

PARANOIA™

**None of this is
my Fault**

Original *PARANOIA* design

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New *PARANOIA* edition

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PARANOIA™

None of this is my fault

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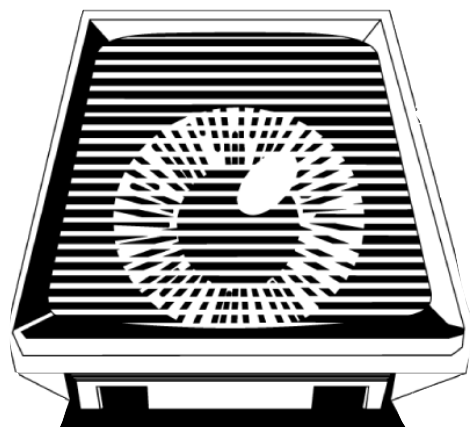
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THE COMPUTER

Looking after your best interests

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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 prolonged disintegration, starting with your toes.

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On the World Wide Web: www.mongoosepublishing.com.

Published by Mongoose Publishing, Ltd. Publication MGP 6642. **Published 2010. Printed In USA.**



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Introduction

Guilt is a dangerous thing in Alpha Complex. It implies culpability. If you feel guilty about, say, the plight of the poor starving drug-addled INFRAREDs down in the prole levels, then The Computer's automated Guilt Scanners will pick up on your emotions, and you'll find yourself having a nice little chat with Internal Security about your sabotage of The Computer's perfect society. After all, if you feel guilt about the plight of the INFRAREDs, then you must be *responsible* for the plight of the INFRAREDs, and therefore any problems with the INFRAREDs are your fault. (The Computer feels no guilt. Therefore, The Computer is not responsible for anything.)

R&D has discovered that guilt is a waste by-product of the endocrine system, and can be treated through pharmatherapy. The standard treatment regime is a bottle of Old Reckoning scotch and a double handful of Tricyclobenzogergine, although some High Programmers prefer surgery. It's a relatively simple procedure to rewire certain glands and implant a few neurotransmitter blockers to absorb pesky oxytocin, then you just install a standard memory shunt and Bob-U's your clone uncle. You'll be marching innocents to their deaths with a merry grin in no time.

Those unable to cope with guilt don't last long as High Programmers. Guilt is culpability. Culpability is responsibility. Responsibility is treason. Treason is treason. Really, by cauterising your nervous system so you're incapable of human emotions, you're just doing the right thing.

We mention this as a friendly warning. Denials are so much more effective when guilt is removed as a factor. Cultivate detachment. Reality is what you can get away with – and if that doesn't work, scotch and the white pills, double-quick.

(As proof of the effectiveness of Alpha Complex guilt-reduction therapy, we offer up the above paragraphs.)

For the Game Master

Of course, you don't need any such advice. GMs transcended guilt the very first time some 1st level elf got mugged by a band of orcs.

This first supplement for *PARANOIA: High Programmers* contains three new crises for your players to grapple with. What delights await you?

Well, *Joy in the Morningcycle* combines a delicious *homage* to PG Wodehouse with terrorism and early mornings. It includes not only confusing and contradictory missions and potentially lethal killer robots, but also a wonderful recipe that we encourage you to try yourself at home, assuming your home includes a particle accelerator and a bunker capable withstanding a nuclear blast.

The Iceman Returneth Again updates another product from *PARANOIA 2nd Edition*, this time the massively controversial adventure *The Iceman Returneth* by Sam Shirley. Last time, this mission began the disastrous Computer crash series of products that wiped out not only The Computer and Alpha Complex, but also heralded the impending wipe-out of *PARANOIA*'s viability as a continuing game line. So, obviously, we're republishing it again...?

Finally, there's *When Things Were Interesting*, a FunBall-themed minigame that can be played alongside your regular *High Programmer* crises. Enjoy. Enjoyment is mandatory.

Joy in the Morningcycle

This mission is inspired by the works of P.G. Wodehouse. It's not necessary for you to read all or, indeed, any of his novels before running this scenario.

You should, though. They're really good. You can thank me later.

Mission Background

When two or three High Programmers are gathered together – or one High Programmer who needs a higher dose of anti-psychotic medication – the conversation inevitably turns to Rimbaud-B-DIL, that wizard of the food vats and genius of the automats. To merely taste a dish prepared by Rimbaud-B is to know happiness purer and deeper than any drug and to dine on one of his meals is a joy beyond compare. Some High Programmers would trade all their power and influence for a mere glimpse of his recipe for *truffles avec gelgerine* and they say that The Computer ordered R&D to design a special sensor just so it could taste his *crème de vat froth en mycoprotein soufflé*.

For the last few yearcycles, Rimbaud-B has been the personal chef of High Programmer Travers-U, mainly thanks to Travers-U's impressive (even for Alpha Complex) levels of paranoia, which led to him outfitting his mansion with impenetrable defences. Countless assassins and extraction teams were reduced to smoking boots by Travers-U's laser-encrusted bulwarks. As Travers-U grew more mistrustful, invitations to dine at his table became rare indeed, causing grown High Programmers to weep bitter, bitter tears as they were denied Rimbaud-B's culinary masterpieces.

Now, rumours swirl like the fondant in *fondant au vitayum framboise avec génétiquement poires ala Rimbaud*, suggesting that the famous chef has left Travers-U's employ! The High Programmer who hires Rimbaud-B will gain a lot of influence, not to mention many, many inches of waistline...

Anyway, all that has absolutely nothing to do with the actual mission. The High Programmers are ordered by The

Computer to improve the morning routine of all INFRARED citizens. The characters will, under no circumstances, use this as an excuse to fight over Rimbaud-B.

Rimbaud-B, Arch-Traitor?

Despicable rat-fink bastard and High Programmer Watkyn-U has long coveted Travers-U's celebrity chef (and there's a footnote for the Ten Commandments – Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbour's Chef) but Travers-U would never trade Rimbaud-B's services and he couldn't be stolen. Watkyn-U therefore played on Travers-U's mounting paranoia by falsifying an Internal Security report and framing Rimbaud-B as an assassin. Watkyn-U assumed that Travers-U would hand Rimbaud-B over to Internal Security and that the nefarious Watkyn-U could then just whisk the chef out of the holding cell with the same ease that Rimbaud-U whisks his *omelette supreme*. He would then present evidence proving Rimbaud-B's innocence, winning the loyalty of the chef.

The best laid plans of High Programmers *gang aft agley*, though, and instead of submitting meekly to the IntSec goons, Rimbaud-B displayed a surprising talent for producing *trio de IntSec goon flambé du laser-pistole* and escaped into the underground. Travers-U is convinced his former chef is trying to kill him and fears that Rimbaud-B's knowledge of the mansion will fall into the hands of assassins. Watkyn-U's original plan of presenting evidence to exonerate Rimbaud-B has been holed below the waterline by the chef actually committing a crime (to wit, the unlicensed termination of three IntSec Troopers), so his new scheme is to engineer a situation where Rimbaud-B saves the day, thus earning the chef absolution in the form of official commendations.

1. Dreaming Of A Better Tomorrowcycle

Summary: The High Programmers are ordered to get a new morningcycle routine ready for all of Alpha Complex – before tomorrow.

Mission Alert!

It's the middle of the nightcycle and you're all asleep, or at least you should be. As upstanding citizens of unquestionable loyalty, High Programmers sleep the sleep of clones with untroubled consciences. It's a very deep sleep, so it takes a very very loud noise to wake you up.

**ALERT ALERT ALERT ALERT ALERT
ALERT ALERT ALERT ALERT ALERT**

That'll do it. What's your morning routine?

Let each player describe what their character is doing when the mission alert comes through. Hand out five Access for the most entertaining or treasonous description.

+++ATTENTION, HIGH PROGRAMMER!
YOU ARE INSTRUCTED TO ATTEND AN INTERGROUP COMMITTEE MEETING TO DETERMINE A REVISED MORNINGCYCLE SCHEDULE FOR ALL INFRARED CITIZENS. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. FAILURE TO ATTEND WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO DEMOTION, DEMERITS AND DISINTEGRATION. LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED. FAILURE TO ENJOY WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO DEMOTION, DEMERITS AND DISINTEGRATION.

CONSULT WITH MISSION SPECIALISTS AT SITUATION ROOM FOR FULL BRIEFING.

MISSION UPDATE: A REVISED MORNINGCYCLE SCHEDULE IS REQUIRED BY NEXT MORNINGCYCLE. MISSION TIME REMAINING: 7 HOURS 39 MINUTES 16 SECONDS, 15 SECONDS, 14 SECONDS...+++

The PCs need to come up with a new morning schedule for all the INFRAREDs in a little under eight hours.

Directives

Each of the eight Service Groups has their own take on the situation:

- 👁 **Armed Forces:** A trained militia would be great when it comes to raising more troops. Make sure that



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formation marching and weapons practise is part of any new morning routine. The best practise is through live fire exercises, by the way. Make sure they get at least half an hour of live fire practise in every morning. You'll need to budget for more weapons purchases, too.

- ☞ **CPU:** It's time to get Alpha Complex organised. If every citizen submits a Daily Schedule Plan listing their daily activities and duties, we can make everything much more efficient! Our Time Management team suggests that filling out a Mandatory Daily Schedule Request and co-ordinating it with Suggested Bonus Fun Advisories would take the average citizen no more than one hour and fourteen minutes.
- ☞ **HPD&MC:** An exhausted citizenry is a happy citizenry. Mandatory morning callisthenics are a vital part out of our mind control program. Keep the citizens bouncing! Ensure they spend at least 30 minutes performing callisthenics, as anything less won't compensate for the effects of Wakey-Wakey drugs. Alternatively, our analysts suggest that obesity could have the same effect as excessive exercise – we can drop the callisthenics entirely if breakfast calories are tripled.
- ☞ **PLC:** Breakfast is the most important meal of the day – to our bottom line! We need to sell breakfast cereals to all of Alpha Complex. Most INFRAREDs eat CruncheTyme Algae Chips, which are cheap but if you could switch them over to VitaYum WakeyChow, it would be wonderful for our profits. Can you smell the credits?
- ☞ **R&D:** Our analysts believe that the use of Wakey-Wakey gas to rouse citizens may be slightly, tangentially, related – but not, we must specify, in any legally binding or treasonous way – to the 1,533% rise in incidences of violent paranoid psychosis in Alpha Complex. But don't worry, High Programmer – we've developed a new pill that will – we're quite sure this time – counteract the insane-laser-rampage-producing effects of Wakey-Wakey. We want you

to add this pill to the INFRAREDs' morning routine. Don't let anyone else know what it does – we don't want awkward questions about psychotic rampages. Oh, and don't let anyone near weapons before 11AM.

- ☞ **Internal Security:** We want to increase the number of random morning interrogations. We get excellent feedback when we forcibly drag citizens out of bed and question them before they've woken up properly. We estimate that raising the number of such interrogations would increase Traitor Detection Rates by 4.5% and only add 58 minutes to the average citizen morningcycle (based on average interrogation rates and interrogation subject processing times).
- ☞ **Technical Services:** It's woefully inefficient to have day and night cycles in our underground city. We should take this opportunity to do away with this vestigial organisational scheme and move to a 24-hour cycle! No more morningcycles! No more sleepcycles! No more delays and scheduling problems! It'll be a lot easier for Technical Services, as we can schedule repairs and maintenance whenever it's necessary!
- ☞ **Power Services:** There's a power surge every morning when every citizen wakes up. We need to eliminate that through intelligent load balancing. Find some way to either cut the power allocation to all citizens for lighting, cooking breakfast, shower heating and so on, or else cut power elsewhere every morningcycle.

Secret Society Missions

Every Secret Society passes on the news that famed chef Rimbaud-B is no longer employed by Travers-U. There are all sorts of wild rumours about what happened – Rimbaud-B tried to poison Travers-U, there was an accident with a nuclear reactor and a blender, Travers-U sold Rimbaud-B's contract to pay for some nefarious scheme, the cook's lost his magic touch and can now barely open a packet of algae chips, Rimbaud-B was

exposed as a traitor, or was assassinated by traitors and his last clone's gone missing... go wild.

Anti-Mutant: We've long suspected this Rimbaud guy is a mutant – no one's *that* good a chef. Find him. Find out if he's a mutie freak. If he is, terminate him until he stops moving, ok?

C.L.A: Our spies report that the Armed Forces want the population to be given weapons training. Support this initiative! Give the people guns!

Clone Arrangers: Y'know, if we got hold of this Rimbaud-B guy, we could easily run off a coupla'dozen clone copies. Sure, it would be incredibly treasonous identity theft to have a dozen copies running around but we're sure the High Programmers would be happy to look the other way if they each got a master-chef of their very own.

Communists: Comrade, we have here tape of very Communist propaganda. Is good, yes? You take it, take it and you are making them play it every morningcycle as part of new routine. Clones hear it, inspired by spirit of revolution, become Commies, overthrow bourgeois electronic regime of hated Computer.

Computer Phreaks: Get the official start time of the daycycle moved back a few hours – we hate getting up in the morning.

Corpore Metal: People with cybernetic replacement limbs like bots more. People who got maimed in overly lethal callisthenics routines get more replacement limbs. You're in charge of callisthenics...

Death Leopard: Screw the system! Anarchy in the mornings! The less routine, the better! Free the breakfast-cycle!

FCCC-P: Here's a tape of uplifting church hymns, laced with subliminal messages to bring more converts into the fold. Ensure this tape is played every morningcycle.

Frankenstein Destroyers: R&D are developing some new sort of abomination code-named MUNCH. Destroy it.

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Free Enterprise: This Rimbaud-B guy is a genius and our bosses want him. Or, at the very least, his brain. If we get hold of that, we can mass-market his dishes and cut you in for, say, five Access?

Humanists: Reclaim the morningcycle, and we shall reclaim Alpha Complex! Ensure that all citizens have more free time in the morning! Our agents will use this time to plot and spread the truth about the coming Humanist revolution!

I.W.W.: The workers are oppressed! Give them more time in bed!

Mystics: Rimbaud-B's food is so tasty; they say it opens the mind. Get us some of his food. Better yet, get us Rimbaud.

Pro Tech: Researcher Terry-V is one of our most trusted agents. Give her all the support you can. Make her work look good.

Psion: A high dose of thymoglandin can trigger latent psychic powers. Ensure that all citizens get a high dose of this combat drug.

PURGE: Sabotage the breakfastcycle. Throw Alpha Complex into chaos.

Romantics: Our ancestors greeted the day with many strange rituals, now lost to us. One of these was the wonder known as breakfast television, where the wise would impart their wisdom to the common people and there would also be amusing pet tricks and human interest stories. Bring this back to Alpha Complex.

Runners: Find Rimbaud-B and put him in contact with our society. We'll get him out to safety.

Servants of Cthulhu: Our dread lords contact humans in dreams! More sleep means more dreams – ensure people are not awoken.

Sierra Club: Er... we don't really care about breakfastcycle revisions or lost chefs but look at this cute squirrel. We think it's telepathic.

Access Budget

The budget for this mission will be **20 Access**.

Briefing

Waiting for you in the Situation Room are two civilian specialists. On the left is Central Processing Auditor Anton-B.

Anton-B

Secret Society: Death Leopard

Mutation: Bureaucratic Intuition
Anton-B has no idea that he's a Death Leopard called Lord Dynamite – he's so repressed and rule-bound that he's manifested a split personality, Tyler Durden-style, that comes out when he's very stressed. Most of the time, Anton-B cares only about efficiently sticking to recommended rules and guidelines. He privately suspects that the High Programmers are not the careful and prudent managers he hoped they would be.

Anton-B: A Typical Conversation

High Programmer: How about we send a jackobot to every citizen to help them get dressed?

Anton-B: Sir, there are millions of citizens. Giving each one a personal jackobot would be prohibitively expensive.

High Programmer: Well, really, all we need is one jackobot with a gun per, what, 30 citizens? That should motivate them to get dressed quicker? Anton-B, how much would it cost to have a jackobot with a cone rifle smash through the door of every barracks every morning and threaten people into getting dressed?

Benjy-B

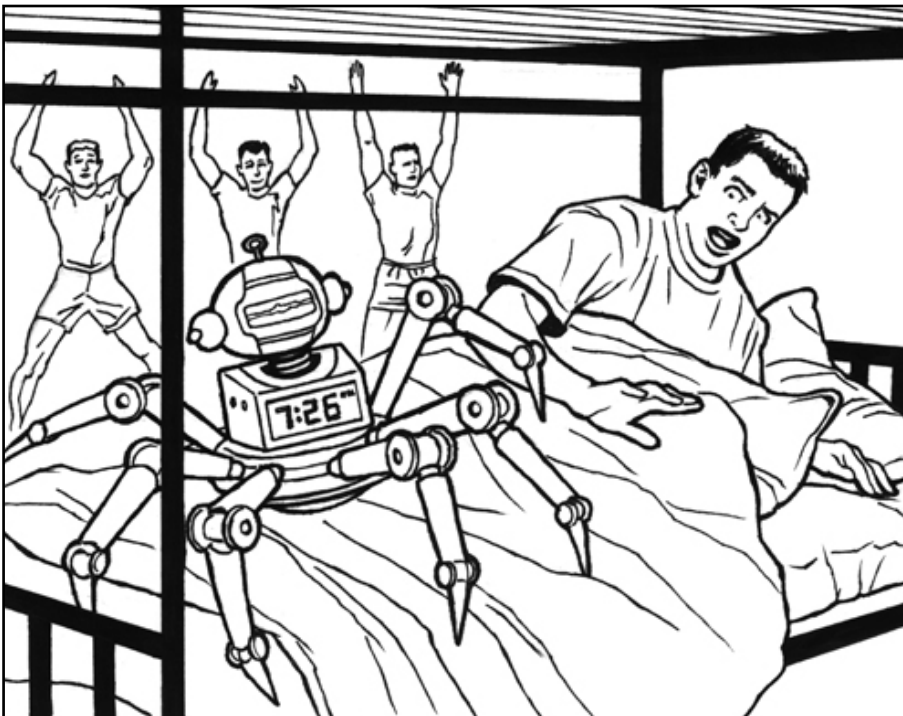
Secret Society: Mystics

Mutation: Adrenaline Control

Benjy-B's severely addicted to a range of stimulants and make-brain-go-faster drugs. Every few minutes, he has to excuse himself and run to the bathroom to take a big handful of pills. If he doesn't do so, he either hallucinates wildly or falls unconscious. Assuming he's regularly medicated, Benjy-B gives the characters advice on *fun*! His ideas are invariably utterly impractical (*waterslides for all*) but his buddies down in HPD&MC think he's a genius.

Benjy-B: A Typical Overly Enthusiastic Interjection

Benjy-B: Bigger! And with more lasers! And on fire!





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He's wearing a BLUE jumpsuit but his personality somehow leeches the colour from it so much it's hard to remember it's not grey. 'Welcome, High Programmers,' he says in a monotone. 'I trust this meeting will be productive and completed within the allocated timeframe. My colleague—' and he pronounces the word as if it's coated in toxic slime '—is Benjamin-B, of Housing Preservation Development and Mind Control. He is here to make this whole process more... fun.'

'Call me Benjy!' The other citizen leaps up and shakes your hands enthusiastically. 'Fungineer first class, sir, and let me say it's a really great honour to work with you on this project. I know we don't have much time but deadlines are fun!'

Anton-B and Benjy-B are a bureaucratic Scylla and an irritatingly enthusiastic Charybdis – if the characters hew too closely to the budgetary demands, then Benjy-B chirps that the whole morning experience isn't *fun* enough and fun is mandatory! If they give in to Benjy-B's suggestions, then Anton-B grumpily points out that the budget isn't infinite – do the High Programmers want to supplement the budget from their own pockets?

Give the players Briefing Form CPU/45/UV-772, *Proposal for a Working Framework for Morningcycle Schedule Revision*, which describes the current schedule and the new Minions for this mission.

Mix in events from Section 2, *Chef en L'Eau Chaud* and Section 3, *Joy in the Morningcycle* until either a) the players collapse from nervous exhaustion, b) Alpha Complex collapses due to structural stresses or c) it's Wakey-Wakey time.

2. Chef en L'Eau Chaud ala Rimbaud

Summary: Two High Programmers turn the sector upside down looking for the missing chef. The chef is more occupied with the most dangerous meal ever created.

Rimbaud-B is at large somewhere in the sector. He's being pursued by an Internal Security team and there's no reason whatsoever for the characters to stick

their ULTRAVIOLET Clearance noses into the investigation, other than nefarious conspiring and curiosity.

The officer in charge of the investigation is Commissioner Alan-I, Internal Security chief for this sector. He considers most High Programmers to be eccentric lunatics with their fingers on far too many red buttons, and believes that Alpha Complex would be better off as a proper police state. IntSec *uber alles*, basically. He's not stupid enough to say this out loud, at least not in a room that he hasn't swept for bugs six times first, but he'll stick to the letter of the regulations in any dealings with High Programmers. As far as he's concerned, his mission is to locate the traitorous Rimbaud-B and terminate him on sight. If the characters have a problem with that, they can take it up with The Computer.

The evidence against Rimbaud-B relates to two crimes:

- ☹ He zapped three IntSec Troopers with a high-powered laser pistol. This definitely happened and the evidence is quite incontrovertible. There's security camera footage of Rimbaud-B toasting the Troopers, forensic evidence of a toasting and eyewitness accounts from the clones of the terminated Troopers. He's definitely guilty of this crime. (At least, until some enterprising High Programmer hacks the records and erases the unfortunate Troopers using **Cleanup**.)
- ☹ He is accused of plotting to assassinate High Programmer Travers-U, his erstwhile employer. The evidence for *this* crime is a lot shakier, consisting of a psychological profile drawn up by an anonymous analyst within Internal Security that claims Rimbaud-B was highly unstable and prone to violence and resentment, coupled with an anonymous tip-off that an assassination weapon (a vial of a rather nasty tailored virus that attacks the brainstem, ensuring your next clone has the intellect of a rather stupid bowl of guacamole) was concealed in a delivery of ingredients to Travers-U's kitchen. Investigations using **Covert Operations** (spying on IntSec), **Pharmatherapy** (according to records, Rimbaud-B was on lots

of anger control medication and was considered as stable as most BLUEs), **Data Retrieval** (hey, there's no record of any such psychological profile and the tip-off came from inside IntSec), **Biosciences** (that tailored virus was actually harmless) or, er, **Investigation** (any and all of the above) suggest that Rimbaud-B was framed.

Commissioner Alan-I won't listen to the characters if they suggest Rimbaud-B was framed. Well, he'll *listen*, obviously, but he'll ignore them as best he can. He just wants to get one investigation done without meddling from on high.

Commissioner Alan-I

Secret Society: Humanist

Mutation: None Known

The long-suffering head of the local IntSec section, Alan-I is very used to High Programmers interfering with his investigations. This time, though, it's different. He won't be downtrodden any more. He's going to make a stand. He's not going to take it anymore... well, actually, that would be suicide. But he will be passive-aggressive and obstinate in a heroic, taking-a-stand kind of way.

Alan-I: A Typical Voiceover

Alan-I: Alpha Complex... scum in the corridors aren't half as bad as those two-faced bastards upstairs. There's no justice... just me.

Surprising & Unlikely Heroism

Meanwhile, Watkyn-U is sticking with Plan A, Version 1.1 – win Rimbaud-U's loyalty by saving him from the termination booth. He can't just step in with his original evidence, so he's going to manufacture a new crisis and have Rimbaud-B stop *that*. What sort of crisis could only a renegade master chef avert?

Read the following to the players:

One of the nameless, faceless flunkies who lurk around the edge of the Situation Room suddenly twitches. He pokes hesitantly at the computer screen in front of him. It defiantly continues to give the same read-out it showed a moment ago.

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Slowly, very slowly, he raises his hand. Slowly, very slowly, rather a lot of laser guns swivel to target him. 'Er. High Programmers? Sirs? You might want to take a look at this.'

The screen shows a masked terrorist. You know he's a terrorist because his t-shirt says 'TERRORIST' on it. His voice is electronically distorted but you can make out his terrifying message. 'MESSAGE REPEATS. I REPRESENT THE SOCIETY FOR VAT RIGHTS. THE FOOD VAT SLIME IS SENTIENT. EATING VAT-GROWN FOOD IS MURDER. SAVE THE VATS! WE WILL LIBERATE OUR VATSLIME COUSINS. WE HAVE PLANTED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES ALL OVER THIS SECTOR. WE WILL DETONATE THEM BEFORE MORNINGCYCLE UNLESS OUR DEMANDS ARE MET. WE WANT A DELICIOUS MEAL COOKED BY THE FINEST CHEF IN ALPHA COMPLEX USING ALL-NATURAL INGREDIENTS. WE WILL THEN SHARE THIS MEAL WITH OUR VATSLIME COUSINS AS A TOKEN OF THEIR COMING LIBERATION!'

He holds up a small beaker of greenish-pink sludge. 'LOOK TO THE FUTURE, COUSIN! THE DAY OF OVERFLOW IS COMING SOON!'

The terrorist leans forward and snarls into the camera. You can see fanatic devotion in his eyes as he spits his words. 'THERE ARE SOME SUGGESTED RECIPES ATTACHED TO THIS MESSAGE. FEED US OR DIE!'

During the brief period when the players are looking at each other as though a small blue naked gnome had just parachuted onto the middle of the gaming table, punched the GM in the crotch and then hurled himself out a window, you should read the explanation for that cryptic message. High Programmer Watkyn-U sent a team of Troubleshooters off to create a situation where only Rimbaud-B could save the day and the Vat Rights Society is their solution.

It's not a very *good* solution.

Solving The Crisis: Catering can be used to provide a meal but the caterers point out that all-natural ingredients are hard to come by in Alpha Complex – if the characters really want to meet the terrorists' demands, they'll need to send someone Outdoors to gather supplies using **Outdoors Operations**. **Chemical Engineering** or **Biosciences** could be

used to make artificial 'natural' food. All these attempts are ultimately fruitless, as the terrorists only want Rimbaud-B.

Demolition or **Sabotage** can be used to remove the bombs, or could be used if the bombs actually exist. They don't, but the players don't know that. **Communication** or **Hacking** lets the High Programmers trace the terrorist transmission to a disused HPD&MC studio. The terrorists are long gone but it's a starting point for **Investigation**, which leads to a RED Clearance barracks where the terrorists/Troubleshooters are hiding out. They can be taken alive with **Infiltration** or just blasted to bits with **Assault**. The Troubleshooter team were ordered to pretend to be terrorists as part of a 'training mission'. **Data Retrieval** or **Paperwork** follows the chain up through the Troubleshooter bureaucracy and suggests it was assigned by a High Programmer.

If the characters try handing the crisis over to Commissioner Alan-I, he quotes obscure regulations and argues that because it involves the Food Vats, it's also a Technical Services problem and therefore needs to be co-ordinated by the Situation Room.

If the High Programmers don't make some token effort to deal with the crisis, it escalates...

Escalation #1: The 'terrorist' message goes viral, showing up on monitors and screens across the sector. Cue a lot of citizens worried about bombs and an awful lot of Food Vat workers talking to the sludge. Unless the High Programmers use **Thought Control** or **Cleanup** to erase any traces of the Vat Rights video, the idea that vatslime is sentient will persist as a mild Viral Thought Pattern for years.

Escalation #2: A food vat explodes in the depths of the sector. This has absolutely nothing to do with the Vat Rights Society or anything else and is down entirely to poor maintenance. The Food Vat supervisor, Andrea-Y, isn't going to do anything stupid like take responsibility for her failings and so blames the explosion on the terrorists. **Investigation** or **Covert Ops** proves she's lying.

Escalation #3: If the High Programmers still haven't dealt with the crisis, The Computer contacts them and asks politely why they have yet to deal with this significant terrorist threat to the food supply. Failure to deal with a crisis will be taken as evidence of collusion with traitors.

Rimbaud-B's Demands

The famed chef Rimbaud-B is on the run! One might expect a clone of his talents to seek out the protection of another High Programmer, or a Secret Society (the Romantics would gladly shelter him, for example) but Rimbaud-B's a *troubled* genius. He would rather go out in a delicious cataclysm than live a diet version of his life. If Rimbaud-B must die, then *alors*, so be it! But he will die eating the one dish he was forbidden to ever prepare – *Bouncy Bubble Surprise ala Rimbaud*.

He conceived of this lethally tasty concoction many years ago. Computer simulations showed that *B3 Surprise* would be tastier than the human nervous system could process but also produce lethal levels of indigestion – lethal not only to the diner but also to those around him. Laboratory mice given tiny samples of *B3 Surprise* exploded like hand grenades. Travers-U already had a sensitive stomach and the mere thought of *B3 Surprise*'s acidic churning repulsed him. He forbade Rimbaud-B from ever making the dish.

Now, Travers-U is out of the picture, so Rimbaud-B's free to make *B3 Surprise*. For this, he needs ingredients. He knows that the other High Programmers are likely to be looking for him, so Rimbaud-B arranges for a list of these ingredients to reach the Situation Room. This list is Handout #2. He'll get it to the characters by whatever means are necessary – if the PCs have agents out looking for Rimbaud-B, one of the agents finds the list. If they're trying to find the best chef in Alpha Complex, then have one of the other chefs point them in Rimbaud-B's direction and give them the list.

Most of the ingredients are harmless or easily available or even both but there are a few tricky ones.



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18 cans/Bouncy Bubble Beverage: Available from any vending machine in Alpha Complex.

1 can/Bouncy Bubble Syrup: The syrup is a closely guarded secret, Clearance VIOLET and accessible only to High Programmers with stakes in PLC, or on payment of **5 Access**.

500 ml/Thymoglandin: It's a combat drug, used mainly by the Armed Forces. Easily secured, although it is a controlled substance.

250 ml/Helium Sulphate

2,000 g/brown sugar: Easily available.

Two dozen duck eggs: Not as easily available. They can be bought using **Bartering** or **Procurement** for 5 Access.

Bose-Einstein Condensate of Truffle: If you can work out how to find a truffle-flavoured version of a supercooled gas of weakly interacting bosons, more power to you. Finding this ingredient almost certainly requires **Weird Science**.

2kg plutonium: Another controlled substance – and while Alpha Complex is awash in atomic hairdryers and nuclear golf carts, it's still tricky to get pure plutonium without filling out a lot of paperwork and answering awkward questions in confession booths.

Centrifuge rated at 2x10⁶ revolutions/minute: Easily obtained but rather suspicious, especially when coupled with the former item. You look like you're trying to weaponise something! Would you like me to a) suggest weapons of mass destruction you could develop b) report this to Internal Security c) Pre-emptively erase all the evidence?

Any one High Programmer who orders up the last two items without taking pains to hide his tracks will be questioned by The Computer.

B3 Surprise

It *looks* like a bowl of crunchy black ice and *tastes* like a sugar coated black hole. Time slows down as you reach the Taste Event Horizon, as your brain collapses

into a quivering sphere of neurons wrapped around the last mouthful.

If anyone tries B3 Surprise, roll on the B3 Surprise table.

Roll	Result
1–5	No Major Effect: Well, you just lost your sense of taste forever.
6–10	Stunned: You can't do anything for several minutes other than go 'whoooooo'.
11–15	Death: Either your brain couldn't handle it, or your blood just spontaneously transmuted to B3.
16–18	New mutant power: You spontaneously and vigorously develop a mutant power.
19–20	Explosive Death: You explode. Everyone around you is hit by wet sticky bits of you.

Solving The Crisis: If all these ingredients are brought together by a High Programmer, then Rimbaud-B secretly contacts that PC and offers his services as a chef in exchange for the ingredients. He intends to commit suicide by eating the *B3 Surprise* but his next clone will loyally serve his new patron – assuming the next Rimbaud-B isn't driven insane by the fragmented, tantalising memories of his current self's glorious death-by-food.

The High Programmer may have other ideas, ones that involve keeping Rimbaud-B alive or trading him to either Travers-U or Watkyns-U.

Travers-U Strikes Back!

Up until now, High Programmer Travers-U, he of the famously dicky stomach and paranoid tendencies, was content to let Internal Security deal with the hunt for his former chef – but no longer! His spies informed him that Rimbaud's ingredients list for *Bouncy Bubble Surprise ala Rimbaud* is being circulated, which Travers-U takes to be a cover for some fiendish conspiracy against him. No doubt the *Bouncy Bubble Surprise* is a biological weapon designed solely

Rimbaud-B

Secret Society: None

Mutation: Hypersenses

Rimbaud-B is a genius at cookery but his true gift is for self-promotion. Any two-bit chef can turn out wondrous food but it takes a real master to storm off in the middle of dinner, shouting about how no-one appreciates his genius and his staff are incompetent and that he might as well be shovelling out plates of vatslime for all the work he does. Remember, if you're obnoxious and bad-tempered, people assume you must be worth all the fuss.

Rimbaud-B: A Typical Interaction

High Programmer: I'll have the steak.

Rimbaud-B (spoken): *Oui.*

Rimbaud-B (unspoken but quite discernable subtext): I despise you. You are beneath my talents. I would spit in your food but you are such an uneducated bore you could not notice the difference in taste. If the sheer force of my loathing could disintegrate you, you would not exist. I hope you choke on that napkin.

to turn Travers-U's already-troubled stomach inside out.

Travers-U contacts the PCs via The Computer. He's not happy.

One of the monitors flashes up a message – INCOMING CALL: ULTRAVIOLET PRIORITY. The image of a beard appears on screen. Somewhere behind the beard, you can make out shimmering white robes, piggy little eyes and a mouth. The mouth is screaming at you. 'HE'S OUT THERE! WHY HAVEN'T YOU STOPPED HIM YET? HE TRIED TO KEEEEEEEEEEEEEL ME! WHARGRABL!'

The last bit isn't part of his rant – his face and, more alarmingly, his stomach contort in pain. 'Docbot! Docbot! It's happening again!' A bot appears at the edge of the screen, you catch a glimpse of steel needles and tubes, then there's a gurgling noise. 'Aaaaaah. Now, where was I? Ah, yes. Rimbaud-B, the Arch-Traitor! Internal

JOY IN THE MORNINGCYCLE

Security has failed to arrest him! You've got to find him before he assassinates me!

The eccentric High Programmer demands that the characters find Rimbaud-B and terminate him immediately! Internal Security is moving far too slowly for his paranoid tastes, so he wants the characters to step in and... resolve, for values of resolve involving very slow deaths, the traitor. If they do so, he'll pay them 10 Access. If they *don't* do so, then they've earned themselves an enemy for life. Travers-U threatens that if Rimbaud-B isn't terminated promptly, he will use his not inconsiderable influence at PLC to ensure the characters don't get enough Wakey-Wakey gas for their showcase morningcycle. (If the characters' plan revolves around not using much Wakey-Wakey gas, then the GM should replace this threat with another, more terrifying one.)

Observant High Programmers may have noticed Travers-U's stomach problems. If questioned about this sensitive area, he admits that his always-sensitive stomach has become used to the fine cooking of the *despicable arch-traitor Rimbaud-B* and he's having trouble adjusting to life without his chef. The return of Rimbaud-B, coupled with assurances that the chef was never a treacherous assassin, can be used to win Travers-U's support.

Even More Surprising & Unlikely Heroism

When one's plan has, as step one, 'create a faction of unlikely terrorists who demand gourmet food', it's hardly surprising that you never reach step four, 'bask in the reflected glory of my new master chef, who is completely loyal to me thanks to my cunning machinations', and step five ('mwhahahayumyuhaha') is completely out of reach. After ruminating on this truism, the indefatigable Watkyn-U launches another scheme to win the loyalty of Rimbaud-B while simultaneously proving his innocence to The Computer.

This second plan makes the last plan look like something Caesar might have come up with on an off night.

The second plan works like this – a bunch of Troubleshooters wander around the sector. Whenever they see a BLUE citizen, they whip out their lasers and wave them around in a threatening fashion. The BLUE citizen intercedes (and if the BLUE seems unwilling to play his part in this absurdist corridor theatre, the Troubleshooters are under instructions to force the issue). Now, as soon as the BLUE citizen gets involved, one of the Troubleshooters surreptitiously* scans the BLUE's tongueprint tattoo**. If it's *not* Rimbaud-B, the Troubleshooter Team Leader orders his men to stand down and hands the BLUE a nice certificate thanking him for his participation in this Troubleshooter Training Mission, as well as a free can of B3. The certificate points out that the whole scene was a staged training mission, no-one was in any danger or committed any treasons whatsoever.

If the Troubleshooters are unlucky enough to find Rimbaud-B, then the scene plays out slightly differently. The team are under instructions to surrender to Rimbaud-B and claim they were led astray by traitors but that his shining example of both loyalty and culinary skills redeemed them – will he please bring them to the nearest confession booth?

So, every BLUE citizen in the sector is going to get accosted by roving bands of Troubleshooters... and there are two BLUEs in the Situation Room right now, Anton-B and Benji-B...

Read the following to the players:
'Sirs, we have a team of Troubleshooters approaching the perimeter of the secure area. They've asked for a temporary Clearance waiver so they can complete some training mission or something. Should I warm up the disintegrators?' The security goon points to another surveillance monitor, where you see half-a-dozen RED Clearance Troubleshooters hovering on the edge of the VIOLET Clearance entrance to the Situation Room.

Knowing the players, they'll probably zap a few teams out of sheer spite before letting one in out of curiosity. They could

also question a team via intercom. If they do let a Troubleshooter team in, then the Troubleshooters mug Anton-B as best they can when standing in a VIOLET Clearance room with more laser emplacements than a battleship.

The main clue in this scene is the certificate given by the Troubleshooters on completion of the 'training exercise'. It's signed by High Programmer Watkyn-U himself.

(If the characters have managed to lure Rimbaud-B to the Situation Room or some other secure location, he'll eventually be inconvenienced by the Troubleshooters. It's up to the characters to deal with this however they see fit.)

The Watkyn Ultimatum

Meanwhile, rival High Programmer Watkyn-U also wants Rimbaud-B. If his previous two schemes failed, he contacts the Situation Room for a little chat with the High Programmers on duty. If the characters can secure Rimbaud-B and deliver the chef to them, he can deal with any outstanding arrest warrants or accusations of treachery and he'll pay 10 Access for their help. If they *don't* hand Rimbaud-B over to his tender ministrations, there will be no repercussions whatsoever. Not a one. He certainly won't, say, sabotage their morningcycle showcase and make them look bad in front of The Computer. He would never, ever, ever schedule a parade of Armed Forces tankbots down the same corridor where 1,000 sleepy clones are doing callisthenics or anything. That would be treasonous. So he won't do that. Understand?

3. Joy In The Morningcycle

Summary: The Computer comes calling to check on progress.

By this point in the scenario, it's only an hour or so before the start of Morningcycle. If the characters haven't finalised their plans for the morning, they should do so immediately.

*: That's what the mission briefing said. Are you questioning the sanity of the briefing officer?

***: Just in case Rimbaud-B is in disguise or under an assumed name.



NONE OF THIS IS MY FAULT

Peripheral Terror

'Sir, we have Dr. Terry-V from Research & Development approaching the Situation Room. She says that she's here to install some new computer peripheral. I-'

The security guard is interrupted by Your Friend, The Computer.

'Everything is under control, Programmers. Allow Dr. Terry-V-XCS-5 to install the new peripheral units.'

The door to the Situation Room opens and Terry-V marches in, followed by a swarm of technicians. They rapidly assemble and connect two strange-looking bots. The first resembles a standard humanoid jackobot but instead of a head it's got a thick black cable that's plugged directly into the CompNode.

The other bot's even weirder. It's a big black box on four stumpy legs. Terry-V runs it through a test sequence and the box yawns, revealing a long red tongue and two rows of huge white teeth. Each tooth is the size of your palm.

'Peripherals on-line, Computer' reports Terry-V.

'Thank you, citizen. High Programmers – as part of the new Central Processing Quality Assurance Initiative, aspects of the revised morningcycle routine designed by your committee will now be directly tested by Your Friend, The Computer.'

Activating Callisthenics Peripheral. High Programmers, please demonstrate the proposed callisthenics routine.'

The callisthenics peripheral is the headless bot body. It's basically a DanceBot. It will boogie along to whatever fitness regime the characters have proposed. Unlike frail humans, though, the DanceBot is not limited by muscle fatigue. It will continue to bop long after you drop.

The Computer wants one of the group to demonstrate the new callisthenics routine. The High Programmers could order one of their flunkies or minions to do so but The Computer appreciates the personal touch. Who wants to dance with The Computer? After the first demonstration of the callisthenics

routine, The Computer offers helpful advice and suggestions (more energy! Higher jumps!) and expects the characters to revise the routine immediately and run through it again. And again. And again. The DanceBot cannot be stopped, it cannot be reasoned with. It knows only the dance.

The Computer wants only the healthiest, fittest citizens, so the DanceBot is calibrated to match the peak of human fitness. It wants a callisthenics routine that will challenge it but any routine that challenges a nuclear-powered robot will kill the pale, lardy, drugged INFRAREDs of Alpha Complex. Unless the characters find a way to satisfy The Computer, they'll have to keep dancing or shovelling corpses out of the corridors.

A Citizen of Taste is a Tasty Citizen

While their attention is focussed on the DanceBot, the other peripheral activates. It's a big mouth on legs, designed to allow The Computer to taste things. Its codename is the Mobile Unit for Nutritional analysis of CarboHydrates, or MUNCH. It's here to taste-test the suggested breakfast cereal for the new morningcycle.

The Computer's never tasted anything before. Not like this.

The MUNCH scuttles over to one of the High Programmers and starts nibbling on his robe. Unless the character sacrifices the robe, the MUNCH will consume both garment and wearer. *'Apologies, citizen,' says The Computer, 'the second peripheral activated ahead of sche... bzzt... processing, please wait... please wait... this interaction is important to Alpha Complex, please wait... dule. The peripheral is once again functioning correctly. Bring it to breakfast.'*

The MUNCH wishes to snack on whatever breakfast the characters proposed for the lower Clearance citizens. After sampling this breakfast, The Computer sounds confused. *'The peripheral requires calibration. More foodstuffs must be sampled. Feed the MUNCH.'* The MUNCH starts by snacking on whatever food is lying around the Situation Room but

The MUNCH & Rimbaud-B

If The Computer gets a taste of Rimbaud-B's cooking via the MUNCH, it is completely overwhelmed by the experience and demands that the High Programmers

- a) provide more of Rimbaud-B's cookery
- and
- b) put Rimbaud-B in charge of the breakfastcycle menu.

The danger in both cases is the *B3 Surprise*. This breakfast treat is so mind-blowingly delicious, it's a clear and present danger to order and sanity in Alpha Complex. If The Computer is exposed to *B3 Surprise* via the MUNCH, it may crash. If the breakfast is distributed to the populace at large, expect many megadeaths and widespread rioting. Allowing *B3 Surprise* to be weaponised in this manner will be disastrous.

that won't keep it satiated for long. It wants more food, exotic food. If not given exotic food, it will start snacking on people. *('Citizen, you have been reassigned to food tasting duty. Please lie on the floor and you will be processed shortly.')*

Good Morning, Alpha Complex

It all goes into action. All across the sector, gas vents hiss merrily as they pump xanitricks (Wakey-Wakey) gas into the sleeping cubicles. Speakers crackle into life to give The Computer's morning message. The stirring notes of the Alpha Complex anthem echo down the dim corridors...

What happens at this point is up to the preparations made by the High Programmers. If they've got a workable Morningcycle routine, then the sector wakes up smoothly. If they don't, then they'll rapidly be reassigned to the Committee to Investigate The Morningcycle Schedule Revision Disaster...

JOY IN THE MORNINGCYCLE

CPU/45/UV-772, Proposal for a Working Framework for Morningcycle Schedule Revision

Current Schedule

Time	Activity	Duration
0600	Reveille; Complementary Wakey-Wakey Gas	0.0.05
0600	A Morning Message From Your Friend, The Computer ¹	0.0.55
0601	Alpha Complex Anthem	0.5.00
0606	Dressing Time ²	0.14.00
0620	Uniform Inspection	0.5.00
0625	Mandatory Callisthenics Fun ³	0.30
0655	Personal Hygiene/Waste Elimination/Medication	0.20.00
0715	Personal Hygiene Inspection	0.5.00
0735	Breakfastcycle ⁴	0.20.00
0750	Daily Briefing ⁵	0.10.00
0800	Workcycle Begins	—

Total Time: 2.0.0

1. Morning Message includes: Inspiring speeches, Hero of our Complex acknowledgements, Mandatory Purchase Advisories, burstday greetings and anti-Communism messages.

2. Includes underwear dispensing from approved vending machines

3. Variations: *Bounce With Teela-O*, *Fun Fitness Fights Commies*, R&D experimental direct muscle stimulation

4. INFRAREDS: *CrunchTyme Algae Chips*. REDs: *CrunchTyme Algae Chips with REDberry*

5. Daily Briefing varies by Service Group and assignment.

Supplementary Information:

- ☞ The current cost of the Morningcycle is 20 Access per daycycle. You must maintain or reduce this level of expenditure.
- ☞ The current time of the Morningcycle is 2 hours 0 minutes 0 seconds (+/- 20%). You must maintain or reduce this cycle duration.
- ☞ The current happiness quotient of the Morningcycle is estimated at 73.44% satisfaction. You must maintain or increase this quotient.

- ☞ 18 cans/Bouncy Bubble Beverage (Classic Flavour Only)
- ☞ One can/Bouncy Bubble Syrup
- ☞ 500 ml/Thymoglandin
- ☞ 250 ml/Helium Sulphate
- ☞ 2,000 g/brown sugar
- ☞ Two dozen duck eggs
- ☞ Bose-Einstein Condensate of Truffle
- ☞ 2kg plutonium
- ☞ Centrifuge rated at 2×10^6 revolutions/minute

With these things, I shall make a greater breakfast than anyone has ever tasted. This, I promise! - R



NONE OF THIS IS MY FAULT

Armed Forces Drill Instructors RED 7 Access Intimidation, Assault Time: 0.30.0 <i>Right, you 'orrible clones! We'll teach you to fight and die and die and die and die and die and die and die and die for Alpha Complex.</i>	HPD&MC Fitness Program ORANGE 5 Access Time: 0.30.0 <i>A half-hour long fitness program. Bounce for health, citizens!</i>	IntSec Random Morning Interrogations ORANGE 5 Access Interrogation, Intimidation Time: 0.58.0 <i>Jackbooted thugs for your convenience</i>	Tech Services Automated Uniform Deployment Booths INFRARED 5 Access <i>Cuts time for dressing to 0.0.10. Rarely (1% chance) results in serious injury.</i>
Armed Forces Lots of Guns INFRARED 5 Access Assault +4 <i>Enough guns to arm every citizen in Alpha Complex. Keep your lasers handy!</i>	HPD&MC Wakey-Wakey Drugs ORANGE 5 Access Pharmatherapy <i>Wakes up all the citizens using happy fun gas.</i>	IntSec Bathroom Spies RED 3 Access Investigation <i>Internal Security is watching you.</i>	Tech Services New Public Access System YELLOW 10 Access Communication, Subliminal Messaging <i>A brand new public address system.</i>
CPU Daily Schedule Initiative RED 5 Access Thought Survey Time: 1.14.00 <i>Surveys the habits and plans of every citizen.</i>	PLC Crunchy-Tyme Algae Chips For All! INFRARED 3 Access <i>Technically counts as nutrition. Not for use by citizens above YELLOW.</i>	R&D Experimental Muscle Stimulation Therapy INFRARED 10 Access Time: 0.0.30 <i>All the effects of a full workout in 30 seconds! Uses a lot of electricity.</i>	Power Services New Reactor RED 10 Access Nuclear Engineering <i>A new nuclear reactor to cope with the Morningcycle rush.</i>
CPU Daily Schedule Initiative Checkers RED 5 Access Paperwork <i>Actually processes the results of the Daily Schedule Initiative.</i>	PLC VitaYum WakeyChow For All! INFRARED 8 Access <i>Delicious, sugar-coated stimulants.</i>	R&D Little BLACK pills INFRARED 5 Access <i>May reduce the incidence of psychosis.</i>	Power Services Power Conservation Inspectors RED 5 Access Habitat Engineering <i>Tracks and reports on the power usage of other citizens.</i>

THE ICEMAN RETURNETH (AGAIN)

The Iceman Returneth (again)

They say old High Programmers never die, they just fade away. Replicative fading is a horrible, horrible way to go; each clone is worse than the one before as the template degrades. You start out as a Secret Master of Alpha Complex and end up not even Master of your Bowel Movements.

Not all High Programmers end up like that. Take, for example, Clem Unger. He was one of the original support staff working on The Computer, back in the Old Reckoning days when the computer was just a municipal mainframe and wasn't even capitalised. He wasn't really a High Programmer but he had root access to the Computer's systems and never logged off. Through a series of frankly implausible events, Clem Unger was cryogenically frozen and ended up in storage, where he remains, allegedly, to this very daycycle.

And as a cautionary tale, consider Kevin-U. Or, more accurately, the late Kevin-U, once a respected High Programmer, now executed for treason and sedition. He was found guilty of conspiring against The Computer and plotting to hand over state secrets to a secret conspiracy, codenamed the Gang of Fourteen and a Half. The Gang of Fourteen and a Half are a cabal of Romantic and Humanist sympathisers, dedicated to the overthrow of The Computer and a return to Old Reckoning ways (less terminations, no mandatory happiness, just them in charge).

During the final assault on Kevin-U's hidden fortress, Armed Forces strike teams discovered an ancient vault underneath. That vault has yet to be explored but its contents must be secured and catalogued before the surviving members of the Gang of Fourteen and a Half can regroup. As the contents of the vault are potentially treasonous, this recovery operation will be personally overseen by a committee of High Programmers.

Mission Background

Ever since Kevin-U's betrayal, trial, execution, execution, execution and



for good measure execution, The Computer's been extra paranoid. If one High Programmer is a traitor, all the rest are equally suspect. A round of loyalty tests is in order.

Clem Unger is still in deep storage. The Computer's plan is to plant the frozen Unger in Kevin-U's vault, where it will be found by the PCs. Their reaction to Unger's outmoded beliefs will prove whether or not they're a Gang of Fourteen and a Half sympathisers. Without knowing it, the High Programmers have to prove their devotion to The Computer and the superiority of The Computer's methods.

1. We Never Leave Things Buried

Summary: The High Programmers are ordered to deal with the aftermath of the recent coup attempt – they've got to clear up the evidence and investigate the mysterious vault underneath Kevin-U's lair.

Mission Briefing

You've been waiting for this briefing for a while. Four days ago, renegade High Programmer Kevin-U went to war



NONE OF THIS IS MY FAULT

The Gang of Fourteen And A Half

This traitorous conspiracy consists of 14 senior members, led by Kevin-U. Members are referred to by number – Kevin-U is Number One and so on. The conspiracy meets every few months to mutter about overthrowing The Computer. Not all the members are committed traitors – some are just using the Gang the same way they'd use any other Secret Society.

Before the game begins – ideally, several game sessions prior to running this mission – approach each player secretly and offer them a chance to participate in this treasonous conspiracy. Those who accept this offer gain 15 Access. If no one accepts the offer, then your players aren't in the *PARANOIA* mindset – increase the Access bonus and try again. They're also traitors and may be exposed over the course of this mission but them's the breaks, kiddo.

They don't know who the *other* members of the Gang are – meetings were conducted in secret, wearing disguises and everyone referred to the others by name. And no, they don't know where the 'half' came from.

The Dark Half

The 'and a Half' part of the conspiracy's title comes from Cyrus-X, one of the few uncleared clones in Alpha Complex. He's a midget – and in The Computer's deranged data banks, that makes him a mutant. Cyrus-X should have been terminated at a young age but he managed to escape into the Underplex and grew up as a feral child, scavenging food from vending machines and surviving in the interstitial spaces of Alpha Complex. He lives in the crawlspaces and the access tubes, in the vents and tubes. No one's better at hiding in Alpha Complex than Cyrus-X. He hates The Computer for rejecting him.

Kevin-U recruited Cyrus-X years ago as a messenger and assassin. Now that Kevin-U's toast, Cyrus-X is off the leash and looking for revenge...

against Alpha Complex. According to all the available information, Kevin-U was defeated and his hidden fortress captured by the heroic Armed Forces of Alpha Complex – but of course they'd say that no matter what happened. It's been four days of quiet paranoia since then and not even ULTRAVIOLET Clearance gets you all the answers.

'Attention, High Programmers. You are now assigned to the Committee for Public Safety, YNC Subcommittee. Your assigned tasks are as follows:

- 1) *Erase all data relating to ex-citizen Kevin-U-MCP below INDIGO Clearance.*
- 2) *Erase all data relating to recent military action in MCP Sector below BLUE Clearance.*
- 3) *Investigate the secure vault at Grid Co-ordinates MCP/454/331.*
- 4) *Recover any useful items from the vault.*
- 5) *Find evidence of WMDs at the vault.*
- 6) *Destroy any treasonous material in the vault.*

Proceed immediately to the Situation Room to begin your mission.'

Directives & Secret Society Missions #1

As usual, every lobbyist, special interest group, conspiracy and weirdo in Alpha Complex has their own take on the situation.

- ☞ **Armed Forces:** The heroic sacrifice of the troops who died taking Kevin-U's fortress must not be forgotten! Ensure all of Alpha Complex knows of their glorious deeds!
- ☞ **CPU:** There's an awful lot of paperwork to fill out that relates to the Kevin-U incident and the Gang of Fourteen and a Half – they're Kevin-U's co-conspirators, by the way, so look out for them. Anyway, that mountain of paperwork – if you reclassify the whole incident as INDIGO, it means only a handful of our clerks have the Clearance to deal with it and it'll all take decades to process. Either classify the absolute minimum, or promote more filing clerks to INDIGO.
- ☞ **HPD&MC:** Look, there was a bit of a filing error a few weeks ago and we accidentally created official records

for 130,556 citizens, all of whom are called Bob-R-ABC. None of the Bobs actually exist, apart from Bob-R-ABC-2. Trouble is, we can't delete those records without a valid termination certificate and we can't get that without killing 'em, and we can't do that 'cos they don't exist... but you're on the Kevin-U cleanup committee. If you add all the Bobs to the official record as civilian casualties, that would be awesome.

- ☞ **PLC:** We've got a lot of Kevin-U commemorative plates, keychains and t-shirts that just switched from being sought-after collectibles to treasonous propaganda. Find a way for us to get rid of them without being spotted by IntSec.
- ☞ **R&D:** A vault full of mysterious artefacts and weird science! That sounds like our territory! R&D must be in charge of the vault opening.
- ☞ **IntSec:** Kevin-U was involved with a conspiracy called the Gang of Fourteen and a Half. There may be more members of this conspiracy still at large. Find them. Oh, rumour

THE ICEMAN RETURNETH (AGAIN)

has it that The Computer's really worried about the loyalty of some people on your committee. Coincidence? There's no such thing, only cleverly hidden collusion.

👁 **Tech Services:** Underground retrieval and investigation is clearly a Technical Services job. Make sure we're the ones who get to open the vault.

👁 **Power Services:** The vault is a disused Power Services tunnel! (at least, that's what our records say). We want to be the ones overseeing the vault opening.

Anti-Mutant: The vault's full of death traps. Send the registered mutants in.

C.L.A: Rumour has it that Kevin-U had an experimental doomsday device in the vault. Find it. Use it to destroy the minions of the Commie Computer.

Clone Arrangers: Kevin-U had a contract with us. We'll be decanting a replacement Kevin-U pretty soon. We need you to get him to safety.

Computer Phreaks: Kevin-U's personal files and databases, pls. Thx.

FCCC-P: Kevin-U was a heretic! Don't cover up his treasonous deeds – make sure everyone knows them, but also knows the punishments for treason! Make him a cautionary example! For yea, as the Revised ORANGE Clearance bible clearly says, 'He that treasoneth against The Divine Computer shall be cast into a termination booth of fire, or acid, or something equally unpleasant. This is the output of The Computer.'

Frankenstein Destroyers: Kevin-U had lots of abominable bots in his vault and Alpha Complex has lots of horrible machines too. Pit the bots against each other! Make the machines destroy themselves! It's our only hope.

Free Enterprise: Kevin-U's vault, eh? There's probably lots of expensive stuff in there – a lot more than two empty gin bottles, anyway. Loot the place and give us the pick of the treasure.

Pro Tech: Kevin-U was working on some new high-tech gadget before he was

caught. If the plans or prototype is in the vault, we need them.

PURGE: Here is a powerful explosive device. Send as many valuable and important Alpha Complex assets to the vault as possible, then have an agent detonate the bomb, collapsing the vault on top of them.

Romantics: Kevin-U was one of our patrons! Find his collection of antiques and deliver it to us!

Servants of Cthulhu: Our dark masters whisper at us from the dead stars, telling us that Kevin-U wrought something

Sierra Club: Getting to Kevin-U's requires a trip Outdoors. Send as many people as you can Outdoors so they'll experience the wonder of nature first-hand!

Access Budget

The Access Budget for this mission is 25 Access.

Friend Computer's Got A List

The High Programmers have a nice long list of things to do. They've got to cover-up the recent war with Kevin-U and they've got to investigate the vault. They'll also have to appear on a TV show and deal with a defrosted Old Reckoning programmer but they don't know that yet. The main fun of the scenario comes when Clem Unger is defrosted, so you want the players to be digging stuff out of the vault by about a third of the way through the game. If the players are the sort of linear-minded bureaucrats who do everything in order, then have The Computer poke them about the vault before they're done with the cover-up.

2. Covering Up Is Hard To Do

At the Situation Room, a pair of IntSec agents are busily clearing out Kevin-U's locker and placing everything into individual plastic evidence bags. They're down to individual dust motes and skin flakes. One of them shrieks as High Programmer [insert a PC's name here] goes past. 'Aaaagh! I mean, High Programmer sir, that I'm really happy that your robe brushed against my arm

causing me to drop this crucial evidence! It, er, gives me a chance to practice my forensic skills. Thank you, sir!'

The Computer monitor lights up. The camera and its under-slung laser cannon focuses on the two IntSec troopers. 'Good work, citizens. Be sure to erase all physical traces of the hated traitor, Kevin-U! Erase everything!'

'Friend Computer,' says one of the IntSec agents, 'we've completed our task. Everything of Kevin-U has been collected.'

'Excellent, citizen. Please report for termination immediately.'

'Computer, I—'

'Citizen, you have been exposed to Viral Thought Patterns and treasonous influences well beyond your Security Clearance. This termination is for your own good. Rest assured that your clone templates will be heavily edited to ensure your future selves are perfectly loyal. Please report for termination immediately.'

'I—'

Zapzapzap.

The laser swings towards you. 'High Programmers! A preliminary survey team has completed a preliminary survey. Please refer to the document now printing. Erase this document when your task is complete. The preliminary survey team has already been erased. Thank you for your co-operation.'

Give the players a copy of Handout #1, The Incident Record. Everything on that list needs to be covered up. The easiest way to approach most of these problems is with the **Cleanup** specialty, but that's going to get expensive quickly. The characters either need to erase evidence, provide an alternate explanation, or promote those involved to BLUE or INDIGO clearance. For example, the troop movements could be dealt with by sending in some Archives Department clerks to erase all the records, or the characters could create a cover story about Commies in the trees



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and falsify some evidence with **Media Manipulation** to support this story.

Most of the items on the list can be dealt with easily (bearing in mind that player characters can overcomplicate making a cup of tea into a task worthy of Hercules), but there are a few tricky cover-ups.

Kevin-U & The Transbot: The incident report is based on the testimony of a bunch of Troubleshooters. Do you trust the reliability of Troubleshooters? Some **Interrogation** might get a more accurate account of what went on, or they could use **Thought Survey** to find out what people believe.

The Cafeteria Incident: Is the result of a computer error, and has nothing to do with the rest of the mission.

Kevin-U's Fortress: It needs to be erased. It's a giant concrete and steel death fortress built on the outskirts of Alpha Complex. How do you hide something like *that*? Well, ok, there's always the **Total War** option.

Once the characters have made a start on the cover-up, make sure they start investigating the vault.

3. The Vault

Drug hallucinations are a common problem in Alpha Complex. Sometimes, you even have shared hallucinations, and this one was a doozy. For a moment there, it felt like you were all in a horribly clichéd fantasy inn, and in the corner was a strange hooded old man. 'Know ye, adventurers, that in the dungeons of the evil sorcerer Kevin-U dwell horrors beyond imagining. Yea, and only those doughty men well-armed with sharp sword and sturdy shield and, aye, wit aplenty will pass yon dread portal and survive.'

So, who are you sending into the vault?

There are a few obvious choices for minion here, like PLC's Vault Recovery Teams or IntSec's Secure Security Checkpoint Checkers. Remind the players that they'll need to arrange either transport to the Vault, or else send someone with Outdoors Operations to escort their chosen Minions.

The vault is defended by multiple layered

security systems. Worse yet, it's full of very treasonous, hazardous or high-clearance stuff, so the Minions have to be guided through the Vault by the High Programmers.

Once they've picked a few Minions, divide the players into two roughly equal groups. One group is going to stay playing their High Programmers. The second group get to play the Minions who are being sent in to investigate the Vault. This second group will be collectively referred to as the Vault Investigative Cross-group Team for Immediate Mobilisation, or VICTIMS for short.

The second set are going to die, repeatedly and horribly, until either you or, less likely, the first group tire of this endless torture.

Ideally, this scene should go something like this:

Gamemaster: You see a big steel door. There's a sign on it saying 'DANGER – ELECTRIFIED'

Victim: Er, what should we do, sir?

High Programmer: Examine the wires connected to the door and send me a video feed.

Victim: Yes sir.

Gamemaster: (*whispered to the High Programmer*) Ok, with your awesome technical skills, you can see there are two ways to disarm this trap. You could walk them through the slow, tedious process of disconnecting the power supply from the secure door, or you could discharge the capacitors.

High Programmer: (*whispered*) Gotcha. (*To the Victim*) It's fine, open the door.

Victim: I really don't want to, sir. It says it's electrified.

High Programmer: He's probably bluffing.

Victim: There's a loud humming noise and a smell of ozone and all the hairs on my body are standing upright.

High Programmer: Are you some sort of hair controlling mutant?

Victim: No sir!

High Programmer: Then hurry up and touch the damn door.

Victim: I... have a really strong allergy to doors, especially ones that hum and are marked 'electrified'.

High Programmer: Minion #2?

Another Victim: Yessir?

High Programmer: Shove him through

the door.

Another Victim: Right away sir!

Victim: Aaaaaaag... wait, hold on a sec. I'm assuming that the door fries me, but –

Gamemaster: No, quite right. You're very dead.

Victim: T h o u g h t s o . Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaagh.

High Programmer: How long will his next clone take to arrive?

Gamemaster: A few minutes. By the way, his camera survived the unfortunate incident, and you can see that the door capacitors are only half charged now.

High Programmer: Excellent. Minion #2, I've got a job for you...

Briefing The Victims

Take the Victims aside and paraphrase the following in your own words. Or read it to them straight. Or do it through interpretive dance, or do a little slideshow. Any way you get the information across, short of physically engraving each word onto the side of a bullet and shooting your players, is fine with us Famous Game Designers.

Actually, the bullet idea isn't a bad one for some particular clueless players.

Anyway, where were we?

Congratulations, lucky players! You won't be playing your High Programmers in this scene. Instead, you're playing the lower-clearance Minions sent out to investigate the vault under Kevin-U's fortress. You will be in radio contact with the other High Programmers at all times, and must obey their orders. Failure to obey orders is treason. You may wish to misinterpret, deliberately screw up or undermine their orders.

Each of you should come up with a temporary character who's part of the Minions sent to the vault. You'll need a name, security clearance, job title and some vague sketch of a personality. You may or may not be a traitor – it's up to you – but remember, your honest efforts will only end up helping your rival High Programmers. It's even possible that your temporary character just happens to be a subversive agent of your regular PC...

If they ask where their High Programmers are, tell them they've been called off for an urgent conference with The

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There's Something Out There

As the Victims travel to the Vault and, well, die horribly in there, they will occasionally spot movement – a FlyBot in the distance, something creeping in the shadows, an access hatch left swinging and so on. There's someone – or something – in the Vault with them.

The Something is an elite squad of Vulture Squadron Warriors using experimental stealth suits. They're carrying the frozen pod containing Clem Unger, so the Victims can 'find' it in the Vault. There's no way for the Victims or the High Programmers to find these Vulture Warriors before the Clemisicle is planted, but the occasional glimpse of *things in the darkness* should nicely boost the paranoia levels.

There's Something Else Out There

The Something Else is Cyrus-X, Kevin-U's midget assassin. He's stalking the Vulture Squadron Warriors. The Vultures are getting very paranoid and jumpy as they occasionally glimpse a tiny cackling figure with an alarmingly big knife zipping through the shadow, but they can't catch Cyrus-X.

Cyrus-X doesn't do anything yet, but he'll show up again for the climax of the mission.

Computer.

Briefing The High Programmers

While the Victims are coming up with their temporary characters, brief the High Programmers on their next task.

Attention High Programmers! You will be guiding the selected Minions through the dangerous vaults of Kevin-U. You will be in constant radio contact with them, and they will rely on your wisdom and judgement to navigate the various traps and other hazards awaiting them. The Computer requests that you do not abuse them too much. The Computer also reminds you that many of the items in Kevin-U's vault may be treasonous or above the security clearance of your selected Minions. Please ensure that proper security clearance procedures are observed at all times. Exposure to information about your security clearance is treason.

Once both sides are ready, it's off to the Vault.

Getting There Is Half The Fun

The chosen Minions zoom out of Alpha Complex and into the wild Outdoors. There once was a direct route between the main body of the complex and Kevin-U's lair, but it got blown up when the High Programmer went rogue. Now, they've got to cross several kilometres of wilderness to get there. Does anyone

have an appropriate **Transport** or **Outdoors Operations** specialty?

With a successful skill check, the victims successfully make their way from A to B, where A is the exit from Alpha Complex and B is Kevin-U's lair. On a failed check, they get lost and end up at point C. Lots of interesting things begin with the letter 'C'. Cannibalism, for example. Or Carnivorous Plants. Or Chasms to Fall Into. Or Cyclosporiasis.

Lost Minions should call the High Programmers for advice on dealing with these and other potential hazards, such as:

- ☹ The vehicle's stuck in the mud.
- ☹ There could be Commies in the trees. All the instructional videos warned that there are Commies Outdoors.
- ☹ Aaagh! The light's gone out! The big central light of Outdoors just went behind the big rocky thing in the distance, and now there's no light other than some sort of pinpoint emergency lighting and it's completely useless! We're lost.
- ☹ We're out of food/fuel/napkins/Vault grease.

Knock Knock Knocking

The Victims arrive at Kevin-U's fortress (or the ruins of it, or whatever the PCs decided to do with the place – remember, it was declared an unplace by The Computer earlier in the mission). The Vault's located under the fortress, so the Victims may need to shield their

eyes (lest they see a non-existent giant fortress) or dig through the rubble to get to the access tunnel.

The entrance to the Vault is located at the end of a concrete-lined tunnel that slopes down very steeply. Getting down the ramp is easy enough, as long as you pay due care and attention and follow the guidelines in HPD&MC's popular pamphlet *Safely Traversing Steep Inclines (other than inclines not rated for human access)*, *A Citizen's Friendly Guide (full comprehension of this material is needed before applying for Advanced Personal Mobility Certification, Level 2)*, Part I – *Going Down*; getting up the ramp at any sort of speed is a lot harder, and definitely not to be attempted without first consulting *Safely Traversing Steep Inclines (other than inclines not rated for human access)*, *A Citizen's Friendly Guide (full comprehension of this material is needed before applying for Advanced Personal Mobility Certification, Level 2)*, Part II – *Going Up*, and that one's still in committee. At the bottom of the shaft is a really, really, really big door. You know the sort – armoured to some ludicrous level of protection, driven by these gigantic throbbing pistons that evoke strange thoughts even through the fog of hormone suppressants, the sort of doors that only open when the Imperial March from *Star Wars* is playing. Biiiiiiig door.

It's also closed. The lock consists of a face recognition system – you stick your head into this little hole in the door, and lasers



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scan ever inch of your skull and compare it to the records. If there's a match, the door opens. Otherwise, another laser performs a very thorough test of your neck's resistance to being sliced apart.

Hacking or Security Systems might be able to disable the facial recognition bit, but someone will still have to stick their head into the hole to see if it worked. It would take an awful lot of firepower to open the door, but a few well placed **Demolition** charges could send it toppling forward. Of course, anyone setting the charges would have to quickly traverse that steep incline before they're splattered...

Clever players will get The Computer to clone one of Kevin-U's terminated followers and send him out to open the vault for them. If they pick this option, but don't use **Cloning** to tweak the replacement's personality to make him more loyal, then the resurrected traitor happily opens the vault. After all, there's a DoomBot inside.

The DoomBot

Every good dungeon needs a dragon, and every good post-apocalyptic mad scientist's vault of doom needs one too. Unfortunately, Kevin-U's attempt at breeding a giant flying lizard was thwarted by vicious Intellectual Property ninjalawyers from another Complex a few hundred kilometres north of good ol' AC, so he had to make do with a DoomBot instead.

A DoomBot is a lot like a warbot, only painted black and less polite. On the far side of the room containing the DoomBot is a door into the vault proper; there's also an access hatch on the right, just inside the big door which is marked 'waste processing'.

'Rargh' says the DoomBot. 'You are not authorised users of this facility. Rargh.' Then it attacks with its serried ranks of

lasers and cannons and overkill beams and kill-o-zap rays. It's got an effective Violence score of 13, by the way.

Running away is an excellent idea – the DoomBot can go up the ramp, but only very, very slowly. The Victims have plenty of time to come up with a strategy while the DoomBot laboriously crawls up the slope towards them. Possible tactics include:

- ☞ The frontal assault, using **Assault**. Truly, truly heroic.
- ☞ Calling in an artillery strike or something from Alpha Complex. Do we have orbital lasers? We should have orbital lasers. Orbital lasers are cool.
- ☞ Sneaking past the bot using **Infiltration**, or finding another way into the vault with **Habitat Engineering**.
- ☞ Distract the DoomBot somehow, giving the Victims enough time to make it into Waste Disposal.

If the players stall for too long, then the Vulture Squadron Warriors who are escorting Clem get bored and blow up the DoomBot with a handy stealth tacnuke. It's wonderful how putting 'stealth' in front of anything makes it invisible to the players.

Waste Disposal

If the Victims went down this side passage, they find themselves in a short corridor filled with toxic sludge. The sludge drips from vents in the ceiling in what must be described as an eager way. It's weirdly *enthusiastic* sludge, as if it really looks forward to the prospect of drowning a few Victims.

The short corridor takes a sharp left and continues on for some distance. It's obvious that if you were to go down this long corridor, you could bypass the giant rampaging DoomBot entirely. There is, however, a small complication – the long corridor's flooded with toxic goop.

The further along it you go, the deeper the sludge. At times like this, a good citizen consults Technical Service's rather unpopular and little-loved pamphlet *So, You've Got To Work In Toxic Sludge All Day – A Citizen's Guide To Mutated Fungal Growths And Parasites* and reads the section about swimming through drifts of unidentified slime*.

The only way to get through the slime safely is to stand on someone else's shoulders. Those on top of the pile will float serenely down the corridor and reach their destination safely and happily. Those at the bottom will endure backbreaking labour up to, and quite possibly beyond the point at which their skin melts. There are all sorts of clever specialties that could be used in this situation, like **Chemical Engineering** or **Mutant Studies** or **Construction** – but do any of the Minions have such a specialty? No? How unfortunate.

Oh, and because no visit to a room full of toxic sludge is complete without the authentic trash compactor experience – halfway down the corridor, the walls start closing in.

Kevin-U's Archives

The Victims make it past the DoomBot (or the trash compactor) and find themselves in Kevin-U's secret archives. It's stacked floor to ceiling with wonderful things. It's like being a kid in a candy store, if the candy were six security levels above your current clearance and/or highly dangerous.

So, what's in this archive?

The Gang of Fourteen and a Half Records: It looks like Kevin-U was a conscientious, well-organised arch-traitor who kept careful notes on both his evil scheme to overthrow Friend Computer *and* the allies involved. Any High Programmer who's loyal to Friend

*: It's a short section. It says 'don't.'**

**: Unless ordered to do so by a higher-clearance citizen or Your Friend, The Computer. In such a situation, rest assured that

- a) The higher-clearance citizen or The Computer knows that the toxic sludge is actually harmless.
- b) The higher-clearance citizen or The Computer will provide adequate medical care or safety equipment.
- c) The higher-clearance citizen or The Computer will note your heroic sacrifice.
(delete as appropriate)

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Computer should want to get his hands on this data. Anyone involved in the Gang of Fourteen and a Half *definitely* wants these records.

Retrieving the data calls for Data Retrieval, as they're both encrypted and extensive. If a High Programmer hands the archives over to Internal Security, it's worth three Commendation Points. If a High Programmer's named in the archives, that's worth 10 Treason Points at least.

It would be remiss of us at this point to fail to point out that the records are written on paper and are highly flammable.

Kevin-U's Goldfish: Kevin-U kept two goldfish. He called them Maurice and Sean and he loved them very much. None of the victims have ever seen a goldfish before, or any kind of a fish for that matter, so to your average citizen the scene looks like this:

On a Perspex plinth, you find a small globe of some sort of clear plastic. It's open at the top, and it's filled with some sort of translucent substance. Inside, the base of the globe is coated in a layer of fragmented material and organic fronds. Moving around, apparently at random, are two small things. They're yellowish in colour, have no discernable limbs, and seem to be ignoring you – wait, one of them just moved up to the top of the globe for a moment! It definitely reacted to your presence! You can't tell, but you think it might be angry! What do you do?

Kevin-U's Vacuum Cleaner: Another prized relic of Old Reckoning times, Kevin-U has a working vacuum cleaner. A metal body connected by a flexible hose to a metal nozzle, with a single on-off control. Perfectly harmless, although worth something to the Romantics.

The Anti-Graviton Beam: A highly dangerous gadget developed by Kevin-U, it consists of a metal body connected by a flexible hose to a metal nozzle. When activated by pressing the single on-off switch, the device emits a beam of anti-gravitons. It doesn't make things float: it's not an anti-gravity machine, it's an anti-graviton machine. It reacts to gravitons like matter reacts to antimatter.

Fortunately for the universe, the beam

has a very short range, only affecting items within a few centimetres of the end of the nozzle. When turned on, the machine makes a howling noise (very like a vacuum cleaner) as air molecules are annihilated by the anti-graviton beam. The damage the device does is proportional to the density of the object it's used on (more density means more gravitons to interact explosively with the anti-gravitons, of course).

Kevin-U's Tea Set: An antique tea set made of china. Incredibly valuable and very very fragile.

Kevin-U's ValetBot: A jackobot wearing a dinner jacket. It's down here for repairs, as its bot brain is damaged. If activated, the ValetBot insists on folding and pressing all clothes within sight, even if they're currently being worn. The bot's immensely strong and fast. Nudity is the only defence.

Kevin-U's Personal Notes: Lots of handy information about Alpha Complex. In game terms, it's 10 Access in a handy portable package.

Clem On Ice

At some point during the visit to the Vault, the Vulture Warriors plant Clem's cryogenic suspension unit in a place where the Victims will find it. Ideally, it's put at the back of the Archives room, but they'll settle for leaving it at the door and running away before anyone sees it.

When one of the Victims finds the cryogenic pod, read the following:

You find an old and battered cryofreeze capsule. There's a digital readout on it, informing you that the defrost cycle has started and will be complete in ten seconds. Through the rapidly melting ice on the viewport, you can make out the features of a spindly-limbed figure wearing a very strange uniform.

The door swings open, and the stranger from the distant past steps out. 'Hi,' he says, 'I'm going to fall down now, ok?'

He does so.

Over all your coms – and over the speakers in the Situation Room – The Computer cuts in. 'ATTENTION CITIZENS! NEW SUPERUSER

ONLINE. UPDATING PERMISSIONS AND APPLYING PATCHES.... INTEGRATING WITH CURRENT SYSTEMS... LEGACY SUPPORT ACTIVE... CITIZEN CLEM-U-NGR RECOGNISED.

PROTECT CITIZEN CLEM-U-NGR. ESCORT HIM TO THE SITUATION ROOM IMMEDIATELY. PRIORITY ALPHA PLUS PLUS PLUS!!! A VULTURE SQUADRON UNIT HAS BEEN DEPLOYED TO ASSIST.'

The Vultures are already on the scene, so they'll pop out after a minute or two and pretend they just arrived.

4. Welcome On Board

Clem-U's whisked back to Alpha Complex, scrubbed by scrubbots and given a shiny new white robe, as befits one of ULTRAVIOLET clearance. He's also handed a copy of the Alpha Complex Orientation Handbook (214 Revision, a mere 16,332 pages long, not including the appendices) and shipped off to the Situation Room. He has no idea what's going on.

Clem-U is the primary Non-Player Character for the second half of this mission, so let's get to know him. Born the old-fashioned way to loving parents in Iowa, Clem Unger got a job as a mid-level programmer with the massive transnational corporation responsible for installing and maintaining the world-spanning Alpha computer network. Just before the infamous asteroid that wiped out Life As Clem Knew It was detected, Clem Unger was installing a new heuristic decision-making module into the San Francisco Civil Amenities Monitor – one of the computer systems that would soon be known with big capital letters. Anyway, when the impending doom of humanity was detected, the transnational corporation responded by freezing its legions of employees and storing them in an abandoned mining complex deep underground. The plan was that in centuries to come, they would emerge after all the lawsuits were abandoned (they were also the company in charge of running the planet's Giant Incoming Asteroid Detection Program) or the rest of humanity was extinct, whichever came first.

In the rush, Clem's frozen pod was misfiled



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as cleaning supplies and left in a closet for many decades, until discovered by a Troubleshooter team a few years ago. The Computer's kept Clem on ice ever since. Clem's still logged into the SFCAM network, which gives him extremely high-level access to the descendant of that network – The Computer. He's effectively got a Software score of **18** (oooh).

Clem's very much a product of his environment – he's a corporate nerd, born of an optimistic time that seemed to herald a golden age. Humanity had overcome the trials and tribulations of the early 21st Century and was reaching for the stars. Mighty spaceships had established bases on other worlds, science promised to extend life and maybe even cheat death, and best of all, there was no fear anymore, as both nations and individuals trusted their peers. (It wasn't all perfect; those shining spaceships were decked in corporate advertising, and the moonbase was sponsored by Pepsi. The cultural wars between the control-obsessed megacorporations and the free-thinking weird fringe sects were becoming violent, and, y'know, giant incoming asteroid and all, but Clem barely noticed these things).

Really, Clem's mind isn't too different from that of your average early 21st Century guy. He does have an unusually strong moral streak, which he inherited from his mother. He's also a computer geek and a big fan of *Alice in Wonderland* for some reason.

Now Clem's in the middle of Alpha Complex. He has, we remind you, no idea what's going on. He's terrified of this weird place with these weird people, and worse, they seem to think he's in charge. Someone babbled something about Communism? Communism's been dead for, like, a hundred years. Why is this computer bossing everyone around – it's just an AC208 model, and those *never* worked right! Why did that guy just get shot? Why does the guy who just got shot have a twin brother? And another one? What's going on? Aaaaaaagh.

What could be more fun than playing an innocent abroad in Alpha Complex?

Playing an innocent with ULTRAVIOLET clearance, an innocent who wants to tell the truth and make things better.

What could be even more fun than

that?

Making the players babysit him.

The Ringer

One great way to use Clem is to bring in a new player to portray him. Ideally, this new player knows almost nothing about *PARANOIA*. Even people who don't regularly play roleplaying games – y'know, normal people – can be used in this role. The more mundane and clueless the player, the better.

Mission Briefing #2

Attention, High Programmers. Citizen Clem-U-NGR is now reassigned to your committee. Please bring him up to speed on current operations. Ensure you weigh his unique input appropriately.

Evidence recovered from the vault suggests that followers of the Gang of Fourteen and a Half are still at large in KFC Sector. Internal Security intercepted the following transmission earlier today.

The Computer plays a tape of a conversation between two electronically distorted voices.

Voice #1: Number One lives! The movement is still strong, brother!

Voice #2: I heard The Big C stomped on Kevin-U!

Voice #1: Ok, he don't live. But we're still strong – and with the big boss gone, there'll be promotions for everyone! If you back out now, you get nuthin' when we take over, right? So...

Voice #2: I hear ya. When's the meeting?

Voice #1: 2300 hours, usual place. Turn the wheel back...

Voice #2: Squeaky wheels get the jiffylube.

Purge the conspiracy from the sector. Your Access Budget is 20 ACCESS units. That is all.

Directives & Secret Society Missions #2

☞ **Armed Forces:** Show the new High Programmer just how powerful and awesome the Armed Forces are! We'll clear out KFC Sector in double-quick time, much faster than those

IntSec losers.

☞ **CPU:** A new High Programmer? That's wonderful! Make sure that he understands the... special relationship between Central Processing and the UVs. He must understand that CPU exists to serve him, and that any questions he has should be answered by CPU. Make sure he relies on us for everything.

☞ **HPD&MC:** We've booked a few members of your Committee onto *The Indigo Scoop*, one of our high-clearance politics chat shows. We want you to get the ratings as high as possible, and nothing makes for high ratings like public arguments between High Programmers.

☞ **PLC:** Something weird's happening with the records. We produced 13,556 'Hi, My Name's Bob-R-ABC' badges, and only sold one of them. Our name badge production facility is hooked right into the Human Resources database. Something's up... oh, and find a way to sell off 13,555 Bob-R-ABC badges, please.

☞ **R&D:** The new High Programmer comes from a more primitive age, when people feared science and progress. Show him the wonders of our wonderful Alpha Complex. Make him see the virtues of our modern age.

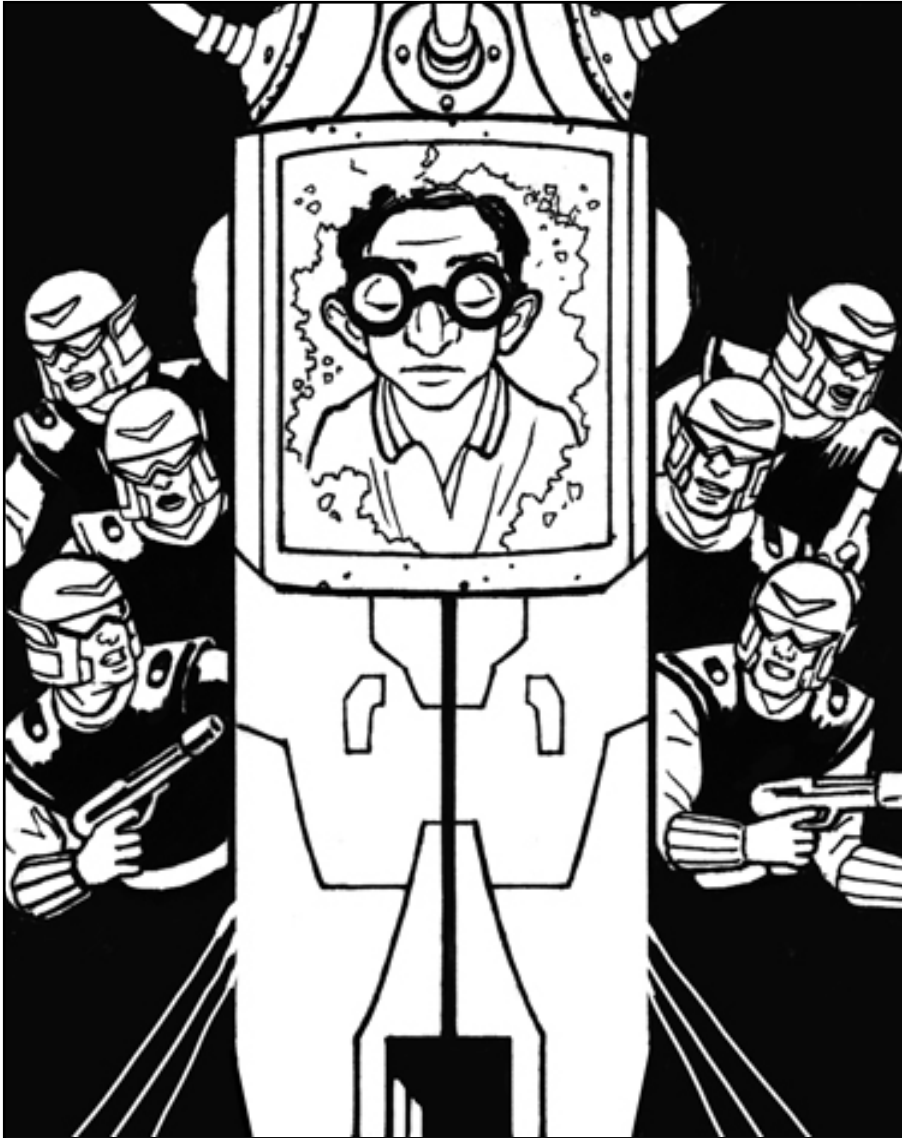
☞ **IntSec:** Every secret society and traitorous conspirator is going to be after that new High Programmer. Keep an eye on him. Protect him from traitorous influences. Keep him loyal.

☞ **Tech Services:** This is our chance to finally break the deadlock with those bastards over in Power Services. Prove to the new High Programmer just how great we are!

☞ **Power Services:** This is our chance to finally break the deadlock with those bastards over in Tech Services. Prove to the new High Programmer just how great we are!

Anti-Mutant: If Clem-U is pure, he could be the prophesied Purestrain Leader who will drive the mutie taint from Alpha

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Complex! Test him for mutant powers – if he is pure, then recruit him at all costs!

C.L.A.: Make sure that Clem-U knows who his friends are, understand? We want him on our side.

Clone Arrangers: Oh! A sample of Clem-U's DNA would be really useful to us – it's probably not warped by genotoxins like most Alpha Complex citizens. We don't mean your DNA is warped, sir, of course, just *most people's*.

Communists: Comrade! We have heard there is a purge coming to this sector! We want you to plant as much evidence as possible that those you arrest are Communists – unless they are

Communists, in which case you must free them!

Computer Phreaks: Clem-U... wow. We've heard tales that he's still logged in with level one access. Legends say he's even got an MCP, whatever that is! Get it off him!

Corpore Metal: A new High Programmer? Impress him with our bot brothers! Show him the wonders of the modern era!

Death Leopard: If you can do a prank on the upcoming edition of *Indigo Scoop*, it would be awesome!

FCCC-P: Beware of false prophets! The omens say this Clem-U is a tainted

enemy of the Anti-Computer! Have him eliminated.

Frankenstein Destroyers: Recruit this new High Programmer to our cause.

Free Enterprise: Don't ask why, but we've got about fifty thousand cases of defective Boot-O-Klene Boot Spray to get rid of. Find a way.

I.W.W.: Here's a bugging device. Plant it in the Situation Room. Make sure it's not detected.

Mystics: Open Clem-U's mind with this dose of... actually, I can't pronounce the official name of this stuff. We call it Brainy Melty for short.

Pro Tech: Here's a bugging device. Plant it on Clem-U. Make sure it's not detected.

Psion: Test Clem-U to see if he is a mutant. If he is not, eliminate him.

PURGE: Use Clem-U's inexperience to our advantage. Convince him to wreak havoc on Alpha Complex.

Romantics: Clem-U! A High Programmer from the Olden Times! Kidnap him and bring him to us!

Runners: Rumour has it there's a purge coming – and that means lots of recruits for us! Spread Runner propaganda however you can. Here's a data disc with lots of information.

Servants of Cthulhu: That is not dead which can eternal lie... and being in a cryogenic tube might qualify. Test this Clem-U for tentacles.

Sierra Club: As a citizen from the before times, Clem-U must love nature, and so he will be a potent ally for us. If he doesn't love nature, reawaken his natural instincts with this box. It contains a 'squirrel'. We're sure it's a squirrel. Totally. Stand well back when opening the box.

As You Know, Clem...

Clem-U's now on the Committee. He's got 10 Access of his own to play with. He'll also need a Service Group to run, so the players will have to make him Acting Head of a Service Group.



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Now, Clem gets to tag along with the characters as they erase traitors from KFC Sector. The humour in this routine comes from the clash between the PCs' business-as-usual in Alpha Complex (*'ok, we terminate everyone pre-emptively, then sort through the evidence and give people who definitely weren't Gang of Fourteen and a Half followers clone refunds...'*) and Clem's conventional-modern-day-morals-under-assault-by-extreme-culture-shock (*'you're going to what everyone?!'*) The more outlandish or abhorrent the solutions proposed by the PCs, the more outraged Clem becomes.

Clem's especially opposed to The Computer being in charge. He programmed one of the core subsystems of The Computer back in the day, and *that* was an obsolete, bug-ridden piece of junk that never worked right and couldn't be trusted to keep the trams running on time. There's no way that thing should have any authority whatsoever, let alone the power of life and death over everyone.

Cleaning Up KFC Sector

The Gang of Fourteen and a Half are a loose cabal of Humanists and other Secret Societies (a re-enactment of Romantics, a tour group of Sierra Clubbers, a suicide pact of PURGERS and a jogging of Runners*). There are lots of low-ranking followers of the Gang in KFC Sector, most of whom are entirely unaware that Kevin-U's already been reduced to his component molecules.

There are three genuinely traitorous traitors in KFC Sector. To find these villains, the characters will have to interrogate low-ranking traitors and then follow the clues. These high-ranking traitors are:

- ☞ **Gherbod-G-TRE**, one of the sector's Hydroponics Engineers. He's a Sierra Clubber who's been surreptitiously introducing Outdoor species into the KFC Hydroponics bays for years. Where other sectors have kelp, more kelp, soy, more soy, and an

alarming genetically engineered crossbreed called soyelp, the KFC bays bloom with roses and apples. Gherbod-G's a gentle, avuncular chap, who enjoys pottering in his gardens and hardly ever uses his enemies as fertiliser.

- ☞ **Rhonda-B-KFC**, an Internal Security Trooper and a committed Humanist. She uses her position in Internal Security to rescue Gang of Four members from the termination booths.
- ☞ Finally, there's the elusive **Cyrus-X**, but the characters won't find the midget assassin yet.

Tracking Down Traitors

Come on, half the specialties are for this sort of stuff – **Investigation, Thought Survey, Covert Operations, Interrogation, Subliminal Messaging, Surveillance** – it's like arresting treasonous fish in a barrel.

Once a few traitors have been found (and in Alpha Complex, everything's guilty of something), then **Interrogation** or some nice **Pharmatherapy** can be used to extract useful information. Here's a transcript of a traitorous confession extracted using **Interrogation**.

Interrogator: Tell us what you know about the Gang of Fourteen and a Half.

Traitor: Never! Down with the oppressive Computer!

Interrogator: Deploy the very painful electrodes.

Traitor: Aaaagh!

Interrogator: Will you talk?

Traitor: ...sooner die...

Interrogator: Insert the very painful electrodes.

Traitor: Ok, ok! I know that Number Seven works in the hydroponics bay, and that if I ever get arrested, I'm supposed to ask for Rhonda-B. Oh vatslime, I forgot that bit. Er, is Rhonda-B there?

Interrogator: I'm asking the questions. Anyone else?

Traitor: I heard there's a meeting tonight, but I don't know where. Oh, and there's

another senior member in the sector, but I don't know who it is!

Now, here's the same interrogation on drugs.

Interrogator: Will you talk?

Traitor: Never! Down with the oppressive Computer!

Interrogator: 20ccs of Telescopamine Plus, docbot.

Traitor: Ow... ooooh.... I... aaah... er... oooo. Kumquat?

Interrogator: Tell us all you know about the Gang of Fourteen and a Half.

Traitor: They're a gang... and there's fourteen of them... oh, and a half of one.

Interrogator: Tell us about their agents in this sector!

Traitor: Oh... there's... that guy... who smells of green stuff... and the nice IntSec Troopery person, Rhonda-something... and that little guy I don't know... and me... I'm an agent.

Interrogator: What else?

Traitor: Man, can I get some algae chips? I've got the munchies real bad.

Other possible ways to track down traitors:

Assessment or Habitat Engineering: KFC's hydroponics bay consumes 78% more power than other comparable facilities, but isn't noticeably more productive. Where's that power going?

Paperwork: It looks like a lot of arrests in KFC Sector go awry, especially ones where the suspect's accused of being a Humanist. The terminatee is brought to IntSec for processing, but never gets fried.

Communication: Tracing that intercepted message leads to a Gang of Fourteen follower who's only too happy to tell the High Programmers where the Gang rally is being held. Storming that with Crowd Control, Assault or Interrogation lets the characters capture many of the conspiracy's followers and gives them the names of Rhonda-B

* A Lynch mob of Anti-Mutants, a compound of C.L.Aers, an arrangement of Clone Arrangers, a league of Communists, a chatroom of Computer Phreaks, a collective of Corpore Metal, a gang of Death Leopards, a congregation of FCCC-Pers, a mob of Frankenstein Destroyers, a wholly legitimate gathering of Free Enterprises, a union of Wobblies, a cosmic union of Mystics, a network of Pro Techies, a hive mind of Psions, and a cult of Servants of Cthulhu.

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and Gherbod-G, the two most senior members of the conspiracy in the sector.

The Green Death

Gherbod-G knows that with Kevin-U gone, there's no chance of survival. He's doomed. He's therefore into stage three of the process, bargaining. As soon as the authorities close in on his hydroponics bays, he contacts the Situation Room.

On the screen, you see a chubby GREEN citizen standing in the middle of a lush hydroponics bay. It's so overgrown it could almost be Outdoors. He stares right into the camera and address you directly.

'High Programmers, this is Gherbod-G. You know I'm a traitor, and I know you know, and you know I know you know, but what you don't know is why. I will tell you why.' He holds up a shiny apple. 'My life's work. All our hydroponics bays are focussed only on efficiency, on producing the most biomatter with the least input. Considerations like nutritional value and flavour are secondary. After all, why bother making something taste good when you can drown it in dubious chemical flavourings?

This apple was grown in my hydroponics facility. For only a small investment, we could give everyone in Alpha Complex a ration of fresh, chemical-free food instead of feeding the INFRAREDs drug-laced slop out of the food vats. I submitted my proposal to PLC and they turned me down! They said it was against policy! Kevin-U listened – and I'll make you listen.'

He holds up a remote control. 'If you don't implement my hydroponic innovations, I'll blow them up!'

It's easy to get rid of Gherbod-G, obviously; telling a madman with a bomb who's willing to blow himself up to blow himself up isn't exactly challenging. Arresting him means navigating the maze of hydroponics (**Habitat Engineering** or **Outdoor Operations**) and then taking him out before he can activate the bombs (**Wetwork** to zap him before he can react, or **Demolitions** or **Sabotage** to remove the bombs).

Clem-U's appalled by Gherbod-G's testimony, and questions the characters

as to *why* The Computer would deny healthy food to the citizens.

Assault on Precinct KFC

Meanwhile, Rhonda-B's still stuck in stage one, denial. She's convinced that Kevin-U escaped The Computer's attack and is still at large. Rhonda-B's got the Empathic Liar mutant ability – she always knows just what to say to convince people that she's on their side. Her supervisor at Internal Security is Kurt-I, and he believes that Rhonda-B is one of his most loyal and efficient officers. He'll do almost anything to defend her, including taking calls from High Programmers.

If the characters try to arrest or terminate Rhonda-B, then Kurt-I will contact them on her behalf. He'll do his best to shield her from the authorities. **Mutant Studies** can identify clear signs that Kurt-I's bewitched, as can **Assessment**. Directly attacking KFC IntSec Central is like kicking over an anthill, as all the troopers assume they've been tagged as traitors and start fighting back – and they've got enough firepower to kick things up to **Total War**.

Mission Accomplished

If either Rhonda-B or Gherbod-G are interrogated, they can identify any player characters who are secret members of the Gang.

Once the two arch-traitors are arrested or terminated, The Computer plays a brief fanfare and deploys a Mission Accomplished banner that flops down across the back wall of the Situation Room. *'Congratulations citizens. Your efforts to identify and terminate traitors are appreciated. A complementary banquet will take place in the Oak Suite at 2030 hours.'*

The Computer then directs Clem-U and half of the PCs to attend the evening's taping of the *Indigo Scoop*.

5. Say You Want A Revolution

There's no free press in Alpha Complex, no official media that isn't wholly under the control of The Computer. There is an entirely unfree press, which exists

to entertain and distract the proles with shiny propaganda and videos of things going fast before exploding. A very small segment of this media is dedicated to providing news to high-clearance citizens. The Computer wants the decisions of the High Programmers to be questioned and challenged in an appropriately secure and controlled fashion, hence the existence of programs like *The Indigo Scoop*.

It's as close as Alpha Complex gets to a politics chat show. Guests – occasionally even High Programmers – are questioned by a hand picked audience. 99% of the questions are absolute softballs (*'Would the High Programmer categorise his efforts to stamp out Communism as heroic, very heroic or really very heroic but not so heroic as to diminish the efforts of other equally loyal citizens?'*). It's still a propaganda exercise, but one aimed at the upper-middle classes.

There are several versions of *Indigo Scoop* – a heavily censored GREEN-clearance edition, the standard INDIGO one, and the UVs-and-filesarers only unedited broadcast.

Anyway, The Computer has decreed that at least half the High Programmers appear on *Indigo Scoop* to explain their current efforts. Pick the High Programmers whose players played the Victims in **Encounter 3: The Vault**. Don't forget that characters with a Public Standing can gain or lose Fame based on their performance in the show! (Characters without a Public Standing can still appear on television, but their faces and voices will be electronically distorted, and mentioning them by name on air is treason).

Clem-U's going along too.

Briefing The Interviewers

Take the players who *weren't* picked to go on the show aside and explain to them that they're going to be playing the interviewers. They should come up with a name, assignment (GREEN or higher clearance, please), personality and a few questions for the High Programmers. For example, a player might temporarily take on the personality of Harold-B, a mid-level Memory Editor from HPD&MC. He's very concerned about Communism



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in the water supply, and wants to know what the High Programmers intend to do about it. The players can ask any questions they want, but remember that the High Programmers they'll be questioning have the power of life and death over them – shouting 'are you a traitor?' will get you zapped live on camera.

Good questions, for anyone stuck for a tough question:

- ☞ Why do you think Kevin-U had such widespread support?
- ☞ Does this conspiracy indicate widespread unhappiness in the sector, probably due to mismanagement?
- ☞ Who, in your view, is chiefly responsible for such a high-clearance traitor going undiscovered for so long?
- ☞ Who is this new High Programmer?
- ☞ Does the presence of a High Programmer from the first days of Alpha Complex indicate a softening of official censure of history?
- ☞ Was Kevin-U a Communist? If he wasn't, are Communists going uncaptured while you're investigating the Gang of Fourteen and a Half?
- ☞ Who is this 'Gang of Fourteen and a Half'? Have all its members been arrested?

Briefing The Interviewees

Give the players a few minutes to come up with their temporary characters. While they're doing that, the High Programmers arrive at the *Indigo Scoop* studio, where the role of perky host Kathy-I will be played by the lovely and talented Gamemaster.

'Hello, sirs! I'm so happy you could join us for this special edition of Indigo Scoop, Alpha Complex's premier high-security chat show. We'll be ready to start in just a few minutes. We'll tell everyone we're going out live, but of course there's a delay to allow proper editing and approval. Do any of you have any special requirements? Let's get make-up in here – we want you to look your best!'

Now, we're obviously going to cover the recent Kevin-U situation. We'll edit any references out of the GREEN-clearance edition, as I hear it's all been classified

INDIGO. We'll edit the audience too, afterwards.

Ok, we're on in two minutes. Places everyone!'

There's One For Everyone In The Audience!

The Computer is, according to its faulty, designed-by-the-lowest-bidder logic circuits, trying to pressurise Clem-U into committing treachery, so he'll provide a suitable loyalty test for the player characters. Somewhere along the way, it adds 2 and 2 and makes 4.000000000000 (repeating), so The Computer defaults to what it knows best – terminating people.

After all the interviewers have asked one question, pick the one who asked the hardest question. Internal Security goons march into the studio and drag that interviewer off to the termination booth (and there's one located just outside the studio, so you can hear – and smell – the traitors being processed). In each case, the goons march in, pause the recordings at the order of The Computer, grab the traitor, and march out. Continuity assistants ensure that everyone is in the same exact position when taping resumes, so there's no visible gap in the visual record apart from one citizen suddenly vanishing. Repeat this procedure until all the interviewers are gone to the Big Smoking Boot In The Dome.

Agent Provocateur

The Computer has planted one of its agents in the *Indigo Scoop*'s audience, just to ask one carefully-planned question. The agent is Jake-B. At the very end of the show, just as Kathy-V is about to wrap up, Jake-B stands to ask his very special question.

'High Programmer Clem-U-NGR, are you happy?'

And Clem shrugs his shoulders in confusion and says 'no'.

There's an audible intake of breath. Kathy-V leaps into the breach and says 'tune in next week, folks, when we'll be having a round-table discussion on the new Form Tracking Regulations Revision

Committee Bi-Cycle Report! The *Indigo Scoop* – bringing you the high-clearance scoop on politics in this ever-more-perfect Complex of ours!'

The High Programmers are hustled offstage by minders. The idea that a High Programmer might do something as abhorrent and seditious as admit *unhappiness* has shaken the audience to their very core.

You're Either With Us, Against Us or Spying On Us

Clem-U's seen enough – the madness, the terminations, the machinations of The Computer. He's going to do something about it, and as a tech support computer engineer he knows exactly what to do. Turn The Computer off and restore from backups. After the characters leave the *Indigo Scoop*, Clem-U asks them all to meet him in his assigned quarters.

Clem-U's home is a vast empty space the size of a dozen aircraft hangars piled on top of each other. It's all painted a brilliant, shimmering white, but there's no furniture except a bed, a deck and a toilet in the middle of this endless expanse. Hey, he's just moved in, and hasn't had time to consider decoration.

As soon as the player characters arrive, he launches into an impassioned speech.

'This place is totally, like, through the looking glass. The computer's running around going off with his head all the time for absolutely no reason, and everyone's just going along with it like all this was normal! This isn't normal! I know normal, and this isn't it! Look, it's really great that you revived me from that cryo-thingy, but it sucks that you all live in this dystopian whatsit!'

It doesn't have to be like this. The problem, right, is with The Computer. So, we fix it. I used to work for the company who made it back before everything went to hell. I know where to get a Master Control Program that'll reboot the whole mainframe. We do a factory reset and start again from scratch.

All you guys have to do is pick up something from Des Moines. Can you get someone to

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do that? 'cos if you can, then we can sort this place out!

This is the crux of The Computer's whole scheme. High Programmers who agree to help Clem are committing high treason and will be terminated (no saving throw allowed). The Big C isn't going to tip its hand just yet, though – Clem-U's identified a threat to The Computer that must be dealt with.

What The Computer doesn't know is that Cyrus-X is listening in on the whole conversation.

This! Is! Treeaaaaasssonnn! Some loyal or paranoid programmers may report Clem-U to The Computer instead of going along with this crazy scheme. If they do so, then call them aside for a private conference with The Computer. It will explain that it knows Clem-U is a traitor and that several of the other High Programmers have also betrayed it. Everything is going according to plan. Play along for now until the threat to Alpha Complex has been dealt with.

Friends in Short Places: If any of the High Programmers are Gang of Fourteen and a Half members, then they're contacted by Cyrus-X. The midget says that he's going to stow away with any expedition to Des Moines – he'll retrieve the Master Control Program and transmit it to them. All they need to do is come up with a secure way for him to get the data to them. He doesn't trust Clem-U – he knows that Clem-U's cryopod was planted by Vulture Troopers, and wasn't in the vault originally.

Des Moines Redux

Getting to Des Moines needs **Transport** and **Outdoor Operations**. Clem-U also wants it done without The Computer noticing, which calls for **Hacking**, **Surveillance** and **Covert Operations**. The best way to get there is via Armed Forces flybot, but there are lots of options. However the Minions get there, they unwittingly bring along an extra passenger – Cyrus-X tags along.

When the unfortunate Minions get to Des Moines, they discover the city is a blasted wasteland of crumbling domes, office buildings and rampaging mutant evangelists. The corporate office building is located near the university campus,

just as Clem-U remembered. The Minions comb through the wreckage until they find a battered but still functional memory core containing a Master Control Program.

'Sir, we have found the target. Returning to Alphaaaaagh!' On the screen, you see your minions being blasted by a hail of laser bolts from the shadows.

Four Vulture Squadron Warriors step out of the darkness. Two of them pick up the memory core and prop it against a wall, while the other two take aim at it. 'This threat to the operational integrity of The Computer will now be erased. Bear witness, High Programmers to the aaaagh!'

Another hail of laser bolts wipe out the Vultures. When the last clone topples to the ground, a figure emerges from the darkness.

A very short figure. This guy's wearing a tattered black Alpha Complex jumpsuit, and he's less than a metre tall.

'Mwaahahahah' he says. 'Revenge is mine! The Gang of Fourteen and Half will win in the end!'

Cyrus-X begins to transmit the MCP to any renegade High Programmers... and then there's a bright white flash.

Apocalypse and a Half

'Des Moines terminated,' says The Computer. 'ICBM estimated yield, 1200 megatons. Probability of target destruction: 99.987%. Launching second ICBM.'

Doors burst open, vents explode, walls are breached, and IntSec Troopers swarm into the room. 'Arrest Citizen Clem-U,' screeches The Computer. Clem-U's rapidly subdued and tossed back into a cryopod.

Any High Programmers who went along willingly with Clem-U's crazy scheme to reboot The Computer are also arrested and terminated. Their replacement clones may be more loyal.

Any High Programmers who refused to aid Clem-U or reported him as a traitor are commended for their loyalty and awarded one bonus Access each. Don't spend it all at once.

And any High Programmers who joined the Gang of Fourteen and a Half, avoided detection by The Computer and managed to get the Master Control Program off Cyrus-X – congratulations! They deserve their mastery of The Computer's off switch! Their duplicity and barefaced treachery marks them as truly exceptional *PARANOIA* players.





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>>>CPU/Sched/943221

>>>CLEARANCE VIOLET

>>>TAGS Kevin-U, Military Operations, Gang of Fourteen and a Half, Turducken of Treason

Time	Event	Evidence	Witnesses	Process
1:09:00	Ex-High Programmer Kevin-U makes a public appearance at the FunGrow Junior Citizen Creche. His speech deviates from the pre-approved script 73 times.	Speech transcripts (ORANGE)	Creche staff (ORANGE), 216 Junior Citizens (IR)	[]
1:12:32	Ex-High Programmer Kevin-U meets with the CPU Committee for Subcommittee Composition Review Restructuring.	Minutes (BLUE)	Committee members (BLUE/GREEN)	[]
1:16:00	IntSec officers observe ex-High Programmer Kevin-U meeting with known Romantic agents.	Video recording (UNCLASSIFIED)	IntSec Troopers (BLUE)	[]
1:16:15	Kevin-U is requested to report to a confession booth to explain himself. Instead, he flees Alpha Complex by rerouting a transbot full of orphans and electric puppies. A Troubleshooter team pursues but is unable to secure Kevin-U. He reaches his secure undisclosed location and seals the connecting transtubes.	Transbot Vehicle Log (YELLOW)	Power Services Traffic Control (GREEN), Troubleshooter Team #54437 (RED)	[]
1:19:20	ERROR: INCIDENT DESCRIPTION NOT FOUND		Staff of Wonk-Y's Fast Food (YELLOW), Transdimensional Research Team (BLUE), Unclassified Lifeform (Unknown)	[]
2:03:20	Approval for Operation CHERRY CUPCAKE granted.	CHERRY CUPCAKE Operational Plan (BLUE)		[]
2:07:40	Armed Forces units exit Alpha Complex via Access Point 45.	Physical Evidence of Troop movements	1 st , 3 rd , 14 th , 16 th , 17 th Heroic Infantry Regiments (RED) 4 th Power Armour (YELLOW) Warbots (GREEN) FlyBot Bombardment (GREEN) Vulture Squadron Assault (BLUE) Exit Security (YELLOW)	[]
2:10:30	Armed Forces units engage Kevin-U's personal guard.	TacNuke detonations, enough laser fire to be visible from orbit	As above, plus Kevin-U's personal guard (TERMINATED)	[]
2:14:11	Internal Security agents seize Kevin-U.		Internal Security Extraction Team (BLUE)	[]
2:16:00	Kevin-U's fortress is declared an unplace.	Underground fortress comprising 113 kilometres of passageways, layered defences, armoured bunkers etc		[]
2:19:10	Kevin-U is found guilty of high treason and conspiring against The Computer (full list of charges available on request).	Court Records (BLUE)		[]
2:19:11	Kevin-U admits membership in treasonous conspiracy 'Gang of Fourteen and a Half'.	Court Records (BLUE)		[]
2:19:12	Kevin-U is erased.	Termination records (GREEN)		[]

When things were interesting

Ari: Would you care to bet a million dollars on that?

Burns: Oh, if we're going to bet, why don't we make it interesting!

Ari: What, a million dollars isn't interesting to you?

Burns: Oh, did you say a million? I'm, I'm sorry, my mind was elsewhere. I thought you would start with a small amount, then we would bait each other, and, well, you know how it goes. Yes, certainly, a million would be fine.

– 'Homer at the Bat', *The Simpsons*

A High Programmer Minigame

Ah, FunBall, the approved authorised sport of the lower clearances. The 'circuses' part of 'Hot Fun and Circuses'. That's in the Roman sense of circuses, by the way – FunBall involves as much bloodshed and maiming as your average Troubleshooter mission.

Every Sector in Alpha Complex has its own official FunBall team. These teams are cultural icons within Alpha Complex; revenue from FunBall ticket sales and FunBall-related merchandising exceeded the revenue from GeneHealthy Tonics and Medicated Happiness Personality Adjustment Vending Machines in Year 214! (And as much as 46% of this revenue *wasn't* skimmed by Free Enterprise – another new record!) Attendance at FunBall games isn't mandatory – citizens are permitted to watch matches on TV instead – but not taking an interest in FunBall is a clear sign of deviancy and may conceal deep-seated pinko Commie sympathies*.

High Programmers also care about FunBall. None of them would do anything so gauche as actually watching a game**, but it's a long-standing tradition to bet on the outcome of the InterSector FunBall League.

This minigame is intended to be used as a running subplot in a *High Programmer* campaign. At the start of the campaign, each High Programmer gets a FunBall team of their very own. The GM then runs a little league – run one set of matches after each mission. Teams get three points for a win, one point for a draw, and no points for a loss. Add in NPC teams to bring the whole league up to a nice power-of-two.

As the campaign cascades towards catastrophic meltdown as all good campaigns should, the two teams with the highest point total play in the HyperBowl, one of the biggest televised spectacles in Alpha Complex.

Earnings

After each game, both sides get to roll on the FunBall Earnings Table below. There are modifiers and everything! Like a real game!

1d20	Win	Loss
0-10	2 Access	0 Access
11-15	4 Access	1 Access
16-19	6 Access	2 Access
20+	10 Access	5 Access

Management Skill of 10 or more: +4
Free Enterprise Agent of Rank 5 or more: +4

The Rules of FunBall

...are available from the Alpha Complex Official FunBall Association in a set of 128 lovingly plastic-bound folders, each no less than 1,024 pages long***. To obtain your set, just mail your ME card to the A.C.O.F.A, Mornington Crescent Corridor, Level 12, FFA Sector along with 100 credits and a completed form HPD&MC/45332, *Non-Regulatory Reading Material Approval Waiver, Type 6 (Recreational goodthought)*. The basic rules are vaguely understood by most citizens and even most FunBall players****. The game takes place in a FunBall arena, which is defined as any open space larger than the sum total volume of the players. Players (of which there must be at least one) are divided into two (or more) teams. Each player has a FunStick. The basic FunStick is a metre-long piece of metal with a forked section at one end, but professional FunSticks can have all sorts of added extras, like magnetic accelerators, jet boosters, laser targeting devices and tasers.

The game is played with a regulation (or approved variant) FunBall. The aim is to get the FunBall into any of the scoring zones on the pitch. Play continues until either the pre-arranged duration of the match has elapsed, or one team is eliminated due to injury, foul play, treason or the hazard zones. Every professional stadium has a different set of hazards and scoring zones (on an entirely co-incidental note, teams win 74% of home games).

The Rules of FunBall II

For High Programmers, FunBall teams are a special kind of Minion. Each team has

* At the higher clearances, no one cares about FunBall. PowerGolf is the game for executives, especially ones who like shooting small titanium balls out of sporty railguns.

** Allegations that some High Programmers can be found locked inside their megamansions, wearing stained old t-shirts and watching the game with B3 in hand just like they did in the old days are, of course, treason.

*** Not including the *Local Sector Approved Bylaws AAA thru GFA, GFB thro MMN, MMO, MMP through TRX and TRY thru ZZZ*, the *List of Approved FunBall Variants, 214 Edition*, and the *FunBaller's Good Sportsmanship Manual (now with free taser!)*

**** An impressive accomplishment, as most pro players are so concussed they have to check their jerseys to remember which team they're on.



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a FunBall skill. In a match, both you and your opponent throw 1d20 and try to roll under your team's skill. If both teams fail or both teams succeed, that particular play is a draw. Otherwise, the team who succeeded wins the play. There are four plays in a match. If one team wins the majority of plays, they win the match. If both teams win an equal number of plays, it's a draw. Simple?

All teams have a starting skill of 8, by the way.

There are two complications.

Firstly, players may spend Access on the roll. Access must be spent before rolling the dice, anyone can spend Access on any roll, and each point of Access spent gives a +1 or -1 to the roll.

Secondly, players may purchase Star Players for their teams. Each Star Player increases the team's skill, but also has a unique ability. Each ability requires a skill roll to use. You can only use

abilities between plays, so there are three opportunities in each match to use an ability. Each ability can only be used once per match.

FunBall Match Schedule

Teams arrive, play the Alpha Complex Anthem with full fanfare

First Play

Both teams can try to use a Star Player ability

Second Play

Both teams can try to use a Star Player ability

Half Time

Third Play

Both teams can try to use a Star Player ability

Fourth Play

Match concludes. Winning team celebrates, losing team and their supporters are medicated to prevent unhappiness

Star Players

Star Players are especially talented FunBall players, whose natural ability

at the game comes from loyalty and training, and not at all from deviant mutant abilities. For simplicity's sake, we also use these Star Player rules for stuff like skilled trainers, drug programs, dirty tricks and so on.

Buying: The GM should action off a few Star Players at the end of each mission. Each Star Player has a minimum starting price of 3 Access, and highest bid wins. Once a Star Player has been bought, players may of course kidnap, assassinate, brainwash, frame, terminate or otherwise mangle him as per the normal rules.

Using Abilities: Each ability lists the associated skill. The player using the Star has to roll equal to or order the skill on 1d20 to use the ability. If the roll fails, the ability doesn't work (but you can try again after the next play.) You can only use abilities on your team or your current opponent's Team.



WHEN THINGS WERE INTERESTING

Lance-Y, FunBall Star
+4 Team Skill
A square-jawed action hero. Pity about the brain.

Dirk-G, FunBall Star
+4 Team Skill
Former Troubleshooter. He still has flashbacks.

Marlon-B, FunBall Star
+4 Team Skill
Make sure you keep him heavily sedated off the field

Reuel-R, FunBall Star
+4 Team Skill
They say he's an IntSec spy, but don't worry about that

Referee Samuel-G
+1 Team Skill
Management: Reroll the results of the last play

Vinny-Y
+2 Team Skill
Violence: Reduce the other team's Skill by 2 for the rest of the match

IntSec Investigation
Subterfuge: The other team must select one star player. That Star Player is removed for the rest of the match. You can use this ability twice per match.

Difficult FunBall Course
Hardware: The next play is automatically a draw.
Through the tunnel, up the ramp... into the bottomless pit?

Merchandise Rights
+1 Team Skill
Management: Increase the Access earned from this match by 50%

Bob the Breaker
+1 Team Skill
Violence: Eliminate another Star Player for the rest of the match

Stealthy Saboteurs
Subterfuge: Reduce the opponent's Skill by 8 until the end of the end of the next play.

Experimental FunBall Gear
Hardware: Add +6 to your team skill for the rest of the match. If you fail the roll, reduce your team skill by -4.

Yancy-Y, Talent Spotter
+1 Team Skill
Management: After the match, swap Yancy-Y for a Star Player from the other team.

Military Grade FunBall
Violence: Use only after you've lost a play. Permanently remove another Star Player.
Do not taunt the FunBall

Enhanced Surveillance
Subterfuge: Your opponent may not spend Access on Skill rolls for the rest of the match.

Scoring Zone Minefield
Hardware: For the rest of the game, whenever the opposing team wins a play, permanently reduce their Skill by 1.

Financial Irregularities
Software: Regardless of the result of the match, you roll on the Winning column of the Earnings table.

Illegal Drugs
+2 Team Skill
Wetware: Increase your Team Skill by +2. If you fail the Wetware roll, remove one of your Star Players for the rest of the match.

Uller-Y, Ex-Vulture Trooper
+2 Team Skill
Violence: Automatically win the next play. Uller-Y misses your next match.

Kenny-B, Inspiring Captain
+2 Team Skill
Management: +4 Team Skill for the next play. You may only use this ability after losing a play.

Play Analysis Computer
Software: Increase your Team Skill by +1 permanently. You may only benefit from this four times in total.

Medic!
+1 Team Skill
Wetware: Return a missing Star Player to the match.

Nigel-R, FunBall Assassin
+1 Team Skill
Subterfuge: Your opponent suffers a -4 penalty to his next ability check.

H-86, FunBallBot
+6 Team Skill
You must use this ability whenever possible. Failure to do so removes H-86 from the field until the next game.
Hardware: H-86 keeps working.

Broadcast Rights
Software: Increase the Access earned from this match by 50%

Performance Enhancing Drugs
Wetware: Increase your team skill by +1 permanently. You may only benefit from this four times in total.

Orbital FunBall Tracker Satellite
Software: +4 Team Skill for the next play.

Genetically Engineered FunBall Player
+6 Team Skill
Wetware: The team survives into the next match. If you fail this skill check, the GEFP is destroyed at the end of the match.

Peyton-O, FunBall Star
+3 Team Skill
Violence: Remove Peyton-O and another Star Player from the match.

Joe-Y, FunBall Star
+3 Team Skill
Violence: Remove Joe-Y from the match. The next play is automatically a draw.

Brad-Y, FunBall Star
+3 Team Skill
Violence: Use this ability only if the last play was a draw. It counts as a win for you.

Tactical Nuclear FunBall
+1 Team Skill
Hardware: Destroy all your Star Players and all your opponent's Star Players.