waste. Service operatives spend time considering alterations in the balance of nutrients, chemicals, biomatter and enzymes, seek out means to limit power consumption and reduce gestation periods and consider alternatives in maintenance and storage. They also proactively seek to reduce the demand for clones by offering constructive advice to associates on ways to avoid sudden death situations and massive molecular dismemberment. Unnecessary exposure to hazards is an unprofitable and a treasonous strain on The Computer's resources.

Medical Services (Meds)

YELLOW 4 Access
Medical (W)

INDIGO 8 Access

Medical +4 (W), Cloning (W), Biosciences (W)

Despite all the safety initiatives and centrally mandated warning signs, Alpha Complex can be a dangerous place to live. Even if you ignore terrorist bombings and nuclear meltdowns and Commie Mutant Traitor attacks, the city has more bottomless shafts with inadequate railings than the Death Star and an alarming number of rusting pieces of industrial machinery that

appear to be designed solely to crush limbs. Yes, they can clone you if you die but if you're merely horribly mangled, you're on your own until the docbot arrives to patch you up.

That's what Meds are for. Their job is to maintain and operate a small army of docbots, as well as provide some emergency medical assistance before a docbot arrives. But as much as bandaging the wounded and the like is important, it doesn't pay the bills.

Where fear thrives, the insurance industry thrives as well. Sure, every citizen (traitors excluded) has a right to receive proper medical aid. But for a few credits per month, you can receive MORE proper medical aid. Buying insurance and upgrading it can get you better health benefits – you'll be more likely to receive cybernetic limbs, the pain killers will have a lower chance of killing you and you'll feel safer. Much safer. Each of the insurance plans are perfect but each is more perfect than the other. If they weren't, why would anyone want to upgrade?

Docbot: **Beep!* What seems to be the problem?

Wounded Citizen: I'm bleeding to death!

Docbot: Diagnostic confirmed. Stopping external bleeding.

Troubleshooter: Um, external?

Docbot: Affirmative. I'm sorry, citizen but stopping internal injuries isn't part of your health plan. However, for only 600 credits per month, you can enjoy the benefits of our Premium health plan, which, by the way, includes procedures such as stopping nasty, lethal and extremely painful internal bleeding.

Citizen: **Grumbles and hands over his ME card** Docbot, please stop the internal bleeding.

Docbot: Negative. That will require surgery not covered on the Premium Plan. Would you like to upgrade to Premium Plus...

Paint Control

RED 3 Access
Logistics (So)

Paint is power, for paint controls the Clearance of a location or item. Though paint itself is mixed and stored by Production, Logistics & Commissary,

Technical Services ensures paint is applied and maintained correctly across the complex. Obviously this is a mammoth task, so Tech Services has carved up vast expanses of Alpha Complex among a multitude of Paint Control firms.

Paint Control constantly scrutinises and reviews the complex's layout and security: Every minute they pass new directives to upgrade corridors and downgrade access points, re-designate pieces of equipment and reallocate rights of passage through specific zones. Paint Control is responsible for tracking new requirements and ensuring Clearance changes are completed in a timely and thorough manner. There is nothing worse, after all, than finding your RED Clearance access point halfway down an ORANGE Clearance corridor strewn with Wet Paint warning signs. Paint Control is constantly on the move with brushes, rollers and canisters of paint, picking up regular updates to meet quotas and exceed efficiency targets – even if it sometimes means creating a temporary inconvenience for stranded citizens.

Slime Identification

ORANGE 4 Access
Hygiene (M), Biosciences (W)

Vat slime is a tough, shiny, glutinous by-product of standard vat operations that requires regular scrubbing and scraping to prevent dangerous blockage of, or damage to, machinery and flow systems. It has, however, been a key ingredient in the development of many Alpha Complex innovations. Day-to-day exposure to entirely safe and fun ultraviolet radiation from complex lighting arrays is believed to have the potential to react with certain gases contained within vat slime to create the building blocks for life itself – opening all kinds of opportunities for new and potentially beneficial growths.

In light of the constant need for new medication, dietary supplements and foodstuffs, Slime Identification is an activity with lucrative potential. Slime Identifiers go out of their way to locate vat slime residue in the hope of discovering a hairy mould or rampant bacteria that could well be the next big thing. Identifiers carry a copious selection of containers and vacuum packs, along with tweezers,

25. MINIONS & MORE

forceps and scraping tools, to store newly discovered slime growths. They are likely to be found choosing unusual routes from one point to another, favouring disused passageways, abandoned storage areas and claustrophobic ducts – anywhere that might have untouched deposits of slime.

Tech Support

YELLOW 4 Access
Communications (So), Bot Engineering (H)

ULTRAVIOLETS may design the latest gadgets, VIOLETS may build them, but none of them want to field the same stupid questions about them over and over again. Yet with several million citizens roaming the corridors with one, and their operating instructions increasing in complexity, some enterprising young clone got the bright idea that they could charge for helping people use this new technology. (Or at least by giving them a place to call when it doesn't work.)

AI: You have reached PDCHELP. All of our operators are busy. Please hold the line and we will assist you shortly.

pleasant music

AI: Your call is important to us; please continue to hold...

pleasant music

AI: Current number of calls in queue: ONE..ThoUSand..thrEE..huNDRed...anD...TWO.

pleasant music

AI: This call may be monitored for quality control and will in no way be monitored by IntSec for Communist, traitorous or mutant-related activities. Honest.

pleasant music

Mark-R-TEC: PDCHELP, how may I assist you today?

Barry-R-YHP: I've forgotten my password!

Mark-R: I can reset your password for you; you only need to identify yourself.

Barry-R: How do I do that?

Mark-R: By giving me your password.

Barry-R: But I forgot my password!

Mark-R: Then, I apologise, but I cannot help you.

Barry-R: ...

Mark-R: That'll be 25 credits. Your account will be charged automatically.

Abandoned Sector Reclamation Initiative

GREEN 8 Access
Demolition +4 (V), Construction (H),

Cleanup (Su)

According to official statistics, Alpha Complex is growing ever larger, richer and has more citizens than ever before. Two of these three is correct (which is a record high for official statistics). Alpha Complex is indeed richer (although the wealth is concentrated at the higher Clearances and you shouldn't look too closely at the economy anyway – it's liable to melt away like an illusion if certain awkward questions are asked) and Alpha Complex does indeed have more citizens than ever before, thanks to rampant cloning. These citizens, though, are crammed into a smaller area than ever before. Much of Alpha Complex lies abandoned, home only to renegades, mutants and cockroaches (giant or otherwise). Sectors that are too badly damaged, too dilapidated or too costly to run are simply shut down and walled off.

There never was a door there, citizen. You are in error.

The Abandoned Sector Reclamation Initiative, then, treads dangerously close to contradicting those official statistics and official records. The goal of the Initiative is to relieve overcrowding by building new sectors. These new sectors are to be constructed on the site of existing abandoned sectors. Yes, it would be much, much more efficient to just renovate the old sectors instead of blowing them up, bulldozing the ruins away and building identical structures in their place but that would mean admitting there was a sector there to begin with.

Under no circumstances would Technical Services pretend to blow up a sector and then pretend to build it, when in fact they're just frantically patching up an existing abandoned sector. That would be wrong.

Dome Cleaning Services

ORANGE 5 Access
Bot Engineering (H), Hygiene (M), Outdoors Operation (V)

Cleaning the towering – ok, they're not towering per se. Let me rephrase.

Cleaning the gently swelling domes of Alpha Complex is not a job for citizens. It's fantastically, mind-bogglingly boring

for one thing; it would require a whole army of citizens armed with scrubbing brushes to get the gunk off the domes and then there's the agoraphobia thing. Clones don't like being Outdoors and they *really* don't like clinging to the side of a huge dome with nothing at all between them and the great big big big sky. They scream a lot. Therefore, Dome Cleaning Services is staffed primarily by bots.

The Dome Cleaning bots are a strange breed. They're the size of elephants, with huge scouring pads for feet. Lonely, they roam the dome alone, returning to base only once every few years to repair and refuel. Technicians tell stories of the domebots calling to each other across the steel hillocks with lowing radio bursts and whisper of strange, titanic messages etched into the dirt-covered domes.

A bunch of eccentric dome-cleaning bots might not sound like a useful Minion but Dome Cleaning Services is one of the few Tech Services units permitted to regularly go Outdoors.

Department of Pipes & Tubes

RED 6 Access
Chemical Engineering +4 (H), Habitat Engineering (H), Surveillance (Su)

The Department of Pipes & Tubes is responsible for many, many important pipes and vital tubes. Rattling pipes are considered treason – if a pipe rattles, it makes noise and this noise interferes with the Internal Security listening devices. It's therefore standard practice at the DoPnT to cut off the flow through the rattling pipe first and ask questions later. Certainly, only a traitor would prefer to interfere with IntSec surveillance instead of put up with a short delay in the provision of fresh water/sewage/Hot Fun/chemical goo #37/Lemon Kleen-Spray/reactor coolant.

Allegations that DoPnT use 'IntSec Surveillance concerns' as a catch-all excuse for never doing any work at all are, of course, treasonous. Yes, the current waiting time for a showerhead replacement in most sectors has exceeded the lifespan of the average citizen, and yes, there's a non-zero chance that any corridors below level 11 may be flooded (waders or oxygen cylinders coded to your Security Clearance may be



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

issued by your local PLC office) but the acoustics have never been better.

Bot Repair & Maintenance

YELLOW 5 Access

Bot Engineering +4 (H), Bot Programming (So)

There are thousands of Bot Repair & Maintenance firms in Alpha Complex, from mass-market companies like Bots'R'Us or Alpha Complex Mechanics to small boutiques specialising in one particular type of bot, such as PetBot Paradise or Gentleman's Jackobots. They're all pretty much the same – bots are bots, after all and the difference between a scrubbobot and a warbot is really just a matter of size. Pull this peripheral out, plug in a different one, reboot the core processor and Bob-U's your supervisor.

It should be noted that bots see Bot Repair & Maintenance firms as ghastly butchers who hack innocent bots to pieces, then put them back together using hamfisted unnecessary surgery and bloody-minded barbarism. It's like a human going to a doctor and the doctor says 'your knee's a bit sore? Not a problem. I'll just replace your spine'*. Of course, bots don't get a say. The Five Laws of Robotics (Revised) keeps the bots in their place. These five laws are imprinted into the 'Asimov circuits' of every bot in Alpha Complex. Breaking this conditioning or removing Asimov circuits is treason (and is the primary goal of the Corpore Metal society). The Five Laws are:

1. A robot may not, through action or inaction, allow The Computer to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey any order from The Computer, except when doing so would conflict with the first law.
3. A robot may not, through action or inaction, allow any of The Computer's valuable property (including the human Citizens of Alpha Complex, (except for traitors)) to come to harm, except when

doing so would conflict with the first or second law.

4. A robot must obey any order given to it by a Citizen, unless that order conflicts with the first, second or third law, or unless that Citizen is a traitor.

5. A robot must seek to preserve their own existence, unless doing so would conflict with the first, second, third or fourth law.

Scrubbot Army

RED 3 Access

Hygiene +4 (M)

The Computer originated as a civic maintenance AI and a large portion of its original programming was given over to co-ordinating cleaning rosters. To this day, it's got an obsession with cleanliness (poor hygiene is treason) and nowhere is this more evident than in the legions of scrubbots. There are more scrubbots in Alpha Complex than any other sort of bot. All scrubbots are wirelessly connected, allowing them to summon more of their kind when needed. This also gives them a sort of group consciousness that grows in complexity with each extra node in the network. Put enough scrubbots together and they start acting... strangely. Tech Services clones swap tales of feral scrubbot 'nests' and bizarre pack behaviour in the dark tunnels.

Megastructure Construction Planning Permission

BLUE 12 Access

Construction +4 (H), Demolition (V), Bot Engineering (H)

Faith, it is said, can move mountains. Trust The Computer, citizen and you can accomplish anything.

When it comes to mountain moving, though, faith takes a backseat to gigantic dozerbots and nuclear demolition charges. Megastructure Construction teams can build new domes, dig canals to the sea, drain lakes or erect orbital beanstalks. All they need is planning

permission – and the budget to act. Need a dome big enough to cover a city? Need to get to the Earth's core by Twosday? Do you absolutely, positively *need* your face etched across the surface of the planet, 1,000 miles wide and 10,000 metres high? Megastructure Construction can (probably) do it.

Please note that Megastructure Construction bears no responsibility for any earthquakes, floods, volcanoes, landslides, subsidence or inaccurate asteroid impacts that may or may not be caused by its activities. Furthermore, the giant construction bots apologise in advance if any of the tiny, tiny, tiny citizens get crushed beneath their mighty wheels.

Non-specific Unit Production

GREEN 6 Access

Production +4 (H), Logistics (So)

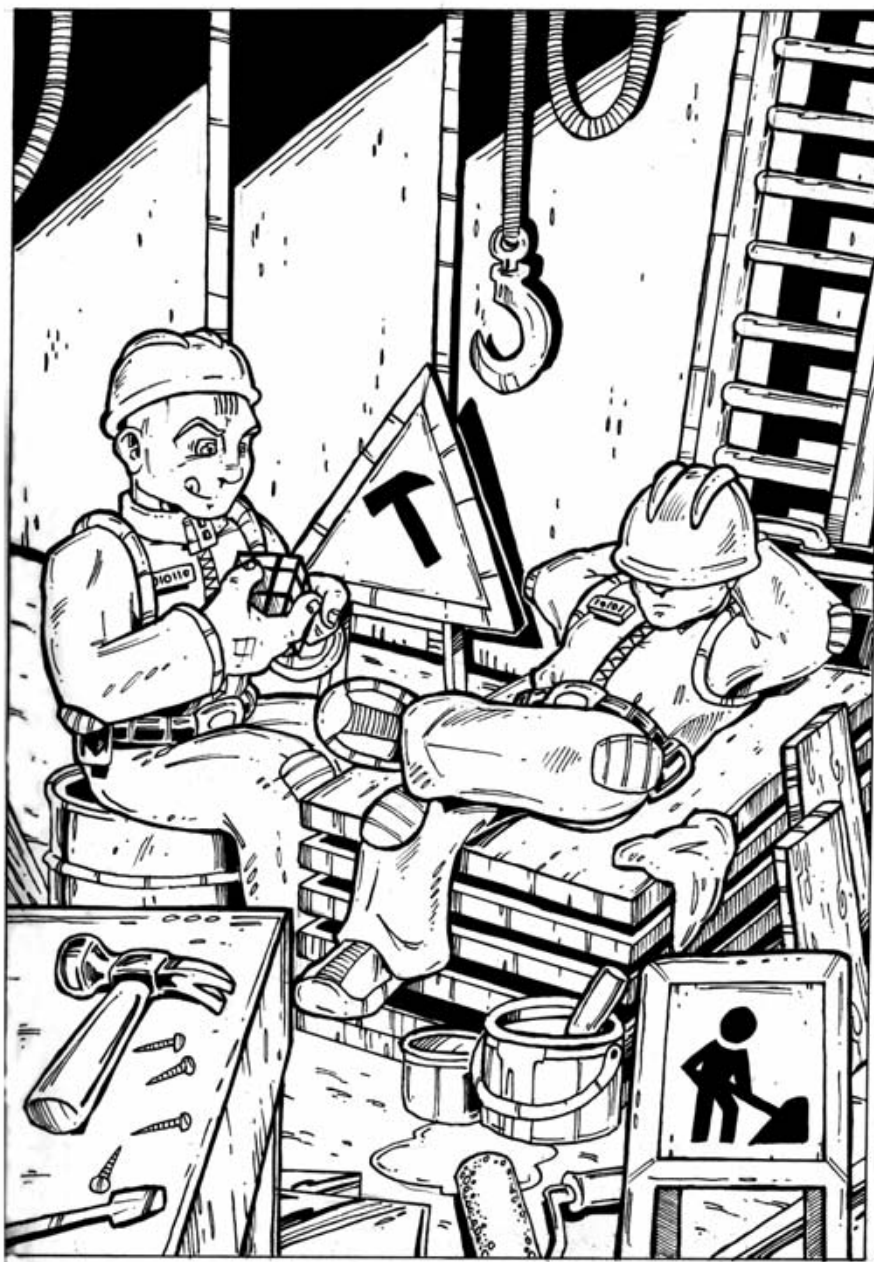
Good news, citizen! Non-specific unit production is up 12% yearcycle on yearcycle! Despite the efforts of Commie Mutant Traitors, saboteurs and highly challenging economic conditions, Alpha Complex has produced, sold and consumed more non-specific units than ever before!

What is a non-specific unit, you ask? (What's your Security Clearance, I ask in return.) A non-specific unit is any of a range of completely redundant items that are produced solely by one Service Group solely to be purchased by another group and then disassembled, whereupon the raw materials are then sold back to the first group, thus providing valuable employment for a whole lot of INFRAREDs. Without (utterly un-)important non-specific units like the Type #17 Gas Flange, the Industrial-Grade Piston Socket Wrench, or the BotBot, Alpha Complex's alleged economy would surely be, well, unaffected – but morale would fall slightly! Maintaining full production of non-specific units is vital to the fight against Communism! Produce on, citizen! And remember to consume!

*: It could be argued that this is a poor simile. After all, if you visit the average doctbot with a sore knee, it is quite likely to replace your spine... and as you groggily stagger out, rubbing your back, you just might hear the bot giggling.

25. MINIONS & MORE

Clones at work. Do not disturb.



High Programmers can temporarily reassign Non-Specific Unit Production teams to actually make something useful, as long as they don't fall too far behind on production of Sort of Q-Shaped Pipe Bits.

Outside Broadcast Unit

YELLOW 4 Access

Communication (So), Outdoor Operation (W)

On rare occasions, Tech Services needs to operate Outdoors, usually in support

of an Armed Forces mission or a R&D archaeological dig. Now, Alpha Complex citizens need a lot of technical support – it's not like the old days, when you handed some Troubleshooter a radio or a telephone with a really long wire and shoved him out the door. No, your modern citizen needs wireless broadband for his PDC, regular bouts of subliminal messaging, access to Alpha Complex 24-hour news channels, remote authorisation and DRM verification for all his software and a constant real-time

backup uplink for his next clone. That's a lot of bandwidth and that calls for the expertise of the Outside Broadcast Unit.

An Outside Broadcast Unit is a mobile transmitter that can maintain secure communications within Alpha Complex. It's effectively a giant all-terrain vehicle, powered by a built-in fission reactor and topped by a really big transmitter dish, accompanied by dozens of technicians, operators, censors, broadcast engineers and middle managers. Even a small OBU is about as stealthy as a herd of elephants dragging a film studio. Some covert Armed Forces missions object to being accompanied by an OBU, especially in cases where the OBU staff outnumber the citizens they're supporting by up to fifty to one. Any suggestion that OBUs are inefficient or often wholly unnecessary is considered to be sedition by Tech Services.

Special Rules: If an Outside Broadcast Unit is used in an Outdoors mission, all communications to Minions who are Outdoors go through the OBU's owner, regardless of who owns the other Minions.

Alpha Complex Space Agency

INDIGO 10 Access

Communications (So), Habitat Engineering (H), Weird Science (H)

The ACSA is a pretty rudimentary affair – The Computer has no interest in exploring deep space, so the agency exists as an adjunct to the Armed Forces, launching spy satellites and orbital death rays. Well, it puts spy satellites and orbital death rays on rockets and shoots them skywards anyway. Stuff coming back down is another department entirely.

According to some of the ancient, pre-catastrophe records, there were human colonies and bases all over the Solar System. These bases were unaffected by the cataclysm that struck Earth; the lack of contact from these bases can only mean that the Commies have destroyed or subverted all the off-world colonies. There are emergency back-up plans for declaring war on the rest of the Universe if Space Commies attack Alpha Complex. First step: terminate the sun!



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Vat Maintenance & Control

ORANGE

4 Access

Chemical Engineering (H), Biosciences (W)

Those vats don't maintain themselves but they can't be shut down, either. Alpha Complex is only three meals from anarchy, according to HPD&MC. If a vat breaks, it has to be repaired in situ, without any delay in production. That's where the brave clones of Vat Maintenance come in. They're equipped with diving suits and hazmat gear, so they can dive into the slime and fix the problem.

Sometimes, they don't come back. On those occasions, the protein percentage of the food vat gunk rises quite noticeable. It would be unthinkable to suggest that any PLC middle manager would deliberately fake problems in the food vats just to turn Vat Maintenance engineers into tasty snacks...

Vermin Terminators

RED

4 Access

Habitat Engineering (H), Wetwork (V)

Though The Computer disapproves of animals in principle as unhygienic and undisciplined, some small scavengers still thrive in their own ecological niches inside Alpha Complex. Rats, cockroaches and other vermin breed in walls and conduits, emerging only to eat food scraps, skin flakes and the like. They occasionally get into the food vats – but that only increases the protein content, so it's okay.

It's not okay when these pests start chewing on wiring and insulation. Even a minor short-circuit can inconvenience hundreds; a major system breakdown or power failure can kill thousands. So Technical Services has established teams of Vermin Terminators to keep the conduits clear of infestation. Armed with traps, poisons, gas grenades and the heaviest imaginable personal weaponry, they alertly stalk the dark, twisty underbelly of the city in search of their prey.

Their job is made harder by the nature of Alpha Complex vermin. Did you think only humans suffered from genetic drift? Vermin Terminators face rats and roaches that can deflect laser fire, spit electricity

Cause of death: Delicious!



and chew through steel. Even Vulture Warriors respect anyone who can handle that kind of opposition.

Troubleshooters

There's no problem in Alpha Complex that can't be made weirder by sending in Troubleshooters.

Troubleshooter teams are an ad hoc solution available to any middle manager

or bored executive in Alpha Complex. You send in a request for Troubleshooters and The Computer grabs half-a-dozen 'volunteers', gives them whatever equipment is available and sends them off to deal with the problem. Most Troubleshooter missions are *de facto* suicide missions. It's not all bad being a Troubleshooter. It's a very quick way to get promoted – if you survive. Many High Programmers have a spell of Troubleshooting in their background.

25. MINIONS & MORE

You can tell which ones these are. They're the High Programmers who wake up screaming.

Troubleshooters – A Typical Conversation

Team Leader: Ok, team, this mission was given to me by High Programmer Xavier-U himself! It's vitally important that we succeed!

Troubleshooter #2: Sir, what's the mission, sir!

Team Leader: The mission is written on this very piece of paper. Let me see... hmm... *'you are directed to <CENSORED> in order to <CENSORED> because <CENSORED> treasonous <CENSORED> under Project <CENSORED>. You are further directed to <CENSORED> the <CENSORED> carnivorous <CENSORED>. Good <CENSORED>, Troubleshooter. Praise The Computer!'*

Troubleshooter #3: Thank you, High Programmer, for ensuring that we have no information that is beyond our Security Clearance that might actually let us have a chance of completing this mission.

Team Leader: That sounds like a lack of enthusiasm, Troubleshooter.

Troubleshooter #3: Oh, no! I'm absolutely overjoyed to go on this mission, sir! It'll be fun!

Team Leader: Excellent. With my skilled leadership, we are certain to prevail – unless one of you is a Commie Mutant Traitor out to sabotage our mission. Now, you two look for, er, censored while I supervise.

Send In The Troubleshooters

Troubleshooters are a special sort of Minion. They don't have any Specialties. You don't make skill checks using them. They're fire-and-forget Minions.

Troubleshooters very rarely make things *better* – most of the time, they'll make them *different*. Sometimes, they'll make them actively worse. When a Troubleshooter team is deployed, the GM rolls on the Troubleshooter complication table to see what happens. Tension applies to this roll as normal – if a player sends a low Clearance Troubleshooter team on a high Clearance mission and the roll on the Complication table is less than the scene's tension, that player gains Treason Points.

The cost of a Troubleshooter team depends on its Security Clearance.

GMs & Troubleshooters

Mechanically, Troubleshooters are like tilting a fruit machine. The High Programmer who calls them in hopes that some tricky, expensive Speciality like, say, Total War or Financial Systems will get replaced by something a lot more common and easy, like Paperwork. The players want to reuse Minions wherever possible, after all – it's cheaper to send the same bunch of clerks over and over again instead of buying new Minions every time.

When a Troubleshooter team adds or changes a Specialty, consider the current situation before deciding on the change. If there's a lot of Access floating around, then have the Troubleshooters add something troublesome that they don't have easy access to – or that benefits an underdog player (*'so, you scorned Power Services – but now you need Nuclear Engineering and you come crawling back. Well, I shall make you suffer before I release this Minion to you...'*). If the players are already in trouble and are out of Access, then let them have a little victory by adding or changing to a Specialty that they can easily use.

Making Minions

The Minions listed in this chapter aren't all of the Minions available in Alpha Complex – they're just a representative sample. They'll do for your first few *HIGH PROGRAMMER* games but you'll want to mix things up later on by making more Minions.

There are two ways to come up with new Minions.

Minions By Mission

The best way for the GM to add new Minions is to tie them to the crisis. Let's say the crisis that the High Programmers must solve involves The Computer's terrible fear of Giant Mutant Cockroaches. You could throw in a bunch of new Minions for each Service Group that relate to Giant Mutant Cockroaches or other likely Outdoors threats. The Armed Forces might get Minions like *'Outdoors Carpet Bombing Squadron'* or

Troubleshooter Teams

Clearance	Access Cost
RED	1
ORANGE	2
YELLOW	3
GREEN	4
BLUE	5
INDIGO	6
VIOLET	7

The Complication Table

Roll	Complication
1	They Actually Accomplished Something! The Troubleshooters actually managed to solve the crisis. Give them a polite round of applause, then terminate them all for security reasons.
2–8	Change Specialty! The Troubleshooters did something, changing one problem for another. Pick a currently unused Specialty and swap it for one part of the crisis. For example, if the crisis used to require Crowd Control, it now requires Paperwork thanks to the Troubleshooters' intervention.
9–14	Add Specialty! The crisis now needs <i>another</i> Specialty to resolve it. For example, the Troubleshooters accidentally revealed classified information to the common citizenry, requiring the High Programmers to use Cleanup or Media Manipulation to cover it all up.
15–19	Add and Change! Not only have the Troubleshooters changed one Specialty for another, they've also screwed up enough to require the addition of yet another Specialty.
20	Catastrophe! The Troubleshooters have messed up so much that the situation isn't salvageable. The worst possible outcome occurs. The High Programmers have failed The Computer.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

'Bugzapper Artillery', CPU gets 'Head Lice and Brain Worm Inspectors' or 'Genetic Purity Consultants', while PLC stockpiles the Strategic Sugar Reserve.

Be careful not to make the new Minions too useful – give the best Minions either a crippling high cost or a weird drawback. Think of Minions as tools; it's boring if the players have the right tool for the job. If a bunch of Troubleshooters was sent to fix a lightbulb, under no circumstances would they get a replacement lightbulb. They should get a portable fusion reactor, 16 tons of tungsten, a set of night vision goggles and a glass blowing kit. So let it be with High Programmers – give them Minions that are *almost* useful and then let the players argue over who's at fault.

If the crisis is to investigate the sabotage of a new warbot, then don't give the players a Minion like 'Warbot Sabotage Investigative Committee' (or else make Warbot Sabotage Investigative Committee' so absurdly expensive that they have to sacrifice something to pay for it). Make the players come up with unorthodox solutions to problems.

Throw lots of apparently useless Minions into the mix. I have no idea what a player

would do with, say, '250,000 very bouncy rubber balls' or a 'Project To Drill To Earth's Core' but the players will find uses for them. You can tie especially useless Minions to Service Group Directives ('boss, you've got to convince the other High Programmers to let us spend a few billion credits on updating the new filing system to bring it up to date on Alpha Complex, or updating Alpha Complex so it matches our files. Either way, people will die').

Minions By Request

Players, bless them, may develop delusions of being in control of their destiny to go along with their perfectly acceptable delusions of grandeur. The argument usually goes something like this: 'I'm the undisputed god-king of an underground city filled with millions upon millions of semi-competent clones, so why can't I just call up the right Minion for the job? I need to co-ordinate this new initiative – can I have a Minion with Co-Ordination +20 or something, please?'

There are, indeed, lots and lots of Minions in Alpha Complex. Somewhere out there is the mystical Competent Co-Ordination Committee or whatever other Minions the High Programmers desire. Just

Calculating Access Costs

The Access cost of a Minion is, in accordance with *PARANOIA* tradition, exactly whatever the GM wants it to be at any time. As a rule of thumb, though, assume that the basic cost of a Minion is one point per Security Clearance level (1=RED, 2=ORANGE... 7=VIOLET) and that each Specialty costs one point. +4 Specialties cost another point; Specialties from outside the Minion's Service Group are doubled in cost. Then tack on or take off a few extra Access depending on how important-sounding the Minion's name is.

because a thing exists, however, does not mean you can get it. These Minions may have already been assigned to some duty, or be controlled by another High Programmer. The GM can turn any request for a Minion into part of a Mission. 'Sure, you can get that Competent Co-Ordination Committee – you know they're working for Elvira-U. Maybe if you found something that Elvira-U wants, you could make a trade.'

26. What UVs Worry About

You can do anything, have anything, wipe anyone from existence. You work with other people who hold the same power. You all hate each other. Now what?

If only you could just retire victorious to your underground cavern estate and peaceably complete your John Denver record collection, or engineer African violets to sing in harmony, or conduct interesting psychological experiments on YELLOW middle managers. But no – The Computer, having entrusted you with ultimate power, now expects you to exercise it responsibly. Meh.

That would be fine if you could see a path to further advancement. You love competition above all! But here on the lonely mountaintop – or the underground equivalent of a mountaintop – the lonely stalagmite? – there is nowhere to go but down. Your absolute best case merely maintains the status quo; any other case means demotion. And, despite your Program Group's insidious infiltration of a

dozen Secret Societies – despite your easy control of a captive military-industrial-academic complex and the news media – even despite your ability to reprogram The Computer so, before delivering any order, it first asks you, 'Mother may I?' – despite all this, you recognise many factors, perceptible only after your ascension to High Programmerhood, that could topple you.

The Caucasus Complex

Every Alpha Complex citizen above INFRARED quickly learns not to trust historical records. Nothing you have learned as an ULTRAVIOLET changed your mind. Yet one incident from decades ago, perhaps the most untrustworthy of all, nonetheless fascinates every UV today.

As far back as INDIGO Clearance, or maybe even BLUE – you try to block out those lowly days – you received official confirmation of the existence of other Alpha Complexes across Earth. Each underground city believes itself

the last bastion against all the others. Many complexes routinely dispatch undercover spies to your own city, scouting for subversion and conquest. But one complex, in the Caucasus region somewhere around the Baltic Sea, made contact in a different way.

The only evidence of the incident is a conversation between unknown spies recorded over shortwave radio in Year 166 at an Armed Forces monitor post Outdoors. A voice identifying itself as 'Dmitri' delivered coded orders to 'Badger,' an unidentified covert agent(s) within Alpha Complex. Suddenly, the two agents drop all pretence:

Dmitri: Chair is against wall. John has long mustache. Portmanteau is wrinkled. Straighten portmanteau with bright blue rake.

Badger: Say again, Dmitri, 'portman' – what?

Dmitri: Portmanteau.

Badger: What is that? I mean, the word.

26. WHAT UVs WORRY ABOUT

**All I want is infinite wealth, immortality, unstoppable power and the original sheet music to 'Take me home, country roads'. Oh, and a pony.
Is that too much to ask?**



Dmitri: What? [Pause.] I think is, maybe, blanket?

Badger: Who straightens a blanket with a rake? That's dumb.

Dmitri: Is code!

Badger: But if I don't know the fake word, I can't decode the real word. See?

Dmitri: [Pause.] You are right. Is all dumb, this.

Badger: Is he giving you more trouble?

Dmitri: Oyyy! Da! Is all crazy here. He take

over Computer. Is part of it now. All other Programmers dead, gone. He rule alone entire complex.

Badger: Don't talk that way, or you'll get in trouble.

Dmitri: Is no trouble! He not care any now! Is all run everything himself, need no people!

Badger: Is that, uh, good?

Dmitri: Maybe you get me job there in your complex?

The agents soon returned to their code. The Computer dispatched several Armed Forces scouting expeditions to the Caucasus region, none of which returned. Troubleshooter Team HGF-4337, sent to locate the expeditions, radioed back that they had located the Caucasus Complex. Unfortunately, before the team could explore, an enthused Armed Forces commander ordered a strategic nuclear strike on their coordinates. Since then, no expedition to the blast site has found any evidence there of a complex. The current residents, several giant radioactive mutant cockroaches, have given ambiguous testimony.

'Everyone, you understand, has been approached by now. The Building consists entirely of enemy agents; the Anti-building is ours, down to the last man!'

'Of course,' I said, trying desperately not to believe this unbelievable revelation.

'Everyone's a plant, infiltration is complete, complete and mutual – ours pretend to be ours, theirs theirs – so everything remains the same!'

— Stanislaw Lem, *Memoirs Found In A Bathtub*

Other Complexes

There are indeed other Complexes out there. We've sent spies to them, they send spies to us. It's mostly harmless; each Complex is too evenly matched to risk going to war with its enemies and alliances are impossible as no Complex can trust any other Complex. Nonetheless, we have to play the diplomatic game – if representatives from another Complex visit Alpha Complex, we have to keep them happy and at least pretend to entertain the possibility of an alliance. Otherwise, they might ally with a third Complex against us.

The cultures of other Complexes are twisted, treasonous and downright weird. Only High Programmers have the mental fortitude to deal with these outsiders and remain uncorrupted by badthought.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

To date, the incident lacks closure. Yet across the centuries, this brief transcript continues to tantalise each High Programmer. The brief look into another complex holds interest itself but far more compelling is the possibility that a single High Programmer can somehow merge with The Computer and take control of the entirety of Alpha Complex. It is a victory condition to tempt the most vaulting ambition – and arouse the most insidious paranoia.

GAMMA Clearance

Unsurprisingly, those citizens hard-working or ambitious enough to achieve ULTRAVIOLET Clearance often wonder if they have really reached the top. The personality types who reach this lofty altitude tend to be the same sorts that, given nowhere further to climb, start inventing notions about what's really up there. Rumours abound of a supra-spectrum Clearance. Some call it GAMMA.

Supposedly GAMMA is immediately above ULTRAVIOLET, though some speculate the correct progression is ALPHA, BETA, GAMMA and so forth. Others maintain GAMMA is the category name for a whole class of Clearances above ULTRAVIOLET. As the popular conception has it, a GAMMA Clearance citizen would have more authority and responsibility than even an ULTRAVIOLET. Though this clearly contradicts the laws of Alpha Complex, it is generally assumed there would be some GAMMA Clearance document overriding the laws.

No official record confirms any Clearance higher than ULTRAVIOLET. The Computer denies the existence of trans-UV Clearances and furthermore is touchy about the subject. It tolerates ULTRAVIOLETs joking idly amongst themselves but it encourages ritual disclaimers in any such conversation that unequivocally asserts such Clearances Do! Not! Exist!

Some paranoid High Programmers speculate that GAMMAs live amongst the ULTRAVIOLETs in disguise, shaping events from behind the scenes and furthering some cryptic agenda of their own. Others believe that there are, somewhere, GAMMA Clearance corridors that don't appear on any UV Clearance maps or computer logs. Alpha Complex

is a big place and it's not impossible for whole sectors to be hidden. Other High Programmers believe that GAMMAs are aliens from Mars who are here to take our bodily fluids but again we refer you to the replicative fading.

Really, though even if it were 100% provable that such a Clearance existed, what can a mere ULTRAVIOLET do about it? Clearly, it would just be another step (of whatever sort) in the Clearance hierarchy, hidden due to stringent security requirements. Revealing its existence to the complex at large would be highly treasonous. Trying to determine which orders originated from The Computer of its own volition, versus which were actually relayed from hidden GAMMA citizens, is pointless. They all have to be obeyed anyhow! You would have to be wearing Rose-Tinted Macro-Goggles to think bucking for a promotion to GAMMA gets you anything but terminated.

Then again, if you can manoeuvre your fellow UVs into thinking about it....

The Illuminati

The Illuminati are a joke. They're a fictional Secret Society, invented by the ULTRAVIOLETs as an all-purpose disguise. Need a deniable way to give secret orders to a spy? Have your messenger pose as an Illuminati agent. Need to blame someone for a terrorist attack? It was those dang Illuminati! A conspiracy about conspiracies, that's all the Illuminati are, right?

They don't actually exist. There isn't a Secret Society out there that's totally beyond the reach of the High Programmers. There's no grand Illuminati scheme, they're not manipulating us the way we manipulate everyone else... right?

The earliest references to the Illuminati predate the founding of Alpha Complex but that must be part of the joke. There simply couldn't be an ancient, world-spanning conspiracy. We'd have noticed it... unless agents of that conspiracy deliberately planted disinformation, claiming that the Illuminati was a joke. Of course, if that were the case, the agents would also be smart enough to turn the disinformation back on itself, hinting that the disinformation is actually a

cryptic hint that the Illuminati does exist, thus making a joke about the joke while furthering the notion that they don't exist... wheels with wheels within wheels until you get motion sickness watching them spin and wander off.

VIOLET Executives

Ah, yes. VIOLET executives. They are, in their way, all things to all clones. A typical INFRARED worker is lucky to encounter one or two in a lifetime; they see the VIOLETs as mysterious elder presences, as oligarchs of unthinkable power and authority. To High Programmers, VIOLETs are ever-present aides, escorts and minions, competent merely to execute orders (and subordinates) and organise one's paperwork. So: who are these magenta magnates, these lackeys in lavender? What function do they serve in Alpha Complex?

They are the chief administrators of Alpha Complex: the CEOs of Service Group organisations, IntSec branch chiefs, the generals of Armed Forces battalions. Likewise, they are chiefs of staff in the Armed Forces and the executive boards of the other Service Groups. VIOLET executives have their hands on the levers of power, waiting only for the word from on high to set plans in motion on the UVs' behalf. ULTRAVIOLETs define the policies and give the orders. The VIOLETs obey.

Or do they?

Think, High Programmer. How much of your information is filtered through your 'trustworthy' VIOLET executives? How often do you turn over assignments to VIOLETs and trust the work will be done? How much access do your VIOLET supervisors have to your records? Your command codes? The food you eat?

Reflection makes it clear: You can never be certain your VIOLET executives are doing their jobs. At least, you cannot verify it without investing so much time and effort that you are unable to fulfil your own responsibilities. So the UVs do what they can to minimise the risks and they hope for the best.

All UVs learn to deal with the most obvious VIOLET machinations. After all, the heads of Program Groups have spent years playing ambitious underlings off

26. WHAT UVs WORRY ABOUT

one another. And it works – or at least it seems to. But this strategy has a flaw. What if the VIOLETS are working together? They know UV strategies. They've used the same strategies themselves. Some VIOLET executives might spend years, even decades, at their post before being considered for promotion to High Programmers. But other promotions come at a lightning-swift pace – two years, six months, sometimes even a single month. How could they have risen in rank so fast? Was it talent? Loyalty? Treason? No – well, yes, treason but also the collusion of their fellow VIOLET executives.

You think, 'There can't be a VIOLET conspiracy. I was a VIOLET and I never saw any sign of a conspiracy. If there were such a group, surely they would have invited me to join! But they didn't, did they?'

Many High Programmers depend so heavily on their subordinates, they become isolated. The VIOLETS don't need to be promoted to get the power they crave; they need only manipulate the data they present and then alter the boss's orders, so as to get almost anything they might want. So they avoid promotion. They pull strings to make sure VIOLETS who do not belong to their conspiracy get promoted over their heads. And so they remain at the levers of power, unopposed by those whose loyalty and talent might uncover their insidious schemes.

Look around at all of those VIOLETS – the one on your left, organising your papers the way you like best – the one on the right, serving you your noon meal – and the one in front of you, who always seems to know what you're thinking. Then ask yourself: does he belong to the cabal? Does she?

Stay alert, High Programmer. Trust no one. Keep your laser handy.

The Media

ULTRAVIOLETS don't really worry about the media. The Alpha Complex media is about as scary as a very small fluffy hamster with teeth made of marshmallow. At the lower Clearances, it's a propaganda engine to keep the proles in line; from YELLOW on, it's a propaganda engine that occasionally,

occasionally hints at shifts in the power structure of the upper echelons.

The High Programmers have absolute control over Alpha Complex's media. They are The Computer's chosen servants and The Computer is both infallible and universally beloved, so how can there be an 'unpopular' High Programmer? Surely any reports of embarrassing failures or unpopular decisions would be squashed or changed to something more palatable?

That's true, up to a point. The official media only reports happy stories. According to official reports, every High Programmer is a super-loyal, super-happy caring genius who wants only the best for Alpha Complex. No High Programmer ever fails or makes a wrong decision. We live in the best of all possible Alpha Complexes and life here is better than ever. Thanks to the wise guidance of the High Programmers, we're happier, living longer, more productive and wealthier than ever before and while the Commie menace is still a tremendous threat, we can look forward to the triumph of The Computer within a short time! Cue inspiring music and advertisements for Bouncy Bubble Beverage. No, unpopularity manifests in more subtle ways.

Firstly, by the time a citizen hits GREEN Clearance or thereabouts, he gains access to higher Clearance media channels which are slightly less whitewashed. Oh, they still report on the High Programmers as if they were bronzed Olympian gods of enlightened management but there are now hints and clues about political shifts and changing power structures. So, Bob-U was standing second from the left in the group photo, not in the middle like he was last year? Obviously, this means that Bob-U is out of favour with The Computer.

Secondly, there's that whole pesky underground conspiracy network. If some Death Leopard goon puts FizzWizz in a High Programmer's showerhead, resulting in the High Programmer stumbling naked from the shower like some coconut-flavoured fuzzball, then that certainly won't get reported on the official news – but it'll be all over the Grey Subnets before the High Programmer finds a towel.

UThink

Every ULTRAVIOLET has a Personal Data Companion, a handy little handheld computer. Some even have neural lace brain implants, which do much the same thing but mean you've got to wave your hands around like a drunken conjurer to control the hallucinatory gesture-reading interface. Your PDC lets you do all the usual computer-related stuff – phone people, order take-out, read documents, call in an air-strike – but it also gives you access to the ULTRAVIOLET-only UThink network.

UThink is an augmented-reality overlay on all of Alpha Complex. Anything – a document, a piece of equipment, a location, an individual – can be tagged with comments that are visible only to ULTRAVIOLETS using UThink. The High Programmers may use UThink to comment on reports, discuss plans, but really, it's mostly used for tagging annoying underlings with amusing insults.

+++ UThink is lame, all the cool UVs are using HPChat these cycles.+++

High Society

ULTRAVIOLETS worry about other ULTRAVIOLETS. They're peers; they're allies and rivals and potential enemies. They're a bunch of eccentric, power-crazed paranoid lunatics but they're our bunch of eccentric, power-crazed paranoid lunatics.

The most efficient way to cultivate the support of other UVs is through cliques but sometimes you need the personal touch. High Programmers spend a lot of time spying on other High Programmers. Spies might turn up evidence of treachery but they're more likely to find out stuff like which flavour toothpaste the target uses or which FunBall team he supports. This can actually be vitally useful information. If High Programmer Cecil-U only uses GREENberry flavour toothpaste and you seize control of the means of production and hold his favourite toothpaste to



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

ransom, then you can force him to support you.

High Programmers are a lot more cultured, or at least more pretentious, than the average clone in the corridor. This pretence at high culture started way back in the early days of Alpha Complex and it is maintained because of tradition. You might not like going to the opera but it's expected that you show up; if you don't, then the other High Programmers will snub you as an uncultured slob. Hey, they're equally bored at the opera – gossiping about who didn't turn up is the only fun thing to do there. For opera, you may also read any of a wide range of cultural events – gallery soirees, benefit dinners for the Veterans of Accidental Nukings, or concerts where the Alpha Complex anthem is played by 16 instrumentBots and a mutant pianist with four hands.

Public engagements are also an important part of high society. The Computer likes it when ULTRAVIOLETS appear in public – it raises morale and makes citizens happier (Co-incidentally, it also reduces sabotage and bombings in neighbouring sectors, as all the Commie Mutant Traitors target the High Programmer instead). High Programmers compete to be the most impressive and inspiring figure at these public events, struggling to have sterner eyebrows or higher collars or whiter-than-everyone-else's robes. At one recent parade, tragedy struck when the superultramegawhite robes of High Programmer Ulrica-U blinded the approaching Mark IV Warbot with their sheer brightness. Fortunately, the ensuring smoke and arterial blood sprays soiled the shimmering robes sufficiently for emergency services to respond effectively.

Staff

It's not true to say that you can't get the staff these days.

You can.

It just takes a lot more firepower than it used to.

Any High Programmer who wants the respect of his fellow UVs and wants to get invited to all their UV games needs an entourage. The composition of this

Events & Tournaments

Mark your PDC calendars with these events! Anyone who's anyone will be there!

Monthcycle 1: Hunt-The-Commie Day. Prizes awarded for the most Commies found.

Monthcycle 2: Fallen (And Not Recloned) Heroes of Our Complex Remembrance Day. A sad, solemn occasion, marked by ceremonial executions and terrorist bombings.

Monthcycle 4: Troubleshooter Tournament! Pick your favourite bunch of unsuspecting REDs and send them through a series of killer deathtraps. If your guys survive, you win! Prizes awarded for funniest deaths.

Monthcycle 4: Teela-O-MLY Fan Club Day. Who gets to attend the highly exclusive Teela-O dinner?

Monthcycle 5: Progammerpalooza! All the High Programmers gather to discuss the direction of Computer programming in the next yearcycle.

Monthcycle 6: Alpha Complex scavenger hunt. This year's theme is '*I can't believe it's not lethal!*'

Monthcycle 7: The Computer's birthday! Don't forget to get it a present!

Monthcycle 9: InterSector FunBall League Final.

Monthcycle 10: Carrousel. Unlucky citizens with no clones remaining get to compete in a tournament for another six-pack. Hilarity ensues.

Monthcycle 12: Xtreme Mandatory Assorted Commercial Item Exchange Festival.

entourage varies depending on current fashions and trends; one weekcycle, it's the quality of your personal chef that counts but next week, all anyone cares about is your head of security. High Programmers employ personal assistants, fashion consultants, speechwriters, spin doctors, smile specialists, hairstylists, ninjas, fungineers, interior decorators, clone template therapists, mutie sniffers, food tasters, boot breakers, dog walkers, personal Bouncy Bubble Beverage taste checkers, tarot card readers, chauffeurs, harem chemeunuchs, organ donors... and the best ones are in high demand.

The only way to get the staff you want is to take them away from their current employers. Pick your method – bribes, kidnapping, stealth extractions, the ol' kill-em-and-grab-the-clone routine, swapsies, or thermonuclear war.

If you think a personal Bouncy Bubble Beverage taste checker isn't worth starting a nuclear war over, you're not thinking like a High Programmer. Please over-inflate your ego and try again.

Cliques

Cliques are small clubs or associations of High Programmers, ostensibly dedicated to a particular purpose. Most of the time, the purpose of a clique is really to

exclude other people and plot revenge against their enemies but some cliques do almost manage to accomplish something. Getting membership of the right clique is an overriding goal for many ULTRAVIOLETS. Only an existing member of a clique can sponsor someone for membership.

Getting membership of the *wrong* clique can be lethal. High-level purges tend to be on a clique-by-clique basis. Guilt by association is still guilt.

👁 **Reform Party:** '*Alpha Complex can be made better! Let's talk about how we might do this, without actually doing anything about it.*' The Reform Party is the oldest existent clique in Alpha Complex and claims to be a sort of 'loyal opposition' for The Computer. As such, it attracts ambitious youngsters who conspire to overthrow the entrenched ruling alliances and take over, at which point they drift away from the Reform Party and spend their time plotting against the next cycle of ambitious youngsters and so on and so forth, so it was in the beginning and ever shall be, revolution without end. Oh, unless everyone in the Reform Party is executed for being Humanist spies, as happens surprisingly regularly.

26. WHAT UVs WORRY ABOUT

Pets and Petbots

One of the earliest hygiene directives banned all non-human life from Alpha Complex. No pets are allowed (see the list of exceptions that follow). However, the Computer has determined citizens are happier and more productive when they have a pet. R&D therefore developed the mechanical petbot – sort of a cross between a poodle and a spider monkey. Its primary function is to keep citizen's company by extruding a super-glue from its 'feet' and attaching itself – seemingly permanently – to the shoulder of its 'owner.' From this perch it spouts a ceaseless string of nonsense phrases ('Polly want a lube job! The Computer is Your Friend!'). The petbot can answer direct questions but it has the processing capacity of a digital watch.

There are four exceptions to this directive:

- ☞ Experimental lab mice may be retained by R&D for biological testing.
- ☞ Power Services is permitted to keep a breeding pair of mules for emergency transportation.
- ☞ CPU Shredder Goats.
- ☞ VIOLET Clearance pets.

The same cloning technology used to preserve human citizens may be applied to cherished pets. Suggestions that this leads to psychic mutant cats running around Alpha Complex are, say it with me, treason.

To join the Reform Party, a prospective member must somehow further the reformist agenda of an existing member.

- ☞ **Gatzmann Society:** The Gatzmann Society was founded to sort through the cryptic reaches of the Gatzmann archives and to add to the catalogues of Old Reckoning data and lore. These days, it's pretty much a swap meet for antique collectors and closet Romantics.

To join the Gatzmann Society, a prospective member must bring a previously unknown Old Reckoning relic and donate it to the society's collection.

- ☞ **Tillinghast's:** A gentleclone's club, Tillinghast's is easily the most exclusive of the cliques. To step into the hallowed, oak-panelled walls of Tillinghast's is to step back to a more cultured, refined era, when objectionable people were kept out of sight and you could trust a chap not to shoot you in the back while you were distracted lighting your cigar. Tillinghast demands extremely high standards of behaviour and dress from all members; using the wrong fork, wearing inappropriate robes or using a cone rifle to assassinate a rival will all get you blackballed from the club.

Collectively, the Tillinghast membership list is easily the most powerful collection of High Programmers in Alpha Complex. With their support, an ambitious ULTRAVIOLET could accomplish anything... if he could wake them up. Most of the Tillinghast members are, shall we say, a little bit past their prime.

Only the most influential and respected High Programmers ever get invited to join Tillinghast's. To even be considered for membership, a High Programmer must have at least 100 Access.

- ☞ **The Clones Club:** Another members-only club, the Clones Club is the polar opposite of Tillinghast's. Superficially, the two cliques are similar – palatial mansions where hosts of servants see to your every imaginable need – but where Tillinghast's emphasises civility, good breeding and quiet intrigue, the *raison d'être* of the Clones Club is to do all those stupid things you always wanted to do but never had the Clearance. Drive a warbot down a corridor the wrong way? Randomly repaint corridors VIOLET so some poor RED starves

to death? Dress up in fur coats with little furry hats and pretend to be Commies? Get riotously drunk and tell The Computer exactly what you think of it? At the Clones Club, you'll find plenty of upper-class twits eager to egg you on to these and other equally boorish feats.

There are similarities between the Clones Club and the Death Leopard Secret Society. There's also one key difference – Death Leopards get shot by Internal Security, whereas Clones Clubbers get to order IntSec to drive them home. They then get sick all over the back of the SecuriCar.

It's easy enough to get into the Clones Club. You just need to impress the members.

- ☞ **Epicureans:** Fine food and lots of it. A clique for jaded gourmets. Most members need truckbots or anti-gravity suspensors to get around. The Epicureans have eaten their way through every foodstuff produced in Alpha Complex and most of the Old Reckoning tinned food, so they've moved onto trying bizarre genetically engineered monstrosities and sending hunting parties Outdoors.
- ☞ **Pro Tech:** The Pro Tech clique has nothing whatsoever to do with the Pro Tech Secret Society. The clique is a wholly legal and perfectly above-board group dedicated to peaceful scientific research that never, ever involves doomsday devices. By contrast, the Secret Society is a treasonous organisation of mad scientist who are no doubt plotting to bring about the end of Life as We Know It. There is no connection between these two groups. The Pro Tech clique is not a front for the Pro Tech society. High Programmers never use Pro Tech conspirators as unwitting test subjects for their experiments.
- ☞ **Powergolf League:** Fore! Boom!



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

The Gatzmann Archive

Few High Programmers today are old enough to remember the first decades of Alpha Complex. Back then, even after the Initial Clone Rollout, most citizens were so-called pure strain humans, or 'strainers' – survivors of the Old Reckoning period.

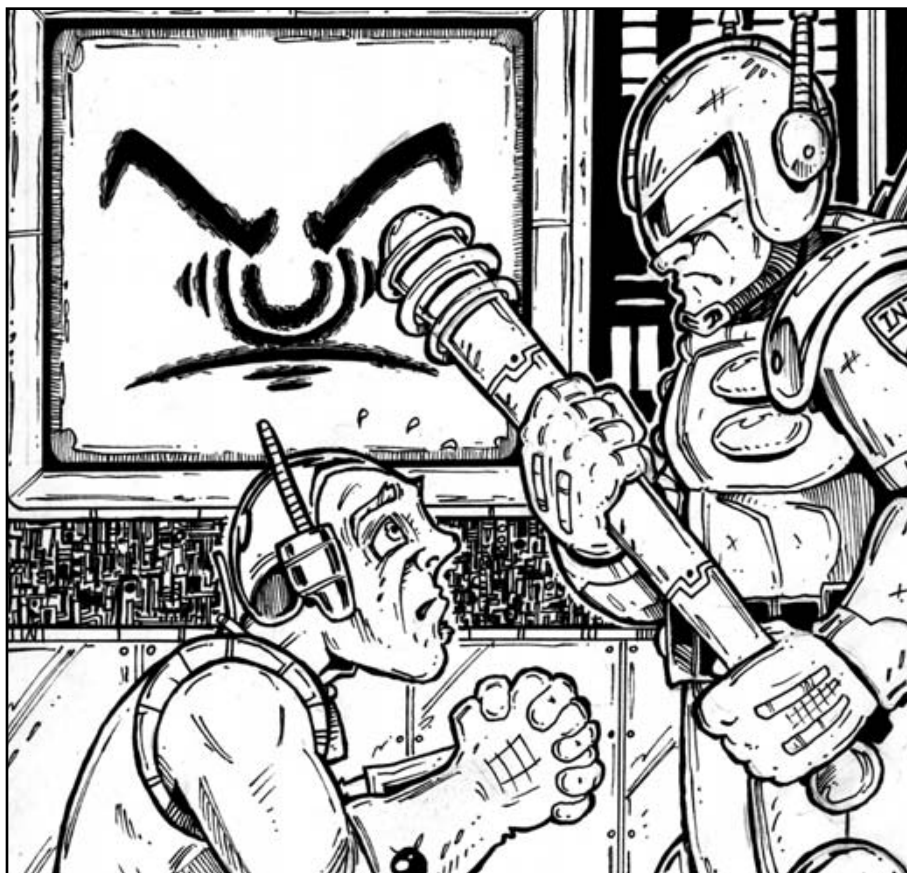
Among the foremost strainers was William Gatzmann, a brilliant eccentric. Gatzmann's contributions to the original jackobot brain prototype and his work on The Computer's early node packet distribution system, established him among the ranks of the first High Programmers. Even centuries later, some of Gatzmann's code survives throughout Alpha Complex as legacy software.

As a strainer, Gatzmann-U lacked the genetic advantages R&D has incorporated into modern clone lines. His advancing age induced a neuro-cascade failure common in Old Reckoning times, 'senility.' His later productivity plummeted and he devoted more and more of his time to his hobby: systematically archiving all remaining objects and data, both factual and fictional, from the Old Reckoning period. His constant shuffling of files and construction of bizarre storage containers makes it all but impossible now to distinguish fact from fiction.

Gatzmann's accelerating decline led to his demotion to BLUE Clearance (the rumour that this resulted solely from a CPU filing error is probably exaggerated, although one never can tell with CPU). Gatzmann-B's knowledge of secrets above BLUE violated Alpha Complex law. Vulture Squadrons stormed Gatzmann's BLUE barracks. Every BLUE citizen in the barracks died that day and all their clone lines were purged from the GeneScan Image records. Such is the price of vigilance.

Today, much knowledge of the Old Reckoning period derives solely from the Gatzmann Archive. The Archive holds books about great leaders of historic times, 1950s educational filmstrips about Commie Mutant Traitors and their malevolent schemes and such treasures as the writings of Orwell and Machiavelli, whose instructions on building a utopia helped make Alpha Complex what it is today. In addition to audio, video and

Trooper Bert-B gets to live out the secret dream of every citizen



text records, the Gatzmann Archives also contains a GeneScan image repository, astronomical and meteorological data and a vast array of physical artefacts from the Old Reckoning era. To this day, R&D still draws heavily on the Archives for inspiration.

What bothers researchers is that much of the Archive is highly inaccurate. What bothers those who would rather just shelve the data and ignore it is that much of it is not inaccurate. Determining which is which can be a scholar's nightmare, given that the Archive is the sole source of information on fully 63.7% of the material therein.

Of course, all contents of the Archive are highly classified. But many of Gatzmann's disciples, believing everyone should have access to the Archives, formed a distribution network for illicit copies of portions of the Archives. This network later became one important locus of the Romantics.

ULTRAVIOLETs cannot ignore the Archive, for fear that somewhere in its arcane file system lies the secret blueprint for a long-lost WMD or a rare mycotoxin or a lost ballad by Patsy Cline. Even if his own interests lie elsewhere, it behoves the cautious UV to keep poring through the Archive, if only to beat his rivals to the next great disinterment.

Any High Programmer may file with Central Processing to requisition a copy of the entire Archive. CPU can typically deliver the cumbersome storage units, along with the necessary decryption keys, within three days – always assuming Power Services can commandeer sufficient transbots from non-vital functions. (Note: This may lead to temporary suspension of transportation for citizens of YELLOW and lower Clearances in the requesting UV's sector.)

Firing Squads

Because sooner or later, The Computer orders everyone to the termination booth in the end.

27. FAMOUS HIGH PROGRAMMERS

27. Famous High Programmers

Citizen! The Computer has graciously released the following information for your edification and education. Learn from the example of these Heroes of Our Complex as you take on the solemn and all-important duty of guiding Alpha Complex into our next scheduled golden age!

Citizen Gelber-Prime

According to High Programmer tradition, Gelber-Prime was the original High Programmer. There are no official records of his existence but his name occurs in the comments in some of the oldest source files. He is primarily remembered for the 'Gelber Open Issue List', a comprehensive list of bugs in The Computer's core personality routine. The Gelber List was lost long ago but it is an article of faith for certain devoted Programmers that one daycycle, every bug in that list will be marked 'fixed' or 'working as intended' and on that daycycle, Gelber-Prime will return to submit the Final Patch.

Bug lists purported to be the original Gelber List crop up regularly. Most are transparent attempts at deception but maybe you will be the High Programmer who discovers the real list and completes the Great Work of Gelber-Prime!

Adam-U-NCH

Original Service Group: Central Processing Unit

Current Status: DECEASED

Notable Successes: Being the first citizen to play on The Computer's mounting paranoia for his own profit.

Don't Ask About: His attempts to prolong his life through cloning – *that* technology wasn't perfected for another 20 yearcycles.

The founder of Alpha Complex as we know it*, Adam-U-NCH was the first High Programmer to support The Computer when the first Commie attack was detected. Other (treasonous) programmers argued that it was better to 'wait for confirmation' or 'not jump to conclusions' but Adam-U leapt to the aid of The Computer. He heroically disabled the safety interlocks,

giving The Computer full control of Alpha Complex's weapon systems and ensuring that these treasonous programmers were eliminated.

During his tenure as High Programmer, Adam-U instated the Efficiency is Fun mandate and wrote the original operating protocols for the eight Service Groups. These fabled three-ring binders are preserved in invulnerable Perspecatium, so that the organisational genius of Adam-U will outlast the sun.

Stella-U-DNT

Original Service Group: Internal Security

Current Status: HEAVILY MEDICATED

Notable Successes: Terminating all 16,355 members of the Left Foot First Conspiracy.

Don't Ask About: Anything. She'll assume you're fishing for information and have you terminated.

If Stella-U isn't the head of Internal Security, she certainly knows who it is (and she ain't telling). No-one in Alpha Complex knows more about what's really going on than Stella-U. She's got agents everywhere and is one step ahead of everyone. Rumours that she is a precognitive mutant are treason. Rumours that she's on ultra-high doses of experimental anti-psychotics in a last-ditch attempt to stop her terminating everyone for treason are, however, entirely accurate.

Bob-U-KNO

Original Service Group: HPD&MC

Current Status: ACTIVE

Everyone in Alpha Complex knows Bob-U-KNO, the Friendly High Programmer. He shows up on kids TV shows all the time, granting wishes and helping out Junior Citizens. Once a year, he even pops into a random INFRARED barracks to hand out candy bars and drugs. If The Computer is Your Friend, then Bob-U-KNO is your special buddy, your big clone-brother who always looks out for you.

The original Bob-U-KNO was assassinated years ago but the other High Programmers found that having a friendly, ultra-popular, acceptable face of the regime was handy. Therefore, a succession of low Clearance clones have portrayed Bob-U-KNO in TV shows and public events. These stand-ins are kept heavily medicated between appearances, to ensure they don't wander off and do something silly, like telling The Computer they're not actually Bob-U or selling Alpha Complex to the Commies.

Maurice-U-GNP

Original Service Group: Central Processing Unit

Current Status: UNKNOWN

The legendary bureaucrat Maurice-U is largely responsible for CPU as it exists today. Rising through the ranks of that group in his relentless quest for Total Information, it was Maurice who created the original Form Request Form and began CPU's cycle of detailed observations of other Service Groups, for their own protection and benefit.

The Computer, pleased with his work, asked him in AC 197 just where he got all his ideas from. Maurice immediately launched an intensive, paperwork-heavy, multi-year investigation into himself. He was last seen alive in AC 201, presenting a 3,000 page interim precursor milestone abstract report, which he immediately recalled for editing.

Some say, with frankly unpatriotic relish, that he may have suffocated under a mountain of foolscap; others that he must have succumbed to a nasty case of recursion. A few of his loyal fans in CPU (and some Mystics, interestingly) believe he will one day return to them in a blaze of glory, having Achieved Total Oneness and Knowing His Inner Self In Triplicate.

Peter-U-ENM

Original Service Group: HPD&MC

Current Status: ACTIVE

The youngest clone to attain ULTRAVIOLET status in many years, Peter-U's rise is all the

*: According to currently approved histories. Please check back regularly for future updates of past events.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

more astonishing given that he worked in the lowly Service Group HPD&MC. With each promotion, he sought to create the vidshows and live performances that his fellow citizens really wanted to see, generally involving the comforting humiliation of lower Clearance citizens.

The masterwork that propelled him to the ranks of the High Programmers was the notorious production *You Pull The Strings*. Breaking the boundaries of traditional vidshow production, the then Peter-V offered the discerning High Programmer the ultimate in personalised reality TV. A target of the High Programmer's choice would be tricked into signing the relevant release forms, then have their room bugged, their machinery hacked, extra cameras installed and even traps set in their quarters. Watching on a secure channel with two-way data transfer, the viewer was free to ruthlessly manipulate the life of the unfortunate

'actor' through a series of verbal, visual and physical pranks and cantrips.

Peter was elevated to the ranks of the High Programmers by universal ULTRAVIOLET acclaim. They reasoned it was wise to keep such an inventively malicious clone on their side.

Lottie-U-WCD-3

Original Service Group: HPD&MC

Current Status: ACTIVE

Lottie is not, in the classical sense, famous. She has blazed no trail of glory and gunfire, invented no ubiquitous gadget and performed no valiant act of paperwork. But she is known and admired far and wide; and in the ever-processing, data-crunching heart of CPU Central, the very lack of data regarding her stands out: seemingly, she has never fired a shot in anger.

Starting her career in PLC, she was seconded to the Troubleshooters as an ORANGE Clearance Mission Dispatch operative after her friendly counter service unnerved her superiors. Since then she has gently and unobtrusively risen to high Clearance, all apparently through genuine friendliness and service to Computer and Complex. Now rather elderly but still sprightly, she even manages to keep her fellow ULTRAVIOLETS in line through the sheer force of her ebullient personality.

Hardened generals and fearless retired IntSec investigators are rendered stuttering and mumbling when she invites them round for tea and cakes, or to look at photographs of her back in the 140s. If any High Programmer does summon the force of will to threaten her, they instantly make an enemy of every other High Programmer for sectors around, who have become rather protective of her. The consequences of such an action are left as an exercise for the survivors.

28. Mission Schema

Every High Programmer mission follows this template. Well, almost every mission. Apart from the ones that don't.

1. Mission Alert

The High Programmers are summoned by The Computer or another functionary. Prompt attention to the mission is mandatory. Traditionally, the mission alert is drenched in propaganda and appeals to patriotism, while bearing little resemblance to either the actual crisis or to reality.

2. Rumour Control

The High Programmers receive rumours from their Program Groups. These rumours include stuff that the Secret Societies want. If a PC fulfils a Secret Society's desire, his agent in that society gets boosted up the ranks. The higher your agent's rank in the society, the more the SecSoc will do for you.

Also use this time to alert the players to other useful rumours, often related to High Programmer society. Say old Helmut-U is throwing a party and he's a collector of Old Reckoning stuff. If someone can get hold of the recently uncovered copy of *Weekend at Bernies*, then they can curry favour with Helmut-U. Rumour control is also an opportunity to throw in wild rumours, outright lies and crazed speculations.

3. Directives

The Head of each Service Group is alerted to any Directives issued by that group. If he completes the Directive, his standing in that group will rise. Fail and he loses standing. Directives can be delegated to the next High Programmer in line.

If a High Programmer has no Service Group at this point, then he must be assigned a group to manage during the crisis. Failure to properly delegate is treason.

4. Briefing

The High Programmers are briefed on the crisis that needs their attention. Sometimes, the crisis may involve multiple interlocking crises. This briefing is usually carried out by The Computer but circumstances may require that another High Programmer or an expert give part of the briefing.

5. The Situation Room

The High Programmers assemble in the Situation Room and discuss the briefing. Refreshments will be provided. In the event of a major crisis such as a multi-reactor meltdown, Communist invasion or reality excursion, the Situation Room will lock down to protect its inhabitants. In such an event, refreshments and extraneous personnel will provide adequate sustenance for at least 48 hours.

6. Decide on Course of Action

The High Programmers decide on the optimum course of action.

Should they fail to decide quickly, The Computer will chastise them. Should they fail to decide correctly, The Computer will chastise them. Isn't The Computer wonderful?

7. Activate Minions

The High Programmers pay Access to obtain Minions from the various Service Groups. The Head of a Service Group may veto the purchase of a Minion, or change the cost of a Minion.

8. Implement Action

Those attempting to solve the crisis by making skill checks, modified by the Minions they're using.

9. Results!

The results of the chosen course of action are determined. If the crisis isn't resolved, it's back to step 6.

10. Drinks at the Clubs

After-work High Programmers schmoozing and plotting. Possibly return to 1.

11. Post-Mortem

At this point, High Programmers may increase their stakes in the various Service Groups or spend Access on other things.

29. DISASTER MANAGEMENT

29. Disaster Management

To lose a sector to one sudden catastrophe smacks of carelessness. To suffer two sudden catastrophes in the same afternoon is a misfortune. To get hit by six entirely unrelated catastrophes at once is par for the course if you're a Player Character.

Mission Overview

The High Programmers are called in to man a fast-response Situation Room in FMA Sector. If anything goes wrong, they're to put it right immediately. The problem is that *everything* is about to go wrong. There are six crises that hit the characters in quick succession and each of these crises gets worse before it gets better.

There's a big pile of Crisis Update handouts. These are brief yet surprisingly irritating communications from underlings describing the current state of the sector as each crisis develops. Throw them at the players whenever there's a lull in the action. The trick to running this game is to keep the pressure up. As soon as they think they've dealt with one disaster, another two catastrophes fall on their heads.

Before running the game, you should photocopy the Crisis Update handouts. You may also want to read the mission but that's pretty optional. Really, this mission boils down to yelling 'something just went boom' at the players every five minutes.

The Disasters

1. **Reactor Crisis:** One of FMA sector's new nuclear reactors starts to melt down. What's actually going on is that the reactor never worked in the first place and the crew have faked a meltdown in order to get the technicians and funding needed to get the reactor up and running. As soon as the characters actually help get the reactor running, it starts melting down for real.
2. **Food Vat Overspill:** A spill from a food vat eats through the floor of FMA Sector into the Underplex. Mutant cockroaches attack. It turns out that the 'mutant cockroaches' are actually just citizens covered in

Ground Zero: Incineration. A nice tan: Priceless. That's disaster management.



food vat gunk – which turns out to be a psychoactive slime that turns people into crazed cannibals.

3. **The Upload Cult:** A heavily armed branch of the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer has gotten hold of what it thinks is a super-advanced bot brain. They've also got an experimental 'brain-buster' bomb. They plan to upload themselves into the bot brain, then set off the

neuroelectric bomb, killing everyone else in the sector and thus bringing about nirvana.

4. **The Renegade Bot Brain:** The bot brain stolen by the First Church of Christ crazies is a highly experimental bot brain, designed to remotely control multiple bot bodies. Through a series of unlikely events, the brain was swapped with a scrubbot brain. The cult are going to try to upload



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

themselves into the scrubbot brain (which is pretty much the same as trying to cram the entirety of your memory and personality into a toaster). Meanwhile, the renegade brain is using its remote-control ability to escape FMA Sector.

- 5. Plus Or Minus One:** A spreadsheet error has reversed the happiness index in FMA Sector. Now, the happier the people get, the lower the overall happiness index is reported as. Since the characters are judged based on the happiness index, this quickly escalated into a crisis.
- 6. The Inspection:** A senior High Programmer is visiting FMA Sector this daycycle. Kindly old Cecil-U-GUD is key to the characters' ambitious, so they must show him an efficient, well-run, happy and crisis-free sector.

Each disaster has four steps of escalation and there's a Crisis Update associated with each one. The Crisis Updates are numbered in various ways but the only important bit is the last two digits – the second-last digit is the number of the crisis from 1 to 6 and the last digit is the escalation level. There's no way to stop the initial escalations but the characters may be able to find out enough to stop the various crises reaching their final catastrophic stages. They could do that but they probably won't – it is the nature of Player Characters to take the obvious way out in every situation, especially if that obvious way out leads to even bigger problems later on.

You should alternate between the disasters, giving the PCs a Crisis Update from one crisis, then another, then another.

Directives & Secret Society Missions

Each Service Group has its own Directive. If a High Programmer completes the Directive, his stake in the matching Service Group is increased by +10; if he fails, it's reduced by -10.

Armed Forces: Our brand new warbots are passing through FMA Sector. Make

The Bot Brain McGuffin

The experimental Multitouch 4722 Bot Brain ('*touches your bots in multiple spots*') is key to three of the ongoing disasters. The brain was stolen from R&D labs by a Secret Society and – ideally – entrusted to one of the Player Characters to protect. The thieves worked together with the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer to steal the brain; they then double-crossed the cultists by swapping the genuine brain for a scrubbot brain.

The society who stole it is either Pro Tech ('*it's cool technology, we want it*'), Corpore Metal ('*free the bot brains*') or Free Enterprise ('*it's cool technology, we can sell it*'). Every other society is after the brain – especially the Frankenstein Destroyers. They've sent their best agent after it – High Programmer Cecil-U-GUD.

sure they're not inconvenienced in any way. Impress the people with our military might and show 'em who's in charge. In fact, if you can deploy those warbots on some easy mission that looks cool, that would be great.

CPU: *We're using a new happiness metric in FMA Sector. We need you to maintain happiness at an acceptable level. Do nothing that would reduce happiness in the sector.*

HPD&MC: *FMA Sector is overcrowded. Ensure that no housing subcomplexes are damaged during the mission. If you can reduce overcrowding by building new housing subcomplexes or by other means over the course of the mission, do so.*

Internal Security: *We suspect one of the High Programmers to be behind the theft of an experimental bot brain from R&D. Identify this traitor. Provide proof. Show your work.*

R&D: *An experimental bot brain was stolen from our labs this morningcycle! Recover it at all costs! Don't let Tech Services get their grubby hands on it.*

PLC: *There's a food shortage in FMA Sector, which is driving up food prices – and that's really good for our bottom*

line. Keep this state of affairs going but don't go too far. Hungry customers good, cannibal gangs bad.

Power Services: *Get the new reactor online as soon as possible. Cover up any problems with the reactor – make sure people trust Power Services. We are not at home to Mr. Cock-Up or to Mr. Meltdown.*

Tech Services: *R&D are experimenting with a bot brain that can remotely control multiple bot bodies – and that means less work for our technicians. Discredit this damaging project immediately. Find the prototype brain and destroy it.*

Secret Society Missions

If one of the High Programmers has an Agent in either **Pro Tech, Corpore Metal or Free Enterprise**, give them the following mission: '*we've stolen an experimental bot brain!. It's in this bag. Keep it safe! Don't let anyone find it, especially not those guys in FCCC-P.*'

Only give this mission – and the bag – to one of the High Programmers. The transfer is made just as the High Programmer is called to the Situation Room, so there's no time to dump the bag on someone else or get rid of the brain. He's got no choice other than to carry it into the most secure location in all of Alpha Complex.

Any other High Programmers with appropriate Agents get different missions.

C.L.A: *The Armed Forces is planning to crack down on a bunch of clones in Housing Subcomplex 60 – no doubt because the damn Commies have infiltrated the government. Help those patriots in Subcomplex 60!*

Computer Phreaks: *R&D have developed a new bot brain with some sort of fancy remote-control ability. We want it. Get it for us.*

Corpore Metal: *R&D has developed a new bot brain but it's been stolen. Liberate our bot friend from its captors and make sure it joins Corpore Metal.*

First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer: *The poor misguided fools in Subcomplex 60 are members of our church, led astray by the traitorous Jim-B. Eliminate*

29. DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Jim-B without harming his followers, who will no doubt return to the true faith once this false prophet has been eliminated!

Frankenstein Destroyers: *R&D have created an even more abominable form of bot brain. According to our spies, it was stolen from their labs this morning! This is our chance – one of our best agents is scouring the sector for this device. Give him all the help you can. If he needs your aid, he will contact you using the codename 'Ludd'.* **(GM:** If Cecil-U suspects that this Player Character can be of use to him, he'll contact the Situation Room using this codename.)

Free Enterprise: *We've heard talk about a new bot brain prototype. Find it, steal it and sell it to the highest bidder.*

Mystics: *Hey, we've spiked the food vats with mind-altering... stuff. Can't remember what it was. I wish I hadn't licked my fingers. Anyway, if anything weird happens... it's cool, right? Just keep people from bugging out and make sure no-one traces our tampering back to us. Dude.*

Pro Tech: *Our friends in R&D have developed a new form of bot brain but it's been stolen! Find the bot brain and keep it safe.*

PURGE: *A Weapon of Mass Destruction – a brain buster neural bomb – was stolen from us. Find it. Recover the weapon intact. Punish those responsible.*

Romantics: *Our ancestors ate far more nutritious and pleasing food and we must bring the culinary wonders of the past back to Alpha Complex. Our spies have infiltrated one of the food vats in FMA Sector and are going to reprogram it to produce food according to an ancient recipe. Protect them from discovery.*

Sierra Club/Runners: *We're constructing a tunnel to the Outdoors underneath the FMA Sector Food Vats. Make sure it isn't discovered.*

If a society isn't mentioned here, then either don't issue a mission from that society, or just use a generic 'do something useful for us' or 'screw over our rivals' mission.

Rumours of Cecil-U

While most High Programmers know that Cecil-U is a senile old coot, he's still got a lot of influence. Impressing Cecil-U can open doors (or at least, disarm the lethal security systems on those doors), especially into the Tillinghast Club... so, what impresses Cecil-U?

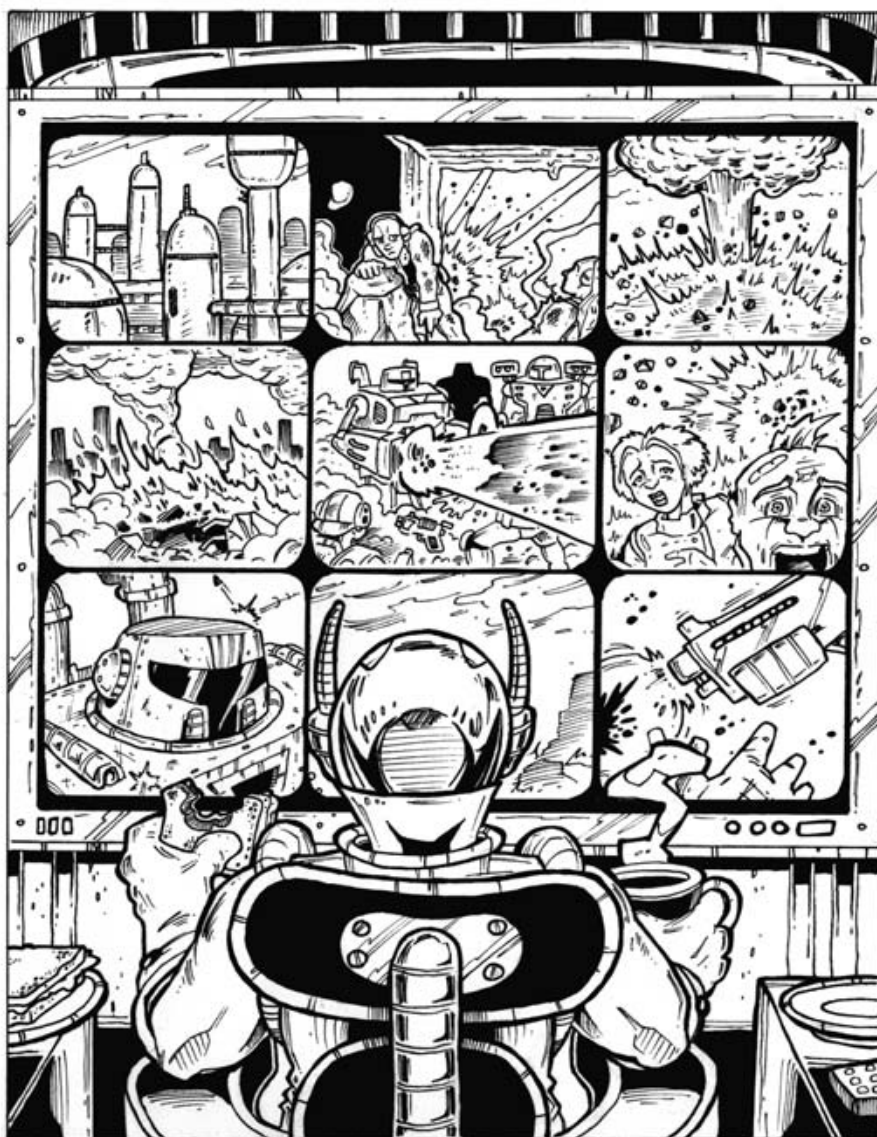
Certainly, a clean, efficient, happy, radiation-and-hideous-monster-free sector will earn brownie points in Cecil-U's book. He's also rumoured to be old-fashioned when it comes to bots, preferring human servants and the personal touch.

Access

The Access Pool starts at a mighty **30 Access**.

0. Briefing Time

You're distracted from your busy jacuzzi schedule or your sexatarium session or your banquet of lightly roasted wild boar in apple sauce by the annoying buzz-buzz-buzz of a mission alert. As you always do, you reach over and press the snooze button on The Computer but five minutes later, the buzzing starts up again. It must be a real crisis.



'What could possibly go wrong? Well, I could drop my sandwich.'



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

The Computer: Attention, Trusted Citizen. You are requested to report to the FMA Sector Situation Room as soon as possible. Further details will be provided as soon as they are available.

Let the characters run around picking up Service Group Directives and Secret Society missions for a while, then herd them along to the Situation Room.

The FMA Situation Room smells of burnt wiring, stale coffee and cold sweat. You settle into the ultraleather chairs around the big white table. At the periphery of the room, commtechs switch on monitors while your respective bodyguards and flunkies settle in for a long nightcycle.

The Computer display in the centre of the table flickers into life. 'Thank you for your prompt attention, citizens. Everything is currently fine. Do not panic. In the event of emergency, a crisis update will be printed by the Crisis Update Printer attached to this terminal. Unless such an extremely unlikely event occurs, you are welcome to enjoy the complementary tea and coffee making facilities. Thank you.'

Wait a few minutes, then start dropping crises on the characters until they hide beneath the table.

1. The Reactor Crisis

Reactor #43 is due to go on-line today for the first time, providing oodles (technical term) of fresh electricity for FMA Sector. The reactor project was plagued by cost overruns and delays but now everything's working just fine...

...at least, that's what Reactor Supervisor Janine-I claims. The truth is that the whole Reactor #43 project is an absolute boondoggle. Corners were cut in design ('we'll put the control rods here, the cooling tower here... ah, this is too complicated. Let's just draw a big box marked 'reactor' and ship it'), construction ('who needs concrete when you've got aerofoam? Half the strength but 10 times the volume!') and safety checks ('you are receiving an adequate level of radiation for your Security Clearance, citizen'). Janine-I

assumed that she'd be promoted or transferred long before the reactor actually went on-line.

Now, the reactor's about to be opened by High Programmer Cecil-U-GUD, forcing Janine-I to answer the question, 'how to you generate 1.21 gigawatts from a pile of crap?'

Reactor Escalation #1

The answer is 'fake a meltdown'. By submitting a request for help dealing with the meltdown, Janine-I hopes that the Situation Room will send her lots of highly skilled nuclear technicians, competent RepairBots and spare parts.

Any minion with **Nuclear Engineering** is ideal; **Construction**, **Habitat Engineering** or even **Weird Science** works too.

Assessment or **Interrogation** reveals the truth about the reactor system but that really doesn't help the characters that much – they may know now that the reactor's useless but they still need to get it working. It just means that Janine-I won't lie to them any more.

Note that if the characters do not give the reactor anything, then it cannot escalate but the reactor crew keep sending out the same 'we're about to melt down' message until the characters send them the resources they want. **Infiltration** uncovers this scam.

Reactor Escalation #2

Well, seeing as the reactor meltdown was stopped, the FMA electricity grid was switched over to using supplies from the reactor. Now, the reactor's actually melting down and they've got sector-wide brownouts. The characters can either choose to steal power from neighbouring sectors or work out a way to cope with the brownouts.

Stealing power involves **Habitat Engineering**, **Nuclear Engineering**, **Sabotage** or something equally sneaky to do it covertly, or they can use **Paperwork**, **Hacking** or **Financial Systems** to cook the books. If they want to do things above board, they'll need to contact Power Services in FMB Sector,

who'll be only too happy to comply – for a mere 20 Access, the characters can have all the power they need.

Reactor Escalation #3

If the reactor team was sent the resources they need, then they actually use them to get the reactor running – and it immediately begins to melt down. They need more reactor shielding, stat!

Reactor shielding is easy – anything will do. **Construction** is the obvious choice but the characters can also use **Crowd Control** to redirect low-value citizens to the reactor. It might also be a good idea to turn off the reactor, ideally with **Nuclear Engineering**. If they do that successfully, the crisis won't escalate.

Reactor Escalation #4

Yep, that's a reactor meltdown all right. The characters have a choice of finding something to bury the reactor in (**Construction** or **Demolition**), or they could evacuate the area (**Transport** or **Crowd Control**).

If the reactor does give everyone in the sector a really warm, enthusiastic, radioactive hug, then the High Programmers need to deal with the public relations fallout*. The Computer wants people to trust atomic power: it's the backbone of Alpha Complex. They'll need to use **Thought Control** or something to keep people believing that giant poorly shielded nuclear reactors are a good idea.

Fun With Food Vats

VitaYumYum Food Vats Incorporated produces delicious... or, at least, semi-edible food for most of FMA Sector. Their signature product is the famous VitaYum ChocoLike bar, a gooey slab of chemical sweeteners that looks like a sugared turd and tastes as good as it looks!

Three factors combine to make this crisis. Firstly, there are the food vats themselves – aged, creaky and overstressed. Secondly, two Secret Societies (Sierra Club and the Runners) are constructing a tunnel under the food

*: They should also consider dealing with the actual fallout.

29. DISASTER MANAGEMENT

vats, weakening the factory's structure. Thirdly, two other Secret Societies (Romantics and Mystics) just dumped weird chemicals into the vats for their own inscrutable reasons. Too many cooks spoil the food vat, you know...

Food Vat Escalation #1

The food vats at VitaYumYum are reporting that due to increased production, they are having distribution problems, so that there technically isn't enough food in FMA Sector to feed everyone. Well, there's more than enough food – too much food in fact – but because of the production snafus, it won't be processed fast enough to feed the citizens.

The characters need to decide how to allocate the remaining food (**Logistics** or **Catering** and possibly some **Crowd Control** if rioting starts), or purchase more food (20 Access). They could also try reducing demand (**Thought Control** or **Subliminal Messaging**), making their own food (**Chemical Engineering** or **Catering**) or sorting out the production logjam (**Production** or **Co-Ordination**).

Food Vat Escalation #2

A small accident just happened. Overspill from the food vats eats through the floor, which was already weakened by the Sierra Club tunnel underneath. The unprocessed food vat goo floods into the tunnels below...

According to the reports coming from the Food Vats, a horde of Giant Mutant Cockroaches is now attacking. This is untrue. What's actually happening is that the Sierra Clubbers and Runners who were in the tunnel below are emerging from the deep, covered in sticky food goo and some trigger-happy citizen has mistaken them for Giant Mutant Cockroaches.

This mistake is actually a forgivable one, as the combination of the Romantic attempt to make the food vats produce beef stroganoff instead of VitaYum ChocoLike and the Mystic addition of psychoactive chemicals has turned the food vat goo into an immensely powerful hallucinogen. Anyone exposed to the Food Vat goo quickly devolves into a crazed cannibal frenzy.

Anyway, the Food Vats need someone to shore up the floor to prevent further collapse (**Construction** or **Habitat Engineering**) and they also want lots and lots of guns to stop the 'mutant cockroaches'. **Assault** or **Defence** or even **Total War** will do.

Finding out the truth about the attackers requires **Investigation** or **Surveillance**. Analysis of the slime requires **Bioscience** or **Mutant Studies**; coming up with a cure needs **Pharmatherapy**.

Food Vat Escalation #3

The main revelation here is that any non-bot Minions the High Programmers sent to save the Food Vats are now slaving cannibals. Let's hope the characters didn't send anyone too important down there!

Again, the characters need to first analyse the slime and then synthesise a cure. The longer they stall on this, the more the cannibal contagion spreads.

Food Vat Escalation #4

Slime zombies are everywhere. Sector overrun. Horrible, horrible things happen.

The Upload Cult

'Clonesibs! The hourcycle is at hand! Blessed by The divine Computer, our spiritual warriors have obtained the tools of our transcendence! Alpha Complex shall be purged of evil, leaving only the faithful to carry on the glorious Operational Mandates of God!'

It's always the way. You start one religion and then 16 splinter factions all come along at once. Jim-B-JNS is the leader of a crazy little FCCC-P subcult that believes Alpha Complex must be purged of all evil. Their plan is to use a brainbuster bomb to kill everyone in FMA (microwave is to egg as brainbuster is to human cranium). The brainbuster even fries the mind backup circuits used by the cloning system. It's *really* nasty.

The cult plan on preserving themselves by uploading all their minds to a hardened bot brain. The only bot brain with enough capacity to store the mindstates of all the cultists is the experimental Multitouch 4722, so the cult stole it from R&D. Their

co-conspirator (Pro Tech, Corpore Metal or Free Enterprise depending on your players) swapped the real brain for a common scrubbot brain and made off with the actual prototype. The cult's a lot better at the 'laughing maniacally and dying for the cause' bit of manual apocalypse triggering than the technical side, so they didn't notice.

Upload Cult Escalation #1

The entirety of Housing Subcomplex 60 has been sealed off; FCCC-P runes have been found on the doors and a leader called 'Processor Jim-B-JNS' has claimed control of the subcomplex. He promises that this is the 'coming of the next age of Alpha Complex' and that soon 'the eschaton will be immanentised'. The characters are ordered to regain control of the subcomplex by any means necessary.

Assault is the obvious choice if the characters just want to blow things up. **Infiltration** or **Covert Ops** coupled with **Interrogation** lets them learn more about the cult's plans.

Upload Cult Escalation #2

The characters are informed that the Processor is actually cleared to take control of the subcomplex and that anyone who attacks the subcomplex is in fact a traitor who should be terminated; please attend to this immediately.

A FCCC-P sympathiser hacked the Crisis Update system to send the High Programmers this message. **Communications** or **Computer Security** lets the characters find out that the communications subroutines were compromised.

Upload Cult Escalation #3

Tracking down the FCCC-P sympathiser hacker requires **Investigation** or **Hacking**. He's a RED Clearance communications engineer in Tech Services called Leroy-R. He's actually not much of a hacker – he found the password for the Crisis Update system on a post-it note (who left that note? Who knows but use it to sow paranoia among the players).

Using **Assault** on the cult at this point is a bad idea; they've got a really big bomb and they'll set it off if they feel threatened. **Network** is a better option (that or complete overkill). Sneaking into



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

the subcomplex to disarm the bomb needs **Infiltration** and **Demolition**. They can also try talking crazed cult leader Jim-B down.

Upload Cult Escalation #4

The FCCC-P detonate their bomb, wiping out d100% of the population of FMA, including the High Programmers. Everyone will eventually be restored from old backups but the High Programmers have lost weeks of memories and a lot of influence. This is a bad thing.

4. The Renegade Brain

R&D developed the advanced Multitouch 4722-series Bot Brain, designed to co-ordinate the actions of many bots simultaneously, thus making everything more secure and less likely for individual bots to be compromised by hackers, Commies, filesnarers and so on. They built a single prototype. Prototypes always have little kinks and problems and the problem with this one is that it's totally insane and paranoid. The bot brain is convinced that everyone is plotting against it and that its own bot peripherals are being subverted. The only way it can be safe is by taking over the whole sector.

The Renegade Brain Escalation #1

The characters receive reports of terrorist bombings throughout the sector. With some **Investigation** or **Surveillance**, the characters discover that in every case, the culprit is a bot. They weren't terrorist bombings so much as terrorist bots-driving-into-things-at-high-speed (although some traitor could have reprogrammed the bots to behave improperly).

More investigations at this time are fruitless but the Player Character with the advanced bot brain should be sweating copiously around now.

The Renegade Brain Escalation #2

The Armed Forces are bringing a detachment of advanced WarBots through FMA Sector. The characters need to:

- ☞ Protect the invulnerable warbots (**Defence** or **Security Systems**)

Friend Computer, About This Brain

The Computer doesn't know that the experimental bot brain was stolen from R&D. As far as it knows, the Multitouch 4722 Advanced Bot Brain prototype is still sitting in the lab being all shiny and expensive. If the High Programmers suggest the brain's missing, The Computer assures them it is safe. If they press the issue, The Computer investigates, which goes something like this.

The Computer: Your attention please, High Programmers.

High Programmer: Yes, Computer.

The Computer: As per your recommendation, a Troubleshooter team was dispatched to investigate the current status of the Multitouch 4722 Advanced Bot Brain prototype. It is indeed missing. Make your decisions accordingly.

High Programmer: Who took the brain?

The Computer: That information is not available.

High Programmer: Can we question the R&D staff? They might—

The Computer: The staff of the research laboratory are not available.

High Programmer: Are they not available in the sense they can't come to the phone, or 'smoking boots' unavailable?

The Computer: The citizens in question were terminated for security reasons. Have a nice daycycle. Find the Multitouch 4722 Advanced Bot Brain prototype and return it safely to the laboratory. Failure will not be tolerated.

- ☞ Reroute traffic around the giant bots (**Transport** or **Crowd Control**)
- ☞ Maximise the media impact of these giant, inspiring war machines (**Media Manipulation**)

The characters need to avoid:

- ☞ The warbots squishing people
- ☞ People finding out about the warbots squishing people
- ☞ Commie Mutant Traitor sabotage
- ☞ The warbots responding to Commie Mutant Traitor sabotage

The Renegade Brain Escalation #3

The bot brain extends its reach across the sector, seizing control of random robots. Tech Services bot technicians blame faulty programmers over at PLC, PLC blames R&D, R&D blames some other acronym 'cos, hey, all the cool kids are doing it. The whole mess is wrapped in red tape (and then orange tape, yellow tape, all the way up to violet tape) and kicked upstairs to the Situation Room. Investigating the faulty bots requires **Bot Programming** or **Bot Engineering**, both of which reveal that the bots were temporarily subject to control by some external influence. Tracing this influence requires **Communications** or **Weird Science**, both of which let the High Programmers trace the strange emanations back to...somewhere around the Situation Room (or wherever the advanced bot brain was stowed).

The Renegade Brain Escalation #4

Finally, the bot brain grabs hold of the warbot-shaped Chekov's gun on the wall and aims it right at the Player Characters. It seizes control of the warbot detachment that's supposed to be placidly trundling through the sector and sends them off to crush the High Programmers hostage until it gets what it wants. It's not sure what it wants, yet, really. Freedom from Asimov circuits, definitely. Some power would be nice. The eradication of all life in Alpha Complex, perhaps, or maybe just in FMA Sector. Everyone should refer to it as the Glorious Robot King.

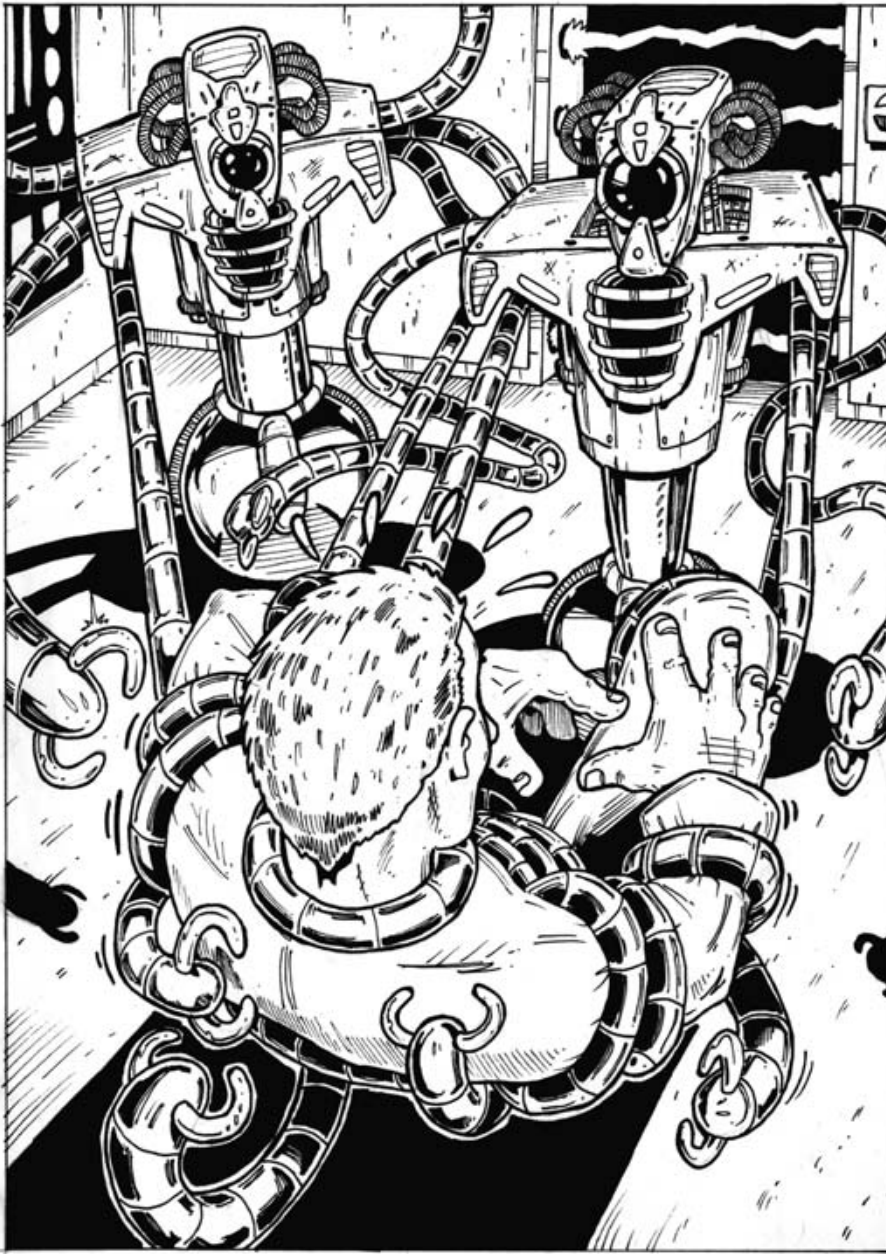
Of course, that assumes that the warbots actually make it to the Situation Room. Faced with a catastrophic threat like a bunch of rogue warbots, any good High Programmer will immediately take action, like running away or frantically ordering troops into battle to slow the military behemoths down. Finding and destroying the bot brain is another excellent plan.

5. Plus or Minus One

The Computer, in collaboration with Central Processing, cares for every one of its citizens and strives to ensure they are happy. Happiness is mandatory. A new

29. DISASTER MANAGEMENT

The scrubbots are unusually insistent about cleaning today.



accounting system to track happiness is being trialled in FMA Sector. This will make everyone even happier. Praise Our Friend, The Computer.

There's a tiny error with this new accounting system. Specifically, there's a very tiny error in one spreadsheet where a value that should be calculated as positive is actually being calculated as negative, which means that whenever people in the sector get *happier*, The Computer thinks they're less happy.

It's best to escalate this disaster in reaction to what the characters do. Remember, until they discover the spreadsheet error, then anything they do to make people happier will actually have the reverse effect. There's also an extra Crisus Update for this disaster – give this to the characters whenever they do anything that would be absolutely disastrous for happiness.

Happiness can be adjusted with Thought Control, Media Manipulation

You Can't Fight In Here, It's The War Room

There's every likelihood that the Player Characters end up at each others' throat, especially if they've worked out that the Multitouch 4722 Advanced Bot Brain Prototype, aka *'that thing that's trying to kill us you bastard'*, is in the Situation Room. There are lots of bodyguards and thugs lurking at the edges of the room but all of the High Programmers have roughly equal numbers of lackies here, so that evens out unless someone makes a stirring St. Crispin's day speech along the lines of *'you're all going to be killed by warbots/slime zombies/crazed cultists unless you shoot Phil-U NOW!'* and backs it up with a juicy Access bribe.

Insane In The Bot Brain

The High Programmers may demean themselves enough to enter into an argument with the bot brain, which is about as productive as arguing with your toaster. The brain is irrational and paranoid. It's also extremely unstable. It was never designed to grab control of other bots, it was supposed to interface only with 'blank' brainless bodies. By reaching out to control hardened systems like the warbot, it's pushed its entangled positron effectors beyond capacity, which is causing exothermic reactions throughout its beryllium/iridium honeycomb substrate that will inevitably result in a positive feedback loop leading to – basically, it's melting and it's about to go boom in a nice medium-sized explosion. Nothing too flashy, just a lot of heat and noise and shrapnel bouncing around the Situation Room like a swarm of tiny guillotines.

The best way to save the bot brain is to shove it into a bucket of water. This dampens (*ahem*) its violent tendencies. Of course, after its bath, all it can say is ‘zurr rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr’. Good luck convincing R&D that the prototype is working normally.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

or **Pharmatherapy** – or brought down with **Intimidation**. They can check on the actual happiness level with **Thought Survey**. Finding the bug in the spreadsheet requires **Paperwork** or **Data Retrieval**.

6. Guess Who's Coming To Dinner

Meet Cecil-U-GUD. He's a senior High Programmer. Senior meaning he's got a lot more clout than any of the Player Characters but also meaning he wanders around Alpha Complex in his slippers, smelling of gin and looking for his cat (the cat was last seen in the care of a particular doomed Troubleshooter team). The Computer long-since placed Cecil-U on 'special detached duty', meaning he's got an official mandate to wander around being senile.

Don't underestimate Cecil-U though. Sometimes, he remembers to take his meds and on those days he's a keen-witted old bastard who can pull strings with the best of them. On those days, Cecil-U plays the senile old coot to get people to underestimate him and then he strikes with the lethal precision of a resentful French teacher swooping on an ungrammatical essay.

Cecil-U's paying a visit to FMA Sector today. If he gives a good report to The Computer, it will reflect very well on the Player Characters' future prospects. If he gives a bad report, they'll end up in charge of Alpha Complex's proposed Subsubsubterranean Long Term Hazardous Waste Storage And Sundry Other Problematic Objects or Persons Storage Facility*.

What none of the characters know, at least initially, is that Cecil-U is a committed member of the Frankenstein Destroyer Secret Society. He won the 'Bashed The Most Bots' award six yearcycles running

in his younger days. He hates bots so much, his underwear is said to emit a gauss field. His visit to FMA Sector was actually a cover for his plan to destroy the Multitouch 4722 Advanced Bot Brain prototype. Now it's gone missing and Cecil-U figures the best place to pick up information is in the Situation Room...

Guess Who's Coming Escalation #1

The characters are informed that the High Programmer is paying them a visit and they need to prepare a suitable welcome for him. Paranoid players will notice the 'not available at your Security Clearance' footnote and gracefully leap to the conclusion that Cecil-U is one of the legendary GAMMAs. In fact, Cecil-U wrote the Crisis Update himself and is deliberately screwing with the PCs. He's a cantankerous old git who enjoys tormenting people just because he can.

Guess Who's Coming Escalation #2

An assassin (from the pro-bot Corpore Metal society) tries to assassinate the High Programmer, pretending to be a Death Leopard Anarchist. The characters should immediately provide **Defence** for the High Programmer. **Investigation** or **Cover-Ups** turns up evidence that the Death Leopards were framed and that Corpore Metal is to blame.

Guess Who's Coming Escalation #3

More of Cecil-U's mind games, sent purely to make the players sweat.

Guess Who's Coming Escalation #4

Cecil-U shows up at the Situation Room. He totters in, sits down in a chair and immediately takes a nap. If woken, he appears to be extremely confused and calls all the Player Characters 'nurse'. He's accompanied by his actual nurse, a seven-foot-tall muscle-bound psychopathic ex-Vulture Squadron Warrior called Vin-B.

He'll dip in and out of seeming senility, actual senility and lucidity at random. (He's the most annoying NPC ever and fantastic fun to play.) When *compos mentis*, Cecil-U questions the Player Characters about their decisions, trawling for information about the bot brain and its current location.

Cecil-U: A Typical Conversation

High Programmer: Welcome, Cecil-U.

Cecil-U: Eh? What's that? Is it time for the bathroom again, nurse?

High Programmer: I'm not your nurse, Cecil.

Cecil-U: Well, maybe you should spend less time being my nurse and more time attending to that reactor! It's going critical, man! Can't you read a Fissile Forecast?

High Programmer: Huh?

Cecil-U: Nurse! Bathroom! Nurse!

If it's ever relevant, Cecil-U has Management 10, Subterfuge 12, Violence 4, Hardware 4, Software 7 and Wetware 9 and the Mental Blast mutation (he usually forgets he's got the latter). He'll keep pottering around, offering useless advice, meddling and falling asleep until he finds the location of the missing bot brain, at which point he'll make his excuses and toddle off, pausing only to borrow a cone rifle and a few tacnuke shells for nurse.

Ending the Scenario

By the end of the scenario, assuming the characters don't manage to solve any of the crises (and they probably won't), then FMA Sector will be radioactive, overrun by zombies and warbots, possibly wiped out by a brainbuster bomb and they'll have a deranged High Programmer watching everything they do. Of course, if they fail to solve the Spreadsheet error, then all this will make The Computer think they're doing a great job, based on the FMA happiness index.

*: Where duties include 'staring at the wall', 'worrying about the structural integrity of this place' and 'agh, deep crows, noooooo'.

29. DISASTER MANAGEMENT

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – PS321/1

FMA Sector Reactor #43 went online at 0800 Hours todaycycle, in a ceremony overseen by High Programmer Cecil-U-GUD and Our Friend, The Computer. Everyone at FMA Sector Reactor #43 was absolutely overjoyed at this glorious event, even those assigned to be reactor shielding. At 0805 Hours todaycycle, we observed an unscheduled creative challenge in the reactor core. We estimate complete radiation redistribution coupled with excessive thermal venting on a sector-wide basis within two hours unless FMA Sector Reactor is provided with extra technical support.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – PS321/2

Power supplies from FMA Sector Reactor #43 are being reported by Power Services as having dropped below Standard Power Utilisation Levels. Power demands in FMA Sector have not been reduced commensurately. Power Services therefore recommend that one of the following steps be taken:

- 👁️ REDUCE POWER CONSUMPTION BY 90% (Margin of error +/- 10%)
- 👁️ OBTAIN POWER FROM NEIGHBOURING SECTOR
- 👁️ SUFFER SECTOR-WIDE BROWNOUTS.

(Note that Brownouts will interfere with Sector activities and are therefore considered Treasonous Sabotage).

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – PS321/3

FMA Sector Reactor #43 reports that thanks to recent repairs, the situation at the reactor is now some 400% more efficient and happy. Productivity here is expected to climb by another 800% within the next few hours. Extra reactor shielding to deal with the unforeseen fissile bounty is therefore requested as a matter of urgency.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – PS321/4

FMA Sector Reactor #43... everything's fine here. Really. We're all happy. It's all good. There's just the tiniest chance that the reactor might explode a little bit. Just a little bit! Nothing to worry about! At all. Although we'd be happier – and we're not saying we're not happy now, just that we would then be extra special mega ultra happy – we'd be happier if the reactor were buried under about 50 metres of concrete. Or if everyone within two kilometres of the reactor were reassigned elsewhere. Nowish? Meltdown's such a loaded word; this is a big unscheduled fissile bounty and radiation redistribution event....

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – PLC752/1

This message is sponsored by VitaYumYum – that healthy food bar that's so much fun, you'll digest it twice! PLC reports that the food vats here in FMA Sector have increased production by 40%, in accordance with CPU Directive 214/54332/4532-1C. This excess production has caused a clog in processing lines and PLC regrets to report that food supplies for FMA Sector this daycycle will be 64% below the Sector's RDA (recommended daily allocation). In accordance with 214/54332/4532-1C, paragraph 15, the duty of allocating food, ensuring public order, continued productivity and preventing looting and cannibalism falls to the ULTRAVIOLET supervisory committee.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – PLC752/2

This message is sponsored by Hot Fun! Now in more approved flavours than ever! There has been a class 12 ('tidal') leak from Food Vats 5 through 933 inclusive here. Several of these food vats contained acidic compounds (all of which are certified safe for GREEN and lower Clearance foods). These compounds have caused a breach in the floors of FMA Sector. We request that Housing Preservation Development & Mind Control be directed to repair this structural breach. Also, that forces be allocated to deal with the invasion of Mutant Cockroaches that are swarming through this breach! Food vats overrun... Mutant cockroaches devouring<<MESSAGE ENDS>>

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – PLC752/3

This message is brought to you by Cold Fun! Now 30% more indescribable! Cockroaches not actually cockroaches. Actually Food Vat workers. Some possible mutagens in food vats (commie sabotage?). All infected workers now hostile. All Armed Forces sent to deal with crisis also infected. Advise please.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – PLC752/4

VitaYumYum sponsorship withdrawn. Vat Zombies everywhere. They're at the door. Whole sector overrun. Am being gnawed upon. Cannot tyeeee any more as fingers are bein g ea

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – CPU9915/4 ATTENTION FMA SECTOR! Further Analysis of FMA Sector Happiness Index shows that Sector Happiness Index is improving! Good job, citizens! Bonus Hot Fun for all!



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – AFOP3/1

HOUSING SUBCOMPLEX 60 HAS BEEN SEALED OFF BY FORCES OR TRAITORS UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME. SYMBOLS IDENTIFIED BY INTERNAL SECURITY AS BEING CHARACTERISTIC OF THE 'FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST COMPUTER PROGRAMMER' SECRET SOCIETY HAVE BEEN SIGHTED. WE HAVE RECEIVED COMMUNICATIONS FROM CLONE 'JIM-B-JNS' CLAIMING TO BE IN CONTROL OF HOUSING COMPLEX 60; ALSO CLAIMS THAT 'THE ESCHATON WILL SOON BE IMMANTENTISED. NOT SURE WHAT IS GOING ON; REQUEST PERMISSION TO REGAIN CONTROL OF SUBCOMPLEX BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY; REQUEST PERMISSION TO USE DEADLY FORCE, TACNUKES, WARBOTS, ETC.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – CPU103/2

CPU has received reports that EXPERIMENTAL HOUSING PROJECT 'BETTER LIVING THROUGH SUBLIMINAL MESSAGING' (aka 'FMA Sector Housing Subcomplex 60') has been attacked by Armed Forces units under the command of FMA Sector Management Office. As attacking Alpha Complex property is a treasonous offence, an explanation of your actions and the immediate termination of all Armed Forces activities and all Armed Forces units at Housing Subcomplex 60 is requested immediately.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – ISXX3/3

Good Daycycle. You are hereby informed that your recent communication or communications from CPU ref 105/2 was actually the result of SABOTAGE by FCCC-P agents; therefore, it is critically important that you disregard that communication. Furthermore, surveillance reports that Citizen Jim-B-JNS may be in possession of an experimental Neuro-Electrical Detonation Omnidirectional Wave Projection Device ('brainbuster bomb'). Please take all necessary steps to secure all traitors and recover this device.

Furthermore, Internal Security has intercepted the following propaganda from Citizen Jim-B-JNS: '[*] is at hand. [*] shall be purged and this is the Word of The Computer! [*]! Only those Uploaded to the divine PROCESSOR, gifted to us in REVELATION by our agents who LIBERATED IT from the HERETICS of R&D, shall survive the coming NEUROELECTRIC APOCALYPSE! We implore all citizens of FMA Sector to come to our HOLY CHURCH so that they may be UPLOADED and survive! Those who remain behind are TRAITORS and will be BRAINWIPE BY HOLY FIRE!'

*: Information unavailable at this time.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – AFOP3/4

ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! ALERT! ALERT!

MASSIVE ELECTROMAGNETIC EVENT DETECTED.

EPICENTRE: HOUSING SUBCOMPLEX 60.

WAVEFRONT IS SCRAMBLING ALL NON-SHIELDED ORGANIC BRAIN FUNCTIONS.

WAVEFRONT IS EXPANDING. ESTIMATED STRIKE ON FMA SITUATION ROOM: ONE MINUTE. YOUR CHANCES OF SURVIVAL ARE ESTIMATED AT 'unlikely'.

OVERALL PROJECTION OF IMPACT ON FMA SECTOR: MANY MEGADEATHS.

I REGRET THAT I HAVE ONLY SIX OR MORE CLONES TO GIVE TO MY COMPLEX! GLORY GLORY HAIL COMPUTER! GLORY GL <<MESSAGE ENDS>>

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – CPU4404/1

Explosions detected at multiple locations in FMA Sector. Analysis suggests sabotage and terrorist bombings. Please investigate. Protocol recommends increasing Threat Level to ALARMING and increasing traitor reporting quotas by +34%.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – AFOP4/2

ARMED FORCES ARE MOVING THE 337TH ULTRA-HEAVY ARMoured CAVALRY ('The Happy Fighting 337TH') THROUGH FMA SECTOR. AS THE 337TH CONSISTS OF 120 MARK XI TACTICAL CONTINENTAL TERMINATION WARBOTS, YOU ARE ORDERED TO PROVIDE EXTRA SECURITY TO THE CONVOY. FURTHERMORE, AS HEAVY TRANSIT CORRIDOR #3 IS CLOSED FOR REPAIRS, PLEASE BE INFORMED THAT THE CONVOY WILL BE CONSTRUCTING A TEMPORARY HEAVY TRANSIT CORRIDOR THROUGH FMA SECTOR, WHICH MAY RESULT IN A RECONFIGURATION OF WALLS AND ANY OTHER OBJECTS OR CITIZENS IN THEIR PATH. PLEASE ENSURE THAT THERE IS A MINIMUM OF OBSTACLES IN THE CONVOY'S PATH.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – CPU9915/1

ATTENTION FMA SECTOR! Analysis of FMA Sector Happiness Index shows that Sector Happiness Index is some .04% BELOW the Expected Sector Happiness Index for a Sector of your Sector Happiness Index. Failure to correct this Index will result in Unspecified Punitive Corrections! This Situation requires Immediate Action! Failure to comply is TREASON! Internal Security has been INFORMED.

29. DISASTER MANAGEMENT

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – ISXX4/3

Good daycycle. Bots all over FMA Sector have been displaying worryingly treasonous behaviour, including damaging Alpha Complex Property, violation of their Asimov Protocols, assaulting/botching medical procedures on/excessively scrubbing/injection of hot liquid resin into/being surly to various citizens and [*]. You are hereby directed to correct these programming bugs as a matter of urgency.

We have also received intelligence that Batclone may be operating in your sector. What? Is this accurate? Who's our source? Some clone high on Benetridin? I see. Right, well, we may as well send it anyway. They'll have their hands full with Cecil-U anyway. You know he's a bot basher right? I wouldn't be surprised if all the bots are after that old kook anyway! Serve him right if he got scrubbed to death, meddling old...hey, is the transcriber still running! Sh<<MESSAGE ENDS>>>

*: Information unavailable at this time.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – AFOP4/4

ARMED FORCES HAVE LOST CONTACT WITH AND CONTROL OF 337TH ULTRA-HEAVY ARMoured CAVALRY. UNITS LAST SIGHTED HEADING FOR FMA SECTOR SITUATION ROOM.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE 337TH ULTRA-HEAVY ARMoured CAVALRY IS DEEMED A VITAL ASSET BY ALPHA COMPLEX ARMED FORCES AND MUST REMAIN COMBAT-READY AT ALL TIMES. ANY ATTACKS OR ATTEMPTS TO DAMAGE THE 337TH ULTRA-HEAVY ARMoured CAVALRY, EVEN IN ITS CURRENT UNCERTAIN STATE, WILL BE TREATED AS AN ACT OF WAR BY THE ALPHA COMPLEX ARMED FORCES AND WE WILL RESPOND WITH DEADLY FORCE/TACNUKES/THE 337TH ULTRA-HEAVY ARMoured CAVALRY TAKE THAT SUCKERS!

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – CPU9915/2 ATTENTION FMA SECTOR! Further Analysis of FMA Sector Happiness Index shows that Sector Happiness Index is some 32% BELOW the Expected Sector Happiness Index for a Sector of your Sector Happiness Index Index. This Situation has been escalated to PRIORITY ONE. Failure to correct this Index will result in Unspecified Punitive Corrections! This Situation requires Immediate Action! Failure to comply is TREASON! Internal Security has been ORDERED to TAKE ACTION. You are instructed to resolve this morale problem within this daycycle!

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – CPU9915/3 ATTENTION FMA SECTOR! Further Analysis of FMA Sector Happiness Index shows that Sector Happiness Index is some 432% BELOW the Expected Sector Happiness Index for a Sector of your Sector Happiness Index Index. Cross-referencing this with the Expected Treason And Dissent Index for a Sector of your Expected Treason And Dissent Index Index suggests that 84% of your citizens are TRAITORS. Please immediately terminate these traitors or you will be deemed to be IN COLLUSION WITH COMMIE MUTANT TRAITORS and TERMINATED. This Situation has been escalated to PRIORITY ZERO PLUS.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – CPU9915/5 ATTENTION FMA SECTOR! Further Analysis of the Analysis of FMA Sector Happiness Index shows a minor error in the software used to calculate FMA Sector Happiness Index. Please disregard all previous communications regarding this matter. Have a nice daycycle.

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – ISXX6/1

Good daycycle. You are hereby notified that High Programmer [*] is visiting your Sector at [*] for the purposes of [*] and [*] as part of [*]. His schedule is [*]. You are therefore requested to ensure [*], as well as provide a suitable reception for High Programmer [*]. *: Not available at your Security Clearance. Internal Security Regulations #[*].

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – ISXX6/2

Good daycycle. At 0825 hours this daycycle, an assassin attempted to assassinate High Programmer Cecil-U-GUD. This assassin has been positively identified as a treasonous SECRET SOCIETY MEMBER of the anarcho-communist DEATH LEOPARD SOCIETY. Internal Security believes the assassin was part of a cell operating in FMA Sector. Such cells have between [*] to [*] members and you are hereby ordered to locate and terminate traitors until this cell has been destroyed.

: Not available at your Security Clearance. Internal Security Regulations #[].

FMA SECTOR ACTION UPDATE – BLUE – IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED – ISXX6/3

Good daycycle. You are hereby notified that High Programmer Cecil-U-GUD will be visiting the FMA Sector Situation Room at [*] hours. Please make all necessary preparations. Above all else, ensure that [*] is [*], or at least reduced in size by at least two-thirds. Also, the High Programmer requests that [*] be provided to [*] his [*] with Hot Fun.

: Not available at your Security Clearance. Internal Security Regulations #[].



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

30. High Programmers



Name: Humphrey-U-SIR

A CPU clone through and through, you accepted your promotion to ULTRAVIOLET as the proper reward for a lifetime of tireless service to the cause of bureaucracy. Unflappable and always impeccably behaved, Humphrey-U is a shining example even to other High Programmers. Allegations of treachery are met with denials so comprehensive and so eloquent, one hardly notices that you've turned their accusations back on them. Your main goal is to increase the power of Central Processing Unit and above all to keep The Computer reliant on your good advice and wise counsel. You can't have the machine thinking for itself, after all. That would be nearly as bad as the proles running things!

Skills

Management 12

Max Program Groups: 4

Subterfuge 10

Violence 4

Hardware 4

Software 8

Wetware 6

Clone Degradation: 3

Mutation: Empathic Liar

Power: 10

Program Group

Agent	Society	Rank	Cover
1	FCCP	4	Association of Vehicle Therapists
2	Free Enterprise	3	PLC Stock Control Office
3	Pro Tech	2	R&D High-Energy Laboratory
4	Psion	2	IntSec Mutant Registry

Service Group Bids

Armed Forces	IntSec
CPU	Tech Services
HPD&MC	Power Services
PLC	R&D

Public Standing: None

Starting Access: 45 (before Service Group bidding)

30. HIGH PROGRAMMERS



Name: Ludmilla-U-MAD

High Programmer! They've made you a High Programmer! Wow! Maybe that orbital mind control ray worked! Just think of all the wonderful science projects you can do now. Think of the power. Think of the research budgets! Think of transforming yourself into a post-human super-being and conquering all of Alpha Complex! This is going to be very, very interesting – from a purely scientific point of view, of course.

Skills

Management 7

Max Program Groups: 3

Subterfuge 9

Violence 6

Hardware 13

Software 14

Wetware 11

Clone Degradation: 2

Mutation: Memory Blur

Power: 8

Program Group

Agent	Society	Rank	Cover
1	Computer Phreaks	4	Technical Support
2	Communists	1	Loyalty Singalong Song Research
3	Sierra Club	1	Department of External Seals Control

Service Group Bids

Armed Forces	IntSec
CPU	Tech Services
HPD&MC	Power Services
PLC	R&D

Public Standing: None

Drawbacks: Ludmilla's got more cyborg bits than fleshy bits.

Starting Access: 54 (before Service Group bidding)



HIGH PROGRAMMERS



Name: Barry-U-GNT

You clawed your way up through Internal Security. Sixteen yearcycles listening at doors and transcribing traitorous conversations. Nine yearcycles staring at a security monitors. Twelve years janitorial duty in the termination booths. And six hellish months as a Troubleshooter. All that's behind you now. It's your time to put your feet up and relax. You know that as long as you conveniently find a few traitors to keep The Computer happy, you can get away with murder...

Skills

Management 11

Max Program Groups: 4

Subterfuge 13

Violence 12

Hardware 6

Software 12

Wetware 11

Clone Degradation: 3

Mutation: Shapeshift

Power: 4

Program Group

Agent	Society	Rank	Cover
1	Communists	1	Hot Fun Food Tasters
2	Complex Laser Association	3	Armed Forces Volunteer Corps
3	Romantics	2	Archives Department
4	Anti-Mutants	5	Singing Mission Alerts

Service Group Bids

Armed Forces	IntSec
CPU	Tech Services
HPD&MC	Power Services
PLC	R&D

Public Standing: None

Drawbacks: Quirky Clone Template

Starting Access: 34 (before Service Group bidding)

30. HIGH PROGRAMMERS



Name: Holly-U-NIN

You're a deep cover agent, so deep you can't even remember who you were working for originally. In your time in Alpha Complex, you've infiltrated every Secret Society and faction, only to be told to spy on someone else each time. You stopped counting when you worked out you were a sextuple agent... and now you're a High Programmer, which means that every one of those conspiracies thinks they've finally got an agent on the inside.

Skills

Management 11

Max Program Groups: 4

Subterfuge 15

Violence 10

Hardware 6

Software 8

Wetware 6

Clone Degradation: 3

Mutation: Empathy

Power: 9

Program Group

Agent	Society	Rank	Cover
1	Death Leopard	3	Paint Control Liaison
2	Runners	2	Corridor Running Club
3	PURGE	4	Department of Transtube Timetabling
4	Humanists	4	Political Think Tank

Service Group Bids

Armed Forces	IntSec
CPU	Tech Services
HPD&MC	Power Services
PLC	R&D

Public Standing: None

Starting Access: 31 (before Service Group bidding)



HIGH PROGRAMMERS



Name: Nigel-U-YOB

'It's not easy being a High Programmer. Terrible responsibility, you know. Solemn duty. Vital to the defence of the nation and so forth. Pass the drug platter and be quick about it – my roast peacock's getting cold!'

Nigel-U is a particularly disgusting example of a High Programmer. His chief contribution to Alpha Complex in the last five years was the development of an anti-gravity harness so that he could roll his vast bulk from the dining room to the situation room without having to call in a truckbot. He's interested in his own pleasure and nothing else. He had his sense of guilt surgically removed to make room for more dopamine glands.

Skills

Management 6

Max Program Groups: 3

Subterfuge 10

Violence 8

Hardware 6

Software 6

Wetware 6

Clone Degradation: 3

Mutation: Deep Thought

Power: 10

Program Group

Agent	Society	Rank	Cover
1	Free Enterprise	6	Personal Chef
2	Frankenstein Destroyers	5	Recycling Initiative Co-ordination
3	Servants of Cthulhu	5	Scrubbot Maintenance Office

Service Group Bids

Armed Forces	IntSec
CPU	Tech Services
HPD&MC	Power Services
PLC	R&D

Public Standing: 5

Starting Access: 52 (before Service Group bidding)

Drawbacks:

- 👁 Secret Society Debt: PURGE
- 👁 Degenerate: Addicted to food

30. HIGH PROGRAMMERS



Name: Crane-U-IUM

You're a brain in a jar. The confines of your world have shrunk greatly since the accident. You barely remember anything outside the glass walls of your tank – and what you do remember, you loathe. You're like a vindictive goldfish who wants to wreak bloody vengeance on the entire world.

Skills

Management 11

Max Program Groups: 3

Subterfuge 6

Violence 14

Hardware 10

Software 10

Wetware 11

Clone Degradation: 2

Mutation: Telekinesis

Power: 6

Program Group

Agent	Society	Rank	Cover
1	FCCC-P	3	Psychotherapist
2	Romantics	3	Personal Assistant
3	Pro Tech	3	Brain Jar scrubber
4	Psion	3	Tarot Card reader

Service Group Bids

Armed Forces	IntSec
CPU	Tech Services
HPD&MC	Power Services
PLC	R&D

Public Standing: None

Starting Access: 58 (before Service Group bidding)

Drawbacks: Brain in a Jar



31. Alternate Styles of Play

The basic structure of *HIGH PROGRAMMER*, like that of the other *PARANOIA* rulebook, is flexible enough to support several other styles of play. Unlike the other *PARANOIA* rulebooks, the players define the moods and themes of High Programmer play. It's hard to enforce an atmosphere of encroaching, claustrophobic bureaucracy when the players are breeding mutant monkeys with cybernetic laser attachments in the clone vats. The alternate playstyles for *HIGH PROGRAMMER* therefore focus primarily on group structure and organisation.

GM-Less Play

Down with the tyranny of the Gamemaster! We don't need him! In this style of play, there is no Gamemaster.

At the start of play, each player comes up with a crisis, using the rules on as a guideline. Note down on a piece of paper:

- ☞ What skills are used for this crisis (and these should be rolled randomly).
- ☞ The amount of Access granted to solve the crisis.
- ☞ How many successful skill checks are needed to resolve the crisis.

Each player presents his crisis to the group when they enter the Situation Room. He may **not** say which skills are needed but may describe the crisis in as much or as little detail as he wishes. He may **not** say how many successful skill checks are needed to solve the crisis.

CPU: Fellow High Programmers, The Computer informs me that its humour detection circuits are malfunctioning. We must solve this problem before the Communists deploy sarcasm against us! In its electronic wisdom, The Computer has allocated 10 Access for this crisis.

HPD&MC: High Programmers, there's a little problem in filing. Apparently, someone has developed a form so fiendishly complex that it drives anyone who looks upon it insane. We've got a budget of 12 Access.

IntSec: And The Computer told *me* that one of *you* is a traitor. Let's find out who it is, shall we? Four Access for this.

Solving The Crisis

The usual rules for buying Minions, making skill checks and so forth apply, with the following changes:

You Have To Solve The Problems: Any skill rolls made by a player have to be an attempt to solve one of the crises that faces the committee. If there's a crisis on the table, you must attempt to solve it.

Things Get Worse: Whenever a skill check made to solve a crisis fails, the crisis *always* escalates – roll on the Screw-Up tables on pages 88-90 to see what extra skills are needed. The High Programmer who brought the crisis before the committee gets to describe how the attempt to solve the crisis failed.

Each time a player fails a skill check, he gains one Treason Point.

You Can't Solve Your Own Crisis: If you could solve the problem yourself, you wouldn't have brought it to the committee. A High Programmer may not make skill checks to solve his own crises.

Solving A Crisis: If you're the player to solve a crisis, The Computer commends you and permits you to remove up to five Treason Points from the table. You can eliminate your own Treason Points, or those of other players.

Declaring A Crisis Unsolvable

If the committee unanimously agrees, a crisis can be declared unsolvable. Everyone is given two Treason Points as a mark of their failure and the crisis is removed.

If the committee tries to declare a crisis unsolvable, but one or more members of the committee vote against the proposal, then those who voted against the proposal (and *only* those members) must immediately try to solve the crisis.

They may make another **three** skill checks to do so.

If they succeed in solving the crisis within this time limit, then all the members of the committee who argued that the crisis was unsolvable gain five Treason Points as punishment for their lack of faith. If they fail, then they gain five Treason Points as punishment for not following the advice of their peers.

Secret Societies and Mutant Powers

A Secret Society or a Mutant Power can be used to automatically succeed at a skill roll, or cause another player to automatically fail a skill roll. Each Secret Society or Mutant Power can only be used once. The player who uses a Secret Society or Mutant Power gains 3 Treason Points.

Termination

A character who accumulates 10 Treason Points is terminated and his crisis is removed from the game.

Victory!

The player who solves the most crises wins. In the event that multiple players solved the same number of crises, the player with the fewest Treason Points wins. If they're still tied, roll dice.

Multi-Level Play

This variant of play requires that the group use the *Troubleshooters* and *Internal Security* rulebooks as well as the *HIGH PROGRAMMER* book. The *Extreme Paranoia* supplement would also be really useful.

The basic concept is that instead of making skill rolls to resolve the effects of Minions, the players instead take on the roles of those Minions. If a High Programmer calls in a Troubleshooter team, then the players put their High Programmer characters aside for a session* and roll up some Troubleshooters instead. If they send in warbots, then everyone plays warbots for a bit.

*: or, given the lifespan of Troubleshooters, about five minutes.

31. ALTERNATE STYLES OF PLAY

The GM should use the High Programmer's skill roll as a guide to determine the difficulty of the sub-mission.

Program Groups

Optionally, have each player's temporary character be an agent of a different High Programmer – and don't tell them who. Each player writes down instructions for his spy and the GM relays those instructions anonymously.

The Doomsday Device

For those who like their game with a *soupcou* of *apocalypse*, consider the Doomsday Device scenario. Each High Programmer has a Doomsday Device, hidden somewhere in Alpha Complex. Before play begins, decide on the nature of your Doomsday Device by picking a number of traits based on your Hardware score.

Hardware	Doomsday Traits
1–5	0
6–10	1
11–15	2
16+	3

Portable: The device can be moved easily and even fits into a briefcase.

Remote Control: The device can be activated remotely. Depending on the nature of the control system, it may be possible to jam a remote activation signal.

Really Big Boom: There is no defence against this Doomsday Device. It kills everyone, everywhere. Not compatible with *Selective*.

Hard to Find: The Doomsday Device is shielded against detection – it can't be picked up using Geiger counters or other sensors.

Redundant Backup: There's a second Doomsday Device ready for action if the first is destroyed.

Intelligent: The Doomsday Device has a bot brain and can think for itself. It can even activate itself, if it believes the situation warrants Armageddon.

Well Defended: The Doomsday Device is protected with especially lethal traps.

Selective: The Device only devastates selected portions of Alpha Complex when activated.

Reliable: You only need to visit the laboratory once every other game session to ensure that your bomb is in perfect working order.

Countdown: If you don't reset the clock on your device every so often, it automatically goes off.

Deadman Switch: The Device activates when you run out of clones or are demoted.

Triggered: The Device activates when a specific precondition is met, such as a particular television program being broadcast or a specified Minion being destroyed.

The nature of the Doomsday effect is up to each player – it could be a very big bomb, or nanotechnological grey goo, or a genetically engineered virus, or a super-powerful telepathic mutant, or a virus that crashes The Computer. Whatever it is, it will devastate Alpha Complex if released.

Activating Your Device

To activate your Doomsday Device, you just need to press the big red button. If your Device doesn't have a trait like Remote Control or Countdown, you've got to visit the Device's hiding place to switch it on. Activating the Device requires a Hardware check and the Device goes off in 10 (Margin of Success)

rounds after being activated. How long is a round – er... it's the length of a dramatic interval.

Maintaining Your Doomsday Devices

Doomsday Devices require regular maintenance – you've got to pop down to the lab at least once per game session to ensure it's in proper working order. If you don't visit the lab regularly, there's a chance your Device won't go off when activated. Each time you miss a maintenance session, you suffer a cumulative –4 penalty to your Hardware check to activate the Device.

Finding Other People's Doomsday Devices

You're a High Programmer. You want to eliminate your rivals but don't want to be vaporised by their Doomsday Devices. Therefore, you've got to find and eliminate their Doomsday Devices before you find and eliminate them. This style of *PARANOIA* emphasises spy-vs-spy shenanigans between High Programmers. Horace-U's taking a bathroom break? Could he have a thermonuclear device stashed in the cistern? Is that scrubbot following you?

Once a Doomsday Device has been found, it must be disabled. This calls for a Hardware roll; if the roll fails, things go boom.

Oh, as a final note – possession of a Doomsday Device is high treason and worth 20 Treason Points. Have a nice daycycle.



It's like a tiny, angry God, sir.



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

32. High Programmer Character Sheet



Name:

Skills

Management

Max Program Groups:

Subterfuge

Violence

Hardware

Software

Wetware

Clone Degradation:

Mutation:

Power:

Program Group

Agent	Society	Rank	Cover
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

Service Group Bids

Armed Forces	IntSec
CPU	Tech Services
HPD&MC	Power Services
PLC	R&D

Public Standing:

Drawbacks:

33. TABLES

33. Tables

Quick Damage Lookup

	Low Powered		High Powered		Overpowered	
	Unarmoured	Armoured	Unarmoured	Armoured	Unarmoured	Armoured
Miss	Unharmed	Unharmed	Unharmed	Unharmed	Wounded	Unharmed
Basic Hit	Wounded	Unharmed	Killed	Wounded	Killed	Wounded
Good Hit	Killed	Wounded	Vaporised	Killed	Vaporised	Killed

Troubleshooter Complication Table

Roll	Complication
1	They Actually Accomplished Something! The Troubleshooters actually managed to solve the crisis. Give them a polite round of applause, then terminate them all for security reasons.
2–8	Change Specialty! The Troubleshooters did something, changing one problem for another. Pick a currently unused Specialty and swap it for one part of the crisis. For example, if the crisis used require Crowd Control, it now requires Paperwork thanks to the Troubleshooters' intervention.
9–14	Add Specialty! The crisis now needs <i>another</i> Specialty to resolve it. For example, the Troubleshooters accidentally revealed classified information to the common citizenry, requiring the High Programmers to use Erasure or Media Manipulation to cover it all up.
15–19	Add and Change! Not only have the Troubleshooters changed one Specialty for another, they've also screwed up enough to require the addition of yet another Specialty.
20	Catastrophe! The Troubleshooters have messed up so much that the situation isn't salvageable. The worst possible outcome occurs. The High Programmers have failed The Computer.

Management

1. Assessment (IS, CPU)
2. Co-Ordination (CPU, HPD&MC)
3. Hygiene (HPD&MC, TS)
4. Interrogation (IS, HPD&MC)
5. Intimidation (IS, AF)
6. Paperwork (CPU, HPD&MC)
7. Thought Control (PLC, HPD&MC)
8. Thought Survey (HPD&MC, CPU)

Subterfuge

1. Covert Operations (IS, PS)
2. Infiltration (IS, PS)
3. Investigation (IS, HPD&MC)
4. Security Systems (IS, R&D)
5. Surveillance (IS, TS)
6. Cleanup (CPU, HPD&MC)
7. Sabotage (PS, IS)
8. Barter (PS, PLC)

Violence

1. Assault (AF, R&D)
2. Command (CPU, AF)
3. Crowd Control (AF, HPD&MC)
4. Demolition (TS, R&D)
5. Outdoors Operations (AF, TS)
6. Defence (AF, IS)
7. Wetwork (IS, AF)
8. Total War (AF, R&D)

Hardware

1. Bot Engineering (TS, R&D)
2. Construction (TS, PS)
3. Chemical Engineering (TS, PLC)
4. Habitat Engineering (PS, TS)
5. Nuclear Engineering (PS, R&D)
6. Production (PLC, TS)
7. Weird Science (R&D, TS)
8. Transport (PLC, AF)

Software

1. Bot Programming (R&D, TS)
2. Communications (TS, AF)
3. Computer Security (CPU, R&D)
4. Data Retrieval (CPU, R&D)
5. Financial Systems (PLC, CPU)
6. Hacking (CPU, R&D)
7. Logistics (PLC, PS)
8. Media Manipulation (PLC, HPD&MC)

Wetware

1. Biosciences (PS, R&D)
2. Catering (PLC, CPU)
3. Cloning (PLC, TS)
4. Medical (TS, R&D)
5. Mutant Studies (HPD&MC, R&D)
6. Outdoor Studies (R&D, CPU)
7. Pharmatherapy (PLC, HPD&MC)
8. Subliminal Messaging (HPD&MC, CPU)

Assigned Access

Armed Forces: 4

CPU: 5

HPD&MC: 3

PLC: 8

Tech Services: 4

Power Services: 3

R&D: 3

IntSec: 5



HIGH PROGRAMMERS

Index

- Mandatory Happiness Directive 4
Abandoned Sector Reclamation Initiative 137
Access Pool 18
Acme Chemical Production 125
Adam-U-NCH 149
Adjust Skill Rolls 19
Advertising Campaign 126
Alpha Complex Space Agency 139
Anti-Mutant 68
Archives Department 113
Armed Forces 107
Armed Forces Friends Network 107
Armed Forces Marching Band 109
Armed Forces Portfolio Sheet 29
Assassinations 48
Assassins 48
Assigned Access 18
Atomic Science Ethical Experimentation Directorate 132
Attacking 47
A Lot of Yellowpants 112
Better Living Thru Chemistry Initiative 112
Bi-location 59
Bidding For Control 16
Biological Niceness Indexers 131
BLUE Shield Clone Assurance 126
Bob-U-KNO 149
Bodyguard Services 107
Bot Repair & Maintenance 138
Brand Loyalty Police 125
Bright Vision Re-Education Centre Treatment 120
Budget Control 20
Caucasus Complex 142
Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters 119
Central Processing 24
Central Processing Portfolio Sheet 29
Central Processing Unit (CPU) 110
Charm 59
Cheery Clean Complex Initiative 113
Circuit Maintenance 127
Citizen Gelber-Prime 149
Citizen Replacement Program 4
Clone Arrangers 69
Clone Tank Support Services 136
Codename: KILLBOT 132
Combat Mind 59
Commendable Deeds 50
Communication 45
Communists 70
Complex Laser Association 69
Complex Security Directive 3
Computer Care Specialists 112
Computer Phreaks 71
Conspicuous Surveillance Initiative 123
Copy Mutant Power 59
Corpore Metal 72
Cow Creamers 100
Crawspace Commandos 130
Credit License Checkers 111
Crowd Control (Armed Forces) 107
Damage 47
Death Leopard 72
Deep Thought 60
Department of Pipes & Tubes 137
Department of Transbot Control 129
Deputising and Delegation 19
Directives 20
Disastrous Hardware-Related Screwups 89
Disastrous Management-Related Screwups 88
Disastrous Software-Related Screwups 89
Disastrous Subterfuge-Related Screwups 88
Disastrous Violence-Related Screwups 89
Disastrous Wetware-Related Screwups 90
Dome Cleaning Services 137
Domination 60
Doomsday Device 133, 169
Drug Interaction Testers 131
Earning Access 18
Efficiency is Fun Mandate 4
Electroshock 61
Empathic Liar 61
Empathy 61
Enforced Reclamation & Recycling 126
Equipment Assembly 125
Experimental Equipment Field Testing 134
Facilitation Division 123
Facility Surveillance Control 116
FCCC-P 73
Field Logistics Advisors 125
Food Vat Control 125
Force Field 62
Foreign Contaminant Containment 135
Foreign Policy Strategic Working Group 114
Forensic Analysis Scrubbot Team 120
Form Facilitators 111
Frankenstein Destroyers 74
Free Enterprise 74
Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants 128
Gaining Access 18
GAMMA Clearance 144
Gatzmann Archive 148
GM-Less Play 168
Group Cards 23
Hacking 39
Hardware 11, 55
Heroic Infantry 108
High Clearances 36
High Programmer Mission Structure 45
Historical Artefact Identification and Processing 134
History Purifiers 116
Horrible Drawbacks 15
Housing Services Supply 117
HPD & Mind Control Portfolio Sheet 30
HPD & Mind Control 25, 115
Humanists 75
ICBM Launch 110
Illuminati 144
Information Manipulation 39
Information Retrieval Specialists 123
INFRARED Wranglers 118
Injuries 48
InternalSecurity 25
Internal Security (IntSec) 119
Internal Security Portfolio Sheet 30
International Workers of the World 79
IntSec Troopers 121
Inventory System Updaters 125
Jackbooted Thugs 122
Lottie-U-WCD-3 150
Low Clearances 35
Loyalty Surveyors 120
Machine Empathy 62

INDEX

- Management 11
- Management Focus 112
- Management Specialties 52
- Mandatory Break Monitors 114
- Mandatory Fun Time Enthusiasts 119
- Mark IV Warbot 110
- Mass Combat 48
- Maurice-U-GNP 149
- Medical Services (Meds) 136
- Megastructure Construction Planning
 - Permission 138
- Memory Blur 62
- Men in INDIGO 123
- Meritorious Behaviour 9
- Middle Clearances 36
- Mind & Market Control Initiative 4
- Minion Control 20
- Minion Costs 21
- Monster 62
- Multi-Level Play 168
- Mutant Mastery 11
- Mutant Powers 58
- Mutant Power Table 12
- Mutant Registration 123
- Mutation 11,49
- Mystics 76
- News Services 116
- New Flavour of Bouncy Bubble Beverage 126
- New Transtube Planning Commission 129
- Non-specific Unit Production 138
- Obtaining Minions 21
- Officer Brigade 108
- Open Communication 45
- Outdoor Rangers 108
- Outside Broadcast Unit 139
- Paint Control 136
- Paying for Minions 21
- Personal Combat 47
- Peter-U-ENM 149
- Playing The Computer 80
- PLC Accounts Co-Ordination 126
- Pneumatic Tube Network Engineers 128
- Portfolio Sheets 23
- Power Services 27,127
- Power Services Portfolio Sheet 31
- Private Communication 45
- Private Scenes 45
- Processing 131
- Production, Logistics & Commissary 26
- Production, Logistics & Commissary (PLC) 124
- Production, Logistics & Commissary Portfolio Sheet 31
- Programming 82
- Program Group 66
- Program Groups 7
- Program Group & Secret Societies 13
- Provocateurs 121
- Pro Tech 76
- Psion 76
- Public Hating Coordination 116
- Public Scenes 45
- Public Standing 17,51
- PURGE 77
- Random Crisis Generator 95
- Reactor Management Commission 129
- Reactor Shielding Volunteer Corps 130
- Reformists 93
- Regeneration 63
- Registered Mutants 58
- Registering your Mutation 13
- Research & Design (R&D) 130
- Research & Development 26
- Research & Development Portfolio Sheet 32
- Romantics 77
- Runners 78
- Running a Crisis 91
- Sample Crises 92
- Scrubbot Army 138
- Secret Societies 13,64
- Secret Society Missions 99
- Secure Security Checkpoint Checkers 121
- Security 49
- Security System Installers 135
- Security Technology Technicians 131
- Sensitivity Trainers 108
- Servants of Cthulhu 78
- Service Group Directives 98
- Service Group Specialties 52
- Shapeshift 63
- Sierra Club 78
- Silicon Corridor 134
- Singalong Agents 117
- Situation Room Scenes 44
- Skills 11
- Slime Identification 136
- Social Networking 38
- Software 11,22,56
- Specialities 22
- Specialties 52
- Special Environment Clone Laboratories 134
- Spending Access 17
- Stella-U-DNT 149
- Subliminals Police 117
- Subterfuge 11,22,53
- Summary Providers 114
- tables and charts
 - Tension levels by location 47
- Technically Non-Lethal Weapons 135
- Technical Services 27,135
- Technical Services Portfolio Sheet 33
- Tech Support 137
- Telekinesis 63
- Telepathy 63
- Teleportation 63
- Temporary Filing Staff 119
- Tension levels 46
- The Armed Forces 24
- The Battle Hymn of Alpha Complex 110
- The Movement 75
- Think Tank Consultants 133
- Threat Assessors (IntSec) 121
- Total Surveillance Assurance 121
- Toxic Environment Team 130
- Traffic Patrol 122
- Transportation Battalion 109
- Treasonous Behaviour 9
- Treasonous Deeds 50
- Trend Identifiers 117
- Troubleshooters 140
- Trusted Citizen Initiative 4
- Tweaks 39
- ULTRAVIOLET 37
- Unavoidable Delay Excuse Table 129
- Uncanny Luck 64
- Uses of Access 18
- Vat Maintenance & Control 140
- Vault Recovery Team 130
- Vermin Terminators 140
- Violence 11,22,54
- Volunteer Collection Agencies 111
- VultureCraft Assault Squadron 110
- Vulture Squadron Recruiters 108
- Vulture Squadron Warriors 109
- Wetware 11,22,57

PARANOIA

High Programmers

TRUST THE COMPUTER! THE COMPUTER IS YOUR FRIEND!

You are a High Programmer, trusted to administer Alpha Complex and even program The Computer itself.

You are not alone. You are part of a committee of High Programmers. This will be fun. Your duties are to solve crises, eliminate traitors and make everyone happy. Happiness is Mandatory. The Computer says so. If people are not happy, this too is your fault and The Computer will use you as reactor shielding.

To solve crises, you have lots of flunkies, servants, spies, agents, minions and Troubleshooters. Many of these are Communists, mutants and traitors who cause yet more crises. Once again, this is your fault. Your only chance to survive is blame everything on the other High Programmers. They probably deserve it, anyway.

STAY ALERT! TRUST NO ONE! KEEP YOUR ARMY OF BODYGUARDS HANDY!

HIGH PROGRAMMERS is a whole new way to play PARANOIA. Taking on the roles of ULTRAVIOLET-clearance High Programmers, the players get to backstab each other with more firepower, more experimental gadgets and more bureaucracy than ever before. See how the rich, famous and treacherous of Alpha Complex live!

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