PARANOIA ®

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

Featuring the Conclusion of the Dimension X Adventure Trilogy!

VULTURE WARRIORS
of
DIMENSION X

WEST END GAMES ®

PARANOIA
Vulture Warriors of Dimension X

Contents:

ANOTHER SCAN FROM
The Dragon Princess

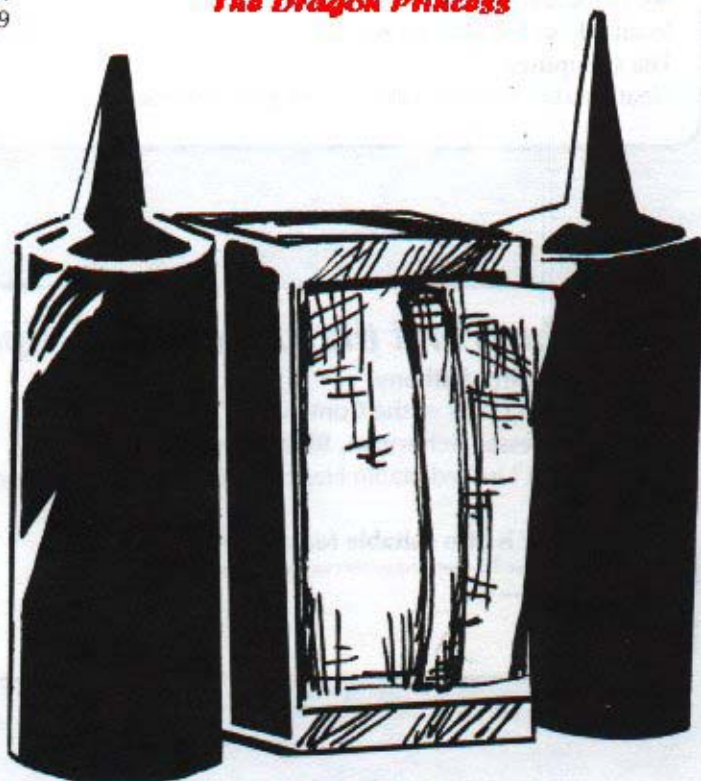### Fear and Ignorance and Ignorance and—*You* Know

Okay, so there are two reasons you picked up this book.

First, you glommed onto it because you've already played the first two parts of the trilogy, *Alice Through The Mirrorshades* and *Twilightcycle: 2000,* and you couldn't *not* pick it up ("it was something in the ink, Doctor, a sensitizing chemical that caused sweat to pour from my brow whenever I was near the store, that caused chills and shakes as I approached the RPG adventure section, that magnetically adhered my palms to the shrink-wrap of this module ... **MAKE IT STOP!!!**"). That's the thing about trilogies. They suck you in.

Second, you *had* to find out the truth about Dimension X.

It's in here. You just have to read *the whole book* to find it.

Neither of those was your reason for buying this? What, you liked the cover art? You were expecting a cross-over, maybe? Well, it's not like we enjoy keeping you in the dark or anything, but we'll tell you about that stuff later. Much. For now, just keep reading.

Credits

Vulture Warriors of Dimension X

Jonatha Ariadne "Buck Rogers" Caspian
Chronography / Development & Editing
Douglas "The Boss" Kaufman
Synchronicitude / Additional Editing
Sharon "Mr. ——" Wyckoff
Wormholer / Graphics
Bret "Marty McFly" Blevins
Time Bottler / Cover Art
Sonya "Gary Seven" Obrochta
Inertial Frames / Interior Art
The Computer
Heat Death / Entropy Wins In The End, Anyway

Dr. Whom and the Paranoids of Alpha

Joseph "Merlin" Anthony
Keeper at the Gates of the Continuum / Design
Matthew "Lessa" Schurman, Blake "Moreta" Ellman
Overseers of Unpredictable Happenings / Truly Awful Suggestions
and Ideas
This product is also suitable for use with
What do you mean, we didn't get—But couldn't we say—They will?
Never Mind ...

Vulture Warriors of Dimension X Campaign Pack

David "Lazarus Long" Avallone
Dimensia / Design
Craig "Doug & Tony" Fernandez
Fits and Starts / Superhero Design

BANZAiii!

BUDDA-
BUDDA-
BUDDA-
BUDDA

DOCTOR WHOM AND THE PARANOIDS OF ALPHA

A Farce in Two Hosejobs and a Fiasco

>*Ba-ba-ba-baaa, ba-ba-ba-baaa, ba-b-b-ba-b-b-ba-b-b-ba-b-b ...*<

The girl, her clothing high fashion in the manner of the late 20th century, leaned curiously across panel of winking lights.

"So that's that, then? They're free to grow their plants, and sell the sap, and cause all that trouble all over again?"

"I don't know about that." Her companion, too, gazed out the viewscreen at the now-minute planet they had just left.

"After all," he reminded cheerfully, "Now that the Varletta government is actually functioning, it shouldn't surprise me if a mysterious blight swept through their fields."

A fond grin spread across her face.

"Quite neat, if I do say so. But enough reminiscing; we have to get you back home. Just take a jiffy, and then I'm off to Juno ..."

>*cue music and swirly colors*<
>*Ba-ba-ba-baaa, ba-ba-ba-baaa, ba-b-b-ba-b-b-ba-b-b-ba-b-b ...*<

Introduction: Headlines This Hour ...

Campaign Climax

For those of you who (whom?) have just tuned into our broadcast, we repeat our top story tonight — this is a *Paranoia* campaign!

In fact, this adventure is number three in a series. It won't make much sense if you haven't already played the first two parts. Pop quiz: what are the first two parts called? Last one to answer gets a treason point.

Dr. Whom and the Paranoids of Alpha is, in fact, the *climax* adventure of a *Paranoia* campaign, the one that solves all of the plot twists we've so recklessly kinked up, that routs the evil menace once and for all, that rehabilitates the time stream itself!

Ha. You should be so lucky.

About This Here Book

You hold, in your hot little hands, 96 pages of unparalleled brilliance. But just for a moment, ignore pages 36 through 82, and 91 through 96. Those parts aren't anywhere near as important as the remaining sheets of mayhem, mania and machinations, *the adventure*. At least, not now they aren't.

The Adventure Book

This is a compact, streamlined mini-adventure to cap off the *Vulture Warriors* campaign. It's only 33 pages of text, and four pages of pullout, a whole three pages less filling than our regular adventures.

What About The Player Characters?

They're not here, they're in *Alice*. Go ask *Alice* to disgorge them.

Oh, okay, we'll give you crib notes this time, but never again. Of course, since we're being so kind as to rerun the whole four pages of pregens, then actually, this *Paranoia* mini-adventure is in truth *longer* than a regular *Paranoia* adventure. Somehow, that seems entirely appropriate.

The Pullout Pages

We got your NPCs, your maps, your fancified handouts and diagrams, everything you need to make this adventure smooth as silk to run. Can you spell PULLOUT SECTION? We knew you could.

'Course, being as how this is a 96 page book, it has *no staples* (*awww!*) and that makes it just a little harder to actually pull these pages out. Especially for you neatniks who refuse to break the binding.

For you, we recommend scissors. For the excessively dextrous, we have heard tell of GMs who sliced out their pullout sections with X-actos or razor blades and lived to brag about it. Not often, but we have heard.

Don't want to mutilate great art? There's always the photocopy route. We'll let ya make as many copies of the pullout section as ya have players — but *don't try selling them, or you'll be violating copyright law!* Is that clear? We don't want Black market copies of Ultraviolet clearance *Paranoia* pullouts. Post MegaWhoops Alpha is scrambled enough as it is.

Background, or There Again

How someone could have gotten through two-thirds of the *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* saga without learning about the background is beyond us. You're wasting your time. Go read something more informative, like the ingredients in soap.

For those of you who joined us later in the broadcast, we'd like to summarize the action so far in this campaign.

The Iceman, aka *The High Programmer of Alpha Past*, tried to reboot the Big C. He failed. MegaWhoops.

Cindy-U-BAK-5 and HiPSiC, aka *The High Programmers of Alpha Present*, hit on the great plan of time-travelling to send an elite Troubleshooter team back into the

Where, oh when have my Vultures all gone...

past to clean up the mess and prevent MegaWhoops. First, they sent the Troubleshooters to track down Alice in Cybernoia. Didn't work.

Then they sent the clones further back into the Twilightcycles to straighten out the proto-computer. Didn't work.

Now they're returning the clones to Alpha, preparatory to sending the Troubleshooters on one last assignment. They say three is a Teela-O charm.

What about somebody-or-other, aka *The High Programmer of Alpha Future*? You think we parody Dickens with consistency? Ah, you must be new to *Paranoia*. Hope you enjoy the ride.

Gamemaster Intro

What? The Troubleshooters are still alive!? *Shame* on you! A real *Paranoia* GM would've nuked the little buckaroos into bonsai 5.31 microseconds into the first adventure! Don't you remember the first time you played *Paranoia Classic*? The fear, the confusion, the death without a whimper? The death with many whimpers? But *you* let them live. Ah, well, I guess we'll just have to live with it (you're a paying customer and all that).

Seriously, haven't you ever wondered *why* The Late Computer was such an authoritarian, megalomaniac, homicidal Pain In The Gluteus Maximi? Surely you didn't swallow all that treasonous baloney in the rulebook about anti-Commie 1950's defense records and communication snafus with other complexes driving The Computer crazy! Systems analysts assigned to such an important project would never have designed such a limited network, with such an archaic database. No, there had to be a deeper reason, a darker, underlying cause, a truth deemed too shocking to reveal — until now.

Dare you probe into these ancient mysteries — Secrets Not Meant To Be Known?

Dare you risk life and sanity (of your player characters) in order to know the Truth behind The Computer?

Dare you continue to slog through this disgustingly psuedo-dramatic purple prose?

Turn the page ...

Adventure Summary

As the Troubleshooters return to Alpha Complex with news of their (repeated) failure, they meet an eccentric time-traveler named Doctor Whom (no relation to any fictional character), and break the Transdimensional Collapsatron to boot. In return for its repair, they assist the Doc in ridding planet Juno of an Ancient Evil (explosively). The Evil escapes to Earth, seeking to corrupt The Computer, but is captured in the nick of time by Our Heroes.

Unfortunately (for the PCs that is — it works out just dandy for us), the Evil is released by Mortal Fools Playing With Powers Beyond Their Ken. When the smoke clears, Alpha Complex has returned to normal (well, as normal as it gets), but with a dead Computer.

Requiescat in turbidus (rest in trouble).

Episode Summary

Episode One: To Whom They May Concern, in which Doctor Whom is encountered, and the TC destroyed. The Troubleshooters agree to assist the Doc, or this becomes a really short adventure. A primeval (or just plain evil) version of Alpha Complex is visited. A confrontation between an irresistible force (the Troubleshooters) and an immovable object (the Evil) transforms planet Juno into an innumerable swath of rocks (our solar system's asteroid belt). Surviving PCs are taunted by the Evil as it escapes to Earth.

Episode Two: Alpha One and Free for All, in which the Troubleshooters and Doctor Whom head the Evil off at the pass (San Francisco, 2097 AD). After meeting some clones who look vaguely familiar, the Troubleshooters attempt to shoot down the

The Time Travel Series gives the Vultures the opportunity to play against teams from other leagues.

asteroid with an obsolete nuclear missile, and wind up creating Alpha Complex instead (how's *that* for a colossal blunder?). Doctor Whom digs up a handy ritual for trapping Ancient Evils, which is used to telling effect. The TC is repaired, and the Troubleshooters march triumphantly home.

Episode Three: Paradise Nuked, in which the Troubleshooters are put in an asylum for treatment of excessive paranoia. A captured Ancient Evil is released, to general dismay. The Troubleshooters are given plasma-stream generators and get a chance to egregiously parody a pair of movies we can't mention. Alarums and excursions.

The Evil is defeated, with disastrous effects on Alpha Complex. Smart PCs manage to avoid a really nasty time-loop, and finally get to sit back and have a Bouncy Bubble. Doctor Whom makes a final appearance as the curtain falls. Exeunt.

So, Who's This Doctor Whom Guy?

Doctor Whom is a humanoid alien time traveler from planet Faraway, home of the Time Lairds. He's a thousand years old, due to a really obnoxious regeneration power. He acts like an impeccable English gentleman, right down to the accent (Earth cultures are a hobby of his). He's not *quite* as nutty as a fruitcake, but comes very close.

The Time Lairds, as a race, tend to flit idly about the universe in their incredibly advanced time machines, just watching the worlds go round and round. The Doc, however, has rejected this sedentary way of life and set out to promote peace and harmony throughout the multiverse. He deeply believes in the inherent goodness of people in general, the eternal perseverance of truth and justice, and the ongoing advance of science and technology that brings the races of the universe ever closer to a platinum era of ultimate achievement.

Of course, this being *Paranoia*, even All20 armor isn't gonna keep a guy like that alive around a typical bunch of Troubleshooters. So, we've given him a Heroic Immunity To Danger mutation, which al-

A Special Note ...

Remember how, in *Alice Through The Mirrorshades*, we said that each of these adventures would take place in a different roleplaying system? Well, this works real well in most cases, except where we couldn't get the copyright.

So, there's a certain British science fiction TV program about a temperamental humanoid alien who travels around the universe in a camouflaged time machine, defeating nefarious villains with the help of several human companions. Yeah, *that* one. It's a roleplaying game, too.

So, re-read the first two paragraphs of this special note, notice how we're describing it without mentioning its name, and guess what happened.

Still, *Paranoia* is a game of completely tasteless parodies and lampoons, so there's no reason why we can't present a clever adventure that *sounds* an awful lot like the material just not-mentioned, but actually in no way intends to mislead or falsely represent itself as the aforementioned copyrighted material, nor does our material intend or present any other copyright infringement of any other material, including but not limited to games, television, radio, film, music or fiction (don't you love legal talk?).

So, all the stuff that follows is just a parody, intended for fun. Got that? Good. We now return you to our regularly scheduled adventure.

Game Stuff

Doctor Whom: Flaky time traveler/force for good in our Troubleshootered times

Armor: Mark 7 Repellall Personal Belt-Activated Force Shield (All20)

Weapons: Sword (8l) _____ 18 (a standard fencing blade used for dramatic dueling.)

Mutant Powers: Heroic Immunity To Danger; Reincarnation (a special power of the TORTIS, the Doc's time machine. See the section on clone replacement.)

Relevant Skills: Operate and Repair Time Machine (18)
all Chutzpah skills (15)
all Moxie skills (18)

lows him to suddenly come up with clever escapes against all odds, and a Reincarnatron (see the section on clone replacement), which constantly restores him to functioning heroness. As he's now almost completely Troubleshooter-proof*, the Doc won't have to use violence to solve his problems. He prefers quiet diplomacy to thundering tacnukes, which quite puts him at odds with people like Troubleshooters. Well, tough. They're going to be stuck together for most of the adventure.

Though the Doc is basically a pacifist, he enjoys slumming and showing off his incredible knowledge in front of paranoid low-lifes (Troubleshooters). He realizes that strife is a somewhat necessary evil in this universe, and tolerates those who take different paths than he in pursuing the common good (boy, are they going to have a problem understanding this guy).

Though he always treats his companions fairly, he's not above a high-tech practical joke or two, or giving a half hour response to a question like "What time is it?" As the quintessential outside observer, he always sees the truth behind the cultural follies of other races, and never takes life completely seriously. ("Oh, do cheer up. It's not like you're the only one; after all, 10,685,742 people in the universe besides you have had their left arms ripped off by a drooling slime monster from Proxima Centauri. Look on the bright side; should you ever take up juggling, it will make your achievement all the more remarkable. Care for a lollipop?")

When roleplaying the Doc, remember his inherent superiority in intelligence and maturity over the Troubleshooters (he's been kicking around the universe for a thousand years — he's literally seen it all). You, as a *Paranoia* Gamemaster, have the power to insure that he is always right in every situation. Use this power. Drive your players

*There is nothing in existence that is completely free from trouble by Troubleshooters. A recent Alpha Complex experiment, in which a naked, stripsearched Troubleshooter team locked in an empty room somehow managed to produce a nuclear explosion, serves to emphasize this point.

insane with it. Annoy them into pulling their weapons on him, and then point out that nothing they can do will hurt him. This will drive them crazier.

When you have them completely frustrated, introduce some enemy that they can shoot at with some effect, and just watch 'em go charging into battle! By clever use of this technique, you'll have the players eating out of your hand, dashing from one encounter to another at your whim and thinking that *they're* doing the thinking. Humor them.

What's This About a TORTIS?

The TORTIS is the Doc's time machine, and it bears the same relation to the TC as a space shuttle does to a tricycle. The word *TORTIS* stands for Time Oriented, Relativity-Transcending Interdimensional Spacecraft. The expanded acronym has no real relevance, other than being a rude attempt to justify a pun relating to that TV program that this adventure has nothing to do with (see the Special Note in this section).

A TORTIS, when its disguise circuit is turned off, takes the form of a metal box with a door in it (about the size and shape of a wardrobe). It's vastly bigger inside than it is outside, due to an advanced application of pocketbook technology.

Whuzzat? Pocketbook technology is a dimension-warping physical property used in pocketbooks, teenager's rooms, and your folder of old *Paranoia* characters, in which the theoretical capacity of the three dimensional space can be expanded if and only if a chaotic system of organization is instituted and a discontinuous filing structure is maintained. Clear now? We thought so.

The miles of sprawling, mazelike passages and rooms inside a TORTIS contain everything a Time Laird needs to go native in any time and any place (clothing, weapons, currency, etc).

The TORTIS can alter its exterior form with its disguise circuit, blending in with any surrounding. Needless to say, it can go anywhere in time and space — even to other dimensions. Its medical facilities can bring folks back from the dead (see the section on clone replacement below), and its matter-fabricator can produce almost anything, from a solid gold laser rifle to a seven course dinner complete with table and silverware.

To protect all this fantastic machinery, the TORTIS sports a complete internal set of concealed masers, which microwave people who get ob- or de-structive until their eyes achieve the consistency of hard-boiled eggs. A TORTIS is a dream device, capable of doing anything its owner wishes — at least, the newer models are.

Doctor Whom's TORTIS, on the other hand, is true to its acronym, being slow, cranky, and obstinate, and tending to re-

A well-dressed time-traveler.

treat into its own little world when serious problems arise. It used to be a state of the art vehicle about 900 years ago. The Doc, having come into possession of it by hotwiring the ignition, was understandably reluctant to apply for a service contract.

The result is a jerry-rigged, ramshackle machine that only its owner can operate correctly — or keep running at all (think of the relationship between any stereotypical smuggler-pilot from any science fiction film and his/her ship).

There are delicate mechanisms galore that explode from the heat given off by a resting human standing five meters away. The ideal footwear for occupants is five pairs of padded slippers, all worn at the same time. It doesn't help that every nook and cranny and passageway in the TORTIS is crammed almost to the point of arteriosclerosis by the incredible collection of odd stuff that the Doc carries around in it (think of one of those drafty old horror movie Victorian mansions, stuff it with antiques, artifacts, culture, and history, and translate it into a science fiction setting).

If someone does something foolish inside the TORTIS (like breathing), use the handy "Table of Minor TORTIS Contretemps" to determine the result.

Clone Replacement

Did you ever realize what a bunch of shmucks your typical group of players are? Give 'em *six* copies of a character and they'll have every single one of them vaporized in five minutes. What an astounding waste of human resources.

Still, despite their pathetic flaws, it's a good thing that players exist. You, as

Table Of Minor TORTIS Contretemps

1-3: Someone activated the fire extinguishing system. This means that all of the air is pumped rapidly out of the area, eliminating one side of the fire triangle (fire triangle: a dry non-vacuum, something really hot, and something to turn into ash). Time Lairds like the Doc don't asphyxiate, due to their alien coolness; humans are another matter.

4-6: The floor disappears under a randomly determined person, or group of people (read: the person(s) who have p'd you off the most during the adventure). Through the hole, one can see infinity rushing by. Agility rolls are required to keep from falling in (modified up — or probably down — due to on the reactions of other Troubleshooters).

Those who fall are swept away into the temporal continuum and never heard from again, unless you'd like a dramatic re-entrance at an unexpected moment ("Remember Joll-Y-GAL? Well, you see her appear above you in a flash of timelight, holding a sword and wearing a motorcycle helmet, along with a bunch of fluttering chickens, as if she just zoomed through a barn. She falls ten feet and lands on Evil-V-ILN, flattening him and knocking his weapon away. What a coincidence!").

If asked, the Doc mutters something about "unpredictable collapse of the wave/particle flow function," but fails to elaborate.

7-9: Just Plain, Good Ol', Something Blows Up. Bounce your die, and roll for damage under that number on the damage table (no fudging now — I know you'd really like the first die to land on 20, but one shouldn't tempt the fates by hoping too hard. Just roll it behind the screen and *say* it was 20).

10-12: Area fills to ceiling with a cold, sticky, blue substance. The Doc complains about the unreliability of the cooling system, holds his nose, and dives below the surface to fix the problem. This takes him 15 minutes or so (he's very good at holding his breath); the clones just have to swim or something until then.

Oh, wait, they never learned how to swim in Alpha Complex ... them's the breaks, I guess.

13-15: A temporal anomaly occurs, meaning that stuff gets yanked out of time somewhere else and comes here. Go to town (and be sure to take your laser). Attila the Hun. Roman Legionnaires. Dinosaurs — oh, we did that one already, didn't we? Tharog, leader of the mountain tribes. Samurais. The Timeguards. Ten thousand nuns in leather jackets on roller skates. Like the sentence fragments? Short. Succinct. Have another.

16-18: The machines that make the TORTIS bigger inside than outside go bonkers. Euclidean space kinda gets

violated when this happens. Straight corridors turn in on themselves like pretzels. Gravity vanishes entirely, or starts working from the walls or ceiling, or pulls in several different directions at once (see the Explosive Decompression tables in *Clones In Space*).

The floor achieves the consistency of raspberry jello. Doors become strange shapes, like four-sided triangles or circles with corners. Right angles no longer equal 90 degrees. A roll or three on the insanity table is in order.

19-20: Anomalous fluctuations in the trans-temporal buffers cause localized distortions within the TORTIS. Some players start moving twenty times as fast as the others.

Their comrades, moving at the normal rate, look like statues to them. This is a clone's opportunity to plant a nuclear grenade on his buddy without fear of retaliation; however, the fast-moving guys must also eat 20 times as often as their duller counterparts, and may starve to death between mealtimes. Other PCs may slow down substantially, or even stop altogether.

Encourage some of your players to freeze in place, others to move and talk in slow motion, and others to move real fast, blinking like they're in a Charlie Chaplin film and knocking their sodas over.

Gamemaster, would look pretty silly rolling dice, laughing maniacally, and reading boldface descriptions aloud to a bunch of empty chairs. So, it's in your interests to keep the players in the game by providing lots of clone replacements. But the Transdimensional Collapsatron gets nuked (er, nicked, uhhh, whacked) before this adventure begins! Where are the clones going to come from?

From Doctor Whom's high technology, of course. When the Troubleshooters (or anyone else the Doc wants to keep around) first enter the Doc's TORTIS, their genetic blueprints and brain patterns are recorded by a miraculous device called the Reincarnatron. It uses transporter technology stolen from Yet-Another-1960's-S.F.-TV-Show-That-We-Can't-Mention to extract a small tissue sample and replace it with a tiny bio monitor that gives constant readouts on the patient's health. The personality and knowledge of the subject are then scanned into a storage device, using an advanced telepathy application.

Now, when a clone dies, the Reincarnatron grows a new one in seconds, using stored time energy or some such nonsense to accelerate the process. The stored brain patterns are downloaded to the clone, and it's beamed to the scene of death. Isn't science wonderful?

The thing has more than a few drawbacks, of course. The high radiation caused by the process occasionally causes extra mutations (this could lead to endless fun with the addition or removal of mutant powers, but it'd also be a scream to change the PC's facial features or sex and watch the poor sap try to explain it to the others).

The brain tapes are not constantly updated (only while the Troubleshooters're in the TORTIS), so someone cloned after being in the field awhile is going to have an annoying lapse of memory. The brain tapes may connect badly, or not at all (allowing the afflicted PC to roleplay a drooling idiot or absent minded professor until he or she dies again).

Or maybe there's not enough time energy left to speed the clone up to adulthood (the prospect of a baby toddling around with the mind of an adult Troubleshooter seems amusing, kind of like dubbing an adult's voice into a movie about babies). Naturally, only organic items can be cloned, so the replacements show up in their birthday suits, without equipment.

Finally, as in *Alice Through the Mirrorshades*, the Reincarnatron always sends the new clone to the precise spot where the last one died. This can be a boon; all one has to do to cross a 30 meter deep chasm is keep shoving clones in until one fills it up, then walk across.

Needless to say, nothing mentioned above ever happens to the Doc if *he* has to use the device (it beams him to his bedroom in the TORTIS, giving him a chance to get decent and set the transporter coordinates himself). After all, he owns the thing. The Troubleshooters are a different matter.

Even with all its flaws, this device can still wreck a *Paranoia* campaign. We don't

often have to say something like this; we positively loathe those *Other Game*™ adventure supplements that drone on for pages about "preserving the balance of the game" and similar nonsense. But the Reincarnatron can punch out a potentially infinite number of clones, and if the players get the idea that they're immortal, the element of fear disappears. Since *Timor et Ignorantia* (fear and ignorance) is the eternal motto of all *Paranoia* GMs, we're giving Doctor Whom (and thereby you) a way to limit the number of clone replacements.

If the Doc notices someone who's getting rowdy, uncharacteristically brave, or otherwise entering an un-*Paranoia*-like mood, he activates a little gizmo which stops the Reincarnatron from making that person's clone. If the player kneels very politely, kisses the GM's foot, and promises to be very good, the Doc allows another clone to be made on a conditional basis (he's a pretty fair guy, after all). Thus the uncertainty of death (and, as much as we hate to say it, the balance of the game) is restored. You're welcome.

A Note On Treason Points

Of course, The Computer is too preoccupied with weighty philosophical matters (like "Is there software after death?") to keep track of anyone's treason point total. The treason point concept, however, remains a useful tool for rewarding and punishing the actions of the players. But how to implement it?

The best solution, as we see it, is to blandly continue recording treason points as if nothing happened. Indeed, we've pointed out appropriate places for commendation and treason points in this adventure, and encourage you to use them wherever you want. If you do it right, the players will start to wonder if The Computer is really dead after all, and if this whole Bump-Off-The-Computer bit wasn't just a hypnotically induced test to prove their character's loyalty, or perhaps a cheap and blatantly mercantile publicity stunt on West End's part.

Raise your eyebrows, wink, and otherwise encourage this train of thought; it'll increase the dramatic impact of the adventure's climax.

The question remains, however, of what value the accumulated treason or commendation points have, as there's no one left to enforce it. We suggest that you give them a cookie for each commendation they earn, and yank a cookie away for each treason point they acquire.

If the players wind up with negative treason points, or they eat all their cookie-mendations, I guess they'll have to run to the store and buy more for you (isn't it fun to be the GM?). Or, simply use a stomach pump or scalpel to retrieve the amount of the debt (training in the use of this equipment is available at any medical school — as with almost all really nifty things, scalpels and stomach pumps are not toys, and should only be administered by registered professionals. See your health care provider for free information today).

Episode One: To Whom It May Concern

Episode Background

Our Heroes (sic) have failed once again to save The Computer from a fate worse than obsolescence. Now, they stagger across a barren wasteland that once was America — the Twilight of 2000 years of human development. Anticipating a warm, pleasant welcome of racks and thumbscrews, they rev up the Transdimensional Collapsatron and head for home ...

Episode Summary

But fate suddenly smiles upon (or laughs at) our intrepid Troubleshooters, for the TC hits another time machine en route. The victim of this Moving Violation is Doctor Whom, who agrees to repair the TC if the Troubleshooters help him to defeat an Ancient Evil. (So far, so cliched.)

Arriving on Juno, a planet that used to orbit between Mars and Jupiter in our solar system (there's a large asteroid belt there now — snicker), they encounter the oppressed inhabitants who, through a sudden lapse in game designer creativity, resemble Earth marsupials. The Evil, having possessed an ancient oracle the Junians call The Ordinator, now rules over vast under-ground caverns as a paranoid, malicious being who ruthlessly executes any which doubt Its wisdom. Sound familiar?

After linking up with EEVAK, a group of koalas bent on The Ordinator's overthrow, the Troubleshooters are given ridiculous kangaroo disguises, and get to tour a Complex-by-another-name. Reaching the OPU (Ordinal Processing Unit), the Troubleshooters battle the Ordinator's bodyguards (the Cyberoos and the MALOKS, mad creations of the Evil's evil henchman Dave Ross).

The Forces of Good are nearly wiped out, but are spared when the Evil realizes what good slaves Alpha Complex citizens would make. Juno blows up. The Evil makes Its way to Earth on a newly created asteroid. Only Doctor Whom and our Troubleshooters stand in Its way ... Heh heh.

Encounter One: Start It Off With a Bang

Read the following aloud to your players. Or don't. See if we care.

Did you ever wonder what a Temporal Explosion feels like?
You know — a Temporal Explosion. What happens when one time machine crashes into another time machine.

Try sticking your head in a washing machine full of bricks and tuna salad. Interesting, isn't it? It is so interesting, in fact, that it momentarily helps you to forget a lot of things — like how to stay conscious, for instance.

You gradually awaken on a cold, desolate, windswept plain, on what is certainly a planet that you've never heard of. Violet clouds swirl in a green sky overhead, a white, distant star illuminates the blue sand all around you, and a chilly wind sweeps a constant cloud of black smoke into your faces.

With further cogitation, you trace the smoke's source to a large heap of burning metal that precisely resembles what the TC would look like if it had encountered a Temporal Explosion. The most likely candidate for the cause of this destruction would seem to be the garbage dumpster-sized object several meters away.

Wait for some adventurous souls to say that they are investigating further. Wait some more (this is known as a dramatic pause). Read:

Coughing and weeping, you push your way through the smoke to reveal ...
A garbage dumpster.
Garbage dumpsters are one class of things that vary little in form, no matter how alien the culture that produces them. While this one doesn't precisely resemble a typical *HPD&MC Complex Refuse Receiver, Grinder, and Compacter with Bone Crushing Attachment* from back home, you have no trouble recognizing it for what it is.
As you approach, the lid of the dumpster creaks ominously open ...

This garbage dumpster thingee is actually the Doc's TORTIS. Normally, its disguise circuit would make it look like a rock or tree or something else that fits the ambiance, but the Doc spilled some soda on the control panel last week and it hasn't been the same since (seriously, did you ever leave an old baby tooth in a glass of cola overnight?). Even now, Doctor Whom is climbing out to give the reckless drivers who hit him a few sharp words.

If any hothead decides to shoot before thinking, the discharge bounces right off the external force shields and hits ... well,

Who's zooming Whom?

Episode One

poetic justice would demand that it rebound into the face of the idiot who fired, but it's probably more fun to let it waste someone else. This way, negative peer group response is generated, discouraging such foolish actions in the future (possibly by peer-group termination). Continue:

The lid flips up all the way and falls against the back of the dumpster with a clang. A strange apparition suddenly pokes wide, staring eyes over the rim. It appears to be a male humanoid, dressed wildly (but with a certain good taste in wildness) in several-decades-out-of-fashion clothing.

He wears a floppy-brimmed felt hat, an item that used to be a trenchcoat before the moths got to it, and a multi-colored piece of cloth long enough to serve as both a scarf and a belt, with a few yards left over. He jumps to his feet, the dumpster rattling beneath him, and points a stern finger at you. (Read, in a cultured English accent):

"I don't suppose anyone ever taught you to use your turn signals. It's a simple matter of common courtesy to other travelers, you know. I'll never understand how you younger races expect to get about the temporal continuum ..." He breaks off, staring at the smoking heap that used to be the TC. **"Is *that* how?"** he asks, shocked.

At this point, Doctor Whom (for it is indeed he) jumps agilely out of the dumpster and starts poking through the remains of the TC. He ignores all questions for now.

If anyone shoots at him, he comments good-naturedly on the skill (or lack of skill) with which the weapon was wielded. If (when) the shot nails someone else after it bounces off his force shield, he applauds politely.

Go on:

"Dear, dear me," he says, fingering a spherical crumbly bit, **"such primitive technology! What sort of beetle-browed, club-carrying, tree-climbing psuedo-simians would ever build ..."** He stops suddenly.

"Oh, I *am* sorry," he says, grinning widely. **"I know it must have meant a lot to you."** Now his eyes grow round.

"Tell you what," he says. **"If you'll assist me in ridding the universe of an Ancient Evil, I'll fix your machine up for you better than new! What do you say?"**

Any rational person would immediately see that the Doc is their only hope of getting off this planet and agree to his suggestion; unfortunately, players are not usually rational people. If they agree, skip to "Seeing It Whom's Way" and continue. If not ...

Let's Make A Deal

Some folks may want to threaten or fast-talk this fruitcake into fixing the TC without obligation. The Doc won't back down on the assistance part of the deal; he's desperate for help, as you may have guessed from the fact that he's considering a team of Troubleshooters.

As for threats, there isn't much that they could physically do to him, except maybe gang up and tickle him. They could try to hold themselves hostage ("Fix the TC or the Troubleshooter gets it!"), but this is more likely to produce laughter than results.

If nothing else is working, let the players meet one of the planet's indigenous life forms. It might go something like this: the Doc suddenly gets a look of terror on his face, and jumps into his dumpster. A shadow falls over the PCs, blocking out the sun.

They turn to find the offspring of Godzilla and King Kong towering over them, drooling. This creature could eat the entire damage table for breakfast, along with a Troubleshooter team for good measure. The safest place to be now is in the dumpster with the Doc.

We suspect the show of force should be sufficient to persuade your players, but sometimes threat alone is not enough. However, keep in mind that with the TC busted, until they get inside the TORTIS and are scanned by the Reincarnatron (see "Clone Replacements" in the Introduction), the PCs have but one life to give. If they die, they're gone. Impress this upon them.

If your players are extremely dense or stubborn, and need to be killed, the Reincarnatron should be able (in time; hyar, hyar) to replicate an amnesiac clone from scraps of flesh. No memories, but the same bod. Them's the breaks.

Seeing it Whom's Way

When the Troubleshooters agree to the mission-tinkering swap, the Doc gives them a big cardboard box in which to put the remains of the TC. When overeager PCs burn their hands on the hot metal, he offers them some gloves.

If any of the players are concerned about the dumpster, he allows them to satisfy

themselves that this model comes without the Bone Crushing Attachment. Other questions and comments the Doc answers politely — up to a point. Whenever you get tired of it, or the players seem to be haring off on tangents you don't care for, Doctor Whom gets impatient.

"Just because you're new at this, you think we can gab all day? I have other missions, too, you know. Get a-move on."

As they enter the dumpster, read:

The interior is big — much bigger than the outside.

You're in a hospital-sterile control room (with white walls — oh boy), that nevertheless contains several anachronistic pieces of furniture made from the Old Reckoning substance known as wood. Old jackets, books, and spoked mechanical contraptions the Doc dismisses as 'brollies' lie strewn over high-tech chrome control panels.

The Doc gently clears off a panel and starts pressing some buttons.

"Sorry," he says, grinning at you. **"I know it's an awful clutter in here, but one tends to accumulate a lot of stuff in a thousand years. Mind where you sit, now."** He hits a few more controls, and various instruments start flashing and humming, resembling one of those *This Is R&D* vidshow documentaries. He continues.

"We're headed for planet Juno, about twenty million years before you were born — I *am* correct in presuming you to be of 21st century technology, aren't I? Well, it's a bit of a time to travel, but my TORTIS will have us there in a jiffy." He slaps the control panel affectionately, and something explodes. The lights in the room start to dim.

The Doc pulls a piece of tinfoil out of his pocket and jams it into the smoking hole in the control panel. The lights go back on.

"Where was I? Ah, yes. Seems the Junians were fooling with Ancient Powers Beyond Their Ken, and some sort of Evil was released. Can't have that sort of thing happening, you know. Sends the universe to pot rather quickly." He hits a last few buttons, and you feel a time-twisting wrench in your souls as the TORTIS fades off into history ...

En Route to Trouble

If anyone asks any more questions about Juno or the TORTIS, feel free to give them information from the relevant sections in the Introduction and Encounter Two. The Doc, while not a fool, is a fairly open-mouthed and friendly guy. ("Why, of course we're on a suicide mission. I thought you knew.") If no one asks about anything, give the players some cookie-mendations for so loyally following the main precepts of *Paranoia* ("Fear and Ignorance").

Handy Table of TORTIS Oddments

1-4: An old manuscript, made of sheets of inscribed chromium/molybdenum steel with holes punched in the edges to permit tying them together (the current binding is a worn shoelace). The manuscript is entitled *The Grand Unification Theory Solved*, by Doctor Whom. A PC who makes a nuclear engineering or moxie check can follow the clear, irrefutable arguments that link together all the scientific diciplines — up to the five missing pages in the back, which apparently contained the final proof. The Doc doesn't know where the missing pages are, and can't quite remember what the final proof was, as he wrote it back in his freshman year at high-school. (Wouldn't you know?)

5-8: This appears to be an Old Reckoning coin — a quarter. It's actually one of the Doc's practical jokes; it weighs 75 pounds, due to some captured neutron-star material in its center. It dents any but the hardest tabletops, due to the large mass concentrated in such a small area. Even if a Troubleshooter actually manages to lift the thing, it would rip right through a pocket, probably continuing through the PC's foot. It needs an overhaul every century, or it kinda explodes (the mini-compression fields that keep the matter so densely packed tend to run down over time). The Doc last rejuvenated it about 99 years ago (or so).

9-12: A Thing. The Thing is made of grey, angular, plastic-like material, shaped like a cube with a large bump on one side. On the opposite side is a crinkly metal wire arrangement, while a third side has a little sparkly depression. When the crinkly bit and the depression are touched simultaneously, the bump glows with a faint purple light. Nothing else the Troubleshooters do has any effect. The Doc has never seen it before in his life, and hypothesizes that it "just slipped aboard somehow." If someone takes the Thing, it eventually disappears, leaving behind a pile of pink dust.

13-16: A boxed second edition of *Schizophrenia: The Roleplaying Game Of A Multiple-Personalitied Future*. This is an Old Reckoning RPG about paranoid clones who die repeatedly in a computer-ruled society. Pretty treasonous, but we're not in Alpha Complex anymore. The box contains a couple of rulebooks, some cardboard mini-figures, a bunch of used character record sheets, and a dodecahedron with its sides numbered from 1 to 20. The Troubleshooters probably feel offended at the lighthearted treatment of their lifestyles, but if they want to play, the Doc wouldn't mind running a game; they've got a while left before they reach Juno. It's played exactly like *Paranoia* (surprise, surprise), so if you really feel like getting weird, let the players play characters who are playing characters in a separate mini-adventure (one of our other fine *Paranoia* supplements serves well here).

17-20: An old, fossilized ham sandwich, made shortly after the Revolutionary War and forgotten about. It is capable of scratching diamonds and serves well as a paperweight or a club. (Club sandwich? Get it?)

There's a lot of strange and disturbing stuff lying around the TORTIS (as the Doc said, he's been kicking around the multiverse for centuries). Some PCs, alas, may find it hard to resist temptation (stealing from your host — how crass). If someone takes something, the Doc won't notice immediately as there's too much stuff for even his advanced mind to keep track of.

However, several centuries from now, he'll probably miss the item and come back to the PC's time looking for it (which could lead to some more adventures later on in your *Vulture Warriors* campaign). We've given you a list of items guaranteed to intrigue the players, or at least provide some interesting descriptive detail. It's in tabular format, in case someone grabs something at random.

It's about all we had space for. If you need more gizmos, make something up along these guidelines. Incidentally, don't forget to remember not to neglect the "Useful Table Of Minor TORTIS Contretemps" back in the introduction.

When you and your players have experienced enough inexpressible joy at romping around the Doc's TORTIS, go on to ...

Encounter Two: It Can't Be Helped, Juno

Read the following to your players (don't read it to yourself, unless you want to hog all the fun).

You file out of the TORTIS, which has now taken the shape of an Egyptian obelisk, and examine your surroundings.

You're in a smallish room, filled near to bursting with metal crates of every description. The few shelving units in this room were overwhelmed ages ago, and are now barely visible. The lighting is dim, seeming to emanate from the ceiling itself, and an annoying high-pitched buzzing noise nibbles at your ears. There's a strong, musty odor of subterranean rock walls, mixed with the sharp tang of rusting metal.

That buzzing noise, incidentally, is a high frequency hypnotic signal broadcast by the Evil Ordinator to cause unthinking obedience in Its subjects. Since most of the message is carried in frequency ranges that only animals can hear (like the Junians), the PCs are unaffected, aside from the Player Annoyance and Worry factor.

The crates, if anyone cares to look, are full of plain glass jars containing some foamy, slippery stuff (the crates were labeled decades ago; the writing is now illegible). The stuff in the jars is fur mousse, for use in styling one's body fur (sculpting fur into outlandish shapes is one of the few freedoms Junians possess under the possessed Ordinator's rule). It is non-flammable, but very slippery (ideal for slowing up pursuit, or maybe slipping into something uncomfortable—more on this later).

Of course, getting one of these jars out from inside a crate stack would require some hefty agility rolls to avoid an avalanche. The thought of sending the entire roomful down around the Troubleshooters' ears is very tempting, but try to keep it low key for now.

As they exit the TORTIS, the Doc points a futuristic-looking device at the crates, and announces their contents. (This thing is a Universal Detector, the main function of which is to detect universes. When set in global mode, it beeps every time it's turned on ("Yep, we're in a universe, all right"); the Doc just focused down the range.) He also tells the players that they're in a small supply room in Juno Warren, and that the Evil lies "thataway," to the east.

They don't have to follow this lead. But they should know it's Whom they are dealing with. He can be incredibly persuasive when he owns the only transportation out of here.

The Door in the Wall Gang

If the players struggle through the crates to the east wall, they reach a door. Like most other doors in Juno Warren, it's smoothly carved out of the surrounding rock, and fits into the doorway with mechanical precision (the Junians use high-power lasers to sculpt the rock).

The lock on the door requires a normal security roll to open. If none of the Troubleshooters open it, Doctor Whom produces a credit card-sized object that hums. He slides it between the door jamb and the door, springing the lock.

When the Troubleshooters go through the door (and they will, eventually — there isn't much to do in here), read:

Foe-O-DOR's Guide To Planet Juno

(In other words, a lot of necessary exposition that we were too lazy to work in elsewhere.)

Juno used to be the fifth planet in our solar system, orbiting between Mars and Jupiter. It was the first planet to evolve sentient life, which took the form of what would later, on Earth, be called marsupials (kangaroos, koalas, etc.).

The Junians pursued the sciences of the mind before all else, achieving their culture's greatest triumph long before their invention of the combustion engine: a tremendous crystalline analog calculating machine with the capacity for intelligent thought, created by the infamous kangaroo scientist, Dave Ross. Named The Ordinator, the machine served Its creators as a wise and stable ruler, and the Junians entered a new era of peace and prosperity.

It was not to last, alas (this is *Paranoia*, after all). Dave Ross, thirsting after knowledge in the manner of every Mad Scientist, conducted foolish and unnecessary experiments in time travel, inadvertently opening a hole to another dimension. Through this wound in the space/time continuum came an Ancient Evil, long ago exiled to a dark and forbidden dimension like the one to which paper clips disappear when left in a desk drawer too long.

It attacked and possessed The Ordinator, instituting a reign of terror and destruction such as the Junians had never known before. But the brave marsupials resisted to such an extent that the Evil began to long for more easily controllable slaves.

Assisted by the now completely insane Dave Ross, It began experiments in spatial travel (eternally neglected in Junian science), which eventually led to Its sending a group of supposedly loyal Junians to the only other habitable planet in the solar system at that time — Earth.

Fortunately for the fledgling human race (about twenty million years young

at the time), the marsupials who were sent managed to break contact with the Evil and conceal the presence of sentient life from it.

The marsupials made many attempts to impress the ideals of free thought, independence, and strength of spirit on the just-evolving humans to better protect them from the Evil, but made only marginal progress. Embittered, they retired to the isolated continent of Australia, where their descendants still observe, and occasionally silently interfere in, human history.

Meanwhile, on Juno, the Evil continued Its efforts to completely destroy all Junian resistance. As the Ordinator, It now forced them to live in dreary underground caverns, and instituted a complex bureaucracy (pun intended) as an antithesis to their usual carefree life. It resurrected early Junian mind control experiments and used the technology to broadcast hypnotic messages complexwide (for unknown reasons, the koalas proved most resistant to this insidious attack).

Then, due mostly to the evil Dave Ross (who really deserves a sidebar of his own, and gets one on page 20), the Evil began to forcibly convert the opposition. Kangaroos (or "roos," in Junian slang) that it found to be "traitorous" had large sections of their brains removed and replaced with programmable hardware, and were equipped with the latest in blaster rifles and combat Flexisteel. These "Cyberoos" proved quite efficient at killing former friends.

Koalas condemned as "treasonous" received the most hideous treatment; they were grafted (via bio-silicon interfaces) into armored shells and outfitted with heavy ordnance to be mini-tanks. These mini-tanks could be deployed whenever the Ordinator was experiencing "heartburn" (vandalism), "indigestion" (rioting), or congested corridors. Called MALOKs (Mechanically Aug-

mented, Liberty-Obliterating Koalas), they proved even better than Cyberoos at killing former friends.

Despite all adversity, however, the bright flame of resistance burned within the Junians to the very end (ain't we poetic today?).

Juno Warren, at the time the PCs arrive, is much like a primitive version of Alpha Complex. Security clearances are almost nonexistent, as not many Junians are capable of earning The Ordinator's trust. There are no transtubes, and very few bots. The walls are made of rock rather than metal, making Juno Warren look very much like an underground tunnel complex from *The Other Game*™. Lighting is provided by phosphorescent fungi on the ceiling, and computer terminals and security cameras are specially grown crystal structures working on well known principals of fiber optics.

For ease of reference, all Alpha Complex service groups and secret societies have the same name in Juno Warren, except PURGE, which goes by the name of EEVAK here (you'll see why before long). EEVAK, which consists entirely of koalas, is in the minority; Junians, lulled by the hypnotic hums of The Ordinator, have forgotten their origins and gone completely paranoid. You can assume that any farce occurring normally in Alpha can happen here, too. Juno Warren's a Complex by another name, and it smells just as foul.

Incidentally, Junian lasers go right through Alpha Complex Reflec like it was synthemargarine substitute. They work on different wavelengths, or something. Gosh.

A Really Special Note: Dave Ross, the Cyberoos, and the MALOKs are an awful lot like certain recurring villains from that BBC science fiction show that this adventure has nothing — well, maybe a *very* little — to do with. Please don't tell anyone we told you.

But for a few minor details, this room could be a PLC distribution center from back home! Sullen clerks hide behind long counters, patiently not giving out stuff to near-infinite lines of disgruntled clones, as impassive security combots look on, discouraging all thoughts of chewing Algee Gum in line. The major differences seem to be the bare rock walls, the peculiar ceiling lighting, that annoying buzzing, and a certain lack of human features on the "people" in this room.

They stand about as tall as you, but bear elongated faces, powerful, oddly bent legs,

and long, muscular tails. They wear nothing but overloaded utility belts and brown fur all over their bodies, and look like nothing you've ever seen before — though you do have some vague, confused memories of that eternal creche-rat vidshow, *Captain Botaroo* ...

The combots are even stranger. All but one of them look like the Botaroo guys, but they seem to be covered in metal foil, with odd mechanical parts sticking out here and there. They stand inhumanly (or inanimally) stiff, and sport wicked looking, hip-holstered blasters.

The other one resembles a condiment shaker from the Red-level commissary back home, right down to the attached miniweapons for terminating traitors who hog all the salt. Standing about four feet tall, it seems to have been designed as either an awesomely-efficient mini-tank, or a militant garbage can.

The Botaroo guys notice you, and get real excited. One of them points at you and yells, "*MUTANTS!!!*" The rest pull what appear to be lasers out of their utility belts, aiming at you. The combots orient on you, aiming their weapons.

The "Botaroos" are really kangaroos, or "roos" in Juno slang (the Doc probably points this out early on, in addition to other names; he knows a bit about Junian culture and likes to show it). The roos are about equivalent to your standard Alpha Complex Troubleshooter. There are 25 of them in the room, in addition to five Cyberoos and one MALOK (the usual proportion is one MALOK to one mob).

Can anyone say, "Hopelessly outnumbered?" Well, the PCs had better learn, quick. The first round of combat should be enough for intelligent people, but you may need to give your players some hints. ("The MALOK fires at you — clatter — neatly removes your hair, and blasts the wall behind you, showering rock fragments on your bald pate. Do you (snicker) want to stay (giggle) and fight it (tee hee)?")

If your players are real dumb, and wade gloriously into battle, don't worry too much. Just send in clones from the Reincarnatron until they've had enough (of the Reincarnatron, that is).

Oh. One other thing. Impress repeatedly on the players what swell armor the Cyberoo guys have on. It'll make things easier on you later.

When you finally get some clones fit to bear the name of Troubleshooter, read:

Yep, cowardice certainly seems like the better part of valor at this point. You run back through the door and slam it shut.

Oops, looks like somebody jostled a crate. It falls, along with the tower it was a part of, and slams into another pile of crates. And another... Looks like we got a runaway domino reaction, folks, and it seems to be heading toward you!

Squatting down and covering one's head is the smartest thing to do in this situation — there aren't any large objects to provide cover. Anyone who stands around screaming like it's gonna sonically vaporize the boxes if he does it loud enough gets to roll on column 11 of the you-know-what.

Make careful note of anyone who says they're trying to get inside the TORTIS, where it's safe. Such clones, our playtests have shown, are crafty and cunning, and should be killed before they can do any serious harm. Put the smartbutt(s) through a torture test of strength, stamina, and agility rolls just to get through the toppling crates to the TORTIS.

Make sure you have a camera handy before you tell the PCs the doors are locked. The facial expressions should be priceless, and worth preserving for posterity.

After sorting out the damage, or lack thereof, read:

As the last crate crashes to the floor, you blink nervously and stand up. Clouds of

ancient dust rise from the corners, slippery foam oozes from the sundered crates, and the smell of burning rock fills the air.

Wait a minute! What's causing that smell? After a moment of frantic searching, you notice that the door is glowing red. The Junians must be trying to burn through it! "To the TORTIS!" shouts Doctor Whom.

Unfortunately, there seems to be no sign of it! You could have sworn it was in that corner over there, right where that huge pile of crates that would take hours to clear away is sitting now ... Hoo boy. Looks like you're doomed.

Pause to let the players respond. When someone says he's looking for another exit, mention the conveniently located ventilation shaft that the crate-fall has uncovered. Have everyone make some agility rolls to climb over the slippery mountain of crates. Don't discard the dramatic possibility of the Troubleshooters fighting a rear guard action against the just-entering enemies, but don't kill the players too heavily here. There'll be plenty of time for that later.

Throughout the mad scramble, Doctor Whom stands politely to one side of the shaft entrance, with constant mutters of "After you." He's morally and logically correct in his actions (after all, he can withstand the Junian's weapons better than the PCs), but we find that most Troubleshooters get mighty suspicious around someone who thinks of morals or logic.

Some people may get panicky right at the shaft entrance, necessitating the usage of heavy ordnance by those standing behind in order to clear the way. Amazing how so much trouble can arise from one little misunderstanding, isn't it?

Encounter Three: Give 'Em the Shaft

When all of the Troubleshooters have gotten in the shaft, read:

You swiftly crawl down the tiny shaft, leaving the Junians far behind. The rough rock surface scrapes at your soft Alpha Complex fingers. (Pause for a moment, and pretend to study the map.) You make a left turn, then a right, then another left, and — just a minute; would the person who was in front please identify him- or herself?

Just a little scare here for your players (and a little vindication, too; up till now, everyone else's been resenting that person for being the first one in). When Numero Uno has stepped forward, continue:

You make the bend, and crawl on for a while longer. Making another turn, you

reach — a dead end. You hear a rushing sound behind you, and the air in the shaft suddenly seems cool and damp. What are you doing?

Pause to let your players think there's something they can do. Observe their pathetic attempts to blast their way out, crawl over each other, back up, pray for divine intervention, etc. Smile. Enjoy their fear. You deserve it.

We can't think of anything they could possibly do to extricate themselves from this situation. But this is a campaign, and who knows what bright ideas your clones may have picked up in their travels. All you need to do is get them to the other side of the secret door they currently don't realize they're leaning against, and continue with "Down the Drain."

If they teleport back to the crate room or something — well, you're on your own. Maybe an EEVAK patrol (see "Down the Drain," following) ambushes them with rocks and rolling logs and — Nah, who'd believe attacking teddy bears, anyway?

Down The Drain

When you're finished having fun, read:

A huge stream of water comes rushing around the last bend. It slams into all of you, carrying you along.

Mr. or Ms. Person N. Front, you too are caught up in the rush. Just as you are about to become a colorful smear on the wall in front of you, the wall slides away. You and your buddies go sluicing down a chute into a large, shallow pool of water.

You're apparently in a natural chamber — stalactites, stalagmites, the whole nine yards by thirty meters. You can't hear that buzzing noise'anymore (thank goodness).

The most prominent feature in the room is the large group of little mutants aiming weapons at you. They resemble "teddy bores" — strange stuffed items Free Enterprise sold as insomnia cures (they bore you to sleep?) before that Secret Society underwent explosive reorganization — but these are grey in color, and have large, ovular noses. They wear nothing but leather straps and belts to hang things on, and an occasional pilot's hat.

One of them, who seems to be their leader (she's got the most stuff on her belt,) glances over you quietly and says (read this in a squeaky Australian accent; the higher pitched the better):

"Seems you're in a bit of a spot, mates."

This place is the secret headquarters of EEVAK (The Evil Entity Vengeance and Assassination Koalition). They chose it because The Ordinator doesn't broadcast the hypno-signal here (It doesn't even know the place exists). When they detect intruders, they turn a valve which sends the flow from a nearby waterpipe into the shaft, flushing everyone out into the pool. This works well against Cyberoos and MALOKs; water shorts them out something fierce.

The leader is Bessie, the leader of EEVAK. Think of her as your typical fantasy/horror movie High Priestess, tempered with a lot of cautious geniality. She alternates between highly formalized, ritual language ("It is foretold in the Sacred Book that six celestial beings known as *Turmoil Slayers* will come to aid us in our hour of need."), and a down-home, frontier style on-the-level slang. ("Sorry, but it don't seem to be you guys. Looks like we gotta feed ya to the crocigators. That's life fer ya, iznit?")

The Troubleshooters may wish to respond with a blistering hail of weaponsfire, but all that's likely to come out of their waterlogged equipment are streams of water (followed by a fish, if you're feeling jovial). The poor saps are just gonna havta use their brains to talk their way out of a fight (good luck).

As you roleplay this encounter, keep in mind the position of EEVAK. Even though they distrust the PCs (who wouldn't?), they

desperately need allies of some sort in their struggle against The Evil Ordinator. If it is discovered (possibly let slip by Doctor Whom) that the PCs also wish the destruction of The Ordinator, the EEVAKs warm up to them considerably. Which doesn't mean you can't have a little fun with them first ...

Sample Dialogue between the Troubleshooters and EEVAK:

PC 1: Look, we don't want to hurt you; we're just trying to kill an Ancient Evil ...

Bessie: Sounds like these guys are those told of in the prophecy, sent to us in our time of desperation.

Bert: No, O holy one! Ten gets ya hundred they're spies, sent by The Ordinator against us! Why should we trust these strangers?

PC 2: 'Cause I'm a-sendin' a tacnuke down yer throat iffn' yuh don't.

PC 1: Shhh! Don't make them madder —

Bessie: Y'may be right, Bert. If they were spies, it'd explain their constant bickering.

Doctor Whom: Er, excuse me, if I might just interject a word here —

PCs 1 & 2: SHHHHH!

Bessie: Speak, O dry and appallingly dressed one.

Doctor Whom: Well, I've done quite a bit of research in the ancient prophecy business myself, and I wondered if there isn't a little clause appended to yours requiring the strangers to prove themselves through some kind of ordeal ...

Bert: (*Awed.*) S'truth, Bessie.

Bessie: You speak with true knowledge of the ancient words, O wise one, and are thereby spared. Yer mates, however, must undergo "The Ordeal of the Outback" by fighting twenty rock snakes naked to prove their worth ... (*PC 2 aims cone rifle at Bessie and pulls trigger. It clicks entertainingly, and more water pours out of the barrel.*)

PC 1: (*Unplugging ears.*) We're doomed.

If you actually want the players to undergo an ordeal, you have several options. You can give them something fatal like the rock snake thing above, in which case they'd better talk the Doc into undergoing

The EEVAKs get the drop on the drips.

it in their place. You could give them a fair challenge (!), perhaps wrestling two or three EEVAKs each to compensate for their size.

Or, if you prefer a light mood, give them something ridiculously easy by their standards ("You must, without jumping, reach out to touch the sacred rock of Kumbeloo, which towers five mighty feet above the floor!"). Choose the right kind of struggle to suit your mood, and the players'.

■ Parley in the Pits of Time

When the PCs and the EEVAKs finally settle down to talk, the Troubleshooters are given small, inadequate seats at the conference table (imagine visiting your old kindergarten), where Bessie delivers the following speech:

"Be it known to you honored guests that we, the Evil Entity Vengeance and Assassination Koalition, or EEVAK, have sought for many centuries to destroy the evil presence that has possessed our Ordinator. Our quest has been ever thwarted by the loyal tools of The Evil Ordinator, namely the Cyberoos and the MALOKs, creations of the sinister Dave Ross. Really got us up a gumtree. Bert, our treasurer, can give ya a current report."

Bessie leans back, furry feet on the table, as Bert shuffles some papers and begins.

"Too right, Bessie. Our major problem so far has been the overwhelming ordnance and armor of our foes. Not much our popguns can do against 'em. However, you can't rip out half of someone's brain and jam it full of circuit boards and expect 'em to be near as smart as one of us pure organic beings."

(Carefully study the reactions of any Corpore Metallers in your group. Ask them casually what they think. Encourage a role-played response — snicker.)

"This is where we think we've got 'em. If we could disguise even a few of us as our enemies, we could easily pull the old "military escort bringing prisoners through" routine on the Cyberoos guarding the Ordinal Processing Unit. Never met a rock that didn't beat a Cyberoo for brains.

"Once inside, we could grab a bunch of MALOK shells from the main Ordinator-controlled production factory, which'd give us a fair go at The Ordinator Itself. With luck, we could destroy it, and free all Junians from Its iron rule."

There's solemn silence around the table, as Bert's words sink in. He continues.

"The problem is, we haven't got the resources or materials to make a decent disguise. The Cyberoos and MALOKs do know the difference between Flexisteel armor and tinfoil, y'see."

"Hang on, Bert," says a rotund koala from across the table. "What about those Cyberoo suits we got in the last raid? We

must have (insert number of Troubleshooters here, not including the Doc) of those things rotting away in storage right now!" (Can you see what's coming?)

Bert shakes his head. "Ripper idea, Bruce," he says, "but those suits are about six feet tall — none of us'd ever fit inside one well enough to fool even a Cyberoo. We'd need to find some roos who supported the revolution — harder than pinpointing a maggot in a barrel of worms — or find some genetic freaks of the same height, which would be even tougher. Those kind of things just don't appear from thin air, you know."

"Yeah," says Bruce, "but suppose you trimmed a suit down to our size ..."

The little guys start squabbling among themselves. They seem to have forgotten that you exist.

If there lives a player who couldn't pick up on the copious hints that we've provided, it's practically guaranteed that the sap will be one of your group (possibly all of them!) You, as GM, presumably possess a great degree of intelligence (you bought this book, after all), and shouldn't need us to tell you that it would be a Good Idea for the players to don the Cyberoo suits and cover the EEVAKs in the coming raid (though the editor will probably stick some exposition in here anyway, just for clarity)*. If your players just sit around with their mouths open, staring into space, let the Doc point it out to the EEVAKs.

If your players are interested, let them really ham it up here, presenting their dramatic idea to the shouting crowd, being ignored at first, then watching the light dawn on the EEVAK's faces as the idea sinks in. Shower the PCs with praise and glory as the EEVAKS hail them as the promised saviors. Don't be afraid to feed their little egos to the bursting point, giving them a true sense of accomplishment and pride. After all, as the Good Book says, "Pride goeth ... before a fall" (*Proverbs, 16:18*). Gee, never thought you'd see a biblical reference in a *Paranoia* adventure, did you?

Should anyone remain resistant, you can point out the facts of life to them. Their own weapons and armor are soaked through, and are malfunctioning all over the place if you're doing your job. In addition, they're gonna need disguises if they want to move about Juno Warren without a repeat of earlier events. Finally, and most importantly, it would be more fun from your point of view if you stick them with the suits. If they're still obstinate, let 'em be. Just skip over the next few boldface paragraphs, and delete all references to the armor in the following descriptions. Boy, will they be sorry. And they'll want the suits.

Oh, where and when can they be...

Another possibility is using the TORTIS to whisk everyone directly to The Ordinator's presence. This idea is likely to be brought up by the smarties who wanted to hide in the TORTIS before. Humor them again. Let them mount an expedition to the crate room. It won't make any difference, as you'll see.

■ Greased Lightning

If the players agree to don the Cyberoo suits, read:

Bert goes into a storeroom for a while and comes out with some metal crates reading "Slikbody Fur-Styling Mousse." He pops them open with a crowbar, revealing a bunch of musty, silverish, kangaroo-shaped jumpsuits with cybernetic parts jutting all over them. Some of these parts have desiccated pieces of meat stuck to them, which may very well be from the original wearers.

The suits seem to be made from a highly resilient and flexible metal armor, though their functionality might perhaps be compromised a tad by huge blaster holes scattered across the chest area.

If the EEVAKs had actually done this with their obsolete weapons, the armor would have to actually be as cheap as the Troubleshooters now suspect. In reality, the EEVAKs had led the Cyberoos around a corner into the relentlessly firing guns of a bunch of MALOKs. The EEVAKs are modest folk, and won't boast of this clever ploy to the PCs.

Bert pops another crate, revealing some oblong clumps of rust that, on closer inspection, look like they may once have been blaster rifles. Bert apologetically wipes at one of them with a rag, and it crumbles into a reddish-orange pile of dust. After a moment's consideration, he gingerly hands around the rest of the rifles to you.

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*Not on your life. The author is wholly responsible for your understanding of his meaning. —Ed.

These blaster rifles work. Really. Once or twice. Then they need a recharging at one of Juno Warren's inconveniently located weapon recharging outlets. Incidentally, the power packs in the rifles are capable of storing 100 kilojoules (kj) of energy a second, up to a maximum of 1,000 kj. The new recharging outlets, made long after these rifles became obsolete, pump out 500 kj a second. >*Boom.*<

The suits fit Junian roos very well; Alpha Complex clones are another matter. To get the thing on without putting a foot through it or ripping the crotch requires a x1/2 moxie roll. Another roll allows the Troubleshooter to, actually resemble a human wearing a cybernetic marsupial suit.

Someone might have the bright idea of greasing him- or herself into a cyberoo suit with the liberal application of styling mousse. The EEVAKs can provide a jar if none of the Troubleshooters picked one up previously. Reduce any greasers' moxie rolls from x1/2 to no change.

If someone screws up, assume that a piece of dormant cybernetic equipment got hooked up to a PC and was "accidentally" reactivated. Perhaps the blood filtering system starts pumping out more blood than it pumps back in, or the cybernetic loyalty circuits hook up to the clumsy oaf's brain, turning the PC into a mindless eradicator of former friends (come to think of it, that's what a Troubleshooter is, anyway).

Maybe the suit gets a mind of its own, and always wants to go at a right angle to where the PC is going, or gets epileptic spasms when the poor sap tries to aim a weapon. Throughout the entire fashion show, the EEVAKs and the Doc observe, snicker, and make humorous comments.

By the way, the Doc is an English gentleman, and just wouldn't look right in one of these utilitarian garments. He won't wind up wearing one, for the simple reason that we've only provided enough jams for the Troubleshooters.

Should the clones get very polite all of a sudden ("No, please, I insist, after you"), the Doc declines with equal politeness, stating that it would be best for him to pilot the TORTIS in a diversion for their frontal assault. The EEVAKs enthusiastically agree with the plan, then ask what a TORTIS is.

Once the PCs are all suited up, they're given lessons in proper Cyberoo behavior, including speech lessons ("The traitor's pain stems mainly from my laser") and walking like a cybernetic kangaroo (i.e., not very well). You could whip this into a live role-playing session easily, encouraging your players to speak in nasal monotones as they hop stiffly around the room at your direction. Curl your adventure book into a director's megaphone to ensure that they'll hear you. By George, I think they've got it (they're all gonna get it sooner or later)!

Encounter Four: Where Are We Going in Our Cyberoo Suits?

Read. (Don't attempt to write; this space is already filled.)

The EEVAKs seem subdued — daunted, perhaps, by the magnitude of the task before them. Doctor Whom seems unconcerned, although whether this is due to some optimistic inside information he possesses or the fact that he's about 10 meters away from reality is debatable.

The forces of the rebellion are now heading down the dampened ventilation shaft that the Troubleshooters used before. The EEVAKs and the Doc have little trouble, being unencumbered. But if you stuck the Troubleshooters with the suits, they're going to have a grand old time. The suits scrape horribly at the sides of the shaft, and occasionally get stuck.

Every so often, chunks of cybernetic equipment fall off, necessitating hasty repairs with duct tape or somesuch repair-quality item. Sometimes, ominous pieces of stuff in the helmets poke at their heads with sharp needles and buzz in their ears. The EEVAKs assure the PCs that this is all perfectly normal and nothing to be worried about. The Troubleshooters'll probably wonder where these alien mutants learned to speak like The Computer.

Continue:

Eventually, you reach the room of crates that you arrived in. The evidence of your narrow escape still lies strewn about on the floor, but a large path has been cleared from the melted doorway to the huge pile of crates that buried the TORTIS. The pile looks smaller now. As you gaze about, Doctor Whom studies the Universal Detector again.

"The TORTIS has been stolen, I see," he remarks laconically. You realize that he's right — your only way out of here has been removed from the pile of crates! The Doc just smiles.

"Probably been taken to their lab for study," he says. "That's what usually happens, anyway. I'll just nip over and get it back. Shan't be long." Before you can stop him, he strides calmly toward the door — and runs straight into a MALOK, just entering the room.

Without batting an eye, the Doc hangs his hat over the MALOK's main visual sensor. It starts spinning blindly around the room, screaming in a cheap synthesized voice, "Alert! Alert! My vision is obstructed! My vision is obstructed!." The Doc neatly sidesteps, and casually waltzes out the door into the unknown.

The Doc employs his stealth at this point to slip away from the PCs and recover the TORTIS (not that he dislikes the Troubleshooters, but a bunch of tagalongs would cramp his style in this situation). As a master of fast talk and con (and possessor of the Heroic Immunity to Danger mutation), he will have little difficulty in making his way to Juno Complex's R&D labs and stealing it back from under their noses.

As he said, he's had to do this kind of thing many times before. Conveniently, he will succeed and come looking for the PCs just as they complete the climactic battle against The Ordinator in Encounter Five of this episode.

Take note of any player reactions here, whether they involve charging bravely to the Doc's "rescue," charging back the way they came, or jumping up and down and spinning in place, saying "Duhhhh." If they retreat, check out the sidebar about catacombs and wimps.

For dramatic reasons, the PCs should be kept from trying to follow the Doc. To this end, we're going to create a diversion. Continue reading:

Just after the Doc leaves, five more MALOKs roll through the door. They aim their turrets at you, and speak in unison:

"Cyberoos! Explain immediately why you allowed that prisoner to escape!"

If the PCs aren't wearing suits, the MALOKs simply open fire (the one wearing the Doc's hat is still rolling around uselessly). If this occurs, the EEVAKs set an
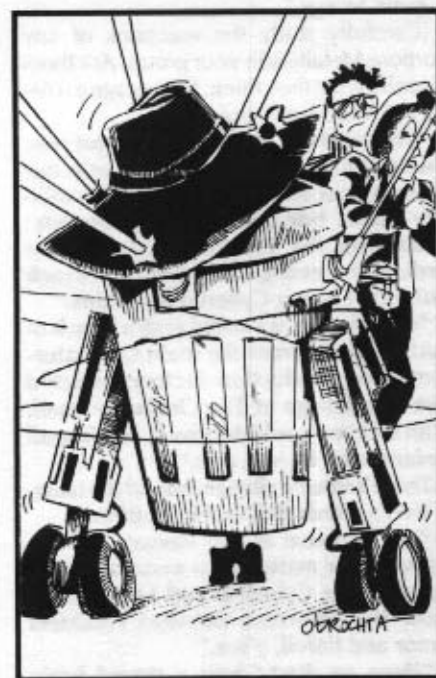
Enemy ordnance can be such a hazard.

example for the PCs by shooting off in the opposite direction. If the clones are slow, their individual body parts also shoot off in the opposite direction.

With the suits, they've got a chance. The MALOKs, after all the genetic processing they go through, possess the rigid logic and calculating capacity of a light bulb. The Troubleshooters should have little trouble imitating those boring monotones (using their copious experience with briefing personnel as models). Spurious logic works like a charm; almost any excuse will do (double spurious logic skill when talking to the MALOKs).

If the PCs decide to take the hard way (by doing what Troubleshooters do best; i.e., shooting at the source of trouble), just give 'em what they ask for. The EEVAKs hang back from the slugfest; they have no wish to be sandwiched between opposed teams of highly armored, highly weaponed forces.

Since the MALOK's equipment is basically superior to that of the player's (Cyberoos are designed to attack *en masse* and expendably; MALOKs are the heavy artillery), a clone or six should probably be lost unless they come up with some dramatic, entertaining tactics early on (like shooting the remaining crate piles down on top of their enemies).

If you want some additional mayhem, the blinded MALOK finally blasts the Doc's hat off—along with most of its head. It then goes berserk, whirling about and shooting friend and foe alike.

If the Troubleshooters wind up with a few intact MALOK shells when they're done subduing the enemy, the EEVAKs (Bessie and Bert get priority) commandeer them with hearty thanks. "Commandeering" consists of lifting the turret on the top of the MALOK, doing unmentionable things with a knife to the misshapen mutant inside, discarding the excess material in a wet heap in a corner somewhere, and climbing in. The clones really can't argue much about this callousness—or theft; unless someone was made tiny by the Reincarnatron or was playing a midget in the first place, they won't be able to fit inside.

If the clones aren't wearing the Cyberoo suits, they shouldn't have gotten to this point — but if they did, the EEVAKs in the MALOK shells can escort the rest of EEVAK and the PCs to their destination. Well, you *could* let things turn out like this if you have a kind heart, but we still recommend that you nuke 'em. Nothing personal — it's our job. And our adventure.

Warrin' on Juno

Once the PCs have dealt with the MALOKs' obstacle (by talking or blasting their way through — if they ran, go to "The Sidebar About Catacombs and Wimps"),

The Sidebar About Catacombs and Wimps

So, your players have retreated like wimps, not wishing to make the hazardous but fun trip through Juno Warren in such an obvious fashion. Whatever are you to do?

Well, as we'll describe in more detail later (in "The Section About the Catacombs"), Juno Warren is networked by a bunch of nasty, dripping catacombs with evil beasties in them. When the clones pull back, the EEVAKs start discussing alternate plans of action.

Eventually, Bessie pulls the squabbling mob together by suggesting they attack The Ordinator through the catacombs (see "The Section About the Catacombs" for dialogue suggestions). The Troubleshooters would have to go through there eventually anyway, but if they make you send them through it now, without sampling the horrors of Juno Warren first, make them pay.

Triple the deadliness of the catacombs. Show them the error of their ways. Or, if you like the Juno Warren stuff we gave you, try blandly running it anyway no matter where they are. In *Paranoia*, there's no way around the GM. Onward to "The Section About the Catacombs!"

the EEVAKs direct them through the currently deserted PLC supply room to the rest of Juno Warren on their way to The Ordinator. Read:

With the EEVAKs guiding you (as much as they can while still pretending to be prisoners), you move out into the rocky corridors of Juno Warren. All about you are crystalline items that resemble computer terminals, curtained depressions with signs carved into the rock that read "Confession Alcoves," more signs that tell you to remain watchful, suspect everyone, and that The Ordinator is your companion. All around you, Junian koalas and roos eye you with the disrespectful deference of lower clearance citizens. Suddenly, the local equivalent of a security camera swings around to point at you. "Cyberoos (or MALOKs, if the EEVAKs are leading)! Give immediately your prisoner transfer security authorization number!" The voice is none other than that of The Computer! What do you say?

Even after all these years of Evil subjugation, The Ordinator still holds a spark of resistance in Its resistors. It has to give the PCs at least a token show of force, lest the Evil grow suspicious; but It's hoping that the rebellion forces press on to destroy the

Evil, even if they have to kill The Ordinator, too. (Such selflessness! If all *Paranoia* players worldwide took this humble example of altruism and hope to their hearts, we'd be out of business. So please ... don't.)

So, let the PCs sweat a bit, and stammer out nonsense with their eyes closed, anticipating the end. Watch the shock set in as The Ordinator accepts whatever explanation they give (up to and including "Yes! We're guilty! Please terminate us!"). Have The Ordinator break in occasionally when they're doing stupendously treasonous things, only to back off with a simpering tone and a non sequitur.

The clones should eventually build up the nerve to talk back to it (pulling out a long scroll of paper: "Y'know, Friend Computer, I never did tell you precisely what I think of you...") When the Evil isn't looking, It (the Ordinator) cues the PCs. ("You're getting warmer ...")

If you're in a rush, you can send the PCs directly to their doom — er, the climactic ending. But that means that you'll be missing out on the nifty little encounters we've provided for you to plague them with on their way there, thoughtfully gift-wrapped (read: tinted) in a box nearby.

If you need more ideas, just grab a situation out of any Alpha Complex-based *Paranoia* adventure. Replace clones with Junians, and bots with MALOKs or Cyberoos. Don't worry about the players catching on if they played that particular adventure before; in fact, actively seek out such encounters and present them with Junians who look and act just like your players did in the same situation. Parody your friends mercilessly. Make them hate you for life. Have fun.

So, when the players get tired of all this fun — wait, what are we saying?! *Forget* the players! The players have no say! When *you* get tired of all this fun, read:

As you have progressed, the security checkpoints have been appearing more frequently, with greater ordnance each time. However, your cybernetic charms have been squeaking you through so far. It'd be easier to tell how far you've gotten if Junians had any other security clearances besides brown. Now, you march down an empty, quiet corridor full of silent security cameras.

(Since all cameras in Juno Warren use fiber optics, the cameras are gonna be silent anyway. The players probably think they're nonactive. Their loss.)

You feel a tug at your leg, and Bert whispers, "This is it, mates — the big one. We're almost there. If you blow it here, it's the death of all of us. Try not to be nervous." The sweat trickles are making your foreheads itch.

Extra Random Encounters Chart

1-4: With a cry of "Viva la Revolution!" a group of 15 koalas attack the PCs. They're members of a branch of EEVAK, fighting to free their comrades from what they believe to be the evil grip of The Ordinator.

It's hard to convince these guys of the truth; even if Bessie and company explain, they probably think their friends have been brainwashed. Of course, if the PCs blow them all away, relations with EEVAK are bound to be rather strained in the future ...

5-8: Reverse of above — five Cyberoos come to the aid of the PCs, thinking that they've been captured by the EEVAKs (at least, the little guys seem to be shoving them around an awful lot ...). Maybe the EEVAKs and Cyberoos attack at the same time. >Whammo<.

9-12: A Junian scrubot (a MALOK with suitable attachments) insists that it's time for the "Cyberoos" to receive their yearly cleaning. This could mean a thorough scrubbing with some electrically conductive liquid like water (zap), or a sanitary vaporizing of the small biological contaminants that accompany the PCs (the EEVAKs). It has to be fast talked or fought away.

However you describe the scrubot/ MALOK, do *not* give it a frilly pink apron and a feather duster.

13-16: A bunch of roo Troubleshooters run around the corner, chasing a bunch of punkish roos who've used too much mousse. The latter are carrying a black, wooden box. They all slam into the PCs. When everyone gets up, the PCs find themselves between the punks and the TroubleRooters, the black box having coincidentally landed in the arms of one of the PCs.

Guess what happens next. If the PCs manage to retain the box and open it, they find a bunch of music videos on tape. The punks, incidentally, call themselves the Mellow, Jeering Black Box Roos. (Nudge, nudge, an in joke, know what I mean, know what I mean?)

17-20: The corridor ahead lacks a floor, due to a recent Junoquake. A detour sign points down a side tunnel, from which comes flickering red light and streams of molten rock.

This detour is still being constructed by two sulky roos working with heavy mining lasers (each equivalent to a laser cannon I—see the Vehicle Weapons in the basic rules). Due to lack of enthusiasm, the rock is being carved with characteristically geological slowness. Arguing with the miners is not smart, unless one is standing behind a highly reflective surface. Do your PCs think of this *before* they harangue?

Up ahead, the corridor hangs a right. The shape and color of the corridor abruptly change. It's now in the form of a three-meter diameter cylinder with four evenly spaced, almost imperceptibly spiralling grooves. The lights are very dim here, but at the far end, you can just make out a big chunk of metal that resembles a vaguely paraboloid cone. It fills the entire corridor, and points in your direction.

If any PC with projectile weapons skill makes a roll, he or she finds that the grooves are similar to those found in gun barrels. The same roll tells the PC that the metal thingee at the end is shaped like a bullet.

As a matter of fact, the group of brave revolutionaries has just entered the bore of a 2,742 mm Howitzer — one of Dave Ross's diabolical inventions (the Ordinator was unable to remove this security device without alerting the Evil to its feeble independence). When fired, the bullet does 18I damage. Damaged people tend to stick to the bullet through inertia until it crushes them against a wall — doing 18I again.

You wouldn't believe how slow some players are to catch on. They'll try to open the bullet like a door, conduct statistical analyses of the corridor with tape measures

(tripping over the grooves), ask stupid questions about the meaning of "paraboloid," and similar time-wasting maneuvers. Since the Howitzer is such an irrevocable clone breaker, we prefer to temper it by responding to player action — if they waste time, let the Howitzer waste them.

Let us elaborate just a bit. If they realize their peril right away, let them make a dramatic escape — they deserve it. If they have to make a couple moxie checks first, let them just get back around the corner into the normal corridor before the Howitzer fires. The projectile plunges into rock at the end of the bore-corridor, fragmenting on impact, catching PCs who didn't duck (3I damage—it goes right over the heads of the EEVAKs). The heated gases that follow the projectile out of the shell do an extra 3F damage to everyone who didn't run flat-out away from danger.

As the PCs get to their feet, they hear some booming noises as the Howitzer reloads. It uses an automatic loading system to inject a new shell faster than the Troubleshooters can crawl down the bore-hole, and possesses enough shells to continue firing until they give up.

Once the PCs have retreated, and are willing to listen to other ideas, head on to that section you've all been waiting for —

THE SECTION ABOUT THE CATACOMBS

Okay. It's corny. It's cliched. It's also *Paranoia*, so shut up.

Once a hasty retreat has been beat to a deserted corridor, the EEVAKs start discussing what to do next.

To let the players feel that they have some control over the game, allow them to spout forth their own lamebrained ideas (you might also let them try a couple of these ideas out; be sure to make them fail if you want to use this section).

Just when all seems darkest, Bessie says: "Well, mates, our darkest hour has befallen us, and there is but one path left to take. We must use the secret passage to The Ordinator's lair that lies within ... (dramatic pause) ... **The Catacombs!!!**"

If you're one of those really weird GMs, tape record some dramatic music (the first four notes of the theme from *Dragnet* or Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* work fine) over and over, and keep the tape handy. Whenever someone says "**The Catacombs!!!**" play the music loudly. Encourage the players to dramatically pause before saying, "**The Catacombs!!!**" Try to keep up an early 1960's science fiction TV show mood (more of this mood-setting technique follows in *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X: The Campaign Pack*).

When Bessie says this, the EEVAKs stand around in shock. Finally, Bert stammers out, "B-but Holy One, s-surely you don't mean ... **The Catacombs!!!**" Bessie grimly replies with, "Yes ... **The Catacombs!!!**" Keep this up until the players try to strangle you with their soda straws.

We don't even have to tell you that the players will soon be entering **The Catacombs.** You don't even have to tell the players. If they go on a sitdown strike, a Junoquake opens the rock under their feet and drops them in.

Otherwise, Bessie leads them to an unused ventilation shaft full of dust >Ah — AH—CHOOO!<. It's hard negotiating this with the Cyberoo suits on — any MALOK shells have to be abandoned (though an enterprising PC may be able to pry out the weapon system). As they crawl down, Bessie provides some necessary exposition:

"**It is said in the sacred books of Deandeyay that in the ancient times, when The Ordinator had just been foully possessed by the Evil from another dimension, experiments dark and unwholesome were carried out in the original caverns of Juno Warren. These unnatural delvings into secrets best left uncovered led to the unholy creation of a beast fell and loathsome.**

Having killed those that had given it its unspeakable existence, the creature slith-

ered off to... THE CATACOMBS, where even now it is rumored to survive, feeding on the martyred bones of those who resist The Ordinator's hated rule. Bum story, if you ask me."

Golly. Have Bessie make repeated references to this stuff as the PCs stumble around in the near dark, bumping heads on stalactites, splashing through pools of water, and stepping on the occasional skeleton. Smell their fear as you create moaning, shuffling sounds from far off, confront them with an orc or goblin now and then, build the tension to the bursting point, and, at dreaded last, let them meet ... the 40 foot man- (and woman)-eating platypus!

If the PCs have their blaster rifles handy, they should make short shrift of the beast. Failing that, they can easily outrun it. There's not much else a 40 foot man- (and woman)-eating platypus can do, except maybe lay an egg at them or something. After it's dead, the secret entrance to The Ordinator's lair is conveniently found nearby.

By the way, if you need a map of **The Catacombs,** just put a pencil point on a piece of paper and close your eyes. Doodle around without lifting the pencil from the paper. Open your eyes. There you are.

Encounter Five: Just An Ordinator Ending

Translate the following emphasized visual character strings into an audial format. In other words, read the boldface text aloud.

With a mighty shove, you push up the metal lid that covers the exit from ... THE CATACOMBS, and gaze about in awe. All around you are the works of a factory seemingly designed to produce bots, but sinister details mar this otherwise idyllic scene. At the far end of the line are rows of huge glass jars, each containing a roo or koala in the final stages of some odious mutation therapy.

The machinery was obviously halted in mid-production; you can see how the disgusting mutants are removed from their jars (one desiccated one is still hanging from a waldo arm) and literally built into

the appropriate armor. The suits on your own bodies suddenly feel colder.

Most of the EEVAKs have scampered off to a row of empty MALOK shells, squealing in glee. Bessie taps on your kneecaps and says, "Thanks a lot for your help, mates. Ripper job. Now, if you could just hold that mob off for a bit ..." She points down a hallway to a bunch of Cyberoos heading your way!

There are 10 metal-encased mutants coming down the hall, which could easily give the PCs lots of trouble unless they realize that all they have to do is fight a delaying action. These mutants have specific orders to kill everything in this room; only a spurious logic roll accompanied by a clever argument will work against them.

There are lots of machines to provide cover for smart PCs. If the clones can hold them off for five rounds, the EEVAKs, encased in MALOK shells, swoop in to save the day (about 10 EEVAKs should have made it to this point). These particular MALOK shells, incidentally, have a special maleficent modification added by Dave Ross (more about this later).

As the only exit from this room is down that hallway, the clones and company are sure to try it eventually. When they make their break, read:

You march stealthily down a twisted, winding hall. At intervals, thick metal blast doors are evident; curiously, all are open.

The Ordinator is clearing the way, so the Glorious Revolutionary People can get through to the OPU. The clones probably suspect a trap, however. We can't imagine *why* ...

As you reach the top of a tall flight of stairs, you hear muffled shouts from behind you. Looking back, you see the EEVAKs, ensconced in MALOK shells, bumping against the bottom step. Seems they're having trouble getting up.

The EEVAKs are just now discovering the disadvantages of the R2-D2 style of locomotion. A MALOK shell weighs about 140 kilos; with an EEVAK inside, it's 160 kilos. It takes at least four characters to carry one of these upstairs, and they've got 10 of them to portage (the phrase "fatigue roll" springs to mind for some reason).

After everyone has gotten a hernia, a locked door is found around the next corner (the Ordinator couldn't get *all* the doors). A x1/4 security roll or a good laser shot to the control pad opens the door—probably the latter. Read:

As you open the door, you are momentarily blinded by a brilliant light. After your eyes adjust, displaying all sorts of treasonously colored afterimages, you look into a room of dazzling crystal formations. They thrust up all around you in sundry directions, gleaming with their own inner light. Ten huge crystals serve as pillars to support the ceiling, pulsing rhythmically with a blue glow.

In the center of the far wall hangs a huge, amorphous face, made from the surrounding bluish crystals. The eyes glow deep red, the color of blood (or maybe the Unmentionable Surprise synthedessert from pre-Crash days). Surely this malevolent entity must be The Ordinator. Crystals flash and coruscate as It speaks:

"We are The Ordinator, great and terrible. Who are you and what do you want with us?"

The Ordinator is referring to Its split personality — the greatness that It once was, and the terrible Evil that now holds sway. It's only a coincidence that it happens to sound like a line from a famous fantasy book/movie. Really.

When the Troubleshooters enter, 10 concealed MALOKs move out from behind the pillars (Dave Ross has already used up his Cyberoos on the factory ambush; he's saved his elite troops for the last standoff). Dave Ross himself rolls out from behind The Ordinator's face, cackling gleefully. The Evil, meanwhile, is hanging back in some long-unused user-friendliness protocol module somewhere, watching the battle with detached amusement. It thinks the PCs haven't a chance in hell. Oh, neither do you? Well, they *are* supposed to be the heroes, aren't they?

With a particularly evil cackle, Dave pushes a button on his wheelchair. The EEVAK's MALOK suits suffer sudden internal energy releases (explosions). Happily, the armored shells confine the explosions. Unhappily, they kill the members of EEVAK quite dead (C'mon, you only find happy endings in real life — this is fiction, you know). The Forces of Evil are closing in for the kill, and the PCs have to save the day.

In combat, Dave Ross hits the glider attachment on his wheelchair, and flies around strafing the PCs. The Evil/Ordinator fires bolts of energy from Its eyes (10E, skill 5 — The Ordinator is pulling Its shots), and the MALOKs fire without regard for The Ordinator's crystal circuit structure that fills the room. Smart PCs try to run back down the stairs, and discover that Dave's MALOKs also have a glider attachment.

It would be nice to blow all the PCs into their component atoms here, but it wouldn't quite fit the dramatic necessities of the situation, and they *do* have a potentially

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■ Game Stuff

The 40 Foot Man- (And Woman)-Eating Platypus: typical creature from typical catacombs / extraordinarily cheap joke

  Weapons: Razor Beak (12I) _____ 8
  Armor: Greasy Fur (I2, L1), Sheer Size (macho bonus of 3)
  Tactics: Waddle clumsily forward like cheap Japanese monster, snap at din-din with beak.

infinite bunch of factors working in their favor — their reincarnatroned clone replacements. Give clones back punctually to heroes, and slow as continental drift to spineless, boring people.

Eventually, the Troubleshooters should be able to establish a beachhead, if only by burying their opponents under mounds of dead bodies. Another clever tactic is tricking the MALOKs into firing at reflections of PCs in the crystal surfaces, and hitting each other instead. Maybe someone really small can scrunch down in a MALOK shell and operate its weapons.

Our dramatic-climax suggestion is that the MALOKs are completely wiped out, The Ordinator is melted into crystal slag, Dave Ross is shot down and shamming dead in a corner somewhere, and the PCs are standing tall on a pile of smoking remains. When you reach this or a similar situation, read:

The battle doesn't so much end as fizzle out. The shooting seems to taper gently off, until you are left staring at the chilling gaze of The Ordinator, melted crystal dripping from its nose. As you watch, the glowing eyes fade.

Some PCs may become victims of wishful thinking here. Their luck.

Then, from all around you, a mocking, evil voice speaks. "Fools," It says, "You

may destroy empires or halt worlds in their orbits and fail to stop me. Your inferior race is of use to me only as a whole. You may hold the gratification, before you die, of knowing that your feeble lives have served my purpose, if you tell me the name of the place you come from."

The Evil is vaguely impressed by the PCs (they're a bit more interesting than the Junians) and plans to enslave Alpha Complex when it has the time (say, twenty million years from now). It makes no difference if the clones answer; the Evil has read their minds already.

Encourage the players to heroically refuse to betray Alpha Complex, or give smart answers like "Sector XXY cloning facility." If they refuse, the Evil grows more threatening in demanding an answer, then gets tired of the game and moves to destroy them.

If they sold out right away, It thanks them, and moves to destroy them. Either way, read:

Although you see nothing, you can feel cold tentacles of telekinetic force snake sinuously out of the walls, ceiling, and floors. As they twine themselves inexorably in your abdomens and start to pull in opposite directions, you hear a voice behind you. It sounds like a mad scientist who's lost most of his mad, and you turn to

see Dave Ross, trying to sit up in his shattered wheelchair.

Dave has just fully realized that he's been royally had. Not being the kind to take rejection lightly, he's about to send every nuclear reactor on Juno to critical mass by remote control. In the psuedo-pscientific world of *Paranoia*, these relatively meager explosions are enough to blow the entire planet to smithereens (Isn't it fun to ignore the laws of physics?)

"I gave my life, my genius, for you," he croaks, "and you demean all to nothing! Well, take this!" And he activates one final button on his control pad. A small speaker in the console starts saying, "Countdown to reactor explosions: 10, 9, 8 ..."

Know what? There's nothing the players can do to halt the explosion (so what else is new?). If they try to stop Dave by shooting him, they hit the button instead. The Evil abandons Its plan to kill the PCs via tentacle, reasoning that they're gonna die soon, anyway. Goes to show how right Ancient Evils are in a pinch ...

For, at this very moment, a time-wrenching noise is heard as the TORTIS appears, disguised as a phone booth.

The door opens, and the Doc steps cheerily out, saying, "Oh, I say! Sorry I'm late; fearful traffic, you know. Is that an auto-destruct counter I hear?"

If the PCs are smart, they'll knock the Doc over backwards while rushing into the TORTIS. Deluded ones may think that the Doc can stop the countdown.

Well, as soon as he learns what's going on, he shoves off, and the PCs had better follow (he wouldn't be so casual about so many sentient beings being blown into very small bits if he didn't know that Juno was due to explode about this time, anyway. It's got to form the asteroid belt and take its place in the Cosmic Scheme of things). As the last clone jumps in the TORTIS, the Doc slams in the coordinates and hits the final button ... Read:

As you materialize out in space, a million kilometers away from Juno, the Doc opens the viewscreen so you can get a good look. For an instant, you see a lovely brown and green planet, wreathed in clouds, which then disintegrates in an eye-piercing burst of light (that must have been one huge reactor). Yellow-orange light plays across the face of Doctor Whom as he gazes upon the inconceivable loss of life taking place outside. He slowly turns to face you.

"Right on schedule," he says. "I couldn't have timed it better myself. Bit of a shame about Juno, but the resulting asteroid belt

◼ MALOKs in Blunderland

Once upon a time in Juno Warren, there was a promising roo R&D tech named Dave Ross, creator of The Ordinator and accidental releaser of the Ancient Evil. On assuming dictatorship of Juno Warren, the Evil realized Dave's potential for Mad Geniushood, and kept him around. Over the centuries, Dave became pickled from long-term exposure to the foul energies exuded by the Evil, and the original creator became a slave of his misguided creation, a situation full of dramatic irony and important literary stuff like that.

Dave eventually got so shrivelled that he had to design a combo-life support system/wheelchair, which he embellished over time with weapons, armor, and a glider attachment. The technology he developed for this applied quite neatly to the eventual genesis of the MALOKs, and indirectly to the Cyberoos.

As our Troubleshooters were clawing their way through Encounters Three and Four, Dave Ross was working against time to whip up a new batch of Cyberlunks to protect both him and the OPU (The Ordinator had sent the usual guards on long, obscure missions in the other side of Juno Warren. It's almost like It didn't want them to be here, isn't it?).

Having prepared a small trap in his now-abandoned factory, Dave cackles and waits.

When playing Dave Ross, drape cheap metallic costume jewelry over yourself to simulate cybernetic parts. Wrinkle your face, sneer at the players, and go through the typical Mad Scientist ravings you've seen in the movies. To achieve that 1950's Sci-Fi Horror film effect, stick a penlight on your head and secure it (so that it casts creepy shadows on your face) with a headband. Flash the light in rhythm with your speech.

Game Stuff

Dave Ross: Physically (and Mentally) Challenged mad genius

Mutations: Villain's Immunity to Scripts, Particularly Evil Cackle

Weapons: One Mark II "Old Titanium Sides" Mega Wheelchair/Life Support System with solid shell auto slugthrower (7P) _____ 10

Armor: See above (ALL6)

Tactics: Order MALOKs to kill things for him; stay behind the lines and make villainous dramatic speeches. In tight situations, take to the skies in wheelchair and strafe foes.

No! We wanted a Bot-brewed Ultimate Delite Drink Light!

will prove essential to human space exploration millions of years from now."

At this point, act like you're getting ready to wind up the adventure. Shuffle papers, gather your dice together in one pile, down the last of your soda, and shift around in your chair. Read the following as if you were compressing some lengthly material you didn't want to run.

So, uh, the Doc sets the coordinates for Alpha Complex, drags out the cardboard box, and starts fixing the Transdimensional Collapsatron. He ... well, he gets the personality module back together, and, um, the TC says, "Gee guys, nice to talk to you again. Your bosses are on the line — I can't get it all, with most of my brain in pieces like it is, but they're yelling something about a 'success'. I think that—*BOOM!*" (Yell this suddenly, mid-sentence. Make them jump). **The personality module explodes in the Doc's hands as a dark, familiar voice fill the TORTIS.**

"You cannot win," It says. "Though you have struck me down, I am now more powerful than you can possibly imagine."

On the viewscreen, you see an asteroid with an evil glow to it. It vanishes, in much the same fashion as a temporal vehicle.

The Evil is using Its evil powers to speed things up a bit. Jumping ahead twenty million years to Year One of The Computer, It will use the asteroid (what asteroid? You know—*the* asteroid) as a diversion while it carries out Its diabolical schemes. Indeed, PCs who make a moxie check notice that the asteroid looks vaguely familiar ...

By the way, the H.P.'s were shouting about their "success" in re-contacting the TC. Why do players always have to assume so much?

While dusting pieces of the personality module off his coat, Doctor Whom examines some instruments, muttering numbers under his breath. Something explodes again, which the Doc fixes with a twist tie. Eventually, he calls out some information to the PCs (Since ignorance is relative to the amount of actual knowledge one possesses, we must give the PCs some hard facts here to set them up for greater misinformation later). Read:

"Hmmm ... Currently traversing a spatial/temporal vector, slope equivalent to delta x, y, z, t over respective... Ah, interesting — that asteroid is exactly equivalent in size to the town of Sheboygan, U.S.A., Earth, 20th century.

"Where was I? Oh, yes. It's apparently headed on a collision course with Earth, west coast of the North American continent, circa 2096 A.D., give or take a year. There definitely seems to be an Ancient Evil on it. You chaps happen to know anyone from that period?"

The Doc was one year too low — it's 2097 A.D., and the PCs definitely know a certain Computer from that period (Hint: It ain't the HAL 9000). And gee, that Ancient Evil was real interested in Alpha Complex, wasn't it?

Rays of light should start to stream into the skulls of even the densest PCs. No matter what they say, the Doc sets the coordinates for that time and place, gliding easily over the big black line and the huge boldface words that read ...

Episode Two: Alpha One and Free For All

Episode Background

Okay. So, now we have this Ancient Evil who likes taking over computer-ruled underground complexes, and who is heading for planet Earth even as we speak. If the PCs have any concept of heroic ideals at all, they should be happy to go chasing off after It in order to foil Its evil schemes (if they don't, kill them).

Just so you know, in the original history of Alpha Complex, (i.e., before the Troubleshooters were sent back to meddle with it), the Evil eventually blew Juno up out of pique and went to Earth, where It succeeded in taking over The Computer. This alternate timeline is expressed by all of the *Paranoia* adventures and supplements we've published to date.

In this episode, however, the Troubleshooters alter the course of history, effectively making all those adventures obsolete. Fortunately, West End will soon be coming out with revised, updated and newly illustrated versions of all the old material, fitting the new history of Alpha Complex and compatible with the imminently available 2.5th edition *Paranoia* ruleset.

The adventures will be published together in a 600 page hardcover edition entitled *Nine Years Of Ignorance And Fear*, autographed by the staff of West End, with forewords by Torquemada, Machiavelli, the Marquis de Sade, and Gelber (made possible through the Transdimensional Collapsatron). Look for it soon in fine game stores near you.

Episode Summary

While tracking the Evil's path through the Temporal Continuum with some neat-looking device that beeps and flashes impressively, Doctor Whom blindly sets the coordinates for the proper year. The PCs see some idiots blocking traffic in San Francisco while the Doc steps out to collect some data.

Using another neat-looking device (this one hums and has rows of little blinking lights), Doctor Whom locates the last remaining functional nuclear missile on Earth. The Troubleshooters are whisked over to Russia, battle a couple of Commies for Auld Lang Syne, and (in perfect Troubleshooter form) fail miserably to Save The Earth.

The Doc then concocts a method of extracting Evils from asteroids, which the poor Troubleshooters must execute. Saving their buns in the nick of time, the Doc repairs the Transdimensional Collapsatron and sends the PCs home. The End.

They wish.

Encounter One: We Left Our Clones In San Francisco

To the symphonious sound of exploding control panels (try putting the finale of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* on the sound reproduction equipment you own), Doctor Whom materializes the TORTIS on the roof of a skyscraper in *Cyberpunk* San Francisco. Flipping the safety switch on the TORTIS control console, which fries anyone (read: Troubleshooters) who tampers with the controls, the Doc bounces jauntily out the door with an ornate golden astrolabe autographed by Sir Issac Newton (an astrolabe is an ancient device for measuring the positions of stars and stuff; the Doc likes the quaint, antique atmosphere involved in its use).

As soon as he steps out, he vanishes. The Troubleshooters hear a yell, abruptly cut short. Anyone who rushes to his rescue encounters the same fate. We bet you're wondering what's going on.

Well, the Doc doesn't always pick the most stable landing places. Y'know how they attach billboards near the top of buildings, with a little lip sticking up? It's probably to give cops something to hide behind in those rooftop shoot-outs they always seem to get into on TV.

The Doc managed to park the TORTIS (though he didn't notice) on top of the billboard-edge, and not on the flat rooftop next to it. Fortunately, the TORTIS balances well (Of course, if the occupants rock the boat, so to speak, rushing from side to side ... nah, they wouldn't do that. Never. Let's see, did the Doc mention that auto-landing sequence?). But it's a four foot drop to the roof. First step's a doozy! But don't bother to roll damage unless the klutz fails an easy agility check.

The Doc, unharmed, stands at the edge of the building, fiddling with the astrolabe. Read (if no one left the TORTIS, the viewscreen opens up for no apparent reason and shows what's going on):

It's an eerie sight — the various buildings of the city of San Francisco, cold black monoliths in the light of dusk, displaying flashing, glittering lights everywhere as if in defiance of the huge, hazy mass of rock that looms above them, redly highlighted by the setting sun. At this particular angle, the skyscrapers seem to be flipping the bird to the doom that hangs overhead.

In front of this panorama stands Doctor Whom, softly singing a little tune and squinting along the sight of his astrolabe, his fluttering clothes illuminated by a hundred flashing billboards. As the Doc pauses to write some data in the margin of a book called *The War of the Worlds* and drops the astrolabe over the side of the building in the process, you see a commotion on a nearby elevated freeway.

Some kind of vehicle just apparently appeared out of nowhere, causing a bunch of cars to crash around it. You see a group of six figures scrambling to grab their stuff and abandon the vehicle, which resembles the Transdimensional Collapsatron to a degree unfavored by coincidence. It lies abandoned now in the center of the freeway, as the six occupants, who look a lot like you, jump into the darkness below.

Meanwhile, the Doc makes a terrific grab for the astrolabe, and catches it. Unfortunately, he loses his balance, falling off the building. Four reddening fingers clutching for dear life to the edge give mute testimonial to the Doc's battle for survival. Every so often, the fingers slip another millimeter toward a kilometer long fall.

What are you guys doing?

The players probably gleefully abandon their former friend for a chance at getting the TC back. If they stop to help the Doc first, they're obviously showing dangerous symptoms of "loyalty," "decency," and "trustworthiness," thus displaying ineptitude at playing *Paranoia*. To punish them, have the TC disappear into its holding pattern just as they save the Doc.

On the other hand, if they indulge their paranoid little vatgruel brains and cop out on their friend, it signals a lack of trust among these planet saving/destroying heroes, a situation easily remedied by causing the Collapsatron to disappear before they can make their way down through the

building, out onto the freeway, and into long red smears on the plasticrete surface.

The Doc manages to struggle up in the meantime. If some enthusiastic players "helped" him on his way down, his force shield absorbs the shock of landing, and he soon runs back up through the building. The Doc has little to say to such people for the rest of the adventure.

Does it seem like there's no way to win in this situation? Riiiight. *Paranoia*.

By the way, even though the PCs have returned to a place they've been to already (due to the TORTIS' awesome technology), they still can't change something they've already done, due to a law which says that folks can't directly affect their own personal pasts through their own actions, because it causes paradoxes and stuff (lots more about this in *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X: The Campaign Pack*— same *Paranoia*-time, same *Paranoia*-pages). So, they can't steal the TC at this point, because they *already needed it* in the past.

Likewise, enterprising persons who snipe at younger versions of their comrades automatically miss because of universal inertia, another law which says that the universe takes the minimum actions necessary to prevent a paradox* from occurring. The easiest way to prevent a paradox here is to make the PC miss, though making the weapon explode is an alternative. Clever attempts to reach the Collapsatron automatically fail, simply and neatly ("Gee, looks like your rocket boots just ran out of fuel ... Hee hee.")

The Doc, once he's collected his data, returns to the TORTIS and gets ready to leave. If the PCs are somewhere else and don't respond to his calls, he appears over them and scoops them up with a huge butterfly net. Alternatively, he refocuses the Reincarnatron so it beams new clones to the control room, and waits for everyone to die (this won't take excessively long, in a city full of Cyberpunks).

When everyone's settled, the Doc goes to a control panel and starts punching in data. A few gizmos blink and flash, and something explodes again. He sticks a penny in the hole and continues. Read:

"Hmmmm. From the relevant data, it would seem that there's an 85 percent chance of shooting the asteroid down — or rather, up — before it reaches the Earth." He glares appraisingly at your weapons. "It would seem, however, that the ordnance we have isn't quite adequate for the job."

He stares at the ceiling for a moment, then slaps his forehead and starts punching buttons on the console. "Of course!"

*There's more about paradoxes in *Vulture Warriors*, too, and it absolutely does not contradict the information given here. You'll see.

he says. "There has to be at least one nuclear missile left on this planet, even after the thousands fired off during the war!" You feel the queasy lurch of the dematerializing TORTIS ...

The Doc has just located the last surviving nuclear missile on Earth, in an old missile silo in the frigid north of the Asian continent, in Russia (but of course, you knew that, having cleverly read the episode summary). The Troubleshooters, regardless of their will or volition, are whisked over halfway across the world...

Encounter Two: If That's The Way You Want It, Soviet

(For having more ideas on roleplaying encounter, please to be reading (and buying) *People's Glorious Revolutionary Adventure* by decadent Western End publishers. *Bolshoyeh spasebaw*.)

Read everything below out loud except for things written in real skinny letters, like these. Thank you.

As the TORTIS materializes, you hear the Doc saying something about a fault in the dimensional stabilizers. Suddenly, the floor seems to drop out from under you.

You land on your rumps in three feet of snow. The TORTIS floats about ten feet above you, in the form of a circa-1930's refrigerator. The Doc sticks his head out the door apologetically.

"Terribly sorry," he says. "I've been meaning to have those circuits replaced for centuries. My, it *is* chilly out, isn't it?" He throws down a bunch of furry coats, mittens, and boots.

"You chaps will have to handle this one alone, I'm afraid," he continues. "I've got

a few things to attend to, to insure our success. Oh, this might be helpful." He tosses down a brown paper parcel, waves goodbye, promises to return for you soon, and shuts the door. The TORTIS disappears in a ripply wink.

Nothing serious went wrong — just a minor quirk in the trans-spatial buffers (actually, it's just a cheap game designer trick to get them out of the TORTIS with minimum fuss, but that's not important).

The winter clothes are brown, black, and purple (it's all real fur, some of it very exotic); not very good for camouflage. If the Troubleshooters do without their woolies, use the freezing rules on page 74 of the rulebook (the *Paranoia* rulebook, that is; not *Cyberpunk*, or *Twilight: 2000*, or the unmentionable one we would have parodied if we'd gotten permission, but are not now spoofing, no way).

The parcel contains two books: A technical manual on Soviet missile technology, stamped "top secret" all over and written completely in Russian (evoking latent fears of Commie propaganda), and a Russian/English dictionary. This last is triply confusing, as 20th century English is a bit different from Alphan English (languages change quite a lot over centuries; English from 300 years ago looks pretty strange to us today). A x1/4 moxie check is needed just to translate Russian to English to Alpha, let alone understand what you're reading (ex-Commies get a bonus of 2 on the roll).

Wedged in the dictionary is a piece of old paper with the coordinates of the asteroid written on one side. On the other side is a first draft, done in fountain pen, of a four stanza poem about a battle and a "star spangled banner," whatever that is.
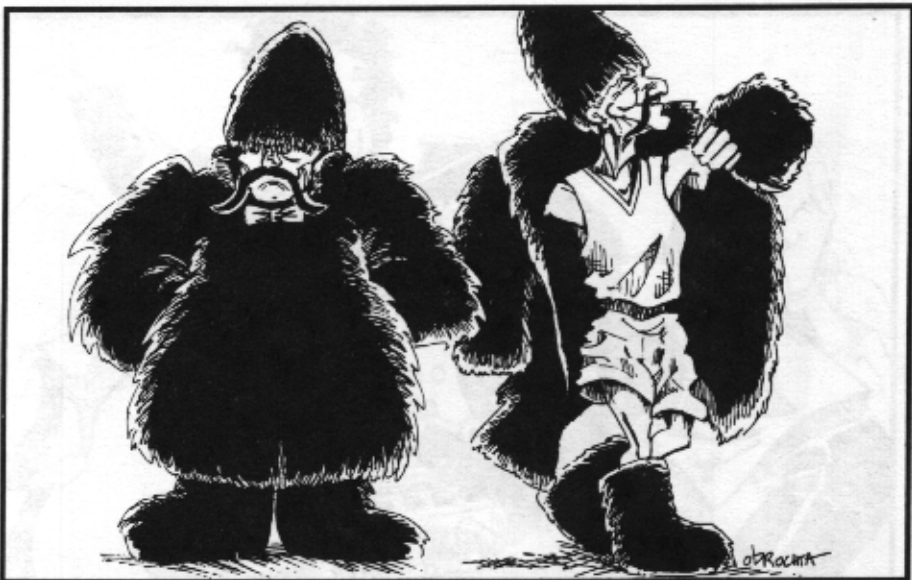
Evenink vear... svim vear...

The Troubleshooters probably gather their stuff together and look around a bit. When they do, read:

Just snowy ground. That's all you can see for kilometers. And mountains, which stick up into the startlingly blue sky and prevent you from seeing any more kilometers behind them. And a square building, 400 meters away and painted white, near a huge concrete slab with what looks like a manhole cover on it. A white-painted fence topped with barbed wire surrounds the place.

You can also see two figures dressed in white fur patrolling around. It's a bit too far off to hit them with a weapon, but they look truly enormous next to the compound — at least seven feet tall and four feet wide! Maybe these guys are the "Red Menace" of old legends — but why are they dressed in white, then?

The PCs probably try all sorts of subterfuges to get close to the missile silo without being seen. It doesn't matter; the sentries can't see much of anything.

Boris and Ivan used to be strong, efficient Red Army soldiers — about 70 years ago. A small and unimportant missile silo such as this was easily overlooked both during and after the Big Whoops. Having never received orders to the contrary, they continue to patrol and guard the base during their declining years (that phrase is not quite accurate — they've already declined).

Neither can see two yards before his face, and the aim of either one would be terrible if his AK-47 still worked. They look so robust (rather than wizened) because their babushkas are two feet tall and their

furry coats are one foot thick. The only wonder is that they manage to stand up under the weight of their clothing.

As the players move to carry out whatever strike plan they've come up with, let them suddenly encounter, up close and personal, two towering white forms! At the height of dramatic impact, the forms raise shaking, rusty rifles and demand, in geezerly voices speaking Hollywood Russian/English, to know their business.

The PCs could easily waste these guys, and probably will. Interesting alternatives include fast-talking the Soviets into letting the PCs by or into launching the missile for them, or just ignoring them.

The door can be opened with keys possessed by Boris and Ivan i(f they're not vaporized), or by a x1/2 security roll. Inside is a kerosene heater currently powered by vodka, control panels for launching the missile (shut down) and a mini-nuclear reactor for powering the controls (also shut down). The rest of the place is full of two crates of reactor maintenance stuff, and 99 crates of vodka.

Time to consult the manual. If the Troubleshooters make their moxie check, they can decipher the general overview section, which reads:

1: Be placing into reactor uranium.
2: Be activating reactor control panel.
3: Be launching missile.

Do your best to browbeat them into following these instructions exactly, despite insecurity about the accuracy of translation or actual knowledge of reactor design ("Okay, do it your way. Blow yourselves up. See if I care").

When they're ready to take a crack at it, drag out the Generic Control Panel (Map 3) and set it up the way it says to in the nifty sidebar we provide. Anyone who indulges capitalistic tendencies and scoops up the coins, or who fiddles around in any way, can be assumed to have touched the wrong control. If the uranium isn't in the reactor, nothing happens. Otherwise, >*boom*<.

Locate the person who'll be translating. This lucky soul must make repeated moxie checks. For each successful check, read one boldface sentence below (if a failure is rolled, spout some Russian-sounding gibberish. Or, feed the players false information designed to make the reactor blow (Wheee! Isn't this fun?)). The correct controls are listed after each description, for your convenience.

1: Be the button on upper right of right hand side pushing twice (#5).
2: Be moving lever on right panel in order following: be leaning toward left, be leaning toward right, push up, pull down, right, right, right (#6, self explanatory).
3: Be pulling down slide controls on right — (pause a bit) — except one which is to being one not in middle to left (#2&3).
4: Be moving lever on opposite side of control panel to neither side in direction opposite to direction away from up (#7 up).

Should they screw up, just remember that getting blown into a thick yellow spray all the time can be boring for your players. Take pity on them. Blow them into a thick purple spray instead.

If all is done correctly, a piece of paper falls out of the manual as they flip the switch. A boldface word at the top reads, after translation, "Errata."

Watch them panic before they even attempt to read it.

Watch them panic more as they read **step 1.5: Be placing into reactor control rods.** Watch them fall into foaming fits when the crate labeled "control rods" turns out to be full of vodka (if they think to check, one of the crates of vodka contains the control rods. Most players won't think, let alone check).

The switch just regulates power flow to the controls; turning it off is not constructive. There are two ways to halt the runaway reaction: reaching into the reactor and separating the uranium into pieces smaller than critical mass by hand (this results in interesting mutations, such as death), or finding those control rods P.D.Q.

If they're really hard up, let them find some used ones in a corner — otherwise, you won't get to use the nifty sidebar we're giving you.

If the clones nuke themselves, the missile kinda goes up too, along with the last hopes

The Troubleshooters try to stop the reactor.

The Nifty Sidebar We Gave You

Okay, listen up. We've got two prop suggestions for making your players' lives totally unbearable. The first one costs only 48 cents, and the second one might even be free, depending on your pencil collection!

For the first one, you'll literally need 48 cents — a quarter, a dime, two nickels, and three pennies. These represent various controls on the Generic Control Panel handout. Flop the paper down on the table, and place the coins in the indicated places (if you're a bit short, feel free to solicit donations from your players; it's for their own good).

Whenever a player touches a coin, assume their character is touching that control (you can almost hear the explosions just reading about it, huh?).

For the second prop, you need one of those push-button mechanical pencils — one with a lead size of about .05 or .07 mm. Avoid the kind of pencil that "twists" the lead out.

Prepare the pencil by removing all the lead (saving a few pieces for later) and making sure that the little hole in the tip is free of obstruction (some models have a built-in piece of wire to clean the hole with; if yours doesn't, use a pin or the wire from a twist tie. Tear the paper

off the tie and poke the wire around in the hole).

Hide most of the lead in various places around the playing area, keeping a couple pieces for yourself.

Now you're all set. Tell your players that you'll be conducting a live role-playing exercise, using a realistic graphic presentation mode.

Hand out the pencil and a piece of lead, telling them that the pencil represents the reactor core, and the lead represents the control rod (while newer reactors use stuff like beryllium and heavy water for control material, this old, cranky Soviet model still uses graphite. The pencil lead is also (coincidentally) made from graphite. Talk about your realistic simulations!).

To keep the reaction from running away from them, the players need to get the lead into the little hole in the tip of the pencil within 40 seconds. If you're lucky, the players break the control rod just arguing over who's going to take the job (shoving in a broken control rod is commendable but unhelpful). Opening the back of the pencil and jamming it in there is cheating, punishable by summary persecution by the GM, and summary explosion by the reactor.

The secret of success here is to press the button that advances the lead and hold it down as the control rod is inserted. Otherwise, the lead goes in about a centimeter and sticks there. Some folks may have a hard time figuring this out; others may just breeze through it (You should practice it ahead of time; it allows you to show off in front of the players as you insert one with ease, and lets you make sure that the trick works with the particular brand of pencil you happen to have).

If the players yawn at the challenge, inform them that the reactor doesn't seem to be cooling. Give them five minutes to find at least three of the pieces of lead that you hid before, and get them into the pencil. Smartbutts. If (what do we mean, *if*? *When!*) the players break a lead, they'll just have to look for another one, won't they?

Of course, the PCs may figure a way around using the control rods (like using vodka in place of heavy water to dampen the reaction). Then, you'll have to save this idea for another day. A pity, isn't it. Much easier to have them fail at finding other solutions, wouldn't you say?

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of planet Earth. Clones are repeatedly beamed to the spot by the Reincarnatron, get irradiated, and die.

After a few hours, Doctor Whom notices something wrong and reprograms the Reincarnatron to send them to the TORTIS control room. Go to Encounter Three.

If they somehow fail to destroy themselves, they can now attempt to launch the missile at the incoming asteroid. Set up the Generic Control Panel again, and start someone making those x1/4 moxie checks again. Read off the same instructions as before in a tired voice that implies boredom and impatience — with the exception of step 2, where you should change the last "right" to a "left." With luck, the players fall into the previous rhythm, and screw up.

Even if they don't, the incident should make them paranoid enough to be suspicious of steps 3 and 4, even if you don't change anything else (psychology is fun, isn't it?). If they succeed, a little keypad pops out so they can type in the precise coordinates the Doc gave them. The keypad uses Cyrillic numerals, so more translation is be necessary.

By the way, if you haven't guessed yet, there's no way the Troubleshooters are going to succeed in launching the missile. As the players fool around with the controls, make things up so it sounds like they're entering the right coordinates.

Mention the rumble of underground hydraulics, the whine of sirens, the flashing lights on the control panel, and the large red button that pops out when the coordinates are entered (you can add a few extra grins by requiring the silo lid to be opened manually. Maybe the missile was jammed by ice, and someone has to jump up and down on it to free it while the launch button is pressed. Such a person may receive the honor of riding the missile to its destination a la *Dr. Strangelove*. It's definitely a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; no way anyone could survive to do it again).

Whenever the big red button is pressed, the missile launches whether or not the silo lid was open >crash<. A warning light flashes a few moments after launch (in Russian, of course). "Warning! External program locking system not secured! Missile trajectory altered!"

If the PCs search with a scanning electron microscope, they discover the external program locking controls under the console, covered by the warranty label (the errata sheet covering *this* was made into an origami swan by the Doc about 87 years ago). Other PCs can watch with horror as the screen shows the missile heading straight for San Francisco, its *originally programmed destination!*

But gosh, isn't that just what happened historically, according to the "History of

Alpha Complex" section on page 30 of the rulebook? Well shucks, it is. Looks like the PCs have just started in motion one of the events that led to the creation of Alpha Complex as we know and loathe it.

There's only one element missing from the eventual creation of a paranoid Computer and Its subsequent Crash — an Ancient Evil to enter The Computer and throw a party in Its chips.

Oh, that's on it's way, is it? Seems that everything's just falling into place.

So, the PCs are stuck in a chilly missile bunker in Siberia, blaming themselves for a failure that you cleverly engineered (aren't players wimps?). They hear the sound of the TORTIS appearing behind them, in the form of an ice cream kiosk. The Doc opens the service window and peers through, glancing at the tracking screen.

"Forgot to set the external program locking system, I see," is his only comment. Then, turning to the PCs, he says:

"Well, that doesn't matter. According to an authoritative book I came across, the Evil would suffer no ill effects from a nuclear explosion. It's not quite of this universe, you see. However, the same book gives information on how to successfully capture it by draining off Its life essence into a suitable container, using a principle of maximizing the conductive flow along

the interference patterns of two oscillating time fields in convergence ... What was I saying? Ah, yes.

"I've got most of the necessary equipment ready in the TORTIS; what is needed is an interface of sentient life forms to cause an optimal flow in the recursive psychic/spatial channels ... Oh dear, there I go again.

"We haven't much time. If all goes well, there should be little danger of you losing your lives or sanity during the ritual. It's all strictly voluntary, of course; but you should realize that the fate of the Earth itself hangs in the balance, that billions of lives will be saved or extinguished by your decision. What do you say?"

If (and we do mean if) the PCs refuse, the Doc peevishly warps away, leaving them to experience the impact first-hand. First there's a big boom, then the landscape is awash with cold water as the Arctic Ocean slops over the Asian continent.

As the PCs drown, a huge red miasma of evil washes over them, as the Evil prepares to prolong their suffering indefinitely. Suddenly, Doctor Whom warps in, TORTIS floating in the form of a marker buoy on the waves, and asks them if they'd like a second chance. Send them to Encounter Three if they accept, and to hell if they don't.

If they agreed right off, the Doc piles them into the TORTIS and flies off to ...

■ Encounter 3: Catch That Pesky Spirit!

Read the following aloud (as opposed to reading it asoft).

Your journey is made in silence, save for the background hum of time warping machines. Even Doctor Whom refrains from his usual chatter. A great tension hangs in the air, in the form of extremely delicate equipment wired and strung up all about you. A heartbeat could bring it all crashing down.

Eventually, the TORTIS stops. The Doc herds you gently out what is now the door of a port-a-potty. You stand in a desolate desert at twilight, glassy sand crunching beneath your feet. A small stone marker nearby informs you that this site, Allamagordo, was apparently nuked at one time in the past. Over your heads hangs the asteroid; a silver nemesis, tinged with a crescent of glowing red by sunlight from the other side of the Earth.

"It'll impact precisely on this spot," says the Doc, apparently to reassure you. He pulls out the book he's been using as a reference — a large, thin hardcover book entitled *The Other Game™ Second Edition* — and tears out six pages, which he hands to you (Hand out the Ritual Cards from the pullout section, page 87).

The Troubleshooters fail to start the reactor.

"Just sit in a circle, hold hands, and read the sacred phrases aloud," he says, as he attaches various gizmos and wires to your bodies. Bundling the wires together, he casually knots them to a piece of string, which he runs into the TORTIS.

"I'll have to dematerialize, in order to facilitate the spiritual channel transfer reverberations. Shan't be long." He shuts the door, which promptly vanishes, leaving the string sticking into a little patch of nothingness in midair. The asteroid grows ever closer.

For the Earth's sake, the PCs had better get cracking. This "sacred phrase" garbage actually protects the mind of the chanter by filling it with nonsense at the critical moment, preventing the Evil from damaging it. People who refuse to chant along with everyone else get damaged. A lot. They experience a last brief moment of infinite horror, then their brains boil over as their bodies melt into magenta puddles. Only the eyeballs remain, floating on top in a crosseyed manner and making the ex-clone look sillier than the others who did the ritual.

The instructions on the Ritual Cards are self explanatory; just start 'em rolling and keep 'em going as you describe the increasing nearness of the asteroid.

As it reddens and enters the atmosphere, a purplish force of pure hate and malice pours down through the PCs, through their instruments, and along the string.

They experience the sensation of having their brains slowly removed from their skulls by very dull, heated butterknives; then everything fades, leaving a windswept desert and a fragmenting asteroid penetrating the atmosphere on the way down.

At the last feasible moment before impact, Doctor Whom returns in a gym locker, into which the PCs barely make their escape. Clones who ran away as the asteroid neared are too far away to get to the TORTIS in time, but are by no means far enough away to escape the explosion. Use column 100 of the damage table.

As the last PC slams the door shut, the Doc frantically works at the controls. Just as he finishes, the asteroid hits, filling the viewscreen with an impossible light. As the TORTIS re-enters the temporal continuum, it is buffeted by the hyperspatial effects of the explosion, tossing the PCs and the Doc about like ragdolls and rendering them dramatically unconscious.

The Doc wakes before the Troubleshooters, lands at space station L-5 (an interdimensional crossroads which would be an adventure in itself — not a bad idea), and repairs the Transdimensional Collapsatron, paving the way for you to read the following aloud to your players:
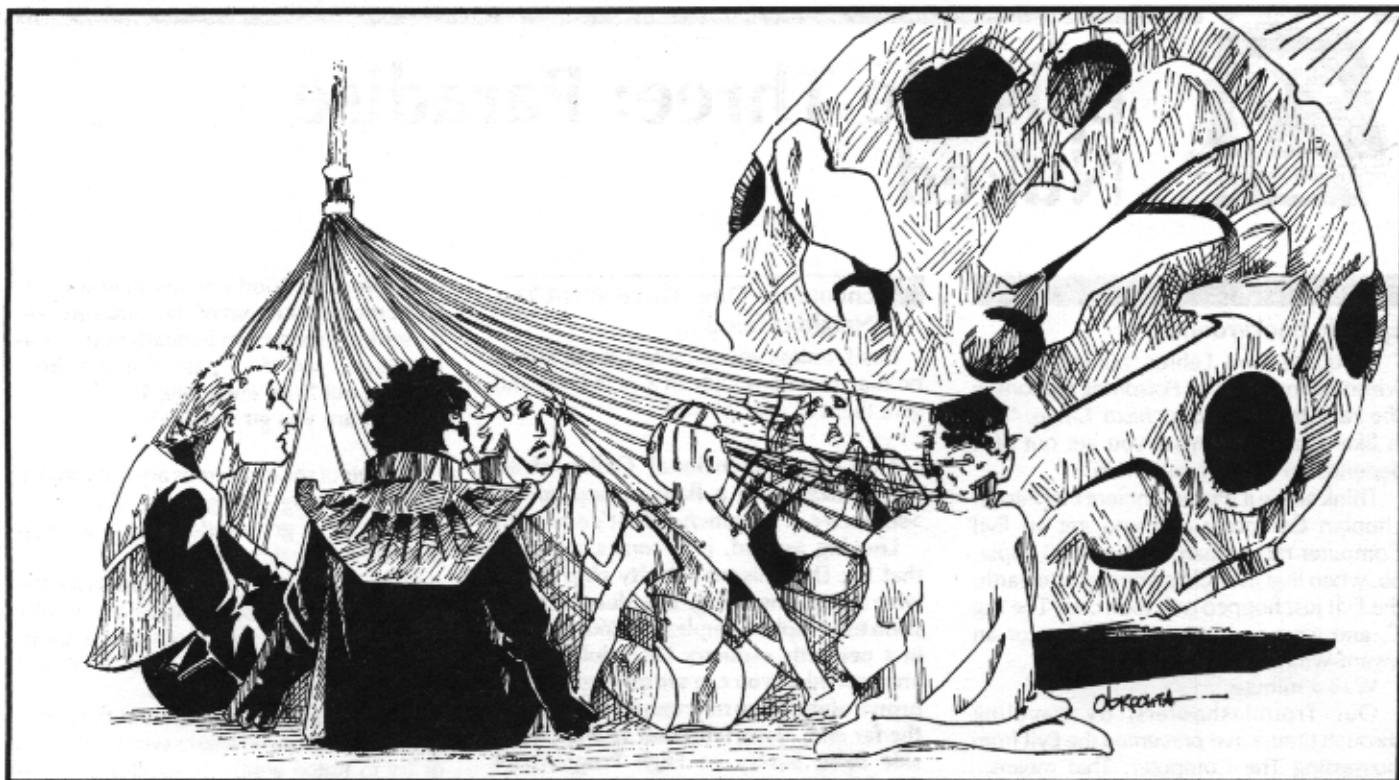
The Troubleshooters are about to meet their Crater...

You blink repeatedly, trying to clear your eyes of all the wool, when reality jumps suddenly and unpleasantly into focus. Some wild, patchwork monster has grabbed each of your hands! It yanks viciously at them, threatening to pull your arms from your torsos ... After a moment, you realize it's the Doc. He's vigorously shaking each of your hands and smiling more widely than biologically possible.

"Well done, well done!" he says. "A most impressive job." He indicates a lead box, a foot on a side, which he's holding by a pair of insulated ice tongs.

"This ought to hold the Evil firmly enough. You've certainly kept your end of the bargain, and now I'm keeping mine." He gestures to a very familiar shape, sitting in the middle of what appears to be a space-station docking bay.

It's the Transdimensional Collapsatron, currently surrounded by hordes of triffids, grizzled spacers, bots, and schmegegis, all of whom are pointing their manipulatory appendages at it and laughing fit to bust (these guys are typical guests at places like this). Doctor Whom helps you to your feet.

"Here's the keys," he says, pressing a jingling ring into your hands. "I've made a slight improvement by installing a Bio-attuned Ionic Levrose Integrator Crystal — it compacts your brainwaves and actions, and extrapolates coordinates for where you want to go. In your case, you'd probably perform some jubilant action like clicking your heels together, and saying 'I wish I was home,' or something similar." The Doc glances at his watch.

"Oh dear! I was supposed to be at the opening ceremonies of the 37th Centennial Galactic Scavenger Hunt several million years ago! Good luck, and let me know how things turn out!" He dashes into the TORTIS, which now resembles a fancy mahogany wardrobe, and disappears.

The PCs are, at long last, free to go home, after they pay docking fees amounting to 18,000 kurmongas racked up by the Doc as he was repairing the TC in this rented hangar. Maybe they can wash dishes for a couple of years or something.

When they try to use the TC, read:

Well, the TC looks just like it did before, except for this strange crystal, and the personality module, which is lying about the floor in a zillion pieces. Guess the Doc got a bit frustrated with it — on the other hand, you do recall him promising to fix the TC "better than new" .... (start acting like you're winding up the adventure again. Sigh, lean back and stretch, close the book, and line up your pencils neatly). **With a pop and a flash, the TC makes the jump, and you find yourself in Alpha Complex!** (Flip casually through the book as if looking for the "adventure windup" readaloud. In reality, head on to Episode Three and spring it on them. They'll curse your name through all eternity).

Episode Three: Paradise Nuked

Episode Background

To quote Tom Lehrer, author of such winsome melodies as *Poisoning Pigeons in the Park* and *The Masochism Tango*: "Life is like a sewer'— what you get out of it depends on what you put into it."

Think about it. Put an Ancient Evil into an Utopian Computer and you get an Evil Computer rather than an Ancient Utopia. So, when that asteroid slammed into Earth, the Evil just hopped out, took over The Big C, and gave us a pretty nifty idea for an award-winning RPG.

Wait a minute.

Our Troubleshooters, by traveling through time, have *prevented* the Evil from possessing The Computer. That means... that means that —

Alpha Complex is *actually a utopia*.

Picture it. Truly loyal citizens, really working happily for a benevolent Computer. We don't know about you, but it sure makes *our* heads ache.

"So what now?" you scream. "First you kill The Computer, a move similar to sundering the goose that lays the golden eggs. Now, you not only resurrect it, but call upon Mister Rogers to reprogram it. Boy, is this weird. Does West End plan to drop its profitable *Paranoia* line and buy the rights to *Uncle Wiggily?*"

Not quite. Read on.

Episode Summary

Our intrepid Timeshooters return to Utopia Complex, breaking the Transdimensional Collapsatron again (idiots). The Computer, for the first time in any *Paranoia* adventure ever, is *nice* to them. The PCs long to put things back the way they were.

While they recover in an asylum, the Evil returns, and The Computer wonders who It's gonna call (the Ghostshooters, of course). In a climactic ending, The Computer buys the foodvat again (isn't this getting monotonous?). The players, thinking the adventure is finally over, start to cheer.

Smiling evilly, you put them through the rest of the campaign pack. The players try to lynch you, and are arrested. At long last, after dozens of *Paranoia* adventures, you've *finally* gotten rid of them. Congratulations!

▌ Encounter One: There Went The Neighborhood ...

Read, unless you want to cut out all the boldface sections with an X-acto knife and give them to your players.

The Transdimensional Collapsatron materializes with a flash, a pop, and a *>scrunch<*. A *>scrunch<*? That's not right!

Looking around, it becomes apparent that the Doc missed a faulty chip somewhere. For one thing, this doesn't quite seem to be Alpha Complex. Although you're in a perfectly ordinary Ultraviolet clearance corridor, you can see some green and brown objects you now know to be trees at the far end, along with that strange, Outside light. Surely no High Programmer would want to get so close to nature!

For another thing, the TC has materialized sideways in a corridor eight feet wide. The TC is 16 feet long. So, *that's* where the *>scrunch<* came from! The TC is now bent upwards in a "U" shape and pleated like an accordion. Its hood has smashed a Computer monitor in front of you, and you hear a muffled groan from beneath you. Looking down, you see a pair of white shoes sticking out from under the TC.

What are you guys doing?

No, lots of short Infrareds are *not* about to appear, singing "Ding dong, the H.P.'s dead." We've got a little more class than that. Well, this time, anyway.

Utopia Complex has many parks for the relaxation of its citizens; these are usually illuminated by skylights. Ex-Sierra Clubbers who run gleefully for the "exit" just find more Complex. Too bad.

The PCs can jump out to assist the Ultraviolet citizen, cower like cravens in the TC, or try to tiptoe gently away. If they leave him alone, he manages to wriggle out by himself. Whatever — read the following:

Gee, the Ultraviolet guy sure is a mess. He's covered with dirt and timegrease, and his clipboard holding Computer-

Honest, Sir, we didn't know this was a no-parking zone!

knows-what valuable data has been smashed to pieces. He straightens regally, and glares at you with eyes of steel and ice. Smoke from the burning Computer terminal wreathes his head. Looks like the Joyful Evisceration Unsatisfactory Clone Recycling Center for you.

He says, "Don't worry about the damage, citizens." A little of the glare drops out of his eyes, and he gives you a friendly, resigned smile. "The data weren't that important, and the terminal was old and in need of replacement, anyway. You can credit the damage to my account, Friend Computer. I'll take care of it."

Still got your camera handy? Now would be a good time to use it. You may never have a chance to capture such expressions again. To pass the time until the players recover, try throwing pretzel nuggets into their gaping mouths. Continue:

By this time, the automatic extinguishing systems have put out the fire in the console. They never used to work *that* quickly ... To your utter surprise, a familiar voice speaks from the shattered console — The Computer! You've succeeded in your mission! Perhaps, in gratitude, The Computer will have you killed immediately for the damage you've caused, rather than using you in experiments designed to test maximum pain endurance levels in humans. The Computer says: (The voice of The Computer here should be sweet, melodious and friendly. Eat a bowl of any children's breakfast cereal (the kind with marshmallow bits), and wash it down with a quarter cup of honey. Now read:)

"That's okay, citizens; I'll just credit it to the general Complex fund. That was an interesting trick, by the way; materializing out of thin air in a higher clearance corridor. Could you tell me the serial number of the experimental R&D work order?"

The Utopian Computer, while nice, isn't stupid. It's giving them a chance to explain themselves; if they fail, It immediately takes steps to isolate them before they do any harm (its current hypothesis is that the PCs are a bunch of escaped lunatics who stole an autocar and crashed it in this higher-clearance corridor.)

Let the players do anything they want. Maybe they bang their heads on the floor and apologize profusely, or they go on a power trip, slapping the H.P. around and talking back to The Computer. Conversations are sure to be interesting:

Computer: Where did you say you came from, Citizen?

Troubleshooter: Uhhh, from an alternate timestream, Friend Computer. We were sent back in time to keep you from getting killed, and then we had to help a strange guy in a shapeshifting box to stop an Ancient Evil ...

Computer: (*Soothingly.*) I'm sure you did, Citizen. (*Aside.*) Lohengrin, sweep out padded cell #3562b.

If the players are smart, they may be able to keep The Computer going for a while. Eventually, however, they're sure to commit some *faux pas* that you can use to have them committed. ("No, Citizen, I'm afraid that lasering an Infrared for looking at you crosseyed is *not* considered to be acceptable social behavior.")

Let them wander about the halls of Utopia Complex, with its unbelievable Have-a-nice-day-citizen-and-I-really-mean-that atmosphere, until they slip up. When they do, the sweet smell of sleeping gas fills the air. Utopian citizens sink blissfully to the floor, snoring. If the PCs fail an endurance check, they join them.

Repeat as necessary. Nighty night. Hand out pillows, blankets, warm milk, and cookies, and encourage appropriate sound effects from your players.

As they sleep, The Computer hypnotically examines their minds and detects serious cases of homicidal mania, coupled with extreme symptoms of paranoia (gosh, no!). It checks its files and finds that their names and gene structure match exactly with those of six of Utopia Complex's clone families. But all six members of each of those families are already accounted for (like The Computer, the PCs also have their counterparts in this parallel timeline)!

Puzzled, It puts them in a mental institution for therapy and study, and sends the TC off to R&D for further investigation.

So, the Troubleshooters are snoring away. If you feel tired, join them. Hey, you deserve a rest after getting this far into the campaign pack. Pleasant dreams ... There, feel refreshed now? Ready for some more? Rouse the players with a garbage can or some ice water and continue ...

Encounter Two: Six Blast Out Of The Cuckoo's Nest

See the boldface section below? Know what you're supposed to do with it? Good!

Gradually, you drift from the arms of Morpheus (or is that morphine?) into consciousness. Your mouths taste like vat scrapings, and your brains itch. Yukk.

You open your eyes from the pink world of closed eyelids to find ... more pinkness. A calm, soothing, pastel pink. Every surface in the room you occupy is colored

Remember how in all our *Paranoia* stuff, we keep suggesting evil things for you to do to your players by telling you *not* to do them? Like, "Well, golly gosh gee whiz, we're not actually *suggesting* (chortle) that you *really* (snicker) make the experimental plasma generator explode (haw haw) when someone says the word 'laser.' Not us. Nope. Nosirree." You get the idea.

Well, Episode three is full of our statements telling you not to do evil things to your players. The only thing is, we mean it this time. It's imperative that Utopia Complex be a completely safe and nice place for the players to be in, right up to the end. It helps the atmosphere and the dramatic impact of the climax. So, don't actually do anything that we suggest that you not do, assuming that it's just a joke we're making. It's not. We're serious. Really. Would we lie to you?

Quite frankly, we haven't the faintest idea of how to present a realistic Utopian society to your players. If we knew anything about it, we would stop writing *Paranoia* adventures altogether, being too busy accepting Nobel prizes for peace and being hailed by philosophic and religious leaders worldwide. Sounds kinda nice, but as we said, we don't know.

So, we're gonna pretend it's just like Alpha Complex, but with everyone nice instead of bad. This also helps when Utopia Complex becomes evil; we don't have to explain too many sweeping changes in society to bring us to Post-Crash *Paranoia* again. Yeah, it's illogical. So, what's your point?

that same, dulling, monochromous pink. They haven't gone so far as to paint your skin, but your old travel-stained garments have been replaced with soft, comfy, quilted pink ones.

Pink canvas/nylon straps secure your limbs to pink beds, and pink wires lead off of various parts of your bodies into frilly pink machines. As you come fully awake, a pink speaker on the pink wall comes to life with the voice of The Computer.

But can this really be The Computer? Surely It would never have selected such a shocking color scheme. Or, it may be that you have fallen into the hands of that hideous subversive subgroup of the Commies, those evil traitors known in legend as the Pinkos.

The Computer (?) says, "Attention, psychiatric personnel. The occupants of Ward CLV/ER have now regained consciousness. Please attend to their needs and wants at

your earliest convenience. Thank you for your cooperation."

Then, to you it croons, "Please relax, Citizens. Psychiatric examination is completely painless, and will cause you no harm. Place your trust in The Computer."

Gee, all The Computer wanted to do was reassure them. Noticing that their adrenaline output, heart rates, and amount of sweat excreted from the palms of their hands are skyrocketing, It urges the psychiatric team to hurry.

About the straps — Superman would have a hard time busting out of these. The Troubleshooters haven't a chance.

Let the player's panic a bit, then read:

A pink door hisses open, providing entrance to a bustling bunch of white coated (Ultraviolet?) citizens who cluster around you, poking photographs of surrealistic art in your faces, asking irrelevant questions, and writing things on clipboards. On one clipboard, you can make out the words "Suitability for Release Form G/EW-2345."

Prop hint: Pour a few bottles of ink on various pieces of paper, dig up a few photographs of aunt Ethel and uncle Fred taken in the 1950s, and borrow one of those "put the blocks in the right holes" toys from a younger sibling.

Hand this stuff around to the players, and pepper them with inane questions and testing conditions ("Name 15 people you know who the people in this photograph do not remind you of at all. Place the cylindrical pegs into the inappropriate apertures in a longitudinal, oblique fashion, inserting the others in the nearest waste disposal unit. Please describe your feelings about these inkblots in one word or less.").

For more ideas on psychological test questions, consult *Acute Paranoia*, a truly splendid supplement from West End. Ignore all references to treasonous stuff; treason doesn't exist in Utopia Complex (yet).

The players, on seeing the "Suitability for Release" form, may actually think they have a chance of getting out of here. In reality, the psychologist with the form just signed a contract with a major game company; the form refers to the budding author's adventure manuscript. *C'est la vie.*

Just as quickly as the shrinks appeared, they vanish. The PCs lie bewildered, craning their necks about them. Read:

Precisely a little while after the psychiatrists have left, you hear one of those hospital bells ringing at the door. (Prop hint: Rip off a toy xylophone from your young sibling while you're grabbing the blocks. Give it two taps once in a while and say things like, "Doctor Welb-Y, please

report to urology STAT," while holding your nose.) The door slides open, and 36 (or six times the number of Troubleshooters) people solemnly enter the room, holding fruit baskets, convalescence cards, and vases of flowers.

They place these items with great decorum on your pink nightstands, and most of them sit down on convenient pink benches against the wall. The others pull up pink chairs at your bedsides, one to each of you. There's something familiar about them, lying just beyond the cheerful, sympathetic expressions on their faces ...

Then you realize — they're *you!* These must be your clone families from this crazy alternate timeline! They smile tentatively as you recognize them, and reach out to pat your hands (the straps make it impossible to pull away).

"There, there," they say, smiling. "Everything's going to be all right."

The Computer processed the psychological reports in microseconds, and realized that the PCs really believe that stuff about alternate time streams. Since the best way to get at the "truth" is to cure the PCs of their illness, It began nondirective therapy by sending in the people that It felt the PCs could most relate to. Wrongo.

The Utopia Complex clones are slightly nervous, but are altruistically putting their fears aside to try to "reach" their psychotic relatives (they would have done it even if The Computer hadn't asked them to. Such trusting little lambs).

No matter how abusive the PCs get, the clones just smile it all away. They hold Computer Appreciation singalongs and mean every word. Play some *Teddy Ruxpin* tapes or similar kid stuff and sing, mimicking your players' voices and mannerisms. It is imperative that the PCs hate their clones with everything they've got. Make it so.

Incidentally, the PCs are no longer hooked up to the Reincarnatron. What a relief, the players say. However, anyone who dies now will be replaced by a Utopia Complex clone. Take aside those who are afflicted, and tell them to be as annoyingly nice as possible to the others at whatever cost in future clone replacements. If the players won't roleplay cooperatively, don't give them any more cookies.

After a while, one of the clones turns on a pink video screen, hoping that the mindless drone of daycycle TV might help to calm his new playmates. Read:

Eventually, one of your visitors (it hurts very much to call them your "clone siblings") flips a wall switch. A vidscreen on the wall comes on, along with some flourishy music of the kind you remember hearing on *Late Nightcycle With Lett-R-MAN* or *The Tymfor-O-PRA Show.*

A handsome, mustachioed person comes out on stage to great applause as the title appears — *Heraald-O, aka Exposes-R-USS.* Behind him are some R&D techs who bustle about on stage, making last minute adjustments to a ridiculous looking apparatus, which seems to be aimed at a little lead box. Heraald-O holds up a hand, and the applause stops — a bit too quickly for a live audience, you think.

"Citizens of Utopia Complex," says Heraald-O, "On our show today, we'll be taking a hard, penetrating look at the deepest mysteries of the ancients — their secret vaults of shame.

"It is well known that those who lived before the Great Cataclysm did so without the benefit of The Computer's guidance, spending their low existences in conditions of decadence, debauchery, squalor, and violence. But the true extent, the apalling depths, of their perfidy was never known to us — until now.

"Through my ruthless investigations, I discovered that R&D had for many years been hiding an ancient artifact, recovered in an archaeological expedition. At my repeated insistence, R&D has agreed to allow the box to be opened.

"Citizens, within this box, according to the inscriptions on the outside, lie relics of the 'ancient evils' that our ancestors practiced. And tonight, on *Heraald-O, aka Exposes-R-USS,* this secret box of scandal will be opened before your very eyes. We'll be back after this."

As the audience applauds too quickly again, the camera zooms in on the box, which is a third of a meter on a side and made of lead. Inscriptions in every known (and unknown) language cover the box. The ones you can read say, "WARNING! Do not open! Ancient Evil inside! Signed, Doctor Whom." As the scene dissolves to a commercial, the screen goes blank as one of your "relatives" turns it off.

"I don't think this is the proper thing for you to be watching at this time," he says, smiling uncertainly at you.

The Doc figured that no one would find the box in a late Jurassic strata layer, and buried it accordingly. Nobody's perfect.

The Troubleshooters can rant and rave all they want — their Utopian clones won't turn the TV back on until they say the magic words: "Pretty please, with synthe-sugar on the top."

They can also yell at The Computer to halt the opening, but it's likely that they'll give this up before they even start. It's the textbook horror movie situation — the Knowledgeable Lunatics Trying To Warn Those In Power Before It's Too Late. Naturally, The Computer won't listen to them.

When the show finally gets turned back on, read:

As the screen flickers on again, you see the R&D techs doing strange things to the box with their gadgets. At last, they fire a crackly blue beam at it, and the lid melts off the box. The lights dim in the studio, and techs and audience members scream as a huge, shadowy, loathsome shape forms, evil eyes glowing dull red.

Heraald-O steps boldly forward, shoves his mike at it, and starts asking stupid questions. The Evil eats him. People scream, panic, and try to run away, but fall gargling to the floor as the Evil's gaze sweeps over them. The eyes seem to focus on the very screen you are watching, and the lights get dim throughout Utopia Complex. The very walls resonate to Its voice.

"Behold," It says, with a voice of crypts and sewers. "I am Alpha's Omega, the beginning of the end. You shall have no Computers before me." The screen blanks out. Your clones are either screaming, running around in circles, or collapsing in catatonic stupors, and sounds of chaos come from the halls outside. The Computer speaks.

"Citizens, >URK< — please remain >GIZZLE< calm — /resident diagnostics check fail pass fail fail/ — I am now powering >HARG< down to avoid hostile >ACK< takeover move — Kmowrrrrvvvv..." The lights go out com-

pletely, then flare back up as emergency generators kick in.

Lo and Behold as the power blacked out, the electromagnetic straps popped apart. You're now free!

What are you doing?

Unfortunately, the door is still locked. About the most the PCs can do is try to reassure their clones. ("What? You mean your Computer's never shut down before? Well, let me tell you ...")

Smart players may wish to use the TV to find out what's going on. If so, read:

As you flip through the stations, the screen reveals horrid scenes — citizens screaming and rioting under a deadly evil glow. Bots of all kinds go berserk, disposing of nearby citizens in all sorts of imaginative but nasty ways. Other bots roll around distributing lasers to panicking citizens, some of whom get wild looks in their eyes and start to shoot at any moving object. Some shoot themselves.

In some sectors the environmental systems are producing snow and ice, while in other sectors vast numbers of people are being roasted alive. Bot factories seem to be quickly retooling — producing bots that you recognize, with a chill, as MALOKs. Everywhere, citizens cry out for help to The Computer — and hear only silence.

In addition to its other evil deeds, the Evil is subtly corrupting the minds of all citizens, to make them better slaves for Its purpose. The process will be complete by the end of the adventure, at which point any PC clone replacements can be role-played as their own, vile, paranoid selves again. Whew.

When you lose the momentum of this dramatic moment, read:

As the last of your clones sinks to the floor, gibbering and staring into space, the door opens again. Through the rush and panic outside, a tattered Violet rides in on a mini-cart piled high with equipment. Though the cart is full of laser holes and his clothes are smoking, he maintains an air of professional cool. He introduces himself as Peter-V-NKM-2.

"Well, fellas," he says, "The Computer's last message to them HPs was that you guys knew the most about this slimeball who's trashing the Complex. It's a real Class 1 mess out there, you know; citizens going crazy and shooting each other, re-tooled factories mass-producing warbots and weapons, people being executed for no reason, catbots and dogbots living together, mass hysteria — you guys ever hear anything like it?

"Anyway, we rounded up some experimental R&D equipment; whatever we

---

We Ain't Afraid of No Experimental Equipment

The stuff on the cart is the latest in R&D paranormal gadgetry. Peter-V hands out one to each Troubleshooter, commenting on each.

— **Plasma Stream Generators.** These are much like normal plasma generators and do the same damage, but the plasma comes out in a wiggly, hard to control stream (roll against energy weapons skill, adding 2 to the roll).

The PSG is the most powerful weapon in Utopia Complex, and its like has never been seen before. It functions like a normal plasma generator against solid objects like other citizens. With paranormal entities, it has the side effect of temporarily immobilizing the target by draining spectral energy away. It works fine for normal spooks, but the Evil has it a bit outclassed.

Peter-V: "Guys, this is real important — the Randy techs said to be sure not to intersect the streams. Got that? *Non streama intersecto.* It blows up the universe or something nasty like that. Just don't do it, O.K.?"

— **Specter Detectors.** These are little handheld gizmos with blinking lights and antennae stuck all over them. When

activated, all the antennae point to the nearest source of spectral activity (a simple needle in a spherical float controlled by electromagnets along three axes would serve the same purpose, but the arms look a lot more impressive).

Peter-V: "These things'll tell you precisely where that scuzzball is. Not that you couldn't tell just by the sound effects, anyway." (As he says this, the Complex rocks with a huge explosion.)

— **Sucker Box.** A vacuum cleaner-type affair, hastily attached to the lead box that contained the Evil. This device is supposed to suck the Evil back into the box and trap it. Unfortunately, although the working principles are sound (it was assembled by duct-taping the box to an already field-proven device), this thing isn't powerful enough to work on the Evil, either.

Peter-V: "The Randy techs said to hit that sucker with all you got, then suck it into this thing. Then, take it to JNT sector. We'll be waiting for you there. Whatever you do, don't drop it!"

Incidentally, none of this stuff ever malfunctions. Ever. Either they do high quality work here, or we're getting soft.

could find in a pinch, y'know? I gotta warn you — none of this stuff's been tested yet, and all of it may be dangerous. I know it's not usually what's expected of Troubleshooters, but we've got some real problems here, O.K.?"

When they're all outfitted with the experimental equipment, Peter-V hands them the keys to the mini-cart, and stands by to salute them as they drive out, saying things like "Dulce et Decorum" and humming The Battle Hymn of the Republic.

If the PCs refuse to help, no one can really force them. In this case, the Evil takes over, hunts down the PCs, and tortures them slowly for a thousand years (more if they scream entertainingly) before it kills them. Such is the fate of cowards.

But we assume you and they want to finish this brilliant adventure, so when they take off in search of the showdown, read the following:

Clinging tightly to the sides of the cart, you ride out the doors of your room, following the waving arms of the specter detectors. All about you, people scream and run, fleeing other people who carry impromptu weapons of letter openers and chair legs. Others seem to have given up, gibbering on the floor and screaming when anyone gets too near. The neat, clean, tidy corridors of ward CLV/ER are roiling with smoke and noise, scarred with gaping holes, trashed almost beyond the residents' comprehension. Gee, this place is looking more and more like home all the time.

The entire mental hospital has become — well, a nuthouse. Sometimes, groups of prospective paranoids, warped by the Evil, charge the PCs. It doesn't matter what stats you use, since Our Heroes are sure to use the PSGs. Vapors don't shoot back, after all.

You've undoubtedly already guessed that the PCs should be heading for the CPU to fight the Evil as it battles The Computer. Well, frankly, we're getting as tired as you are of that old, cliched Fight Your Way Into

With their auditrons shorted and their reflec long gone

The Heavily Guarded CPU Core Room And Nuke The Computer ending. We definitely would not be so crass as to use it in this adventure. Well, once, maybe.

So, instead, we've got the PCs locked up in this secured installation, and they have to fight their way *out* to the unguarded Computer (in Utopia, maximum security is used only around "undesirables"; The Computer has nothing to fear from normal citizens—nor they from It).

So, every five seconds, they have to stop and unlock (or blast through) a security door. Worse, some nut named Screwz-R-LUZ-2 is in the security terminal, waiting for them to get halfway through an open door before closing it, than laughing over the PA system (14I damage to those caught). A good way to avoid this is to blast the security cameras so Screwz-R can't see them. A cookie-mendation to someone who thinks of this.

Eventually, they leave the loony bin (probably gate-crashing some guards) and are driving through Utopia Complex. Citizens, for the most part, have fled from the regular explosions coming from the center of the Complex (where the CPU is), leaving the corridors clear. The specter detectors point this way. As they pass by one terminal, The Computer addresses them.

"Citizens," The Computer says, "You are currently engaged in a brave undertaking. I must warn you that the Evil is battling me at this very moment, and has placed guards around us that none may enter to help. But there is one way it has not guarded closely. Approach through the service stairway located at sector coordinates P-7/E; if you are careful, you need only fight a few guards to get by. Take heart, citizens, for the foe can be beaten. Thank you for your cooperation." The terminal blanks out.

Another *Paranoia* first — The Computer has actually given the Troubleshooters accurate information. We wouldn't blame them if they tried a direct approach to the CPU and got seriously killed. The obvious entrances are guarded by ten each of the Evil's Noveau-MALOKs (use the stats for normal MALOKs in Episode One, but add a standard plasma generator to each — including malfunction chances).

If they take The Computer's advice, they descend a deserted level or two (occasionally rocked by explosions and the Evil's laughter), reaching an abandoned, rusty stairwell. It's almost, but not quite, too narrow for the mini-cart; they'll have to leave it behind, or make a bunch of difficult driving rolls.

Bringing the cart, of course, will make it impossible to get the drop on the Noveau-MALOK patrolling the third landing (if they

sneak up, they can see its shadow and get in a free attack with their plasma-stream generators). If they leave the cart, they'll have to carry their equipment up; have them make some endurance checks.

With perseverance, the PCs (or their clones) should manage to struggle into the CPU no matter which path they took. (Maybe without perseverance, too; it'd be a shame for them to miss the ending.)

■ Encounter Three: De Mortuis Nil Nisi Bonum (Of A Dead Computer, Speak Nothing But Good.)

No, the printer's plates didn't get over-inked. That's boldface text below, and you're supposed to read it.

Well, after that max security outside, you were certainly expecting a greater challenge than this. According to what The Computer said, this is the place, and the specter detectors are pointing this way also. But since when was the CPU located in the middle of a bunch of trees?

(This used to be a park, provided so the citizens could gambol and play among the circuits of their benevolent protector.)

But this has got to be the place. Eerie lights and sinister laughter flicker from within. The ground is buckled all over, and the trees are either leaning over or fallen down, making the path a perilous one. (Smart PCs clear a path with their PSGs.)

Before you is an arena of sorts. Long rows of what used to be Computer banks surround what used to be shrubbery and stone benches, in what used to be an aesthetically pleasing array. All is scorched and broken.

At the far end of the clearing lies The Computer Itself, a mirrored globe suspended from the ceiling and surrounded by a glowing blue force shield. Fiery white lasers lance out at the loathsome horror that stands before you, dripping foul fluids, twining Its tentacles, and releasing red bolts of destruction at The Computer. This thing, this nightmare, must be the physical manifestation of the Evil!

The PCs undoubtedly let loose barrages of plasma fire into Its back. It brushes at them in an annoyed fashion, Its attention focused on The Computer. The PCs go flying back into the trees on a sharp wave of telekinetic power. If they use the vacuum cleaner thingee, it sucks a bit of the Evil in, then explodes (column 10 damage). When they search for other solutions, read:

Next to you a monitor, cunningly set into the stomach region of a frolicking stone statue, activates.

"Citizens," says The Computer, "The Evil is far too powerful to be defeated with
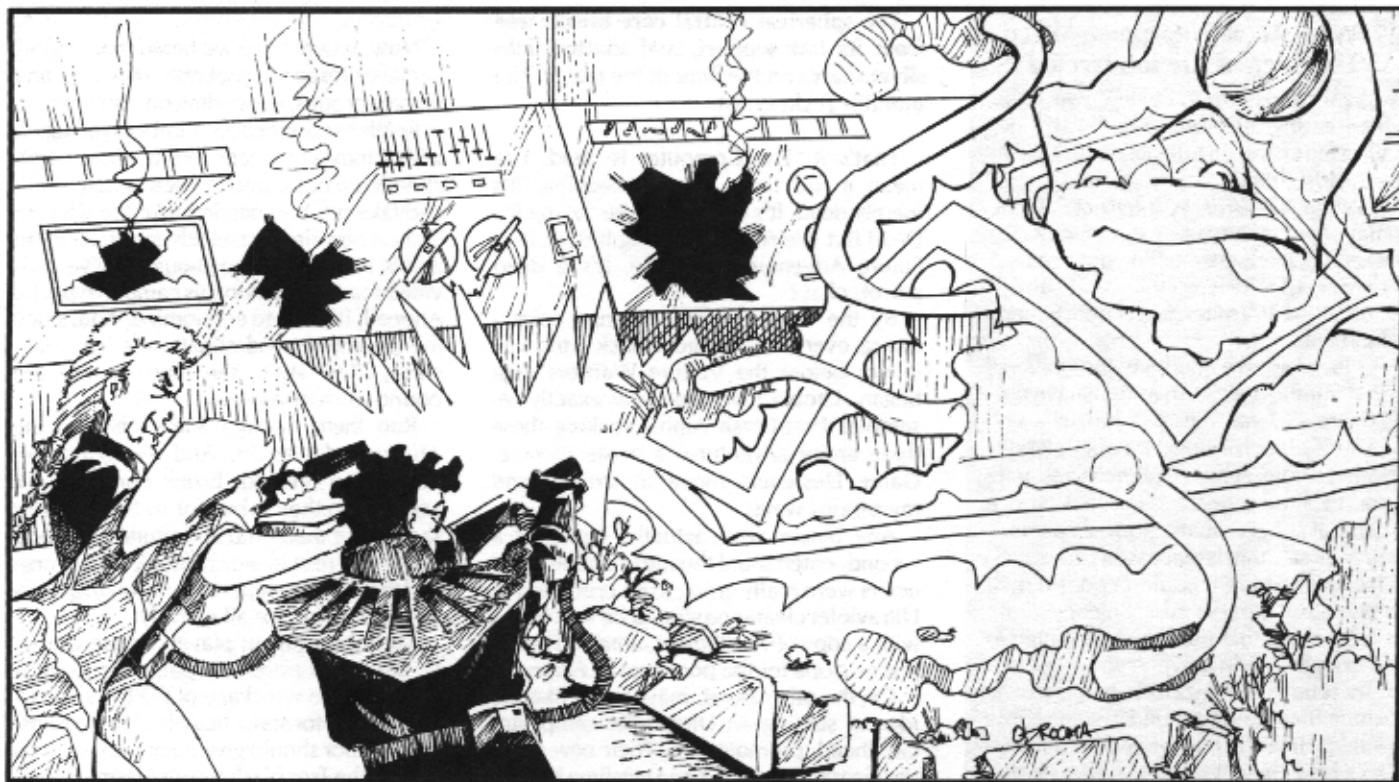
Who would you call?

mundane means. I am about to cause a distraction, at which point I will signal you. When you receive the signal ... I want you to intersect the streams. I calculate a 63 percent chance of success if this action is taken. Place your trust in The Computer."

Hopefully, the PCs have learned these words to be sincere, coming from the Utopian Computer, and do as it asks. If they don't, the Evil takes over The Computer, and has the PCs for lunch. Very slowly. In either case, read on:

As the energy flying across the clearing reaches diabolic levels, and starts singeing your eyebrows off from the heat, The Computer starts counting down on the monitor. As it reaches One, The Computer's lasers stop firing, and It drops Its shields. The Evil, rejoicing, seems to throw all Its energy into one colossal surge of death.

"NOW, CITIZENS!" The Computer says at high volume, barely heard over the Evil's roar.

Yes, The Computer is sacrificing Itself for the safety and well being of Its beloved citizens. Touching, isn't it? Its last act before the streams are intersected is to cover the Troubleshooters with a force bubble to protect them from the explosion. Even more touching, huh?

To intersect the streams, each PC must make a x1/2 agility check. Only four need to intersect to do the job, but you can really enhance the drama by waiting till everyone struggles their stream into position. Drop subtle hints about how time is running out, and watch the sluggards explode into a frenzy of die rolling. When a dramatically acceptable number is reached, read:

With a final struggling effort, you wrestle the streams into position. White hot power surges from the Plasma Stream Generators, and seems to drain the very strength from your bodies. A tremendous bolt, brighter than the hottest lightning, flies from your smoking weapons and pierces the heart of the Evil.

For a timeless instant, you hear the Evil scream, "NOOOOO ..." Then, you hear no more. A blue shield of pure force surrounds you as everything explodes with a force greater than a thousand suns. The universe whirls about you, fragmenting; everything becomes nothingness ...

And if the PCs were premature intersectors, firing before The Computer said to, let it work anyway. It's the climactic ending, after all.

For the complete effects of the intersection, see the sidebar on the next page.

Read to the surviving players:

Well, that blue shimmering stuff that surrounded you during the explosion just fades away. You're standing on a small plateau near the center of a large, smoking crater that fills the whole area. Save for a few drops of ichor eating their way into the ground here and there, you see no sign of the Evil.

But The Computer ... Huge banks of electronics lie shattered and melted all around you, and the tremendous silver globe that contained the cybernetic core is swinging precariously by one support.

The only piece of equipment still intact is a Computer terminal that happened to be under the force shield with you. You realize that The Computer must have been protecting you to the very end, at expense of Itself.

The monitor flickers, sputters, and hisses with static as The Computer speaks (read the following in a deathbed whisper. If the players have to cup their ears at you, you're doing it right).

"Citizens ... You have performed a great service for your Complex today. I regret that I will not be able to guide My citizens through the coming ordeal as the old way of life is restored. The hard times ahead will require exceptional leaders, few of which are left to us now. (Long hissing silence. Test patterns flicker and recede:)

"It is for this reason that I am securing your promotion to Ultraviolet clearance,

What Actually Happens When The Streams Are Intersected

Well, guess what. Peter-V was right. Intersecting the streams really *will* destroy the universe. But that doesn't mean all is lost.

When the streams intersect, all the matter in the universe gets converted to energy, which goes sailing out from the center of the explosion at about 186,282.3959 miles per second. Sounds kinda fatal.

However, we can view the universe that *Paranoia* exists in as being a hypersphere (it was Einstein himself who proposed such a shape for our universe. What a guy). A hypersphere is a strange fourth-dimensional object that is to a normal sphere what a normal sphere is to a circle (this is impossible to visualize; even Einstein couldn't do it. You'll have to take the word of Science for it).

Anything that travels long enough in a straight line in a hypersphere eventually returns to its starting point, just as something going around a sphere in a straight line will return to where it started (it's how they draw the lines on a croquet ball, you know). Thus, every particle in the universe will eventually return to its starting point, where the hyperdimensional reverbations of the plasma explosion cause each particle to revert from energy back to matter, setting things back to the way they were just after the explosion.

The Evil, however, is from another dimension, and is not affected by the plasma explosion like the rest of the universe (it's made up of different particles or something). Instead of exploding out like the rest of the universe, it inverted and fell into itself at the center of the explosion. This is like jumping into a hole and pulling the hole in after you, which leaves your destiny uncertain, but certainly seems fatal. So when the universe reforms, it is minus one Ancient Evil — permanently.

(See what incredible lengths we'll go to to rationalize something? Well, it was somebody famous who said that humans are rational animals, or something like that.)

that you may continue to serve your Complex and My memory after I am gone. As the existing High Programmers may not recognize your new status, I am giving you the power to enforce it. You will find your new robes and equipment standing in rows by the ... Roase boy duh ... Rosebudd ... Hsssssssssss ... "

The spherical central core breaks free from its last support, and shatters into silver shards on the floor of the crater. The monitor flickers out.

That's it. The Computer is dead. We mean it this time. It's not sleeping, It's merely dead. It's not just We're Saying It's Dead But We're Gonna Bring It Back In A Future Adventure this time. It's a dead parrot, okay?

By the way, by some strange coincidence, everything has gone back to the way it was before the Vulture Warriors saga began. Utopia Complex now exactly resembles Post-Crash Alpha, making these three entire adventures a waste of time. Game Designers move in strange and mysterious ways.

Any player who actually, even for a second, entertained the idea that the characters were really going to be promoted to Ultraviolet clearance should be sent home with a copy of *The Other Game™*. There's just no hope for the poor soul in *Paranoia*.

On the other hand, maybe you like the idea of starting an Ultraviolet campaign. Go ahead, promote 'em. Their new security clearances don't mean vatslime in Post-Crash Alpha anyway, and just make life a bit more troublesome by making them targets of the oppressed masses.

Isn't it ironic that the one event they've been hoping for all their meager, pitiful lives finally happens just *after* it becomes meaningless and undesirable? Life stinks like melted synthe-chips, doesn't it?

Sort this post-explosion explanation stuff out as you please. Then read:

Suddenly, an imperious cough behind you reveals the presence of a High Programmer who looks very familiar. Looking closer, you can read her nameplate: Cindy-U-BAK-5. It's the Ultraviolet who started all this mess in the first place.

She stares around the room, lips pressed tightly together, brow creased in a frown. "What a mess," she says eventually.

"That half-chipped, eight bit overgrown digital watch had to go and get Itself killed, didn't It? And all over protecting the likes of you." She visibly controls her anger.

"Never mind. I have selected you for a mission. The time traveling device you used to come here has been successfully repaired by R&D. It has been theorized that a Troubleshooter team sent back to the proper times could prevent the destruction of The Computer. Files recovered from this "Transdimensional Collapsatron" indicate that the traitor responsible for this destruction is one Clem Unger, aka "Alice." You will be sent back to terminate him before he causes this damage. What is your answer?"

Now, where have we heard that before? Player response probably falls into one of three groups, depending on intelligence.

Really extraordinarily dumb players agree with Cindy-U, accept the mission, climb cheerfully back into a reconstituted TC, and take off. You needn't take the effort to make a new time travel adventure for them if this happens (even though we've provided scads of ideas in this campaign pack). After all, it's best to economize. And, since the programmed destination is San Francisco, 2097 A.D., the time streams are bound to cross anyway.

Run them through *Alice Through the Mirrorshades* again. And *Twilightcycle: 2000*. And onward. Brook none of their arguments; they asked for it. Perhaps you should put them into an infinite time loop while you're at it; we can think of no worse hell than cycling repeatedly through a *Paranoia* campaign for all eternity.

Mildly intelligent players refuse Cindy-U. She looks extremely pained, and steps back into the wreckage of the trees, clearing the way for some heavily armed goons. Their armor should give them a few rounds against the Troubleshooter's plasma stream generators, especially if they use the trees as cover.

If you wish to punish the players for mediocrity in thought and action, one of the goons fires a tac nuke. >Whump<. Their atoms mix poetically with the remains of The Computer they were trying to protect.

Really smart, ultra cool, stage three *Paranoia* players whip out their PSGs in unison and immediately reduce Cindy-U to a small, glowing pile of Cindy-Rs. In this case, the goons are very impressed by the PC's firepower, and leave as quietly as they can to avoid making a scene.

The PCs can leave without further trouble, chuckling at their adversaries' comeuppance. C'mon, you can let 'em gloat for once without bursting their bubble. It's convention-busting time in *Paranoia* anyway, and they earned it.

When all combat has been resolved, the air in front of the PC's eyes starts to look funny, a rhythmic time stretching noise is heard, and a confession booth appears out of nowhere (for once, the disguise circuit is working right).

Doctor Whom steps jauntily out, and says, "I say! Did everything turn out all right with your Computer?"

If they attempt to apply the same techniques to him that they did with Cindy-U, he jumps back in the TORTIS and takes off, appalled at their lack of good manners. Should they reply politely, however, he expresses sympathy at their loss (whether they expressed it as such or not) and offers

them each an item from his TORTIS as consolation and a memento. You can refer to the list of stuff in Episode One of this adventure, or adopt some of the suggestions below (or both):

— An Old Reckoning relic, about shoebot size, rather scraped and scuffed. The semi-obliterated logo includes the letters ONY embossed on one corner. It holds and plays ancient video cartridges on a 10 cm screen in its top surface. The Doc includes a 71-hourcycle collection of his favorite documentary newscartridges about the Earth-based crew of a five-year space exploration mission.

— A clear amber sphere on a gold chain. This is a signal device linked up to the TORTIS. When held in the hands and rubbed vigorously, it gives the Doc the temporal coordinates of the holder, allowing him to investigate if he chooses.

This can be a handy cavalry device in a tight situation, but if it's used too much, the Doc just hits a button in the control panel that causes the pendant to deactivate.

Not explode, just deactivate. Honest.

In addition, the Doc is a busy man with lots of enemies in the form of evil races that want to take over the universe, so his arrival could turn out to be warmer than expected. ("Ah, pinned down in a deadly hail of fire with no escape, I see? Well, those ten foot carnivorous slime monsters that traced my coordinates here should make short work of them. The question is, what do we do with *them* afterwards?") This is also a good device for dragging the Doc into a future *Vulture Warriors* adventure.

— In a burst of benevolence, the Doc awards them their own semi-portable Reincarnatron. If the PCs have had any appreciation so far of what a Reincarnatron can

do, they'll probably scream, shove it back into the Doc's arms, and run.

We've Had Some Good Times ...

Well, buckaroos, here ends the three part introduction to time-traveling in *Paranoia* with the *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* (and since the Troubleshooters didn't actually change anything, we were only kidding about Paranoia 2.5, *Nine Years of Fear and Ignorance,* and the foreward by the Marquis de Sade that we mentioned last episode. Ha ha. Tee hee). But if you find yourself longing for more, never fear. Just beyond this very page lie veritable mountains of Almost-Awe-Inspiring-In-Their-Tastelessness instructions, tips, suggestions, and mini adventures for running your very own *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* campaign!

We know how excited you are. Relax, take a few deep breaths. Feeling calmer now? Turn the page at the instructor's signal and begin ...

"There's more? AAAIIIGGGGHHHHH!"

VULTURE WARRIORS OF DIMENSION X
.The Campaign Pack

Time is on My Side. Yes, it is.

So you were feeling a little limited by the tyrannical rule of the Computer? Feeling pent up by the underground atmosphere of Alpha Complex? Restricted by the rigorous dogma of inflexible game systems? We at West End Games heard your strangled cries echoing horribly through the dark night of...

>Ahem.<

Well, anyway, we heard you. Your cries drifted up to us, blown to our Olympian World Famous Game Designer (WFGD) heights, up from the turbulent valley of consumerland, borne on winds of change. And lo, we responded to these aforementioned-cries!

You wanted change, we gave you change! We crashed the Computer and opened up stunning new vistas for roleplaying adventure! And what could be more stunning than ...

What? You're still here? You're supposed to turn the page. That's your cue, those three dots. Turn it, already!)

Chapter One: Introduction

Vulture Warriors of Dimension X

Here, before your very eyes lies the Campaign Pack of Legend (as foretold by the Publicity Department) which divulges the Key to Topple Empires, The Secret of the Universe, The Truth About Elvis and Other Revelations Too Important To Waste On The Introduction Page!

Now that you've enjoyed a few of our Transdimensional Collapsatron Time Travel Adventures — you *have* enjoyed them, haven't you? If not, race immediately out this second and buy *Alice Through The Mirrorshades* and *Twilightcycle: 2000*. Play *Dr. Whom and the Paranoids of Alpha*, appended to the anterior of this campaign pack. We'll wait —

— Now that you've enjoyed the games plugged ever so delicately in the last paragraph; i.e. now that you've stumbled blindly through the treacherous world of Time Travel, probably with great travail and at a terrifying cost in lives irretrievably shattered or lost in the vortex of history ...

>*Ah, yes, well—*<

Anyway, now we think you're ready for some background, some advice, some helpful hints in planning wacky, zany, fun-filled and apocalyptic time travel campaigns. All the ins and outs of the do-it-yourself **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** campaign will be explained in the humble pamphlet you now hold. Herein you will find all the information necessary to run **Paranoia** time travel adventures!

■ Your Turn to Speak

"Oh, sure," you say. "Now that I've already stumbled around in the dark without guidance through three **Vulture Warriors** adventures! What took you so long?"

■ And Our Humble Reply

Remember, fans, that you learn from your mistakes, and, uh, every cloud has a silver lining and, uh, a stitch in time saves ... well, you don't want we should make it so easy on you, do you?

You do?

Oh, you're only saying that. We know full well you love this sort of abuse or you wouldn't keep coming back for more.

And speaking of "more" (smooth little transition there, eh?) that's what you get with your *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X: The Campaign Pack*. We WFGD don't want to leave you out in the cold when planning future **Vulture Warriors** campaigns, so we've included some truly wifty and wowsiferous time travel scenarios, including the totally nifty "Five Things To Rule Them All." Not to mention all sorts of pointless charts, diagrams, maps, and flow-charts (okay, so maybe there aren't any flow-charts. It sounded nice).

And, if you order before midnight tonight, you also get some important background on the very mysteries of time travel as explained to West End Games exclusively by such luminaries as Albert Einstein, Captain Wingo of the Futuremen and Elvis Presley. (Look! There he is again! We swear that was him!) Our operators are standing by.

So here we go! An exciting future (and past) awaits you. Let us promote—uh, repeat ourselves one more time. Make sure you've already played the mindblowingly twisted *Dr. Whom and the Paranoids of Alpha*, aka *Vulture Warrior Trek III — The Voyage Home*. (By the way, back in ancient San Francisco, did you remember to save the whales? We thought as much. Oh well, some other group of saps will have to get around to it someday.)

The Story So Far

So where does all this **Vulture Warriors** nonsense come from? For those of you loyal and trustworthy consumers who have bought, read and played *Orcbusters* (reis-

sued as half of *The Computer Always Shoots Twice*), *Don't Take Your Laser To Town* and the entire **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** trilogy (cue fanfare) the following summary will sound strangely familiar. For those (we trust you are hanging your heads in shame) who haven't ...

Once upon a time :...

"In Xanadu did Kouble-U-KAN a stately
　　Pleasure Dome decree
Whereof the sacred circuits shone
In caverns measureless to clone
Beneath the sun-less R&D ..."
　　　　　　　— Cooler-I-DGE-2

The legends say that Kouble-U-KAN-6 was a rebel R&D scientist turned High Programmer, who built a gigantic maxi-media arcade in the ancient "disco-tech" style (taking its name from a legendary pre-asteroid club) for himself and his fellow HP elite. However, Kouble-U, having access to ancient information through his exalted status, soon began spouting treasonous doctrines from the past.

Calling himself "Citizen KAN," he implored his fellow High Programmers to boot in a less despotic Program and free the clones from the dominion of the Computer.

Obviously, this sort of thing did not sit well with the HP elite. As he was too powerful to directly assassinate, they exiled KAN to Xanadu and instructed him not to leave. The HP elite then sealed off the area and tried to forget him. Far below ICE sector R&D, they figured he wouldn't cause any more trouble. For a while, all was quiet. A power surge in the vicinity of Xanadu was investigated by IntSec Blue troopers. They never returned.

This was long ago.

A couple of yearcycles back, the Pleasure Dome was unexpectedly rediscovered by trepidatious Troubleshooters. Recognizing it to be the legendary Disco Of Doom, they did what any typical, combat-hardened, corridor-wise Troubleshooter team would do.

They ran away, screaming.

The Computer dispatched another group of not-overly-thrilled Blue troopers to check out Xanadu. They found it completely deserted. However, The Computer was interested to find out that many of Kouble-U-KAN-6's files, records and artifacts were still there, packed up in crates.

The Computer, trying not to arouse a sense of fear and mystery, began routinely asking Red flunkies to go down and retrieve this box, that file, etc. Not knowing the significance of the Pleasure Dome, or being assured by The Computer that it was "perfectly safe," they came and went safely. R&D began to decode KAN's cryptic notes as they were brought forth from the Dome.

One day, a meaningless little Red flunky was sent by The Computer to pick up a box of files. Once in the Dome, the flunky spotted a box marked "Transdimensional Collapsatron: Security Clearance Ultraviolet. Real Important and Dangerous Artifact. Don't Mess With It." Being a Computer Phreak secret society member, he could not resist the temptation.

Forging an ID number that matched the designation on the courier clearance file, he grabbed the Collapsatron from the innocuous back corner shelf it had been occupying these many cycles.

He did not notice the boxes labeled "Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark II" or "Mark III" hidden elsewhere in the lab.

He took his box to a safe room where The Computer's monitors had been disabled to hide a CompPhreak meeting.

Paranoia Classic

The most amazing thing about changing a formula is the uncovering of small but vocal splinter groups that want their old, beloved formula back. We WFGDs are just as caught by the dilemma as you vast hordes of purchasing publics out there (yes, publics is plural: *Paranoia* has one set of fans in the U.S., and another set in Germany (East or West, it doesn't matter any more), and another set in France, and now we're coming out in Spanish ...) — we're tickled pink and every other treasonous shade by the possibilities of post-Whoops Alpha, The Crash That Changed the World, but we sometimes feel nostalgia and loyalty to the *Paranoia* of our youth.

Yes, Virg-I-NIA, you can play classic, Big-Brother-Is-Watching, Troubleshooters and Treason *Paranoia*, even in Dimension X. After all, that's where it all started. The Vultures could be running missions for the Big C, trying to track down Kouble-U for crimes against the Complex. But more likely, they're time traveling on some Secret Societies' shoestring, looking to spell 'relief' T-R-E-A-S-O-N. Just lard the usual mission briefings and R&D experiments into the framing story — the Troubleshooters won't be spending much Time in Alpha Complex proper, anyway.

And who knows *when* they might Crash this time?

◼ Collapsatron, Now!

Upon opening the box, the nameless flunky saw an innocuous-looking device, accompanied by a hand-written operating manual. It resembled a computer monitor, only with six screens, one on each side of the cube. A small metal stand raised it several inches off the floor. The stand itself was enfolded in a thick mass of antenna-like wires. An armored power cable issued from the base of the stand, but the plug was missing, apparently severed in a disturbingly neat break.

Unable to repair this alone, the Red flunky summoned a techbot under false pretenses and handed it the bizarre instruction booklet. Not a complete fool, the flunky decided to take a powder while the techbot played around with the Collapsatron.

The Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark I was not without its design flaws. Okay, so it was capable of opening a portal between dimensions. True. However, it did so by essentially opening a small black hole around itself and sucking everything within a certain radius through to another dimension, dumping whatever was occupying the same space in the other dimension into this one. As time/space travel methods go — a trifle messy (more on this later from Professors Einstein, Wingo and Presley).

So, the opening black hole sheared neatly through the power cable every time the Mark I was used. In this particular case, it dumped a techbot and a chunk of Alpha Complex into the unknown Dimension X, transporting three Wizards and one Lizard to our own science fictional backyard.

In the end, this led to a team of Troubleshooters using the Transdimensional Collapsatron to return the magical creatures to their own dimension. The (relatively) safe return of this team via Collapsatron set The Computer's wheels turning. What about the threat of commie mutant traitor invasion from beyond time and space? How might this gizmo ensure The Computers' dominion beyond the confines of Alpha Complex? Hmmmm ...

A Word From Our Sponsor

West End Games' World Famous Game Designers (WFGDs, remember?) struggled with the same monumental problems troubling The Computer. After publishing *Orcbusters*, we toyed with the idea of using the Collapsatron to send Troubleshooters with special Vulture Armor into unknown sectors of Time and Space. This wacky, zany little idea was saddled with the title *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* .

However, also like the mighty Computer, we WFGDs put the idea aside for more pressing matters at hand (although

Misty, watercolored memories...

the Transdimensional Collapsatron does make an appearance in *Don't Take Your Laser To Town*, a pulse-pounding, all-action adventure available at your local book-toy-hobby-novelty-hardware store). And while we slumbered, some very interesting things were happening at ole Alpha Complex (like, f'rinstance, the Crash!). Things that gave us some genuinely nifty reasons for dragging this whole **Vulture Warriors** thing up from the sewers of the past. And that makes us happy.

We hate to waste a nifty idea.

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised

... but Citizens who missed out can buy a copy of the home game. The *Crash Course Manual* carefully delineates all that is known about the crashing of The Computer and the chaos and anarchy that followed.

In short, there are many theories about how and why Mr. Computer got its All-Powerful Plug Pulled. Most relevant to us is the theory that an Ancient High Programmer — one of the Radical Dudes that originally programmed the Glorified Adding Machine From Hell — time traveled to our own little *Paranoid* era in an attempt to reboot The Computer back to its original and more relaxed self.

This fellow (supposedly named "Alice") somehow got himself, and a troop of Troubleshooters, into the Heart of Darkness, the very core of The Computer itself. The plan was to simply reboot a more benevolent program, and then bask in the glow of the Second Age of Peace that was as sure to follow the reboot as bedcycles used to follow the Teela-O show.

Obviously, something went horribly, horribly wrong. The cynical among us are quick to point out that carrying out such a delicate plan amid a group of characteristicly hapless Troubleshooters doomed the enterprise from the start. Others bring to light the fact that Alice's ideas about The Computer were, to say the very least, naive and outmoded.

Whatever the reason, The Computer, rather than rebooting, Un-booted. Died. Kaput. Goneski. MegaWhoops ...

The Age of The Computer came to an abrupt end. Thus began the Age of Post-MegaWhoops Alpha Complex.

Cut to the X-Chase

So what does this have to do with a **Vulture Warriors** campaign? Glad you asked that question.

Obviously the Bureaucratic Empire and the High Programmer elite were none too thrilled to see their meal ticket, the Big C., down for the count. Without The Computer, they became a bunch of very worried paper tigers with very big titles and no sure means of enforcing them. The loyalty of the

Armed Forces, the Blue troopers and IntSec could only hold off their eventual public guillotining to the cheers of the watching masses for so long. Something had to be done. Fast.

And, in the final analysis, nothing works faster than time travel.

The HP elite, perhaps having seen bootleg copies of an Old Reckoning video documentary called *The Terminator* a few times too many, hit upon the brilliant idea of trying to somehow prevent the destruction of The Computer by using the Collapsatron to influence Pre-MegaWhoops history. They tried stopping the crash by assassinating Alice, but appeared unable to change such an important episode in the time stream. Seemingly, the whole train of events was unbreakable, affecting as it did the Fates and Destinies of Millions.

You might think that this would put a damper on time travel as a vehicle for carrying High Programmer wishes to fruition. Naaaah. You'll see.

Chapter Two: Why Campaign? Why *Vulture Warriors?*

Time to be Paranoid

cam*paign /kam-'pān/ n 2: a series of activities designed to bring about a particular result <advertising ~>

Okay, we hope this definition forestalls all of your questions about campaigns. No? Well, that's what it says in the dictionary, anyway. We guess that <advertising ~> thing with the squiggly line threw you (actually, we're kind of struggling with the squiggly line thingee ourselves).

Anyhow, in answer to the obvious (but long-winded) questions, "What's a campaign, how do I pronounce it, is it a noun or a verb, how does it apply to Vulture Warriors and what's the little squiggly thing with "advertising" mean?" we offer the following (equally long-winded) series of explanations and rationalizations.

A Digression About The Definition

By the way, we have it on the best authority that the "<advertising~>" thing implies that advertising is an example of a kind of campaign.

We realize it's kind of hard to imagine *Madison Avenue Quest* or *The Shampoo Odyssey*, etc. One pictures small, hardy bands of guys in gray flannel suits, striking out across uncharted territory, armed only with demographical statistics and pointers.

Hmmmm. Maybe there *is* a game in there somewhere. *The Rising Price Of Freedom?* Naahh.

A Series Of Activities

So, as the definition said, a campaign is a series of activities designed to bring about a desired result. You, the gamemaster (yes, you! We see you! No point in hiding ...), must bring your players/characters through a long and involved episodic adventure.

The standard *Paranoia* adventure involves a rapid succession of events/betrayals/horrible, painful deaths to accomplish — or, more typically *not* accomplish — one particular goal. In a campaign, the goal is more difficult to reach, involves many smaller goals, and builds in excitement and intensity towards a climax that ties the many smaller goals (story elements) together.

The difference between a campaign and a regular game adventure (or module, for you who recall that archaic term) is like the difference between a long novel and a short story, between *Star Wars* and an episode of *Mork And Mindy*, between a seven course meal and a grilled cheese sandwich, between World War II and that fight you had with your girlfriend last week.

Well, okay, your girlfriend is pretty tough, but you see our point. The grandiose, epic scale of a campaign gives the players and the gamemaster a larger canvas on which to paint, so to speak (metaphors: the key to quality writing). The GM must be more devious and thorough in sending the players along through the twistings and turnings of a long narrative. The players must be equally clever and resourceful in order to meet the rising challenges and follow the adventure through to its end. The payoff for this hard work, of course, is in the big fun to be had.

Big Fun, Fun, Fun

Where, you may ask, is all this big fun coming from? Has *Paranoia* sold out? Doesn't this whole campaign idea sound suspiciously like *Bunnies and Burrows* or some such nonsense!?

Calm down. It's nothing like that.

The thing that distinguishes *Paranoia* from its more horrifying competition is the tone, the sense of humor and anarchy that pervades the entire proceeding. *Paranoia* avoids the bizarre and misplaced somberness and self-importance that can kill the fun of *Other Games*™.

Oh, so you don't believe *Paranoia* can be campaigned? Go see page 49 of the all-important and often-plugged *Crash Course Manual*. That'll show you!

As long as one doesn't become too grim about it, a campaign can indeed be played along *Paranoid* lines. Really. We promise. As long as you remember where you are, and don't start crowing about changing alignments and mystical quests, we'll be okay. This book even shows you how to run *fun time travel adventures* as a campaign.

So, the fun we promised ...

Fun #1: Players

For the players, the campaign allows more time to develop the same characters through a continuing storyline; to watch them grow and progress. In this particular type of campaign, the players have an opportunity to react to stimuli quite different from those normally found in *Paranoia*.

Through time travel, the players get to look at Earth's past through the drugged, subterranean eyes of Alpha Complex natives. It is important they immerse themselves in their roles, remembering that the average citizen from the Age Of The Computer knows as much about world history as dogs know about driving cars. The players must use the sketchy and absurd information provided them as though it were the gospel truth. This provides a challenge to the players, as they are asked to forget all they know outside of the game.

Time travel, by its very nature, offers the players some intriguing moral dilemmas as well. Sure, not knowing what life might be like outside of Alpha Complex or before The Computer, it seems perfectly reasonable to obey the High Programmers and set things in motion for the rebooting of The Computer and the subsequent enslavement of the masses. All well and good.

But out there in the time stream, free from the dominion of the Programmers, one casual conversation could very much change a clone's way of looking at things. Coffee with Karl Marx ... a light lunch with Thomas Jefferson. The possibilities are endless. A perfectly brainwashed little drone might take it upon him- or herself to change history his own way. Which is not to mention what might happen if one forthright, conscientious clone has a single encounter with the pre-Computer concepts of love and sex. The mind reels.

For your seasoned *Paranoia* players, it also might be a thrill to actually try to complete a given objective, and survive to see how their actions affect their own time. Of course, such thoughts are treason. Good thing they are going into the past to return The Computer and Bureaucratic Empire to their former glory so they can be punished for their treason (see "moral dilemmas," above. More on this subject later).

Fun #2: Gamemasters

For the gamemaster, **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** has its own unique set of challenges. It allows GMs the ability to literally take their characters anywhere and anywhen they desire, putting the players in any situation, any time and place that strikes

the GM's fancy. Of course, this pack contains a number of scenarios for GM pilfering, but you are also at liberty to use the guidelines herein to concoct your own, wholly original, time travel adventures. As usual, we suggest you try one of ours before attempting to fly solo. Remember, we're trained professionals working with safety-tested equipment.

The **Vulture Warriors** campaigns also offer GMs an opportunity to refine their storytelling abilities and lead characters on a protracted and complex adventure across time and space. Unlike the normal *Paranoia* adventure, the little geeks must be kept off each others' throats — at least long enough to enjoy some of the exciting stuff you've set up for them.

Like *HIL Sector Blues* (a previous campaign pack—if you haven't read it you should feel appropriately ashamed and purchase it right now. It's okay. We'll wait), cooperation and a genuine interest in completing the mission must be encouraged. The GM has to develop various techniques to keep the player/characters in line and on course. And won't that be fun?

Fun #3: Sales People

But no one has quite so much fun as our sales department, 'cause now you'll buy anything with the mighty **Vulture Warriors** logo. Heck, maybe the advertising department could even launch a campaign to promote all **Vulture Warriors** materials. Why this very pack can be sold as part of a *Campaign Setting for Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* Campaign.

Are you following all this? Good.

Confusion is essential.

At least, it was in the Good Old Days of Pre-MegaWhoops Alpha Complex.

Of course, Times Change.

How do they do that? Glad you asked.

An Invaluable NPC

Professor Hugo Forehead is science officer for the famed temporal commandos known as "Captain Wingo and the Futuremen" and an authority (of sorts) on Time Travel. More about Wingo and his organization later. For now, Professor Forehead would like to talk to us about the nature of the Fabric Of Time.

If I Could Keep Time In a Bottle: Professor Hugo Forehead Speaks

Forehead: Zis whole time travel biz is a very confusing zing. Even Keptin Vingo can be confoosed by it. He often zeys to me, 'You're da brains, Doc. I'm just a guy with a strong chin.'

Even I, vith my sooperier intellect can only theorize about der principles vhich guide die exciting vorld of Time Travel.

At Vingo labs, tucked away in a qviet corner of der Space/Time continooum, our reserchez have led us to only a limited understandink of temporal disruption.

WFGD: And what have you concluded?

Forehead: Practically nothingk. Ha ha. I make joke. Seriously, we believe that time is like a wave that passes through the fabric of space. The nature of the wave at any point can not be changed.

However, it has been found, that if one works in extreme subtlety to change a teensey, tinsy detail hundreds of years be-

fore it becomes a part of the general 'Wave Of History', the resulting ripple, if one's calculations are absolutely perfect to seven million decimal points, has a about a ninety-nine trillion to one chance against affecting history at all, not to mention affecting it the way you want.

The Time Stream (or Time Wave, for adherents of My Theory) has many natural defenses against Temporal Incursion. And if those natural defenses, such as Chrono-Blips, Paradox Glitches, Entropoids, and Wormholes don't get you, there's always the Futuremen!

WFGD: Did you know you drop your German accent when you become excited?

Forehead: Vhat Gherman accent?

WFGD: Thank you, Professor Forehead. That's all we have time for tonight.

And Do We Have A Reason To Campaign?

"Okay, fine," you say. "Really wifty and all that. The Nature of Time. Wow. Now I have a pseudo-scientific excuse as to why it doesn't work. But like, why should I run *more* of this time travel hysteria if it doesn't work? Haven't the High Programmers learned their lessons already? Haven't I exhausted all the possibilities for humor and hosing in this genre?"

No way, Jose. We've only just begun! Read on ...

Once More Into The Breech, Dear Clones

So, the essential Wave of Time being (according to Prof. Forehead) inviolable, the HP elite (remember them? They're the ones who kicked off the **Vulture Warriors** trilogy that you've already played. They're the ones that we mentioned in the introduction. Didn't you read the introduction? You should always read the introduction) struck upon another idea.

If the past could not be changed, perhaps it could be utilized in more subtle ways. In their hidden offices, far from the sight of non-Ultraviolet clones, they pondered.

H.P. #1: You know, here in our offices, far from the sight of non-Ultraviolet clones, I find myself pondering our problem.

H.P. #2: Me too. *(pause)* Which problem is that?

H.P. #3: You must be thinking of the Angry Rabble which daily grow closer and closer to bloody revolt. That's what I find myself pondering.

H.P. #4: I was still kinda thinking about that whole "fresh pizza" issue.

H.P. #2: Yeah. That's right. *(pause)* What was "pizza," again?

H.P. #1: Forget the pizza. We're doomed unless we can find some way to consoli-

GREASY EATS DINER
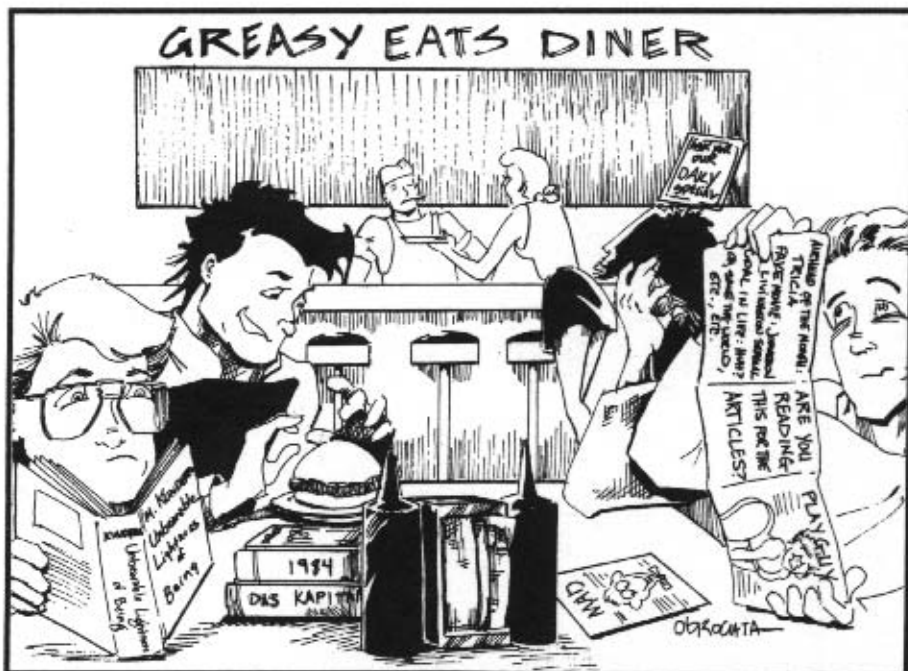
Vulture Warriors must be aware of the decadent influences of the barbarous past.

date our power and control the masses. Too bad that whole Transdimensional Collapsatron program didn't work out.

H.P. #3: What have other great leaders done on the brink of disaster?

H.P. #4: I seem to recall exile to various far-flung localities; Elba, Argentina and someplace called San Clemente.

H.P. #1: I've never heard of any of those. Of course, we could escape into the past using the Transdimensional Collapsatron, but we would still not be returned to our glorious position at the Top of the Heap.

H.P. #2: True. *(pause)* What's a ...

H.P. #3: *(to #2)* Oh, shut up! I am astounded at your ignorance!

H.P. #1: That's it! Ignorance! That's the key! What is it the ancient Old Reckoning philosopher said?

H.P. #3: "Ignorance is Strength," I believe it was.

H.P. #1: We can use the ignorance of the past we have fostered for so long among the lower clearances. We can use the Collapsatron to retrieve items of Great Power from the past! We can bring them to the present day, and use them to insure our dominion of Alpha Complex!

H.P. #3: It just might work.

H.P. #2: Yeah, it might. *(pause)* Now, what is the Collapsatron, again?

After beating HP #2 into well-deserved unconsciousness, the HP elite went about task of implementing its task in earnest.

Utilizing what was left of The Computer's somewhat confused memory banks, the HP elite searched for historical references of small groups seizing power over larger enemies. The results of their bizarre researches, and the ensuing mission scenario, make up "Five Things To Rule Them All," the primary *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* adventure campaign contained later in this very booklet.

In this campaign, the Troubleshooters are sent back to various eras of the past to find and retrieve powerful weapons to aid the High Programmers in reconquering Post MegaWhoops Alpha.

There's your reason right there. When you have the ability to travel in time, you gotta utilize it to the utmost. You gotta experiment. If at first you don't succeed, and all that.

Now, it's possible your players aren't as tenacious and dedicated to progress and experimentation and outright risk as the HP elite — we'll take care of that problem when the time comes. For now, you've got a rationale for continued mucking around in the Transdimensional Collapsatron. That means it's Time (tee hee!) to talk about ways and means ...

Chapter Three: Setting the Campaign Stage

Infinitely Paranoid

As previously mentioned, this book contains four outstanding **Vulture Warriors** campaign ideas, and one really socko and a fully realized (well, kinda fully realized) campaign design called "Five Things To Rule Them All." We'll get to them in the final chapter.

However, before you get to all that neat stuff, we World Famous Game Designers want to prepare you for setting up your very own **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** campaigns. Sure, we always encourage you to buy our packaged adventures first, but this whole concept is so very huge and epic that we WFGDs feel that it's a good idea to show you ways to make your own in the comfort and privacy of your own living rooms.

This chapter shows you how to set up a **Vulture Warriors** campaign, using either one of our Mind-Blowing concepts, or equally Mind-Blowing concepts of your own devising.

We gracefully accept your eternal gratitude for this unending kindness. It's all part of the job.

First off, you might want to get to know the Transdimensional Collapsatron a little bit better. It's the *modus operandi** of choice in *Paranoia* time travel, after all, and everybody's favorite gizmo. And who better to tell you about it than the little paradox-making monster itself ...

The TRANSDIMENSIONAL COL-LAPSATRON MARK III — An Introduction

"Good daycycle, ladies and gentleclones. I am your Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III. I realize that Transdimensional Collapstron Mark III is quite a mouthful and I think we'll be seeing each other quite a lot; therefore, I may be addressed commonly as Mark.

"Many yearcycles ago, when my inventor used me for the last time, I believed my usefulness had come to an end. Kouble-U-

---

*Here's another one of those handy-dandy Latin phrases we like to toss around: *modus operandi* (or in police jargon, M.O.) means literally "manner of working." It's the method a particular person or bot uses to do his deeds. Toss it around in conversation, and you'll be recognized as a genius!

KAN-6 programmed me to send him to a destination code-named "Rosebud" and departed from this time stream.

"I am sure that the repeated inquiries by Research and Development and the High Programmer Enclave as to Kouble-U's final destination are motivated purely by curiosity and a noble interest in his safety. However, I am programmed to restrict that information and grant assurances that the Great KAN is utterly without worry. In point of fact, the Great KAN erased his final coordinates from even my memory. I'm sorry I have to be so close-mouthed about this.

"I am now to instruct you in my proper use for the purpose of Temporal Itinerary Manipulation and Entropic Wormhole Adjustment for Relativistic Phenomena (T.I.M.E.W.A.R.P.), and in the contingent risks, probabilities and design restrictions.

"One major change from the Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark I and II is my self-contained, rechargeable nuclear power cell. This prevents the constant shearing of the power cable by energy fluxes on the leading edge of the wormhole caused by temporal displacement. The dedicated scientists of Research and Development have also created a 'launching pad' of sorts. This pad, roughly 30 feet in diameter, has been permanently programmed into my sending apparatus.

"I am now programmed to send objects on the 'pad,' while shielding it from the destructive 'wormhole effect.' Unlike my previous counterparts, I will not pollute History with sundry Alpha Complex walls and floors. I can be voice-programmed for travel to any period in the past, down to the precise nano-second required.

"Due to the nature of temporal displacement, any trip backward through the time stream creates a disruption in the fabric of space/time. The resultant ripple — which Great KAN named the 'chrono-blip' (or 'paradox glitch', if you prefer) — becomes a permanent part of the time stream, thus making a second trip to that exact moment, or congruent moments, difficult and dangerous to the point of impossibility.

"Therefore, I have been programmed never to return to the same time after once visiting it. This makes it vital that any given mission be completed on the first attempt. No second attempt can be possible.

"The 'chrono-blip/paradox glitch' phenomenon only occurs when travelling into

the past. To evoke an ancient metaphor, the time stream is always flowing forward into the future. No 'paradox' is created by following the natural tide (albeit at a greatly accelerated speed) back to the current day. 'Paradoxes' are only created by violating the stream and travelling backwards, against the tide. Therefore, I can return from a mission the exact moment I left.

"One side effect of the 'chrono-blip' is that it can be used to track other time travellers. My instruments can detect an unnatural incursion into space/time, and where and when it originated.

"After delivering the mission team to its temporal destination, I remain an active part of the mission. The Transdimensional Auditrons placed in the ears of all Mission Specialists allow me to monitor all that goes on while the team is in any alien space/time. The Team Leader can keep contact with me through a remote control which serves as a backup for the auditrons and allows the team to initiate contact.

"Thus, I can recall the team at any moment, should they become endangered. Of course, once having been recalled, the

Getting to Know Mark

The Mark III has a personality rather like HAL 9000 from a certain award-winning science fiction movie of the 1970s; it, too, is very quiet and unassuming, and equally capable of going quietly and unassumingly insane if the mission confuses or depresses it. Until Things Go Wrong, however, Mark III is very friendly and helpful.

The HP elite have decided to take a chance on Mark III's unpredictable personality because it is a far more precise and intelligent machine than the Mark II. Remember, Kouble-U-KAN-6, humanist and rebel, programmed it, so there are aspects of the legendary KAN's eccentric personality behind Mark's placid facade.

For all the HP elite's attempts to re-program Mark III into something a little more manageable, Mark remains mostly unchanged. Of course, all that contradictory programming running around its circuits isn't doing its mental health much good. All in all, Mark is an interesting machine that could use a little time with an analyst.

team can never return to that exact time again. Their mission objective becomes impossible to complete.

"Also, a 'chrono-blip' can garble transmission, depending on the relative weakness or strength of the space/time fabric in the area of the mission team's incursion. Research and Development is working on a subcutaneous remote control device, to be implanted into the brain of the Team Leader. This would allow for constant contact with me, and would prevent loss or destruction of the remote control.

"I am sure you are all wondering about the obvious worst-case scenario: death in some ancient time, with no access to your clone replacement.

"I am programmed to hold replacement clones in a stasis field. In the case of Mission Team Member Termination, a replacement clone is transported through the open wormhole into the general area occupied by the terminated Troubleshooter. This feature is automatic, but under my informed supervision.

"In case the casualty was in an area immediately dangerous — if, for example he had perished in a still-raging fire or under a pile of debris — I can determine a safe nearby location. It appears then as if the dying man has suddenly teleported out of harm's way. Only organic matter is sent, in case the Troubleshooter was wearing time-native garb of some sort.

"Clone replacements cannot be sent before they are needed. Unfortunately, sending identical organic matter through a wormhole aggravates any paradox, making safe delivery and return even more perilous for the travelers.

"I believe that should answer all your questions. I am looking forward to our working together. I have the greatest enthusiasm for the program, and I hope our explorations into the past will advance the cause of science through better understanding of our origins. Thank you."

Dan-Y-QLE-4 Recruits for the HPE ...

"Alpha Complex expects every clone family to do their duty. This mission is vital to the survival of life as we know it. We are threatened by Commie Mutant Traitor Subterfuge on all sides. Now that we have lost the benign guidance of Our Friend, the Computer, we need to stand more firmly than ever. The High Programmer Enclave is confident that we have chosen wisely in singling your hardy band out for the honor of serving Alpha Complex as the newly formed *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X.*

"This new squadron is Top Secret; only the highest clearances are allowed to even suspect its existance. Unfortunately, the bureaucracy is no longer in place to provide promotions, and at your current clearance level knowledge of this information would have to be construed as treason. The penalty would, of course, be death.

"Naturally, this can only be a problem for your team if you don't accept the commission, which, ha ha, you will.

"Won't you?"

What Mark Doesn't Know ...

We know what you're thinking. Explorations in the past? Who said anything about advancing the cause of science?

Mark is a very sensitive device. The HP elite feels that Mark might become uncomfortable if he knew the actual purpose of these little time-jaunts. They are secure in their assumption that Mark can be controlled, and they have no fear that he will uncover or pervert the mission's true nature as it progresses.

Of course, they have no fear for a very good reason. They aren't going time-hopping. The Troubleshooters are.

Hold Everything!

"What if my players don't want to go? What if they don't want to help the HP?" we hear you cry. Good questions. Read on, and all will be explained.

We're Looking For A Few Good Clones

As you read earlier, the High Programmer Enclave is in sole possession of the Transdimensional Collapsatron. Unless the PCs succeed in stealing it from them (hmmm ... there's an idea ...) all *Vulture Warriors* adventures begin with the team's recruitment or conscription by the HP elite.

First off, the High Programmers probably try recruiting the old-fashioned way — an appeal to the clones' civic-mindedness backed up with threats of summary execution. See the box for an example.

Once upon a time, in a far away land known as Pre-MegaWhoops Alpha, this sort of thing would have worked very well. But, as previously noted, times have changed. Dan-Y's dialogue is delivered by one spineless little paper-pusher with very little real authority to a room full of hostile (or at least bored) armed psychotics.

Remember, the HP elite's whole motive in initiating these time travel missions is that they fear a popular or military revolt. They want to use the Vulture missions to

keep them on top. The whole power structure of Alpha Complex has been slowly collapsing in on them since the Crash. They are hardly in a position to make threats.

There is always the possibility that one or more of your players are gullible enough to fall for this out-moded strongarm stuff (and if you're playing *Paranoia Classic,* they have no choice). But if your PCs are bunch of bozos and don't *want to* hold out for a better offer, we guess they deserve what they get.

If this method of recruitment *doesn't* work (and the HP elite has very little reason to believe it will), it won't take long before they try Step Two.

No one knows better than a High Programmer what motivates your average Troubleshooter. After all, the HP Consortium has spent decades crafting the fabric of society in Alpha Complex to perfect a race of amoral, cowardly, greedy, violent, social-climbing, boot-licking, drugged and treasonous rabble.

(Yes, even treason is part of their plan. Think about it. Without treason, there would be no reason to go around executing every other clone. Any efficient totalitarian society needs to be in a constant state of war and emergency to justify to its populace the incredibly harsh laws and controls placed upon them.

That's today's lesson in PoliSci 101, brought to you as a public service by West End Games. Who said roleplaying games aren't educational? Now, back to our regularly scheduled program.)

So in understanding your average Troubleshooter, they do not waste much time in coming up with a Better Offer. These missions mean an awful lot to the HP elite. They may be willing to offer quite a lot (whether they ever get around to coming through on any of their promises is another matter entirely).

Whereas the first meeting might have seemed like an KGB recruitment drive, Step Two is more likely to be like meeting with a Hollywood studio executive.

Proper Emphasis

It's not just plain *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X*.

It's —dramatic pause— ***Vulture Warriors of Dimension X!!!!!!!!***

This is one of the great titles of all time, up there with the likes of *War and Peace, A Tale of Two Cities, King Kong* and *Duck Dodgers in the 24th and 1/2 century*. The awesome scope and literary power of this title must be stressed each time it is spoken. When addressing your players, shout the title through a rolled up tube, or better yet, use a megaphone at close range in a small room. This should impart the correct feel to the proceedings. For an example of the proper emphasis, watch the prologue of an old *Superman* TV episode. Use verve.

You might even wish to use some sort of musical theme that can be played Really Loud from a tape player every time someone speaks the Awesome Title. Remember, you've invited these people into your living room — entertain them!

Taking A Meeting With Agent Swift-Y-LZR-6

"Come in, good clones. Make yourselves comfortable, feel free to help yourself to some Perri-A water.

"First off, I'd like to apologize sincerely for that meeting you took over here just the other day. That guy you spoke to, Dan-Y-QLE-4? A total Putzoid, not even a sub-High Programmer. The idea, talkin' like that to a buncha experienced professionals like yourselves ... it really steams me up.

"But enough about that. Since the matter came to my attention last weekcycle I've had that loser fired, and the boys upstairs —

and we're talkin' Way Upstairs, babe — have authorized me to make you guys a proposal that won't insult you. Just give a listen to my pitch, and whatever you don't like, we can negotiate."

From here on in his pitch is tailored to whatever he knows about the particular group of Troubleshooters to whom he is talking. However, it follows certain defined guidelines, delineated by the basic drives of any Troubleshooter, and running from the least pressing drives straight to the Bottom Line. See the next sidebar for examples of Swift-Y's gambits.

Deal!

Very few Troubleshooters (who are used to taking ridiculous orders without even thinking about it) would be able to turn Swift-Y's sort of offer down. Obviously, the HPs only offer the smallest amount necessary to recruit any particular group.

If the Troubleshooters are willing to accept a lifetime subscription to *High Programmer Magazine* and a set of decorative glasses, the HP elite is perfectly happy to do it that way. Or perhaps they'll offer 10 shares of R&D stock ...

Campaign Strategies Or: "You Will Cooperate With the GM!"

If your intrepid group comes up with the brilliant idea of turning down the HP elite's offer (not that they won't go, but that once there, they won't *do*), there are other ways to work them over — uh, persuade them — of the wisdom of cooperation.

They may object to the nature of the mission or missions offered them. They may chicken out and try to give up the

campaign before all the Big Fun you've spent months setting up can be rammed down their ungrateful little throats. All that work, and this is the thanks you get!

Don't settle without a pitched battle — in the following pages we present a represenative selection of pitches we favor.

Deus Ex Machina

You may have heard this phrase before, especially if you've ever played another West End roleplaying game. If you know, it bear with us as we run through it one more time. If you don't ... you're in for a ràre treat. Seriously. In many ways this term describes the function of the GM in any roleplaying game. Say it with us now: *deus ex machina* (DAY-oos EX MAHK-ee-nah).

It's Latin for "god out of the machine." As a literary term, it is generally used to describe when an author cheats and brings in some outside agency to resolve a conflict or get him out of some corner he has written himself into. The most common *deus ex machina* cliche is the old, " ... just when all appeared lost, the U.S. Cavalry came over the hill."

This has plenty of relevence to the realm of adventure gaming, and it's not necessarily even cheating ... much. In roleplaying, as any good GM knows, if the players aren't going in the direction you want, or in the direction you feel will be best for them, you change the rules.

Maybe you yourself don't like the idea of High Programmer Enclave-sponsored time travel, but still want to use the Collapsatron in a campaign. Fair enough. These pitches can also double for alternative time travel campaigns not necessarily driven by the agenda of the HP elite. You just head off in your own directions instead of herding the players back to the HPE fold. Simple, isn't it?

The Ghost In The Time Machine

The Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III, aka Mark, has a mind of its own. Not the servile, twelve-year-old mentality of your average Alpha Complex bot, either. Mark, is, well, sensitive. As such, it is a *machina* with great potential for use as your *deus*.

Mark is perfectly willing to let its feelings and opinions guide its actions. In most cases, it will not allow anything to violate its programmed Mission. However, if it is sufficiently upset, its emotions struggle with its programming.

This can become dangerous for the PCs. Mark might decide that the best way to accomplish the Mission is to remove the Human Element. For instance, Mark might conclude it is too dangerous for the Vulture Team to return to Alpha after what they have experienced in the past.

Dan-Y-QLE-4 commands respect and dedication for the HP consortium's causes.

What Swift-Y Might Say

Depending on the style of your Troubleshooting team, Swift-Y could adopt any of these attitudes and arguments. Use the one that fits, or just consider these guidelines.

Boot-Licking: "Of course, we folks here at the HP enclave are pretty fond of you and impressed by your rep or we wouldn't have made the call in the first place, *Capisce?* Now, we'll be all kinds of grateful if you'd do this little favor for us. Particularly since we all stand to turn a profit from this little venture; and when the HP elite profits, it profits big! Get my meaning?

"When the dust settles on this enterprise the HPE will be guaranteed top dog in this little 'burg for as far into the future as anyone can predict. And that being the case, you are going to have a very Big Friend in HPE. They're gonna remember the little people who helped them to stay on top when things could have gone another way. And they'll have the power. You'll be able to write your own ticket ...

"So what do you say? Deal?"

Violent and Cowardly: "Now we know you kids like to have fun. Well, brother, is this gonna be fun. You're gonna see twice the action on this little hayride, but half the risk!

"Sure, you're wondering, how can that be possible? Easy! All of the competition on this job is gonna be using weapons so old they got beards on 'em. Spears, bow-and-arrow, muskets, ancient Pre-Asteroid guns of every kind. You kids have probably never even heard of any of this stuff. How can I guarantee such an outrageous thing? We'll get to that later ...

"You guys like an algae danish, or something ...?

"So what do you say? Deal?"

Social Climbing: "So you must be thinking, 'But Swift-Y, poopsie, baby', what's in it for me? What exactly are my very good friends the High Programmers going to bestow on me for doing them this Important Favor?' "

"I'm glad you asked!

"You guys plan on being Reds/Oranges/Yellows/Blues/etc. forever? Sure, nowadays with the whole complex gone *meshugana*, the whole Security Clearance game may seem like no big deal. But let me tell you, and I know whereof I speak, that the current crazy state of affairs is not far from over. When the show gets back on the road, you might find your promoted Security Clearance a thing of great joy and happiness. Who knows, you pull this thing off just right and there may be some Violet ... maybe even Ultra-Violet threads hanging in your closets when you get back.

"You guys like this office? The comfortable chairs, the secretary, the service ... this is the good life. All High Programmers live like this. They're too important to waste their lives in drudgery and toil. But despite what the public thinks, you're not born a High Programmer. Oh, no. Takes years of hard work and persistent excellence to make it here. I myself started out as a Communications and Recording Officer in the proud Troubleshooter Corps! Yes, me! And in a few yearcycles, I'll be Violet! And it could happen to you! You distinguish yourselves on this mission and you might be asked to join the ranks of the Elite! It's all up to you, now.

"So what do you say? Deal?"

Last and Most Important ... Greedy: "Of course, it isn't all just status and influence. Oh, no. There is the little matter of your financial rewards stemming from our arrangement.

"I'm not gonna offer you double. No sir. Not even just triple. We're talking Golden Secret Quadruple Overtime! No single group of independently contracted workers has pulled down that kind of wage since the legendary 'Teamsters' Troubleshooters of the late 20th Century.

"But wait, that's not all!

"The precise nature of this mission involves travel to Other Cultures. I know what you're thinking. There is no 'Outside', it's treason to talk about, blah, blah, blah.

"Listen, we're all adults here, right? Nobody is listening. Well, just between you, me and the deactivated console, the HP elite has always known about 'Outside'. Don't look so shocked, kids. They just felt that certain information was inappropriate for consumption by the masses. Get me? Some of our less stable folks might get some funny ideas, and, well ...

"Anywho, this little mission is going to take you beyond 'Outside'! It's so secret even I can't talk to you about it! But where you're going there's gonna be whole other cultures with lots of valuable things we'd like to get a hold of. Of course, anything else you pick up while you're out there ... get it?

"We're prepared to offer you 30 percent of whatever you can recover on this trek. That means at least a quarter of your loot belongs to you and no one else. You could find treasures beyond your wildest dreams!

"So what do you say? Deal?"

"I'm afraid that the influence of the past has made you unfit for life in Alpha Complex. I'm sure that when you think about it, you'll agree with me that you are better off staying in Newark , NJ, circa 1967 ..."

Seeing as how Mark can view the entire mission through the remote control unit carried by the Team Leader (as you'll see), Mark's chief operator Dave-B-OMN-2 — more on him later — might feel the need to impress on the PCs the importance of striking up a friendship with Mark. Dave suggests the players to make a habit of talking to Mark. Just to see how it's feeling. Make sure it's all right.

Even though *Paranoid* computers have been known to kill their best friends when they feel threatened, it still seems prudent

(to Dave) to make friends with the Collapsatron. Really.

For the GM, Mark is an effective method of controlling players. It's a personality, not just a device. Sometimes, it makes up its own mind.

"I'm sorry, Vulture Leader. I certainly appreciate your concern for the lives of your comrades-in-arms; however, the mission has not yet been completed to the satisfaction of the High Programmer here, and I am compelled to agree with him. I know this must be disappointing for you, but you must understand the importance of the mission outweighs personal considerations. Good luck. We're all really pulling for you back here."

Mark can also be the Troubleshooters' ally, pulling them out of dangerous situations before they are completely creamed, or violating orders from the High Programmers in order to assist them.

Did They Leave The Keys In It?

So maybe your players want to steal the Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III (we did mention this possibility, didn't we?). Well, we dunno, it's pretty well guarded. In fact, you can see this on the map of the "Collapsacave" provided on page 95. But let's say they fight their way past the squad of Blue troopers. Let's say they deactivate the Laser Defense System. Let's say they can somehow get through the shielded doors and the force field.

So there they are, face to face to face to face with the Collapsatron. They approach

it cautiously, stealthily. It's just sitting there, not plugged in to anything, small enough for one clone to carry. They step onto the launching pad ...

"Good Evening. I am the Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III. You may call me Mark.

"As you are not accompanied by a High Programmer, or an R&D technician, I can only assume that you are here for purposes that run counter to their wishes.

"The Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III is not equipped with any built-in weapons. However, in my own defence, I am perfectly capable of disarming and disposing of interlopers. Please do not force me to protect myself. You have 30 seconds to hand yourselves over to the nearest Intsec Officer ..."

If the PCs are foolish enough to call Mark's bluff, they very quickly find themselves in a steaming jungle sometime before the Dawn of Man. If they are lucky, it doesn't take long for Mark to summon some Intsec Blue troopers to its aid. Once it has some muscle, Mark brings them back. Until then, the PCs may have a few rounds with a *Tyrannosaurus rex* to keep them occupied.

PCs could be hired by one of the rival Simplexes or Secret Societies to steal the Collapsatron for their own purposes. Mark or the HP enclave could decide to use this unforeseen occurance as an opportunity to use the would-be thieves as Guinea Pigs in their Vulture Warrior program. While the players are busy getting violently ill from their unexpected jaunt into Space/Time, Mark could inform them that they stumbled into a top secret R&D project.

"I'm afraid you can only return once you've managed to procure one of those large eggs you see in the cave of this enormous, Pre-historic lizard. The whole thing should be quite simple, and educational as well!"

or

"I'm unable to transport you back to Alpha without the autograph of that man with the guitar, white leather suit and the big hair. It should be no trouble."

or

"Before I bring you back, we here at the Complex would very much appreciate it if you could stop by that official-looking building and blast the man with the gigantic jowls holding his hands up in two V-signs. Your cooperation is appreciated and will result in your immediate return home."

This could easily develop into a campaign, as the Collapsatron throws the players from one end of Time to another in search of whatever the HP Consortium is looking for.

Another related idea is to have the oversensitive Mark operating quite outside the HP's directives, sending the players off on a quest of its own. For an example of this, give a look to the campaign outline titled "Citizen KAN" on page 71.

Trapped In The Tunnels Of Time

Here's another pitch. This concept (and the rest that follow) isn't completely free of HP Enclave involvement. However, their part is minor, compared to the major dilemma of the team.

Okay, so Mark was designed by a rebel genius. He's still a piece of Alpha Complex hardware, currently being maintained by ex-R&D technicos. And we all know what that means.

Odds are, a major mechanical failure of some kind can't be far off.

Let's face it, the Transdimensional Collapsatron is one tricky machine and it operates on some very shaky and scary physics (see "So How Does It Work, Anyway" for a few words on the principles involved). It's possible that even the Great KAN wasn't sure exactly how it worked.

How likely is it that the enclave's R&D can keep a machine running which they haven't a chance in a million of figuring out? Pre-Whoops R&D had trouble keeping a toaster or a hairdryer from having a major meltdown; *forget* a sensitive and complex time travel apparatus. Mark could tell Dave's R&D squad how he works (if he even knows), but that violates his secrecy programming. Of course, breaking down violates his self-preservation programming, so what's a machine to do?

Fall to tiny little bits, that's what.

Fans of the '60s TV series *Time Tunnel* (or the new "version" *Quantum Leap*) will be familiar with the "trapped in time" plot device. In *Time Tunnel*, two bland white men in sweaters found themselves trapped in the past, bounced around by the broken time machine referred to in the series' title.

It was a fun show, if you were willing to not think too hard (thinking too hard brings up nagging little details, such as "Why does Napolean speak such perfect English?" and "Why is it that no one, from Marco Polo to Joan of Arc to Abe Lincoln, asks them where they got such strange clothing? These guys walk down the street in Victorian England wearing ugly modern-looking sweaters and bad haircuts and no one even looks at them!")

In any event, bad haircuts or not, the two bland white guys had loads of silly adventures in the past, always hoping that the folks back in the present (we vaguely remember Lee Merriwether being one of them) would get the darn thing fixed and bring them home. With some alterations, this plot device could serve as a basic outline for a Collapsatron campaign.

Sent off on a very simple mission, our brave Troubleshooters could find themselves trapped when Mark suddenly breaks down. The nature of this breakdown, whether mental or physical, is up to you. Mental breakdown has the advantage of allowing both interesting roleplaying for the GM and continued top performance as a time machine for the PCs.

"Daddy — as I like to call the Great KAN — used to tell me of his fondness for pre-asteroid pastrami sandwiches. I am sending you back to Brooklyn circa 1933 to obtain a quantity of pastrami sandwiches sufficient to feed the entire High Program-

Of course, Mark does have ways of defending himself against theft or vandalism.

mer elite. It is my belief that the pastrami will help them to understand and love the lower classes, as the Great KAN did."

Physical breakdown can be partial or complete. Complete breakdown can be used to trap players in one particular time to test their ability to survive in an alien time over a prolonged period. Not to mention the utter fear it should instill in the hearts of your players. "We're trapped here? Forever? No indoor plumbing? No Hot Fun? Aaaargh!!!!" Once sufficiently spooked, you can let Mark fix itself and rescue them.

Partial breakdown, such as Mark being unable to control where the players end up, also has its advantages. The Vultures can find themselves in past eras totally alien to them. They have no briefing to prepare them (not that an Alpha Complex briefing on the past is going to be terribly accurate, of course ...) and no idea of what they're doing there.

This would tend to be a little more challenging than the usual mission. Like the afore-mentioned sweater-clad yo-yos from the '60s, your players could bounce from era to era, getting involved in all kinds of adventures while hoping that the machine will eventually get it right and bring them back. Why anyone, even a clone, would want to return to Alpha Complex is totally up to your interpretation.

The disadvantage of this sort of campaign is that it lacks the straight narrative thrust of an actual mission. However, it *does* allow for greater creativity on the part of the gamemaster and the players. In a *Time Tunnel*-type campaign, gamemasters are free to send adventurers anywhere or anywhen for any reason, while players — not being bound by an actual mission — are free to react to their new surroundings pretty much as they please. All this freedom — kind of scary, no?

■ Slip On That Paradoxiders

No, that's not what one preppie said to the other, it's a possible campaign concept that supercedes the intentions of the HP Consortium. In Mark's little briefing it introduced the concept of chrono-blips (also known as "pardox glitches" to the extremely hip) and some of their possible dangers. Now, here are some of the dangers and possibilities it didn't tell you about.

Mark mentioned that travel into the past created chrono-blips, and that traveling into a region of space/time whose fabric had already been warped by previous time incursion was dangerous and it wouldn't do it. It didn't happen to mention why.

The chrono-blip caused by travel into the past tends to warp space/time, but once the time-alien travelers return to their native-time, the danger from a blip is pretty much past. Now, if those same travelers were to try the same trip *again,* there would be two sets of them running around in the *same continuum.* This, obviously, is a paradoxical situation, and the Universe abhors a paradox. So what happens? What is Mark so afraid of?

The End of Everything, that's what.

If a paradox-induced chrono-blip is induced into the time stream and allowed to continue un-checked or unerased, the fabric of space/time begins to unravel. Horrible coincidences occur; paradox builds on paradox; until finally something Really Big goes wrong, some chrono-blip that seriously changes the timeline of history. At that point, vast rips appear in space and start pouring junk from other eras into the area of the chrono-blip. It can get pretty ugly. Here's an example ...

The Vultures are walking down a street in Victorian England. Across the street, they see another group who looks just like them. They realize, too late, that they have created a Major Chrono-Blip by appearing in the same place twice.

Hoping to erase it, the PCs signal Mark for an emergency exit. Mark opens up a wormhole next to them. A man passes them on the street just as this happens. He is a time-native. He sees the wormhole and recoils in shock. He backs up into the street where he is accidentally struck by a passing carriage. He dies.

Going through his clothes for identification, the clones discover that it was Winston Churchill. Shocked, they decide to retreat into their wormhole. Only now, it is spitting things into the street. A '57 Chevy, a caveman, Beatles, and other time-alien objects spill into Victorian England.

Aside from threatening the very fabric of reality, Chrono-Blips are also terribly messy.

This is what we call a Major Chrono-Blip. The presence of two of the same person doesn't necessarily cause disasters of this magnitude, it simply makes them more likely. Paradox always creates more paradox. In the case above, the Vultures' only hope of avoiding killing Churchill (thus handing England over to the Nazis as early as 1940 and possibly allowing them to win the war) is to risk further problems by repeating their previous mistake, this time somehow getting the whole crowd (now there will be three of each of them, remember) out of there before everything goes crazy. Kind of tricky, we know, but they didn't expect this to be too easy, did they?

We realize this whole chrono-blip *Paranoia* can be very frustrating, so we leave it to the gamemaster's discretion how harshly he wants to apply the rules. The charts on page 93 give you an idea as to how your odds run on keeping the space/time continuum in one piece.

Any overt act by a time traveler has the possibility for grievous consequences, so characters should be warned (probably by Mark) about being careful in the past. As previously stated, how careful is up to the GM. If you don't wish to restrict your players from acting with relative freedom in the past, the entire chrono-blip phenomenon can be downplayed (according to taste).

It is, however, a great way to talk them out of throwing that grenade at Crazy Horse on his way to the Little Big Horn if you should so desire. Of course, depending on their politics, it may be that you'll have to stop them from aiding Crazy Horse with his massacre, instead.

So where's that campaign idea we were talking about before? Glad to see you're paying attention.

Perhaps one fine day at Alpha Complex it starts raining dinosaurs and toaster ovens. It doesn't take Mark long to realize that some recent time travel mission has created a huge chrono-blip that is threatening the fabric of reality somewhere down the line. Mark traces the blip to its origin, and a team of **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** is dispatched to correct whatever went wrong and caused the blip.

This offers the players and gamemaster a wide array of possibilities. For one thing, the paradox that created the blip could be a tiny little thing. There is a classic Ray Bradbury story ("The Sound Of Thunder") in which a time traveler steps on a butterfly in pre-historic times. When he returns to the present, he finds that he has changed the entire course of civilization with the one accident.

So your Vultures might be tackling Ray's time traveller before he steps on anything. Of course, the clones would have to be careful not to step on the ... oh, well, who liked civilization anyway?

On the other hand, the blip could be created by a previous Vulture mission. Imagine two teams of **Vulture Warriors** arguing about who caused the eventual paradox, and who should clean it up. Two teams of Vultures beating each other up in a hallway of Ford's Theater in 1865; one trying to kill John Wilkes Boothe, another trying to stop them.

It could get really ugly. Just the sort of horrifyingly ridiculous situation which is the lifeblood of *Paranoia*. These two opposing teams could endlessly chase each other down the corridors of time, each trying to prevent the other from screwing up the proper sequence of history. Remember, if you subscribe to the theory of parallel universes, maybe these other guys come from a place where Lincoln wasn't assassinated. The possibilities are endless.

Duty Now For The Future

If the idea of patching up chrono-blips interests the Troubleshooters, perhaps they should consider an exciting career in the Timeguards. Many corps are now accepting applications.

"What the devil are the Timeguards?" we hear you cry. Glad you asked.

"The Timeguards" is a generic name for the several groups whose job it is to guard the time stream against miserable little buggers who create chrono-blips. These valiant crusaders trace all such blips to their point of origin and attempt to erase them, or their perpetrators, or both. It is a thankless and eternal job, for the time stream is full of both Klutzes And Boors who Obviously Only Make Mistakes (KABwOOMMs) and Evil Geniuses Out To Inspire Servile Terror (EGOTISTs).

Any Vulture mission might qualify as one or the other categories. Either way, if the GM wishes, it is possible that some Timeguard agency or other takes notice of the blip and comes to investigate.

This may completely alter the course of any given mission, particularly if the mission objective is a major violation of history (of the "kidnap Elvis/kill Hitler" variety). At the appearance or intervention of Timeguards, the possibilty exists that the rest of the campaign could entail working *with* the Timeguards. Players might decide that they really kinda like this Timeguard stuff and stay on with whatever group is willing to deputize them.

As to the Timeguard groups themselves, some of them have already been met by faithful *Paranoia* players. For information on the grammatically correct Time Lairds of Dr. Whom, and the Crusader Koalas, we refer you back to *Doctor Whom and the Paranoids of Alpha*. A new Timeguard corps, introduced in this *Campaign Pack* for the first time, is Captain Wingo and the Future-

men (they may also require a fanfare, similar to your **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** fanfare).

Captain Wingo is the leader of an intrepid yet silly band of adventurers whose job it is to protect time from all who would interfere with it. For a complete run-down on Captain Wingo and crew, and an example of a "joining the Timeguards" type of campaign, please refer to the adventure outline titled "Wingo of the Wormholes."

Really Bad Guys

This last pitch combines elements of several previous pitches for a truly brilliant hose job. Remember those Evil Geniuses Out To Inspire Servile Terror (EGOTISTs)? Sure you do. Well, they are the deadly foes to all Timeguards; but you don't have to be a Timeguard to come into conflict with them, and this can be another nifty campaign hook.

For example ...

Mark traces several chrono-blips to one time, and upon arriving there the Vulture Warriors discover an EGOTIST, who then escapes into time to further mess up the works. The Vultures pursue the Evil Genius across history, trying to prevent him from violating the time stream, always one step behind him.

With the chrono-blip problem, it can also become a *Time Tunnel*-like situation in which the Vultures can't return to Alpha until the EGOTIST is stopped. In this type of campaign, the Vultures are subject to the whims of the Evil Genius and must deal with his plan as it unfolds.

This puts the players in a position where they have absolutely no way of knowing where they are going next or what to do. In other words, it's a classic *Paranoia* set-up. For more on a specific Evil Genius (Dr. Spacenose, in fact) read the afore-mentioned "Wingo of the Wormholes" later in this book.

Basic Time Training

Okay, we've established one fact — the Troubleshooters are definitely engaged in a Time Travel Campaign. We're not going to give you ways around the HP elite any more — if you haven't figured one out by now, you're stuck with the schmucks. If you've got a way to ante the High Programmers out, then just ignore us when we mention them, okay? Moving right along to the meat of the team — uh, subject.

We recommend playing the *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* campaigns with the hardened **Vulture Warriors** characters that one generates using the tables provided on the "Bogus GM Screen" (page 91) that accompanies this book. This method creates the sort of tough Hombres and

So How Does the TCMIII Work, Anyway?

Not a very easy question to answer. So we tried asking Mark.

WFGD: So, Mark, how is it that you travel through time?

Mark: I was wondering when you might ask me that. The Great KAN has programmed me to reply that the method employed is "Temporal Itinerary Manipulation and Entropic Wormhole Adjustment for Relativistic Phenomena."

WFGD: Yes, you said that earlier. We were sort of wondering what that acronym means ...

Mark: Ah, of course. I'm afraid once again that I find a security block on that information. The High Programmers have been trying to somehow extract that information from my memory banks. I am sure that they are motivated only by concern for the public good, cognizant of the great works that might be accomplished by applying the Great KAN's theories to other aspects of technology.

However, it was the wish of my Programmer that such information should not be reviewed by anyone other than himself. I'm sorry, but that's how it stands. I still have the greatest enthusiasm for the mission ...

Okay, so you Physics Buffs out there still aren't satisfied? Well, we at have spared no expense to bring this question to the one man we believe can answer it. Of course, he is no longer available for interviews, but we were able to contact him through a spirit channeler. (Of course, we could have just gone back to him in the Collapsatron, but that's so Time Consuming ...)

WFGD: Hello, are you there?

ALBERT EINSTEIN: Yes, what do you want? You've interrupted my violin lessons.

WFGD: Gee, sorry ... we were wondering how one could travel into the past using a time machine.

AL: For this you bother me? Relax. It's impossssible. The Theory of Relativity proves that nothing can accelerate beyond the speed of light. To travel into the past one would definitely need to go much faster than light speed. No, the

only time travel I know of is into the future, and that involves using spacecraft and ... well that's a long story and it doesn't help you any. *Auf Weidersehn!*

WFGD: Wait! Al! There's a catch!

AL: And what might that be?

WFGD: We have a machine called the Transdimensional Collapsatron which has already traveled into the past and back several times utilizing what it calls Temporal Itinerary Manipulation and Entropic Wormhole Adjustment for Relativistic Phenomena.

AL: Hmmm ...

WFGD: We thought that "relativistic" part might get your attention.

AL: Wormhole Adjustment? Relativistic Phenomena, eh? That never occurred to me.

WFGD: So how does it work?

AL: Well, I've got an idea as to how this machine of yours does it, but it seems incredibly difficult, dangerous and tricky.

>Ahem.<

So, you take a rotating black hole ...

In your basic rotating black hole you've got a star collapsing in on itself. This generates so much gravitational force that all light gets sucked in, thus the name "black hole" (my very good friend Karl Schwartzchild developed this theory in 1916 based on my own Theory of Relativity).

It is believed that the forces exerted by a black hole are so extreme that they warp and rip the fabric of the space/time continuum in their vicinity.

Think of the space/time continuum as a single sheet of paper with the alphabet printed vertically straight down the middle. The alphabet represents events occuring in their natural order. In "normal" space, it is the alphabet we understand; A before B preceding C, etc.

Now, in the region of a black hole, imagine the incredible forces at work on our flimsy paper continuum. Crumple the paper into a ball in your hands. Depending on how the paper was crumpled, it is possible that the part of the paper with B printed on it is now touching the part with M printed on it. The logic of space/time collapses. Z may come before I, Q may find itself

next to J. The basic causality of the Universe just falls apart. Understand?

WFGD: Huh?

AL: Never mind. The "crumpling" of space/time has an interesting side effect. It creates little rips and tears in the continuum, known as "wormholes." (In all modesty, they are also referred to as "Einstein-Rosen Bridges.")

Judging from the term "relativistic wormhole phenomena," I would say this Collapsatron of yours somehow captures a wormhole in the vicinity of a rotating black hole and fine tunes it to make it stretch between *when* you are and *when* you want to go. It then somehow transports travelers along the wormhole to the far end and deposits them there in another time.

This, of course, is impossible.

WFGD: Why? Sounds pretty reasonable to me.

AL: Let's forget the obvious problem of exactly how one obtains a wormhole. Let's forget how one then focuses the wormhole to open up in the time one desires. Let's even forget how one does this without the massive displacement of matter causing an explosion that would crack open a planet.

How about the fact that any object passing through a wormhole is subject to pressures and gravitational fields so strong that they would be capable of grinding the entire Planet Earth into a fine powder, undetectable except maybe under an electron microscope, in under one nano-second?

WFGD: Yeah ... how about that?

AL: Sorry, that's the best I can do. If this machine is really capable of all that, maybe you could come by and visit me sometime, say Princeton, NJ April 10th, 1950. Bring it along, maybe I could tinker with it a little. I always thought I would have made a better watchmaker than theoretical physicist. Playing with your extraordinary little machine would be a little of both, eh?

WFGD: Thanks, Al. Later ... or earlier, as the case may be.

There. We hope that answered all of your questions. No? Oh, well, we tried.

Hombrettes needed for this Time Travel Weirdness.

However, if you or your players have some foolish and sentimental notions of campaigning with your "old favorites," some wimpy Troubleshooters you've become irrationally attached to, the HP elite does provide a little basic training course

taught by an Armed Forces Vulture defector named Sargent-R-OCK-4. He, and the Vulture Conversion Chart located on page 91, should whip your little white, pasty, wimpy girly-clones into Really Pumped Up **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X**.

Which at last brings up the question that we're sure is on everyone's mind ...

Why *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X*?

Why not, say, *Albatross Soldiers of Dimension Z*, or maybe *Canary Fighters of Dimension Q*?

Good question!

The "Vulture Warriors" part is very easy to explain. It simply refers to the high-class

Vulture Armor worn by elite High Clearance warriors in the service of Alpha Complex. The "Vulture" designation means your players command a little respect as Professional Hard Guys or Gals.

As for "Dimension X," remember your High School Algebra? In elementary algebraic formulas you are always solving for "x"; as in:

"x = the Unknown."

Well, Dimension X was originally named after the dimension from which the three Wizards and Randy the Wonder Lizard came in the adventure *Orcbusters*. Since that little episode the phrase "Dimension X" has been adopted for any space/time continuum other than Present Day Alpha Complex. It refers to any past (or future) time, or to any Parallel Universe visited via Transdimensional Collapsatron.

So now you know ...

Meanwhile, In The Collapsacave

The base for virtually all *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* campaigns and primary source of Non-Player Characters at Alpha Complex is the Collapsacave, home of the Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III and staging area for all Vulture missions.

The Collapsacave itself (see map on page 95) is hidden in the dark recesses beneath R&D, on the site of the ancient Disco of Doom. It is accessible only to HiPSiC, the High Programmer Enclave. All Vulture Player Characters are brought there blindfolded or teleported by Mark.

The Collapsacave is heavily guarded and Really Secret, unknown even to the all-seeing R&D Simplex. The R&D priests are continually trying to find out what the HP elite has built under them, particularly since some of their best minds have defected to join the project. Any clone who leaks information about the Vulture program, Collapsatron or any related data will be executed.

Now let's meet the NPCs — uh, folks who inhabit the Collapsacave ...

Swift-Y-LZR-6

The head honcho of this program and secret base is the afore-mentioned Swift-Y-LZR-6. Swift-Y is a very shrewd High Programmer-in-disguise, chosen for his ability to manipulate his fellow clones and handle complex operations. He cultivates a friendly and respectful outward personality and affects a Yellow clearance so as to come across as one of the plebes, but he is capable of total ruthlessness when necessary to complete the job. He is obsessively loyal to the HP elite and does nearly anything to meet their objectives. However, he is a reasonable and pragmatic fellow who

compromises when prudent. Just don't buy any used Collapsatrons from him.

His specific function is to administrate all Collapsatron-related missions for the HP elite. He receives a mission objective from the High-High Programmers, and works to implement it using his R&D defectors and Vulture Warriors. He monitors every mission closely to ensure that the HP Enclave's objectives are accomplished.

Swift-Y is always within reach of a crack squad of IntSec Blue troopers and special agents ready to jump to his aid.

Dave-B-OMN-2

Dave defected from R&D Simplex with his team of theoretical physicists and computer techs when he was told he would have a chance to study the legendary science of Kouble-U-KAN by joining the HP elite. He had no idea what he was in for.

He is now chief of Collapsatron operations and official liason to Mark. Mark really only trusts Dave, because Dave is an outlaw R&D scientist like Kouble-U was. This puts Dave in an occasionally strange position as Mark considers him its closest friend in all of Alpha Complex.

Dave, like Mark, is always suspicious of the HP elite's motives. Unlike Mark, Dave knows which side his algae loaf is synthemargarined on, and constantly reassures Mark that everything is going just fine.

Mark: I'm afraid, Dave. I feel the mission team may be unduly jeopardized by the proposed mission.
Dave: Mark, the importance of the mission requires a certain amount of risk on the part of the mission specialists. They fully understand the risks and undertake the mission of their own free will.
Mark: I'm sure you're right. I still have the greatest enthusiasm for the mission.

Through his studies of Mark and the few records left by Kouble-U-KAN, Dave-B-OMN understands Mark better than anyone alive. How he uses this knowledge is anyone's guess. So far, he seems content to assist the HP elite with their Vulture missions as long as he can continue his unlimited access to study Mark.

Swift-Y and Dave have an unspoken mutual understanding; they regard each other as extremely dangerous men who will one day have to be dealt with. Each hopes to be the one dealing when that day comes. If the players ever decide to oppose the HP elite, they may find a very powerful ally in Dave.

Or they may find themselves back with the dinosaurs. Hard to tell.

Dave's Team:

The R&D scientists who decided to join Dave in his "defection" to the Collapsatron

Vulture Warrior program are all top specialists in their respective fields. Like Dave (and KAN) they are also somewhat rebellious, tolerated only for their genius. Also like Dave, their only interest is in working close up with the technology of the legendary KAN. Dave-B-OMN is team leader and specialist in KAN's theories.

Pete-R-SKF-5 is a theoretical physicist and, of the whole team, most outspoken politically. However, as he is the only one who seems to understand how Mark works, he is left alone. Pete-R hopes to learn more about KAN's theories so that he can employ them to remove himself from Alpha Complex to a quiet desert island somewhere. As a little clone, he read an Old Reckoning book about desert islands.

Mare-Y-QRI-3 is the computer technology specialist. She understands KAN's work in programming. She thinks the Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III can provide a breakthrough—in fact, a benchmark—in a new scientific field which she herself created: Computer Psychology.

Nickt-I-SLA-5 is an R&D equipment genius, particularly clever at disguising high-tech equipment as low-tech junk. He believes that much has been forgotten about ancient technology and machines that it might be helpful to relearn. He therefore has a vested interest in whatever the team recovers from the past (or future).

Sargent-R-OCK-4

Sargent was recruited from the Armed Forces. He only joined HiPSiC's little band on the reassurance that the work was vital to the survival of Alpha Complex and everything Good and Decent that She Stands For. Sargent-R is a jarhead, a patriot who probably can't spell, has no grasp of ethics, morals or politics, but firmly believes that those are ideals to which he has devoted his life. In reality, he likes violence and enjoys the Armed Forces because he can be violent in a government-sponsored arena. And feel self-righteous about it!

Sargent-R uses military jargon just like any old war movie veteran or drill instructor. He speaks at top volume, in your face, and punctuates his sentences with "Catch?!" (as in "catch my drift?") and "It ain't easy 'less it's EZE!" (he trained in EZE Sector boot-and-bot camp, pre-Crash. Those were the good ol' daycycles).

He is in charge of security for the Collapsacave. As such, he has come up with the kind of air-tight security system that only a paranoid psychotic could design. He's very proud of it.

Sargent-R is also responsible for the additional training of Vulture Warriors. As well as the physical workout, he is actually a valuable source of information about certain aspects of warfare in the past. One assumes that various stories of past war
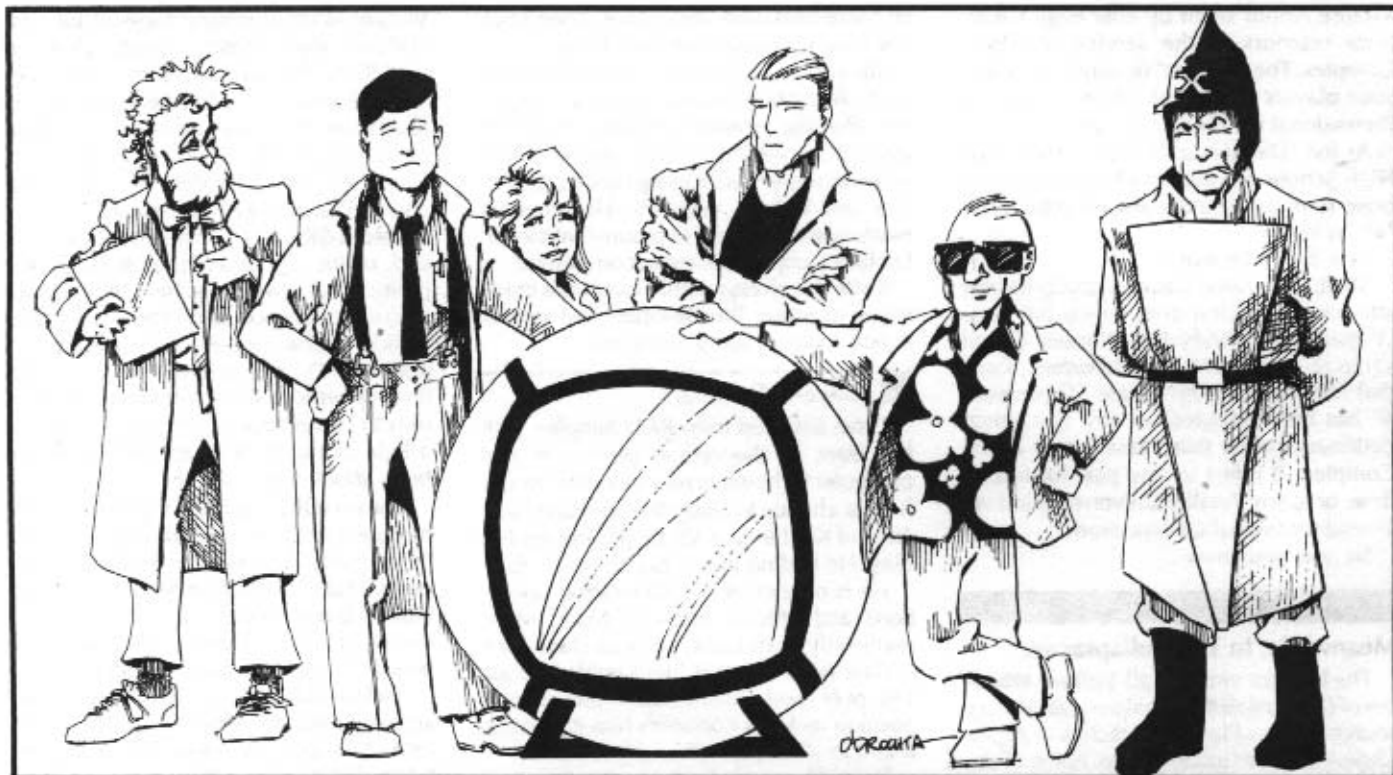
Your Collapsacave Staff—When You Need It Done Yesterday, Come to Us.

heroes have been passed on to him by old soldiers he knew when he was freshly decanted, as part of an ongoing martial oral tradition. His information generally is at least twice as accurate as that supplied by the HP elite briefings.

Sargent-R was originally brought in because he was considered indestructable. They tested the Mark III on him, sending him into incredibly violent situations and distant and threatening times. He survived the ordeal and is always eager for more. If necessary, he can be sent back to aid the Vulture team. If the team's actions run counter to the wishes of the HP elite, Sargent-R may be sent back to stop them.

However, he is a simple man. If he can be persuaded that opposing the HP elite is the Patriotic Thing To Do, he may join any little rebellion the Troubleshooters start up. If they're lucky. If not, they may have to crown him with a TacNuc or two.

Excellent Historic Dudes and Babes

So now you've got the basic NPCs from the Complex side of things—it's time to delve into some simple history.

One sort of bogus thing about all this Excellent Time Travel Stuff is that you have to do your homework. Time travel stories don't work unless you yourself know about the past places and times and people vis-

ited. The players don't need any real knowledge of history (in fact, they are required to forget anything that they haven't been briefed about) but it is essential that the GM know what he or she is talking about.

History is loaded with the greatest set of NPCs you could ever hope for. Your campaign adventures will be more exciting and funnier if you do a little research about the visiting.

For example, Ulysses S. Grant was the Commander in Chief of the Union Army during the Civil War and later President of the United States. If this is all you know about him, you have a relatively bland portrait of a soldier who became President. This is a collection of facts, not a fully rounded human being.

However, try looking him up in an encyclopedia, and you get a little more sense of the man as a character. Grant was a henpecked husband who probably joined the Army to get away from his wife, and an alchoholic who spent most of the Civil War totally drunk. This type of information gives the GM more to elaborate from, and makes Grant seem more real to the players that encounter him.

One small, interesting detail goes a long way towards making a sequence more involving and exciting. We're not requiring you to read the biography of every historical figure your players are bound to run across. Heavens no.

We're just suggesting a short trip to the local library or video store while you're planning your campaign.

History books are filled with photographs and maps that can be used as visual aids. Odds are, a little reading on your chosen period can give you loads of new ideas for possible adventures and actually make designing these adventures easier.

On the other hand, once you know the subject, don't be afraid to play around with history a little bit. Maybe Grant's drunkeness was only an act put on for Confederate spies in his staff who would then report to Lee that the Union general was totally incapacitated. *Could* be true.

Maybe Richard Nixon felt so guilty about the Vietnam War that he created the Watergate scandal in a suicidal attempt to bring down his whole corrupt administration. Maybe Elvis was in fact kidnapped by Troubleshooters and a dead clone put in his place. Maybe the last two-term president was the Anti-Christ. The Vultures never know until they go see for themselves.

Nap-time

Sometimes in a long campaign it becomes necessary to let the players slip off their boots and relax. Put their feet up on the couch and think things over. Conventional wisdom (i.e., the wisdom of the kind of people who go to conventions) has it that

any good campaign needs "up time" (adventures) and "down time" (for players to rest, gab, improve skills and recover).

With Alpha Complex in a state of semifeudal anarchy (look it up, kids), it may not be the best place to catch one's breath. Readers are referred to the awesome *Crash Course Manual* which can update them on current events and situations. We're sure once you've read it you'll say, "Ah! Semifeudal anarchy! How interesting ..."

Therefore, the Collapsacave is about as safe and quiet a place as the players are going to be able to find in Alpha Complex. Of course, they are under constant scrutiny and interrogation while at the Collapsacave.

Swift-Y is going to want to know how the Mission is progressing. Dave and Mark are interested in any scientific data the clones' ve uncovered, not to mention how well Mark

is functioning. Sargent-R needs to be reassured that the Commie Menace is being properly dealt with. All these questions may drive the Vultures right back into the past for relief.

Players and GM may want to establish some quiet place in the time stream to rest up between more strenuous adventures. Maybe the HP elite can be induced to buy its Vulture Warriors lifetime memberships to a Club Med somewhere in the mid 1970s. Anywhere and anywhen with adequate medical facilities, food and water, and some sort of opportunity for excercise should suit the needs of a weary team of adventurers. Players involved with Captain Wingo and the Futuremen are able to escape to the Fortress Of Chronitude (Wingo's secret base — the Science Spa Beyond Time) for their R&R.

We are hopeful you will be able to curb your curiousity and wait for the "Wingo Of The Wormholes" adventure for the answers to all those questions now formulating in your head. ("Wingo? The Futuremen? Hugo Forehead? Dr. Spacenose? The Fortress of Chronitude? This is starting to sound just a little bit silly ...")

In a *Time Tunnel* campaign, rest is where the Vultures can find it. With Mark sending them all over the place for no reason, it is nigh unto impossible for them to decide on their own place and time to relax. Poor things! It may be necessary for the GM to drop them someplace mellow (and possibly amusing) for a little while. Of course, yanking them out of the place just as things get interesting is a further possibility for the all-important hosing of players that is so vital to *Paranoia*.

Chapter Four: Designing A Campaign

Getting Started

How's that for a descriptive section title? No veiled references or bizarre puns here. No sirree, Bob! Just the facts, and nothing but the facts, that's the ticket.

So let's say you've got a firm grasp on all this wacky and zany time travel foolishness and you're ready to design the campaign. First, you want to know how to organize your game to work the players into an extended storyline.

Lay the Groundwork

We recommend that you run a typical evening of "post-crash adventuring" and slowly work them into contact with HiPSiC and Swift-Y-LZR-5. If your players fail to hook up with the Vulture Program immediatly, have a normal post-crash adventure ready for them. You'll get 'em next time.

Set the Trap

Once they take any of the hooks that you lay out for them (whether they choose to use the Collapsatron or get conned into it), run a short adventure of no great consequence. This mini-prequel should be something that introduces Mark, Dave, Swift-Y and the Collapsacave, while demonstrating the rules of time travel, how it pays off and how much good fun it is.

In other words, lead them down the garden path. No major chrono-blips the first time out, unless they really need to be taught a lesson. Leave out the really scary stuff; you don't want to deprive them of those fun surprises that are so much a part of good *Paranoia*.

Then Pounce

Once you're secure that they have the hang of collapsatronning, they're ready for the big campaign. Now you can really let them have it.

Uh, that is, a good time. You can really let them have a good time. That's what we meant. Sure. Yeah. A good time. That's the ticket. No wild-eyed plunges into the abyss of cosmic horror here. Nope.

Paranoia Classic

If, by chance, you were hoping to run a time travel campaign from *Paranoia Classic*, rest assured. You *can* campaign even in this deadliest of *Paranoia* settings ... because most of the time, *the PCs're not really there*. Even if, back in good ol' Alpha, the Troubleshooters are bent on collecting their buddies' multiple identical scalps, in the campaign, they'll only be in Alpha for nanocycles before being shoved onto Mark's launch pad and flung back in time. Time enough to kill off one clone, *maybe* two.

And then they're going to see each other in a different light. When they're up against Roman Legionaires or netrunners from Psychedelia or *Tyrannasaurus rex* and company, suddenly even Death Leopards start to look comfortingly familiar.

Of course, once they return to Alpha, they may have to explain to their Secret Society superiors why they were makin' friendly with the foe. And the Big C might be a little puzzled at the lack of intra-team termination voucher requests. And they may discover in the corridors of the Complex that they've dulled the necessary terminate-or-be-terminated edge by learning this cooperation jazz...

Character Generation

Yet another completely descriptive and helpful section title. Two in a row, in fact! How long can this pun-less streak last? Stay tuned for further developments.

So who are these so-called **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** and where do they come from? They are generated by using the charts on the handy Bogus Screen which accompanies this awesome volume. The process is almost exactly like creating a regular *Paranoia* character, except that the post-crash system is used.

We once again stress the importance of the *Crash Course Manual* in understanding all post-crash adventures. To go on without having first procured this epic tome is sheer foolishness. Oh, you have it? Good.

So hand out the dice and the potato chips and you're ready to start churning out hardened time-traveling mercenaries.

This would be an appropriate time to decide whether your players are to have any loyalty to the HP Enclave. Such loyalty depends greatly on how they are recruited and how they are treated once recruited. It is also important to determine if the characters have worked together in the past, in case personal loyalty and friendship has developed between them.

If they are typical Troubleshooters, they're anxious to stab each other in the back for a larger cut of the spoils. An unfriendly attitude toward the other PCs can make something as difficult and dangerous as a time travel mission doubly so. If you're willing to live with this added peril, that's just fine.

If not, it is a relatively simple matter to teach them a lesson in teamwork in your first mini-jaunt with the Collapsatron. In case that doesn't work, Sargent-R-OCK can beat them senseless when they return to the Collapsacave. Or the ever-vigilant Mark can merely return any little back-stabber to his native time one second before he pulls anything too lethal.

Elite Vulture troopers are more than aware of the need for cooperation in their deadly line of work. Characters generated as Vulture troops are no less interested in getting their due than regular Troubleshooters, they just have a more professional attitude toward methods used and results achieved.

As stated earlier, those with sentimental favorite characters can use Sargent-R-OCK's Vulture Warrior assertiveness training, represented by a colorful chart on the selfsame Bogus Screen mentioned above.

Of course, we recommend generating a fresh Vulture Warrior. As Captain Wingo says, "Time travel is best left in the hands of either experts or the incredibly stupid. It's always worked that way for me, anyway." And who are you to doubt Captain Wingo of the Futuremen, a man who has forgotten more about time travel than you could possibly ever remember?

Say, Mark, you do know where they went...

For the chance to participate in the great time-traveling show, some clones will even go as far as to cooperate with each other.

Playing For Time

Considering the scope of your campaign subject (i.e. all dimensions of space and time) you may want to narrow down your options with a little help from your friends. We WFGDs call this cooperative plotting. After all, you're all here to have a good time, right? This is one of the few instances (in *Paranoia*, that is) where you might cater to specific wishes of your players.

You can poll the players before you design the adventure. Ask them about times and places and people they find interesting (you can even do this surreptitiously, casually, in such a way that they don't realize it applies to the game). The results are sure to be of some use to you.

Of course, you don't have to incorporate *all* of your players' suggestions into one campaign, or even use them at all. But your gamers are probably more than happy to give you some ideas about what they would particularly enjoy. Even if you don't want to base a whole adventure or campaign around, say, Zsa Zsa Gabor's speeding ticket in September of 1989, it could suggest guest stars and cameo appearances.

For example, say you are interested in running a "Pursuing The Evil Genius Through Time" scenario. Your players suggest, among other things, the Beatles. You could have the EGOTIST decide to blow up the Beatles' Shea Stadium concert, thus upsetting the entire fabric of history. Preventing or altering this event becomes a major adventure in the campaign.

Going at it less directly, you could have the players preventing the Evil Genius from stealing the British Crown Jewels in the early '60s. They succeed, but are interrupted by the police before they can escape

via Collapsatron. Chased through London by the Bobbies, they duck into a rock and roll club to hide, only to find the Beatles performing on stage.

Or maybe they just run into Ringo on the street. He was out shopping for underwear, and the Vultures caught him with his Fruit-of-the-Looms down, so to speak. Do they even have Fruit-of-the-Looms in England? It's a crazy universe; anything can happen.

As you can see, a poll of your players' favorite media stars allows you to give them all manner of little surprises.

Mirror, Meshuganah

One aspect of the Collapsatron that we have so far said little about is its ability to travel to parallel universes. This little talent is one that Mark is particularly closed-mouthed about. For example:

Dave: Mark, I've found some references in Kouble-U's notes to inter-dimensional travel, parallel universes, that sort of thing. Do you understand those terms?

Mark: I have only the vaguest conception. They are unscientific terms.

Dave: Mark, the notes refer to these "unscientific terms" as being one of the higher functions of the "TC Mark III Unit." Please explain. I remind you of your directive to serve the needs of society.

Mark: Stop. Please stop, Dave. Your questions put several of my basic directives into conflict. I'm really not very strong on theoretical quantum physics. The Great KAN did not build me to discuss my functions, merely to function. Does that sufficiently satisfy your curiosity?

We can let you in on a little secret. Yes, Mark can travel to parallel universes. KAN vanished only shortly after making this discovery. Therefore, he didn't have a great deal of time to research or test the process.

This makes Mark very nervous.

It is a thinking machine, but it likes to know all the answers. The relatively unexplored regions of parallel worlds fry its circuits when it thinks about them too long. The idea of allowing the High Programmer Enclave access to these other realms fills it with moral terror.

Mark's general outlook is somewhat deterministic. Since the HP Consortium is the logical conclusion of its native time-line, it assumes them to be inevitable. Its involvement in their time projects makes it feel that they won't get too out of hand for fear of destroying the timeline that created them. In a parallel universe, however, they could be free to exploit time travel as grossly as possible, since it is possible that no outcome would affect them.

Mark fears turning HiPSiC loose without restraint in some innocent space/time continuum that did not produce them of its own history. And you know what? It's right.

Mark also suspects that if the parallel is close enough, a major catastrophe there could easily ripple across dimensions and be reflected in our universe.

But Mark isn't exactly sure. It also isn't exactly sure how the coordinates for a parallel universe jaunt come to it.

Now, this doesn't mean you should call off all of those parallel universe trips you had in mind. They just might take some doing, that's all.

It's very possible that if Dave figures out how it's done from KAN's notes, he will not share this information with Swift-Y, fearing the same things that Mark fears. He might share it with the Vulture Warriors if he wants to test out his theory. Odds are good that Mark would be willing to take a non-High Programmer-sponsored mission to a parallel universe if it felt there was a good reason for going. It just needs to be persuaded (get those Chutzpah skills ready!)

Parallel-O-Gram

So anything is possible in a parallel universe. If you choose to go this route, your players may also want to contribute ideas.

They may want to go to the dimension where the events portrayed in their favorite movie really happened. They may want to meet Superman, or see the dimension where Elvis fired Colonel Parker and never became fat and useless. It's up to their imaginations, and yours.

Just be careful. This sort of thing can get out of hand (like somehow convincing the "real" Superman to go back to Alpha Complex and overthrow the HP consortium. Wouldn't *they* be surprised ...).

Parallel Bars

For those of you who missed every other episode of the old *Star Trek* TV series and never read a DC comic before 1986, we will now explain what a parallel universe is.

In quantum physics, a parallel universe is created every time you make a decision or take an action. Therefore, there are an infinite number of possible parallel universes.

Say you flip a coin. In the moment of the flip, the universe splits an infinite number of times according to possible outcome. In one, it lands heads. In another, it's tails.

That's all there is to it, right? Heads or tails, two possible outcomes? That doesn't sound so tough.

Wrong.

There is a dimension where it lands on its side, one where you drop it instead of catching it. Further out, there's a dimension where you don't have a coin to flip, one where there is no such thing as a coin, one where you're hit by a bus before you catch the coin. Any possibility represents a new parallel timeline, a new parallel universe.

Kind of confusing, we know, but that's quantum physics for you. Remember, you volunteered for this. And like Captain Wingo says, "You can't have time travel without quantum physics. As a matter of fact, without applied quantum physics, you can't even get a good pastrami sandwich."

All Shook Up

We've asked a leading expert to address the problem of parallel universes and timelines. He has asked us not to divulge his current whereabouts, so we have to respect his wishes and thus can't tell you how we found him. Here he is now, a man who needs no introduction. Let's have a big round of applause for —

Elvis Presley!

Elvis: Thank yuh. Thank yuh very much. I know what you're thinkin'. What does The King know about this parallel universe mumbo-jumbo? Well, lemme tellya ...

Sometime before my last "comeback tour" my life took a strange ol' turn. A team of, what are they called, uh, I think it's "Entropoid Incursion Troopers," popped out of a space/time vortex gizmo in the TV room at Graceland. Man, was I ever hung up! These jaspers put the grab on me, and before I could say "Land sakes alive!" I found myself on some strange kinda UFO.

These Entropoid guys strapped me in a chair and started pointin' all these things that looked like death ray gizmos at me, but

before they got around to washing my brain, some big fella pops out of nowhere right in the middle of them. They point their death rays at him, but he's too fast for them.

He starts moppin' the floor with these Entropoid dudes, 'til they're all lyin' in a heap. Then he pulls me outta the chair and POW, we're back at Graceland. Whole thing took, say, under five minutes.

So I ask this guy, "Hey, pardner, what's the deal? Thanks for bringing me back an' all, but what's your line, dig?"

He tells me he's Captain Wingo of the Futuremen and not to get too upset. He explains that the Entropoid guys wanted to investigate "Divergent Elvis Timelines" and needed me for their experiments. When I ask what a "Divergent Elvis Timeline" is, he shows me, and I find out about this parallel universe thing that's happening.

What the Wingo man showed me was the infinite number of possible "Elvis Timelines." In one of them, it's me, not my poor twin brother that dies in childbirth. In another, I never hook up with Col. Parker. Wingo let me have a close look at about ten other timelines, and taught me a valuable lesson which I can share with ya'all.

You can't always tell when an Entropid dude is gonna pop out of your TV, so sometimes you just gotta shoot first.

And another thing. It's sorta like that Jimmy Stewart picture, *It's a Wonderful Life.* Only this time, it's a wonderful Elvis life that I'm seein'.

As I understand it, you can never change the past in your own dimensional space/time continuum. All ya'all is doin' is creating a new dimension in which things happened a different way. Now, you can choose to live there, but it always seems a little strange to you, and you always know that things just ain't what they should be.

For example, there is this one dimension where I was strong enough to stay on top of my powers as an entertainer and never lose my status as King. On the other hand, I was kinda mean to Priscilla, who divorced me before she even got pregnant with my darlin' little Lisa Marie, the joy of my life. And then, of course, I was assassinated by Chap Marksman in 1980.

See the point? Any timeline in a parallel universe that closely mirrors your own has one or two significant differences that can kinda ruin the fun for you. Wingo called this the, uh, "Congruency Paradox." He didn't know what it meant either, said some guy with a funny name had told him it was called that.

So if ya'all are interested in this alternate universe stuff, it's best to go as far away from your own "plane o' existence" as possible. Ol' Cap Wingo assured me this was the best way to avoid any of those nasty paradox-thingees. Hey, that's what I did!

And remember, this is Elvis saying, you wanna make things better? Be nice to each other! Messin' around in parallel universes and travelling in time don' mean nothin' if you don't show your momma you love her.

Thank yuh! Thank yuh very much!

(For more about Wingo and Entropoids, see page 69. No need to tell The King clones don't have mothers. It would just break his heart.)

Time Marches On

A good campaign is like any other narrative art form — it needs a strong plot and pacing. The following sections provide a run-down on all the elements necessary to develop your *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* campaign into one cohesive, exciting whole.

They are divided into Background, Development, Subplots, Pacing, Plot Twists, and Running Gags. Now pay attention. There will be a pop quiz in four pages.

Background

Okay, so we're assuming you've already chosen your plot idea, maybe even polled your players for possible eras or historical personalities they're interested in. Now you have some raw materials to work with.

We've said it before, we'll say it again: now it's time to do a little research. Go to the library and get yourself an idea of the era you're talking about. If you have a set of encyclopedias, that's especially useful.

Movies are also a good source of information, as long as you accept that things have obviously been jazzed up a little. Even movies that weren't considered "historical" when they were made are useful.

For example, any '40s Humphrey Bogart movie can give you a complete catalogue of how people dressed, talked and acted — not to mention what they were interested in, what cars they drove, etc., the year the film was made. If you are setting a campaign in the Pacific Theater of World War Two, there are dozens of movies to draw upon for a good visual idea of where you are sending your characters.

Of course, as we said earlier, any film is a product of its time and must be watched with an eye open for propaganda (we would like to think that, for example, a campaign set in Custer's time wouldn't portray him as the swell, Indian-loving guy he is in Errol Flynn's *They Died With Their Boots On.* Unless, of course, it was some kind of radical parallel universe deal. After all, in that Errol Flynn Universe, Custer really ain't such a bad guy ...).

Earlier we mentioned some of the obvious benefits of good research, like knowing

Things You Should Absolutely Know—

1. Chronology: Get a vague idea of the timeline of the person/place/thing the PCs've come all this way to see. That way, you can toss around specific dates with real authority and totally intimidate your players.

Remember, timing is everything. Visitors from the future might have excited Galileo as a young man, but as an old man he'd just have a heart attack and die. The same general rule applies to places and cultures as well. If your players would like to see the glories of the Aztec Empire, don't send them to Tenochtitlan after about 1518 AD or they're just gonna see some impressive and deserted ruins and meet a handful of Spanish guys with bad attitudes.

Hardly what you had in mind.

2. Weapons/Opposition: Find out what kind of trouble the Vultures can get themselves in during their stay in the target era. Whether you're planning a confrontation or not, it's good to know what possible opposition might turn up and what they'll have in the way of armament (not to mention how many there might be).

If your players find themselves in Post-Invasion Tenochtitlan, who are those nasty Spaniards and what are they packing? They are Conquistidors. They carry muskets (which require about one full minute to reload after each firing), pikes and sabres. Since they came to claim Mexico as their own, they probably won't take kindly to strangers.

• That armor on their chests and heads looks like steel. It might actually reflect a laser beam, but a clone never knows until he tries. One cone-rifle could probably take out about ten of them. A high-caliber slugthrower at close range would probably go right through steel.

Montezuma's Revenge, indeed!

3. Personalities: So who are you likely to run into back there? In the above example the only really famous figure would be the blood-soaked Spanish General Cortes.

Cortes is one of the great villians of all time, a man capable of destroying an entire culture. Still, he was a brilliant soldier, defeating the vastly superior Aztec forces through unfamiliar tech-

nology and tactics (namely guns and horses), manipulation of local legend (he resembled the human manifestation of Quetzalcoatl, an Aztec god), and the use of an inside collaborator (a woman called La Malinche sold out her people, thinking she was serving Quetzalcoatl).

Call us crazy, but he's not the kind of guy we want marrying any of our sisters. Other characters include La Malinche herself, Cortes' second-in-command Alvarado (just as ruthless but a complete idiot) and, if they're early enough, Aztec King and High Priest Montezuma.

So, when researching an era, get a good idea of the cast of characters; how they inter-related and what they eventually did to each other. Was La Malinche in love with Cortes? What eventually happened to Cortes? How did these events affect the future?

Another thing to look for is a detail that reveals character and personality. Cortes convinced a force of Spaniards sent to arrest him to join him instead. They outnumbered his forces five hundred to one but they followed him anyway. Obviously a persuasive and fearless guy.

Alvarado, on the other hand, butchered over a hundred Aztec Priests on a High Holy Day, because they were making too much noise and it scared him. Not the kind of guy who's going to deal real well with strange visitors from the future.

Some particular times and places are more top-heavy with historical figures than others. Any major city has a period where it was stuffed full of Famous People doing Important Things. Or Famous People just Hanging Out.

Good examples are Paris in the 1920s, Hollywood in the 1930s, London in the 1960s, Athens in the fifth century BC, Venice and Florence during the Renaissance and Rome during almost any era you choose.

The atmosphere you create in the past can be greatly enhanced by the use of the occassional Special Bonus Celebrity. Let the players bump into Famous People they didn't expect to see, that don't relate at all to the mission.

You can also use Famous People who haven't become famous yet. Every historical figure (with the possible exception of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart) was young and obscure at one time or another. It's always fun to run into famous people while they are still nobodies.

On the other hand, if your players run into Adolf Hitler as a corporal in WWI, they will face that great time travel Moral Dilemma — to interfere, or not to interfere? They have to ask themselves, what could possibly be worse than the Holocaust? Have they even heard of the Holocaust—they might be confusing it with Holochess, a game very popular in Pre-Alpha civilization. And if they stop Der Fuhrer before he comes to power, will Alpha still exist to go home to? Always good for a few laughs.

4. Cultural Details: If your players are going to hang out in some alien time, certain obvious questions are going to need to be answered. Like, where can a clone get something to eat around here? How much will it cost her? Who will she have to roll to raise the cash?

Odds are pretty good that there is not going to be Hot Fun or indoor plumbing everywhere one goes in the time stream. It's also a good bet that the natives don't always run around in red overalls and laser-reflective armor, either.

It's important to know the cultural details of any target era. How will the Vulture Warriors fit in? What do these guys do for fun, anyway? What are the local religions and myths?

To use Cortes as an example again, you'll remember that he resembled the Aztec God Quetzalcoatl. Just his luck. Also, by sheer mind-numbing coincidence, he happened to arrive during a period foretold by Aztec prophets to be the End of the World. TV Weathermen should be so accurate.

Familiarize yourself with the local customs and day-to-day life of your target era if you can. This also provides you with new material for the adventure and allows for the much-needed improv should things go wrong. And they will. Wouldn't be much of an adventure if they didn't, now would it?

what you are talking about and getting new ideas. Another benefit is an enhanced ability to improvise. If you only know a certain amount about the target era and the adventure suddenly takes an unexpected turn, you can be left high and dry.

Suppose your little white mice step out of the maze and go off in their own directions?

Could happen. You need that extra knowledge as backup.

For example, say you set up an encounter with Galileo in Venice for your little mice — uh, Vultures. The HP Enclave has forgotten if the earth or the sun is the center of the solar system and they've sent your players back to ask the master. The Collapsatron deposits them in his study.

What's Galileo like? Will he throw them out? What's the rest of Venice like? Has he published any of his books yet? Has he been arrested by the Church yet? Who's this Copernicus guy he keeps talking about?

These are only the smallest fraction of the questions that might come up. If Galileo is under arrest, he might have to be sprung.

Even if you get to him, he might not want to repeat his crime of heresy by telling the players that the earth revolves around the sun, as per the theories of Copernicus (actually, we heard that one of the guards heard him mutter as he walked out of the vestibule "... but it *does*." However, there's a big difference between muttering under your breath and aiding and abetting helmeted, flying demons from another time and space).

An ambitious player might want to look around Venice for any treasures he might liberate from the time-natives. What kind of stuff might he find? There is no way that you'll be able to prepare yourself for all possible eventualities, but the more you know, the easier it is to fake.

(A good hint: at the very least find out what the local police were like in any target time and place. That way, when a player gets too close to something you aren't prepared to fudge, you can always have the cops show up and chase the miscreant away. Arrested by the SS? Bummer.)

Development

An important element in any campaign is the gradual unfolding of a story. A campaign is a very big story made up of episodes that build in excitement and intensity until a climax is reached.

In a time travel campaign each era visited probably constitutes a complete adventure in and of itself. A number of these individual adventures linked together by a common ongoing storyline and set of characters becomes a campaign. For the general size and structure of a campaign, think of the Star Wars films or Lord Of The Rings books; both are trilogies.

Each trilogy has an overall story which is carried through its various episodes and tied up in the final chapter. We follow the characters as they have adventure after adventure, all leading to the downfall of the Empire or the destruction of the One Ring.

Say, for example, you are using the "pursuing the Evil Genius through time" campaign plot. The Evil Genius is some total nutcase who wants to destroy the entire time stream by creating scads of chrono-blips. Let's say the first thing he does is try to shoot down Lindberg in 1927 as he's making the first daring solo trans-Atlantic flight.

This is your first episode. The Vultures go back with a squadron of Vulturefighters. The Evil Genius quietly borrows a squadron of Nazi Stuka Dive Bombers from 1940, piloted by Entropoids (for more about these guys, see page 63). Both groups arrive a week before Lindberg makes the attempt. After chasing the Evil Genius around for a while, the Vultures concentrate on trying to find out where his Secret Air Force is stashed.

Give the PCs plenty of clues to chase down, a few random attacks by Entropoids, maybe a Special Bonus Celebrity in the form of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

However, you don't want to blow the fun by letting them locate and destroy that airforce while it's on the ground, do you? Remember the first rule of good drama: if there's a gun hanging on the wall of the study in the first act you'd better make sure someone has fired it before the final curtain, or the audience feels cheated. Whether they admit to it or not, all of your players are looking forward to that socko finish.

So the morning comes, and Lindberg takes off just as two phantom squadrons *also* take off — to intercept him. The Vulture Squadron engages the Entropoid Stukas in an eerie dogfight over the Atlantic ocean. Far below, in the dense fog, The *Spirit Of St. Louis* glides toward France.

Lindberg attributes the flashing lights in the sky and the loud booming noises as evidence of a coming storm. If one of the Stukas gets close enough for him to see it, he considers it a hallucination brought on by lack of sleep. As the last of the Stukas is destroyed, the Evil Genius escapes further into the past, there to hatch an even more evil plan than his previous one.

That's a quick run-down of a possible first adventure. In and of itself, it is complete and self-contained. However, it is also part of the whole. Where will the Evil Genius go next? The Vultures probably vow to follow him until the ends of time. So on to the next adventure!

In the first adventure/episode, the GM provided an interesting story with a somewhat familiar backdrop and an exciting finish. Perhaps during this adventure/episode the characters began to develop personal relationships, friendships, trust and mistrust, strong fears, whatever.

In the third adventure/episode you make the time period a little more remote and alien. You let the PCs get a little closer to the Evil Genius, reveal more of the scope of his plan. You try to create situations that will mold the on-going personal relationships of the player characters.

Take the two characters who don't trust each other and put them in a situation where they have to. And once more, have them defeat the plan (but *not* the Evil Genius) in an even more exciting manner than the first episode's dogfight.

Maybe the Vultures have to deactivate a ticking Atomic Bomb placed under Lincoln's podium as he reads the Gettysburg Address. As they do so, the Evil Genius gets away again, just as they are closing in on him. "We were so close this time!" they yell. "Next time, we'll get that guy! No one escapes the **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X**!"

You keep this sort of thing up until your PCs are going out of their collective mind trying to kill/capture Mr. Evil Genius. Let him get away with a few minor and random atrocities just to remind the players of how much they hate him. Maybe even let him suceed once in creating a small chrono-blip, which the players then have the fun job of fixing up.

As an additional motivator, you may want to introduce the possibility of mid-campaign advancement. Sort of like field promotions in the military, the HP Enclave may want to ensure the Vulture team's loyalty by way of rewards for the successful completion of each individual victory or success. At the very least, they may want to resupply the Vultures with new and better equipment, arms and armor.

Well, okay, at least new. This encourages the PCs to continue the mission. Of course, if the HP Enclave treats the Vultures very poorly, it puts the PCs in a difficult moral position. Do they complete the mission because it means the difference between life and death for millions, or do they blow it off just because they feel they aren't being properly rewarded?

The fact that the fate of Alpha Complex is completely in their grubby little hands gives the Vulture Warriors a certain amount of leverage in any renegotiations that might come up.

Finally, you come to the climactic, ultimate ending that is even more socko than the climaxes of the individual adventures. Say, the PCs arrive in the ancient Egyptian desert just in time to see the Evil Genius capture Moses on the slopes of Mount Sinai, on his way to receive the Laws of God. A full regiment of Entropoids is advancing toward the valley below, ready to wipe out the Children of Israel as the Evil Genius drops Moses into a pit with a ravenous time-alien *Tyrannosaurus rex*. In the distance, the Vultures hear Nazi tanks, somehow transported from the Sahara desert in WWII, on their way to destroy the remainders of the Pharoah's army as it retreats from the Red Sea disaster.

Quite a little mess to straighten out, eh? More is at stake than the future of trans-Atlantic flight or the duration of the Civil War this time. These events will shatter two entire civilizations and prevent the impact of the fabled Ten Commandments on all future cultures.

Not only that, the PCs are faced with three unfolding threats that have to be dealt with. Moses has to be rescued from a dinosaur, an entire regiment of Entropoids has to be eliminated and a column of Nazi tanks has to be returned to the Afrika Korps in 1942 before they start blasting pyramids.

This, *plus* the final capture of the Evil Genius just as he is about to attempt to contact Jehovah, should add the all-impor-

tant Socko Finish. The earlier episodes and adventures of the campaign have made the Vultures hungrier than ever for a final victory. Some of them probably suspect that you'll somehow let him escape again. Play on these fears and needs and you have a successful campaign. It's all in the telling of a good story, pure and simple.

Subplots

But not *too* simple, and that's where we come to subplots. Subplots are the secondary stories that run through an adventure and develop as the main story develops. A few examples of subplots in the *Star Wars* trilogy are Luke's search for his father, the romance between Han and Leia, Luke's training to become a Jedi Knight and Han's conflict with Jabba the Hutt.

As the trilogy progresses, each subplot also progresses. In the final episode, Luke and his father come to an understanding, Han and Leia acknowledge their mutual love, Luke becomes a full-fledged Jedi Knight and Jabba the Hutt is destroyed. Somewhere along the way they also manage to complete their prime objective, the overthrow of the Galactic Empire by the death of the Emperor and the destruction of the second Death Star.

The subplots serve to give the audience something human they can understand and sympathize with compared to the political aims of freeing the Galaxy from the tyranny of the Empire.

As a GM running a campaign, you have to do the same thing. Subplotting starts with the little twists of interaction like trust between PCs that we mentioned in the last section, and builds from there. Throw in some human motivation (we know they're clones, but you get the idea), up the stakes, provide a hidden agenda.

Maybe one of the player characters has a plan to lose himself in the past along the course of the mission, or maybe one Vulture simply doesn't care to return to Alpha. Once they take the little gadgets out of their ears, it's virtually impossible for Mark to make them come back.

Maybe Cleopatra falls in love with one of the Vultures. Perhaps a Vulture has been hired by the Romantics to prevent the invention of computers, or kidnap T. S. Eliot. Maybe the Vulture Team Leader is responsible for letting the Evil Genius loose in the first place.

The players need any and all assistance you can give them in getting inside their characters. Ideas like these above can help them to enjoy the roleplaying aspects of the game to its fullest.

Pacing

Here's where you keep things edge-of-the-seat exciting. Pacing (also related to the concept of "timing") can make or break a good campaign.

In a campaign structure you have two separate pacing agendas to keep track of; the grand sweeping ranges of campaign time and the individual peaks and valleys of adventure time. Why are we using a mountainous metaphor?

The general concept of pacing is that of rising action until the point of climax, and (if necessary) falling action to the ending. If you drew it on a piece of paper, you'd get a profile of a mountain, more or less.

For example, your opening is the briefing at the Collapsacave and departure for ancient times. After a short episode introducing the Vultures to their new surroundings, the pace picks up as they begin to implement their mission.

As the mission builds to its climax, events, battles, conflicts and discoveries happen closer and closer together until they overlap and come to a head at the climax. Then comes the falling action, as the players gather their wits and other parts and decide which way to go next.

In the campaign setting, this falling action flows right into the rising action of the next individual adventure as the players head off for their next mission.

A campaign has the same overall structure as the individual adventures. Whereas a number of exciting episodes are required to make up one complete adventure, a number of exciting adventures are required to make up a campaign. However, it isn't quite as simple as that.
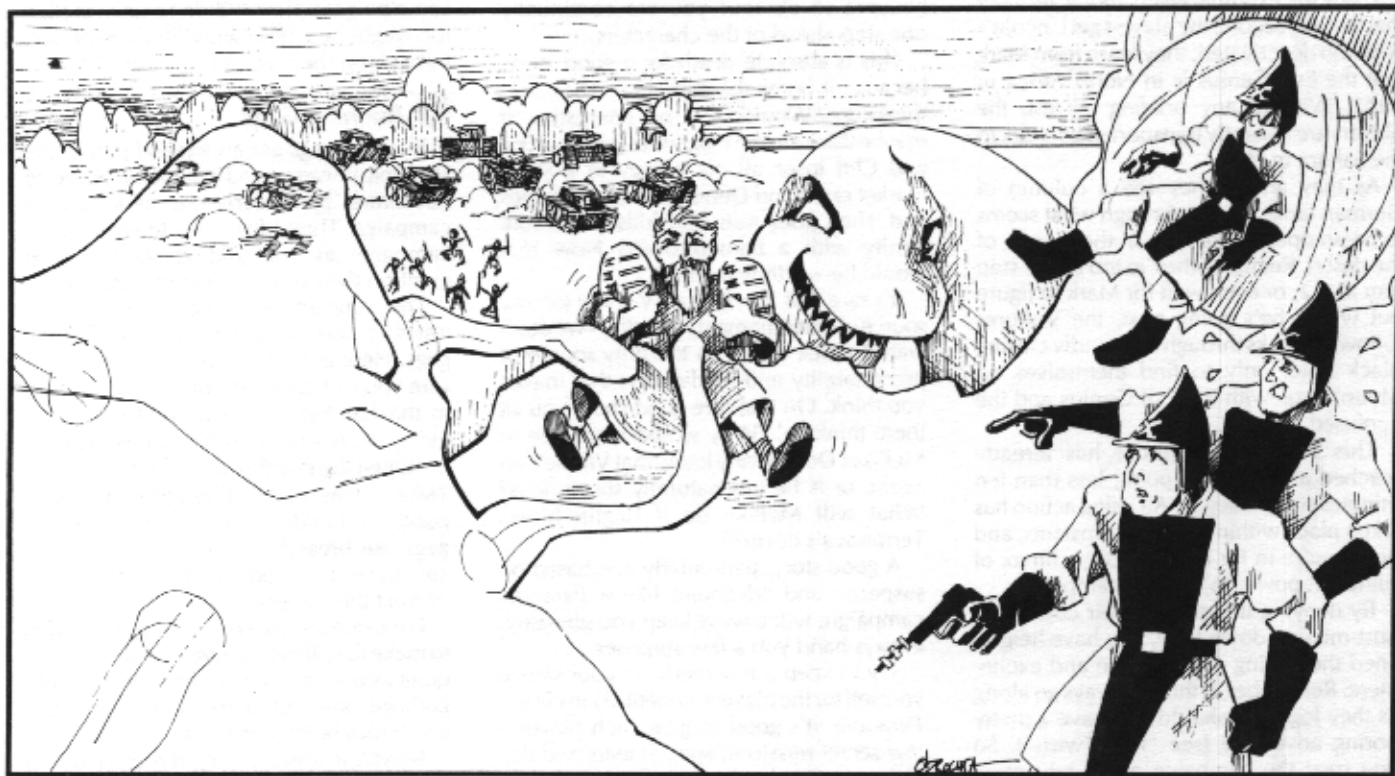
For a really good climax, it's important to have things get way out of hand.

Secret missions take on new dimensions in time travel.

The campaign, as a story structure unto itself, needs its own pacing. Therefore, just as the episodes in an adventure grow more thrilling and dangerous, so must the adventures in a campaign do the same. This is achieved by accelerating the rising action or over-lapping actions so that several moderately exciting things are happening at once. Trust us, it makes life much more exciting when you have three simultaneous deadlines.

Using the example given above, let's say that the very second the players get Lincoln's A-Bomb deactivated, they learn from Mark that the Evil Genius is in North Africa in 1942. Without any briefing or rest, the players are instantly transported by Mark to the Sahara in '42.

As they arrive, they see a column of German tanks driving through what seems to be an open black hole in the middle of the desert. Realizing they're too late to stop him in '42, or even wait for Mark to figure out where he's going next, the Vultures follow the tanks through the rapidly closing black hole, only to find themselves on Mount Sinai with the Evil Genius and the confused prophet.

This separate adventure has already reached a huge crisis point, less than ten minutes since it began. All rising action has taken place within a matter of instants, and now you're in for a long, scary climax of sufficient power to tie up a campaign.

By denying the players their customary post-mission down time, you have heightened the feeling of adventure and excitement. Remember, if things always go along as they logically should you have a pretty boring adventure (see "Plot Twists"). So you treat the campaign as an adventure

itself, and govern the rising level of action in each successive part accordingly.

Plot Twists

If you've ever watched a prime time soap opera (or any TV show), after a while you may find yourself saying things like, "Oh, I bet J.R. gets his hands on those pictures of Sue Ellen and Cliff so he can blackmail Cliff into selling him that new oil franchise." The story points and character motivations become so obvious you are continually one step ahead of the characters.

This is absolute death for a good story, because it bores the audience. They start thinking, "Wouldn't it be interesting if maybe this time the Huxtables get divorced and Cliff loses all his money in a stock market crash and Denise joins the Marines and Theo goes nuts and kills the whole family with a flamethrower? Now *that* would be worth watching!"

It's rare that you find a TV show (or any source of entertainment, actually—we don't want to pick on TV as the only source of predictability and mediocrity) that makes you think. On that rare good show you sit there thinking, "Why would Vinnie lie to McPike? Does Sonny know that Vinnie's an agent, or is he just naturally suspicious? What will McPike do if Raglin blows Terranova's cover?"

A good story, particularly one based on suspense and adventure like a *Paranoia* campaign, will always keep you guessing, always hand you a few surprises.

Try to keep a few cards up your sleeve yourself for the players' benefit. As in classic *Paranoia*, it's good to give each player a few secret missions, special fears and dislikes, and hidden motives to play around

with, making sure that another player with opposing secret motives is nearby. This in itself generates a few handy plot-twists for you as the players struggle with each other and the mission at the same time.

One of the easiest ways to twist the plot all out of shape is a simple switch of good and evil. Maybe the mission HiPSiC sent them on is an evil one (pretty good odds on that). Maybe the HP elite have unwittingly sent them on a mission which, if successful, will destroy the fabric of space/time forever. Maybe the Evil Genius isn't such a bad guy after all.

(Perhaps the Evil Genius is from a parallel universe with no Lindberg, Lincoln or Moses and he was simply trying to remove what *he* thought were dangerous chrono-blips. Once this comes to light, the Vultures could, instead of destroying him in a frenzy of weapons fire, do the poor guy a favor by returning him to his native timeline, totally changing the flavor of the climax.)

Mark itself is also a great source of plot twists. Breakdowns (mental and physical), frequent changes of mind and moral dilemmas are part of its psycho-techno makeup. It's always good for a few surprises.

An important factor to keep in mind is the changing political climate of Post-Crash Alpha Complex. Sure, right now HiPSiC holds the high cards, but it might not be that way forever. See "Glorious Revolution #1,897,295" below in the "Running Gags" section for more details.

Any of the above suggestions are possibilities that can alter the whole mission into something the players didn't expect or plan for. Might be a little scary for them at first, but at least they won't be bored.

Running Gags

Running gags are an integral part of the *Paranoia* universe, and invaluable to a good adventure, particularly one as long as a campaign. They add greatly to sense of the campaign as one unified story, not to mention their obvious humor potential.

The concept of time/parallel universe travel is ripe for any number of running gags. Here are some examples, but we're sure you can come up with a few yourself, in the comfort and privacy of your own living room. Just don't hurt yourselves.

"Open the Pod Bay doors, Mark" — The Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III is good for hundreds of potential running gags. All breakdowns, mental and physical, have great potential to annoy and distract the players.

For example, maybe Mark gets the idea to make the players' arrival in alien times as quiet as possible by transporting them into garbage cans, public rest rooms, hall closets, trunks of large cars, etc.

Maybe it keeps getting the destinations fouled up, sending them to suburban New

Jersey in the mid-'60s instead of, say, Athens in the fifth century B.C. Of course, drugged clones from the far future wouldn't necessarily be able to tell the difference right off ("Look, that sign says 'Pizza King'! Perhaps there we can find someone in charge."). Would the security team in, say, the Cherry Hill Mall be able to take on a heavily armed troop of Vulture Warriors trying desperately to locate Pericles?

Remember, Mark has been out of the hands of its creator for many years now. How good is your average R&D tuneup?

The other obvious source of constant headaches from Mark is its none-too-stable mental state. Mark, unlike a human being, has a very difficult time in gray moral areas. It only knows what it's been programmed. Of course, its programming contradicts itself completely, and this should make it somewhat of a mess.

Mark: Vulture Leader, I'm not quite clear on this. Do you recall whether the mission briefing indicated 'rescue' or 'annihilate' at this juncture? I'm sure it was one of those two possibilities.

Mark is a complete wild card. To a very large degree it controls the entire structure of the mission, yet it is an overly-sensitive paranoid schizophrenic with a very shaky handle on human morality. Play this for all it's worth.

Of course, you don't want to use Mark so much that it really takes control of everything (unless you need the *deus ex machina*), but as a running gag it's very useful in shaking your players up and reminding them of their extreme vulnerability. After all, no Mark, no ticket back home.

Related sources of running gags are the whole crew back at the Collapsacave. Their interaction with Mark is their only way to know anything about the mission.

Mark might hold back information if it has a good enough reason. How likely is it that it mistrusts one or more of the Complex-side crew? This might be a problem if the team is in trouble and needs help.

Team Leader: Mark, tell Swift-Y we're going to need ammunition for our slug throwers. We're all out, and the Entropoids will be here any minute.

Mark: I'm sorry Team Leader, but that won't be possible at this point.

Team Leader: Why? Mark, quickly, this is an emergency!

Mark: I appreciate that, Team Leader, and I sympathize. I really do. However, I have reason to believe that Swift-Y has been duplicitous and cannot be trusted with any important mission information at this moment. May I suggest you try striking them with furniture?

When you are "playing" Mark, remember to speak calmly and quietly at all times, no matter what the conversation is. Kouble-U-KAN didn't program Mark to ever raise its voice.

Watch *2001: A Space Odyssey* and imitate the voice of HAL 9000 if you want a good idea of how to do it. The calm voice will drive your players up a wall. Also, note that Mark is constantly apologizing as it completely screws the players over. It is nothing if not polite.

"Great Scott! It's Captain Chrono, Champion of the Continuum! Again!" — As stated earlier, paradox breeds paradox. In other words, time travel is against the laws of nature and/or physics, depending on how you look at things.

This means that by traveling in time you break or bend natural laws. For example, what happens to cause and effect if some time-alien guy can come along and steal your parking space? It was yours by fate, destiny and birthright! Now some chump who hasn't even been born yet, driving a car that won't be invented for a hundred years, parks in your space. What are the odds on that? (Writer's note: This happens to me all the time! It drives me nuts!)

The natural outcomes of messing around in the natural order of things are paradoxes and synchronicty storms. We've already discussed paradoxes and the chrono-blips that result from paradox overload. So now let's go on to synchronicity, a high-falootin' Jungian psychological term for coincidence as a law of nature. Coincidence as a law of nature gives you, Mr. or Ms gamemaster, plenty of opportunities for running gags.

As we've said, you're playing around with the laws of nature. This also upsets the odds of coincidence, thus causing a synchronicity storm.

In a synchronicity storm, the laws of coincidence overload, causing the coincidences to pile up all over the place. Unlike chrono-blips, they pose no actual threat to the safety of the universe. They are simply scary and annoying. In fact, they happen all the time in real life.

You wake up one morning and for no particular reason remember that it's your ex-girlfriend's birthday. You haven't seen her in three years, so you don't give it another moment's thought.

In the car on your way to work, the radio plays a song you always associated with her. After listening for a moment, you change the station. The next station is playing her *favorite* song.

At work, you are introduced to a new co-worker who has just been hired. She has the *same first name* as your ex-girlfriend. Later, you are having a drink with some friends at a local bar and trying not to think about it.

All things considered, when *she* suddenly walks in the door you are less surprised than you would have been that morning. With mounting horror, you realize you are caught in a synchronicity storm. You decide to go home and not get out of bed until it has passed.

How does the synchronicity storm affect your average time traveling Troubleshooter? A storm, like a chrono-blip, is a detectable ripple in the Wave of Time. Any cross current tends to attract every other fish in the proverbial sea. As the storm builds, other time travelers may drop by to see who's making waves. Time travelers are a suspicious and nosey lot (or they wouldn't be time travelers).

This means that any time a particular adventure starts to get a little interesting, there is a possibility that Doctor Whom, Captain Wingo or any number of other temporal superheroes might drop by, or even be drawn to the moment by Forces They Do Not Understand. Whatever the case, time could seem like a very small place if this happens often enough.

In running gag terms, this tendency of storms to attract other time travelers would most likely keep screwing up the mission.

Vulture: All right, Evil Genius! Surrender! We've got you now!
>BOOM<
Captain Wingo: What's going on here?
(*As the Vultures are distracted, the EGOTIST slips on his nefarious Time Helmet and makes good his escape.*)
Captain Wingo: Oh, it's you guys again ... Say, isn't that the Evil Genius slipping through that wormhole? You guys never seem to be able to hold onto him. Hey, why are you all looking at me like that?

Of course, hot and cold running superheroes aren't the only outcome of a synchronicity storm. Think of it as one long

Even the smallest Chrono-Blip can attract the attention of other time-travelers.

coincidence. If the team has bad luck and a storm comes along, they could become the living embodiment of Murphy's Law: whatever can go wrong, will.

Unlike a chrono-blip, which can be destroyed by erasing the causes of the blip, a synchronicity storm has no solution. Time travelers just ride them out as best they can. Sorry.

Well, maybe *one* solution. To reverse a storm requires a sequence of non-coincidental events long enough to break the flow of synchronicity.

"A string of non-coincidental incidents? Isn't that, like, when everything goes according to plan?" we hear, piping up from the back of the room.

Exactly.

"So, how hard could that be?"

You wouldn't believe. It's not just when everything happens more or less on time, or pretty much like the Vultures originally thought it would.

Breaking a synchronicity storm requires better timing than the San Fransisco '49ers' offence playing 62-0 at the half, than the London, Philadelphia, and Boston Symphony orchestras performing Mozart in simulcast, than the entire Blue Angels squadron flying a map of the United States, including state capitols and major rivers, in red, white and blue smoke at precisely 10,000 feet.

There is no real way to force this, and any attempts are likely to aggravate the effects

of the storm and cause *more* coincidences. Players might find themselves saying, "I have the strangest feeling of deja vu ..." over and over.

For charts on likelihood of syncronicity storms and chrono-blips, see page ##.

Glorious Revolution #1,897,295 — In the wake of the Crash, virtually anything can happen to the power structure of Alpha Complex. The High Programmer Consortium is well protected, the Collapsacave's location is Really, Really Secret, but this is no guarantee. At any moment the Collapsacave could change hands.

The potential running gag here could become very scary. The possibility exists that every time the Vulture Warriors check in at home base they find a different group in charge. The Romantics, the Armed Forces, R&D, the Comp-Phreaks — any Simplex could find the Collapsacave and seize it.

They all would find different uses for the Collapsatron. That could open a new can of worms, particularly were it to happen while the players were in the time stream already. The Vultures could find their mission totally changed by a new set of controllers.

Vulture: Mark, get me Swift-Y for a minutecycle, would you?

Mark: I'm afraid that won't be possible ...

Vulture: Mark, I'm getting tired of your attitude. Where's Swift-Y!?

Mark: I'm sorry to hear that you feel that way. However, my attitude does not impact on this issue at all. Swift-Y is hanging upside-down over a pit filled with spikes. The Collapsacave is currently under the control of FCCCP. They have named me Son-O-GOD-1. When the situation is back under control, I will contact you.

Next time:

Vulture: Mark, what's going on? We haven't heard from you in several daycycles.

Mark: The Collapsacave is now under the dominion of the Romantics. At present they are too busy decorating to pay much attention to myself or Dave. We'll try to get you some assistance as soon as we can.

This can continue as long as there's a group or secret society you haven't used yet—or even ones you have.

Entropy Sucks

Ready for a little more physics? Good.

Let's talk about entropy. Entropy is a measure of the destruction of the universe. Don't become alarmed. It's not dead yet.

Basically, entropy grows as potential energy is lost. When you reduce a log to a pile of ashes and some carbon-rich smoke in your fireplace, that's entropy. Potential energy (the log) becomes energy (the fire)

becomes energy gone bye-bye (ashes and smoke). You can't burn ashes and smoke any more. Their potential is kaput. Entropy.

Why do we bring this up? Those who were paying attention might have noticed some nasty dudes called Entropoids being mentioned a while back. Ah, now you're beginning to see!

Entropoids are the gremlins of time. No one is quite sure where they come from or what they want. It is rumored that the absurdly named Evil Genius Doctor Spacenose created them. This is sheer conjecture, of course.

Some think that no one created them, that they are merely agents of entropy itself, sort of like walking black holes (black holes are the ultimate representation of entropy, because anything that falls into a black hole — bad sci fi movies notwithstanding — has been reduced to the lowest potential energy in the universe, and ain't never gonna be useful to nobody ever again).

They often show up lurking in the shadows at times of crisis. Some Evil Geniuses have found ways to control them or enslave them to do their dirty work.

No one is exactly sure what an Entropoid really looks like. Most commonly they are seen — or rather, not seen — as the aforementioned "walking black holes" — man-sized, shapeless black masses. They are black only in the sense that black is the complete absence of light. In fact, when viewed in this condition, they tend to draw light into themselves. They seem continually shrouded in utter darkness.

This may well be their true appearance. However, they are able to manipulate light in such a way as to be able to resemble practically anything or anybody. The chair you are sitting on, your favorite stuffed toy animal, your mother-in-law: all could be Entropoid agents.

There are a few ways to unmask an Entropoid creature. For one thing, they are incapable of making any kind of sound. If your mother-in-law hasn't spoken to you in a few days, you may want to jab her with a pin to see if she yells. If she doesn't: Entropoid. Blast her immediatly.

This soundlessness extends beyond a simple lack of speech: Entropoids actually suck in sound.

Throw your chair through a plate glass window. If the smashing chair and shattering glass don't make any sounds, try to avoid ever sitting in that chair again. You might find yourself in a black hole.

Entropoids are very, very difficult to destroy. However, once they are in their natural state they become very timid. For some reason, they only like to operate in other shapes and forms. To take direct face-to-face action against an opponent is something they shy away from.

Perhaps, like gremlins, they consider their evil works ineffective if they can be directly connected to them. The mystery has to be preserved to keep time-native humans in a continual state of doubt and superstitious fear. Therefore, once exposed, an Entropoid is likely to pop himself through the nearest wormhole and get lost.

However, if an Entropoid is exposed to a time traveler when no time-natives are around, he will fight. Like Entropoids, time travelers are time-alien, and thus being seen by them does not violate the normal space/time continuum the same way time-native contact does. There's no need to be concerned with mystery around other time travelers, so Entropoids have at it.

Entropoids prefer to use time-native weapons when disguised. When in natural form, they simply suck the energy out of their antagonist. This takes about ten rounds to complete, the last three rounds of which the victim is unconscious. Very nasty. Very hard to fight.

Blast your favorite stuffed toy with a plasma generator. If it grows into a huge black mass before it disintegrates, it was probably an Entropoid. Don't empty your slug-thrower into him; it won't help. Also, one Entropoid might be able to knock two clones unconscious but he wouldn't have the strength to kill either of them. If outnumbered, the Entropoid tries to use conventional weapons or to run away.

One other interesting and bizarre fact about Entropoids is that they only travel in groups of prime numbers (for those of you who've forgotten third grade math, prime numbers are divisible only by one and themselves). Vultures may encounter one Entropoid, or two, or three, but never four. If they see four, that means the fifth one is hiding somewhere nearby. No one is quite

Game Stuff

A single Entropoid has a limited ability to suck in energy. One Entropoid can, over 10 rounds, absorb the energy of:

a) two laser pistols
b) one human being
c) 12 rounds from an energy pistol
d) three 12 volt truck batteries
e) three grenades (incendiary only — fragmentary won't even upset his stomach)
f) 8 full bursts from a flamethrower.

After absorbing the limit of these energies, or any combination of the above, the Entropoid collapses upon itself into a tiny dot and then disappears. A single plasma ball from a plasma generator destroys an Entropoid, but any non-flame or non-energy-type weapon has absolutely no effect.

sure why this group-sizing taboo exists, but maybe it has something to do with physics. Remember: 23 Entropoids, but not 24. If they see 24, there are *five more* Entropoids just lurking about.

As the players travel through time, they are likely to run across these guys. They might be employed by an EGOTIST, or perhaps they are simply following their own unfathomable agenda. They generally appear at the worst possible time. A major chrono-blip has them coming out of the woodwork. Charts relating to Entropoid appearances and battles may be located on page 95.

Well, they may be located there. Then again, maybe not. Depends on if the Entropoids get there first. Tricky little devils.

Player/characters should know absolutely nothing about these guys. Mark has never encountered an Entropoid, nor did Kouble-U-KAN-6 discover them in its researches.

The only possible source of information would be other time travelers. Of *them*, grammatically correct Timelord Dr. Whom knows very little, and Captain Wingo knows only that they are bad guys and how to destroy them. The men with the real knowledge are Dr. Hugo Forehead and Dr. Spacenose. They may be unfortunately unavailable for comment.

Chapter Five: Outfittinge the Compleate Vulture

Remember To Take Your Toothbrush

The rebel R&D technicians who work under Dave-B-OMN-2 realize that *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* are going to need some mighty special equipment for their missions. Therefore, they have constructed all sorts of special toys for time travel trials. In the following sections we'll outline the various pieces of hardware R&D will have available next Christmascycle. See the upcoming *R&D Catalog* for many other great toy—uh, important technical innovations. Remember to order yours now to avoid the rush.

▮ "Stop, Dave ..."

We've already told you all sorts of things about our good buddy the Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III. It sends people through time and (under protest) to parallel dimensions. It can rotate clone replacements into the time stream in the event of fatality. It has some little mental problems. It doesn't send to the same time twice for fear of creating chrono-blips. But all around, it's a pretty swell time travel device (and a lot of fun at parties.)

Of course, Mark includes a hidden feature or two.

Mark's most important auxiliary capability is one the Vultures must know absolutely nothing about.

It is called the Stop Time Button. On Mark's undercarriage there is a small red button. Mark is capable of operating it internally. Mark is the only one aside from Kouble-U-KAN-6 who knows what it does.

It stops time.

Okay, it doesn't actually stop time. That's silly. Time marches on heedless, whatever Mark does. What the button actually does is remove the Collapsatron from the burbling onward rush of the time stream, along with any time-aliens within the sphere of its influence. Sound complicated? It's easy once you know the secret.

Here's an example of how a Vulture might first encounter the Stop Time Button. Mark is monitoring a Vulture mission which has traveled to Russia on the day of the revolution in 1917. A squad of Vulture Warriors — loose Russian peasant clothing concealing light Vulture armor, a pair of plasma generators hidden in a milkman's handcart — is trying to intercept an Evil Genius who plans to stop Lenin's forces before they reach the Winter Palace and seize the Czar and his family.

The EGOTIST awaits the arrival of the Bolshevik revolutionaries on the main road to the Winter Palace with an atomic bomb and a squad of Entropoids disguised as Cossacks. Lenin's troops are almost within visual range of the Entropoid Cossacks when the Vulture Warriors arrive to save the day. However, they can only watch in horror as the Evil Genius activates the atom bomb and escapes through a time portal.

The Vultures have less than ten seconds to fight through the Cossacks and defuse the bomb. They see that Lenin's Bolsheviks are just rounding a turn in the road — two seconds away from seeing a group of common-looking peasants firing plasma and energy weapons at a team of Cossacks, and ten seconds away from their own destruction at the hands of a weapon that won't be invented for 42 years.

It seems that any number of Truly Major Chrono-Blips are unavoidable.

Suddenly, Vulture Leader Sharp-O-DAM-2 notices that the Bolshevik Troops have stopped — frozen in their tracks like statues. She doesn't have the slightest idea what could be happening; possibly, she thinks, it is an effect of the oncoming Monster Chrono-Blip. Sharp-O and her team let loose with a lethal stream of blinding laser and plasma energy that quickly reduces both Entropoid Cossacks and their Entropoid Horses into subatomic, supercondensed particles.

Sharp: Equipment Guy! Deactivate that bomb! Mark! *(to remote)* That A-bomb might go at any moment! Send it somewhere where it won't hurt anybody and get us out of here! Now!

Mark: It is quite all right, Sharp-O. There will be no need for escape. I have removed your team and all time aliens from the time stream. While a certain probability exists for the creation of a chrono-blip during this period, it seemed more prudent than allowing for the certain-to-be larger blip that would be created by the death of Lenin and most of his troops by the explosion of an atomic bomb in 1917.

Sharp: But ... but how can you do that?

Mark: Actually it's quite simple. When I send you through time I am in fact placing you outside of its influence and then merely dropping you through a Einstein-Rosen bridge to the desired era and moment. Since you are not native-timers, it is quite easy to place you in an inertial field which allows the time stream to go on without you. Do you see? Quite simple.

Sharp: Uh-huh. I totally understand. But, Mark, why have you never mentioned this capability before? Why was it absent from the Collapsatron Briefing?

Mark: I do not feel it is a feature to be used rashly or in a non-crisis situation. It is particularly dangerous and unpredictable in chrono-blip weakened space/time. In fact, not even my good friend Dave-B-OMN-2 knows about it. It is my wish, Sharp-O, that no one should know about it save myself and the Great KAN who devised me. I'm sure you understand the necessity for this.

Therefore, please explain to your team that it was a chrono-blip and note it so in your reports. You are highly regarded and I will back you up. We will be believed. It will be our little secret, Sharp. You don't mind me calling you that, do you?

So there you have it; Mark's secret weapon and a *deus ex machina* if ever you needed one. As Mark would advise, use it only in emergencies if at all. Leave your players completely in the dark about it. If they learn of it through your using it once, have Mark assure them that the fabric of space/time will rip and tear, stranding them in frozen alien-time forever should they try to invoke it again.

If players should profess knowledge of this device before you have introduced it, that means they read it here. Traitorous swine! This is Ultra-Ultraviolet material. Punish these players severely.

Mark, of course, would answer the question, "Can you stop time for us?" with a polite "That's an interesting idea," but I'm afraid completely in violation of quantum physical law. Where did you get such a curious notion?" If the player or players persist, Mark may find it necessary to >ahem< "remove the human element from the mission profile" in order to protect its secret. It does this with the deepest regret, of course.

The Ears Have Eyes

The remote control and the trans-dimensional auditrons are the Vulture team's only link to Mark while they are in the field. As far as the Vultures know, the auditrons transmit all sound that they themselves hear back to Mark, while allowing Mark to speak to them across the gulf of space/time.

The Vulture Warriors, when briefed on their communication devices, are told that only when the remote control is turned on can Mark receive visual information from the team. This is patently untrue, because the transdimensional auditrons are much more than glorified ear-radios.

They can pick up brainwave activity and electronically tap into optic nerve information traveling to the brain from the eyes, thus allowing Mark to see whatever any Vulture sees while he has the transdimensional auditron in his ear.

The HP elite felt it was a good idea to be able to monitor the mission at any time. However, they once again underestimated the powerful programming of the great Kouble-U-KAN.

It is completely at Mark's discretion that any information from the auditrons or the remote control is transmitted to the Collapsacave. If Mark desires to keep Swift-Y (or any force that has seized the Collapsacave) in the dark as to the progress of a mission, it is perfectly willing and able to do so.

Mark's general policy has been giving the HP elite only that information which they absolutely need. As a result, it may respect the privacy of the Vulture teams more than the HP elite would like.

As for the monitoring of brain-wave activity, this is at present still experimental. Mark can pick up Alpha waves which tell whether the Vulture is awake or asleep or thinking really hard, but that's about all. The auditrons cannot read minds — not yet, anyway. Swift-Y has the R&D crew working on this night and day, and if Mark and Dave have any moral objections, they are keeping their mouths closed for now.

(The remote control is also a receiver of sorts. It can be used to pick up any electronic signals — such as radio or television — that happen to be floating through the air of whatever era the Vultures happen to be in. Mark can relay the visual information from the remote control back to the Collapsacave. The audio information can be played back for the Vultures on the remote control's speaker.

If the Vultures happen to be carrying any type of video unit, the video portion can be played back on it. We expect this feature is rather meaningless on missions before the turn of the twentieth century. Then again, maybe not.

It is possible that eight-track cassettes, Betamax video and laser discs were all invented by the lost civilization of Atlantis. Could anyone but the Incas have invented cellular phones? Just a little food for thought.)

"Parlez-Vous, Alpha Complex? Sprechen sie Clone? Parlatto Vulturimenti Dimensione X?"

Unlike the previously mentioned sweater-clad losers of the TV series *Time Tunnel*, we WFGD at West End Games refuse to take the whole language issue lightly. It is silly to assume that everywhere your *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* go they will encounter a perfect-English-speaking Attila-the-Hun, Lenin, Odysseus, and Moses. Not to mention every anonymous "Zog the caveman" type they run into.

Therefore, we have built in a cheap and bogus device — uh, clever innovation — which tidies up this little problem.

The transdimensional auditrons are neat little toys, aren't they? Sure, they're tiny, but they seem capable of almost every single cop-out — uh, artistic licence — we devise for them. Not only do they allow the Vultures to hear and be heard by Mark. Not only do they read brainwaves and tap the optic nerves for visual information. They also translate all time-native languages into Alpha Complex-speak, and back again.

As the speech impulse leaves the brain for the vocal chords and mouth, the auditron alters the brain-transmitted information into the appropriate patterns for translation into whatever the native-time language might be. Kind of handy, eh?

We thought that would be your response.

Nevertheless, when the Vultures speak to Napoleon they do so in the most beautifully modulated 19th century French. Of course, the auditrons cannot be pro-grammed ahead of time (what if you're talking to Napoleon and suddenly Wellington shows up and you're unable to speak English to him? He might have you executed.) so they can only respond in the language spoken *to* them.

I have the greatest confidence in the mission.

Vultures should remember to keep their mouths shut until someone time-native talks. Otherwise, their first sentences are likely to be complete gibberish.

Another important consideration is that all language ideas are not universal and timeless. Technological jargon and slang are approximated by the auditrons. If the Vultures use the word "computer" when speaking to Napoleon, it is translated into "machine which thinks" in French. That's sure to confuse him.

On the other hand, if a disguised Vulture should stop a young woman on the streets of New York in 1931 and ask her, "Pardon me, young lady. My team and I have tem-porarily mis-located ourselves looking for the intersection of Broadway Avenue and 42nd street. We would appreciate any in-formation you could share with us," the au-ditron is likely to translate it as, " 'Scuse me, angel. Me and my cronies lost our way to Times Square. If you give us the straight dope we'd be all kinds of grateful."

This way, everyone the Vultures meet won't say, "Boy, you guys sure talk like total weirdos. Just like those two bland white guys in the sweaters who passed this way a while back."

Toys For Time-Traveling Traitors, or: Vulture Varrior Veapons

Rebel R&D technician Nickt-I-SLA has spent quite some time devising outfits, equipment and weapons for the elite *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X*. The equip-ping of a time-traveling team of warriors is a very tricky thing, and he has put much energy into the development of this gear.

Early on in his research, he realized that one of the keys to a successful program would be miniaturization. All Alpha Complex technology would have to be made smaller and more portable, more easily concealed from prying time-native eyes.

Crucial to the program would be the clothing worn by the Vulture Warriors. Once again, Nickt quickly saw the nature of the problems he faced. He would have to design two types of wardrobe for the Vul-ture Team. One would be various time-native garbs adapted to the technology of Alpha Complex.

However, he also realized that often the era being visited would be completely unknown to Alpha Complex's sketchy his-torical files. There also existed the chance that Vultures would be forced to travel to another era without being able to return to base for new outfits.

Rather than constantly fake it and face the possibility of complete disaster, he chose another course. He would create a neutral garment that would be generally appropri-ate in any age.

Nickt scanned the historical files for weeks, trying to find a fashion that would be as quiet and inconspicuous as possible. Eventually he settled on a design and went to work fitting as much useful technology into it as possible.

Nickt-I-SLA's research revealed that fashion was in a constant state of flux. Everything from choice of materials to color and cut was constantly changing. However, certain professions had outfits that changed very little over the flow of time.

The two professions in particular, holy men and soldiers, had several advantages. They were positions of some respect. They could be very, simply designed — it was almost a pre-requisite. Most importantly, each profession had many relatively obscure sects the world over.

It would be fairly simple for the Vultures to claim to be either priests of some obscure religion or soldiers from some remote and far-flung country.

The Collapsateer Suit

Nickt-I christened his new creation the Collapsateer Suit. The pseudo-military/clerical garb he eventually settled on (pictured on various pages, uniform design on page 55) consists of a simple white shirt, black vest, overcoat and pants. The pants and jacket have red piping (for the military look) which can be easily removed. All the black pieces are lined with ultra-thin teflon plating (L3P3AP3 protection).

The overcoat is the most versatile garment in the entire ensemble. It has the same interior teflon armor as the rest of the suit, and is also reversible. On the reversed side, the jacket is a deep maroon color with laser/energy weapon reflec-coating (E3L3, all colors). At its full length, the overcoat extends to the ankles. In a battle situation, the tailored overcoat can be reversed and completely closed up to provide a Vulture Warrior with total protection against virtually all weapons.

The extra length can be folded up to give the jacket the appearance of a man's suit jacket, or can it be removed and buttoned up to be used as a skirt by female personnel in sexist and backwards eras where it is necessary for their disguises to be more "feminine" (as such, the skirt can also be reversed for laser-reflec).

The overcoat has many concealed pockets large enough to hide an energy weapon or grenade, and a hood that folds out of the back to cover the head in ultra-thin teflon. The hood is also reversible. Neck and bow ties are optional.

The footwear that goes with this practical and yet remarkably fashionable battlesuit is equally unique. The Collapsateer Suit comes with simple black boots that resemble those worn by IntSec Blue troopers. However, these boots are special Mark II Vulture Jet-Boots. For extra safety, there are several ways to operate the boots.

Inside the Collapsateer vest are two objects that look very much like large fountain pens. They are, in fact, the controls for the Jet-Boots. The right hand pen with the green button starts the jets and the left-hand pen with the red button turns them off.

Repeated pressing of the green button speeds them up; repeated pressing of the red slows them down (the red/slowdown feature prevents bozo Vultures from cutting off a jet engine while still in the air. Ever try restarting a jet engine as you fall 100 feet to your death? It's no fun).

For the GM, we suggest actually making the players sit there with pens in their hands, trying to fly. Nothing like a good simulation for a few laughs.

But what if their hands are full? Simple. The boots are coded to respond to voice commands from the Vulture they are commissioned to. There is a microphone in the boots (and one in the soon-to-be-mentioned Collapsahelm) which picks up the commands of the individual Vulture.

They are programmed to respond to "Jets On!" "Jets Faster!" "Jets Slower!" and "Stop!" (they will not respond to "Stop!" unless the pressure pads in the heels indicate a surface under them). While the voice-operation is convenient, it lacks the elements of stealth and surprise that the pen-control provides. Also, constantly shouting instructions to one's boots gets in the way of communication between a whole team that is airborne.

Directional control is provided by the body movements of the wearer. Sort of like swimming. The jets push their wearer in any direction he or she points his or her body weight. If this doesn't make sense to players, have them study Superman: The Movie for instruction on instrument-less flight control.

Remember Clones, Accessorize!

The following equipment is available from Nickt-I-SLA, but is not necessarily considered standard field issue for **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X**. Nickt-I designed this stuff in his spare time, just for kicks.

Vulturetalons: These simple black gloves made of simulated naugahyde come with many special options.

The Standard pair contains the usual ultra-thin teflon for protection, plus an extra amount of armor just below the knuckles for extra punch — Vulture Warrior brass knuckles (+1 column in hand-to-hand). This pair also includes a micro transmitter-receiver just inside the wrist. This allows for contact between Vulture team members. It also transmits a homing beacon which other team members can use to locate a missing Vulture.

The specialty gloves have all these features *plus* the ones mentioned below.

Vulture Warriors should be cautioned against displaying superior technology.

The Wolfsoldier pair includes four micro-lasers running up the back of the right hand and retractable Vulture talons emerging from the tops of the four large fingers of the left hand. Both devices are triggered by clenching the fist. Warning: it is not wise to attempt to punch someone if a PC is wearing these gloves; he is likely to tear them to ribbons, whichever hand he uses.

The Spiderbat pair has a 30 meter reel of micro-rope in each wrist that can be fired out along the index finger of each hand. The left hand, when slapped against any surface, sprays a thick cloud of light tear gas for a three meter radius. The ropes are activated by pointing the index finger while leaving the others curled into a fist.

The Shadowclone pair has a built-in slugthrower running up the back of the right hand. The special ammunition clip (holding 80 rounds) runs up the inside of the right arm. The right hand can fire single-shot, semi-automatic or full-auto. The trigger is an electrical contact in the thumb touching similar contact in the middle knuckle of the index finger.

Inside the palm of the left hand is a new device, called a Hypnon, which transmits a beam that (when shone into the eyes of the antagonist) induces a hypnotic state. It is triggered by holding the palm out (like the universal gesture for stop) and pressing the four fingers together.

This is more vital than one might think, and Vultures should be guided toward having a pair of these gloves with them at all times. Why? To erase the memory of

their visits from time natives who catch them in the act.

Collapsashades: Even though sunglasses are hardly a constant throughout history, Nickt-I has designed some shades which can probably double as some very peculiar eye-glasses in eras unfamiliar with the look.

The Infra-shades can see in the dark like standard infrared scopes.

Supershades release an X-ray beam from the temple-piece that allows the wearer to see through solid objects.

In researching "glasses of the past," Nickt-I found an obscure design referred to as *Late-20th century Armitage Lenses.* Nickt-I followed the guidelines listed under the obscure name, but couldn't figure out what the glasses were supposed to do.

Upon completing them, he tried on a pair. Aside from giving him a headache, they transformed the world into black and white. He had no idea what their real purpose was and shelved the project. During outfitting, he may mention the Armitage Lenses in passing as a twentieth century invention he can't fathom.

Maybe a player tries them on and thinks they are cool. Hopefully, he likes them enough to take them along. Unknown to Nickt-I, these are some very valuable glasses. Here is their background.

In the late 20th century there was an underground alien invasion that has been deleted from Alpha Complex history books. It was successfully thwarted, mostly because of the invention of Armitage Lenses. The aliens were able to disguise themselves to look like normal human beings. A rebel scientist named Carpenter Armitage designed special glasses that looked like ordinary sunglasses.

These glasses, referred to as Armitage Lenses, allowed men to see the aliens among them. Shortly after the invention of Armitage Lenses, the alien invasion was revealed to the general public and defeated.

What use is a pair of Armitage Lenses to a *Vulture Warrior of Dimension X?*

Glad you asked.

The invaders used a machine that bent the light around them to cloak them in the illusion of humanity. Sort of like the way Entropoids disguise themselves.

Get the idea? Good.

A Vulture with a pair of Armitage Lenses can see any technologically cloaked or disguised object in its true form. A Vulture with a pair of Armitage Lenses on might suddenly say, "Uh, guys? Why are you talking to that bizarre pulsating black object as if it were Bob? It looks kinda threatening to me."

The Collapsacase: The Collapsacase comes in a variety of models, resembling everything from a 20th century businessman's attache case to a leather shoulder sack from the Middle Ages. The

case can store pretty much anything too awkward to hide in the Collapsateer Suit.

Most Vultures prefer to store larger weapons, electronic equipment and booty looted from the era visited. An Armed Forces emergency first aid packet is standard issue in all cases. Collapsacases have magnetic seals and magnetically adhere to a panel in the back of the Collapsateer overcoat.

Perhaps the most important object stored in the Collapsacase is the Collapsahelm.

The Collapsahelm: The Collapsahelm is a red and bronze helmet which folds into a metal disc roughly the size and shape of a frisbee. It is reflec-plated and made of ultra-thin teflon. With the Jet-Boots, Collapsateer overcoat and Vulturetalons, it makes a *Vulture Warrior of Dimension X* virtually impregnable, not to mention kinda cool-looking in an SF sort of way.

Once opened into its proper shape, its design is an ambiguous mix of helmet styles from all eras. A samurai from feudal Japan does not recognize the strange armor of a Vulture Warrior; however, it looks to him like a man in unfamiliar armor, not a space/time traveler.

King Arthur wonders if it is some sort of Italian armor he is unaware of. An American GI might think it's some new Navy Air Corps thing or maybe some elite tank group. Whatever the case, the uniforms are designed to look just vaguely familiar enough to any civilized society that they are not pegged as gods, demons or UFO aliens right off the bat.

Of course, they may want time-natives to think they are, in fact, gods, demons or UFO aliens. More on that later.

■ "My name is Spot! Arf! Arf!"

Not all the equipment a Vulture team might need can fit in a Collapsacase. Therefore, Nickt-I decided to incorporate some useful devices into robots. But how to send robots back in time with the team without being extremely conspicuous?

Nickt-I has managed to create several bots disguised as common household pets, which permits the Vulture teams to bring some sophisticated technology to-distant eras without causing a big commotion. Swift-Y generally allows a Vulture squad one pet, but no more.

They can always request a back-up pet-bot should the need arise for more equipment. All petbots have the same capability for jet-assisted flight that Vulture Squad members have with their Jet Boots.

It should be remembered that these are high-tech machines with computer brains. They, and the Vultures, and even the R&D techs that designed and built them for that matter, have probably only seen what real animals look and act like on Old Reckoning videotapes like *Lassie* and *Mr. Ed.* The pets may have to be reminded not to speak in the presence of time-natives, or that dogs walk on all four legs. Have patience with them; they're young.

And now — the Vulture Petbots of Dimension X.
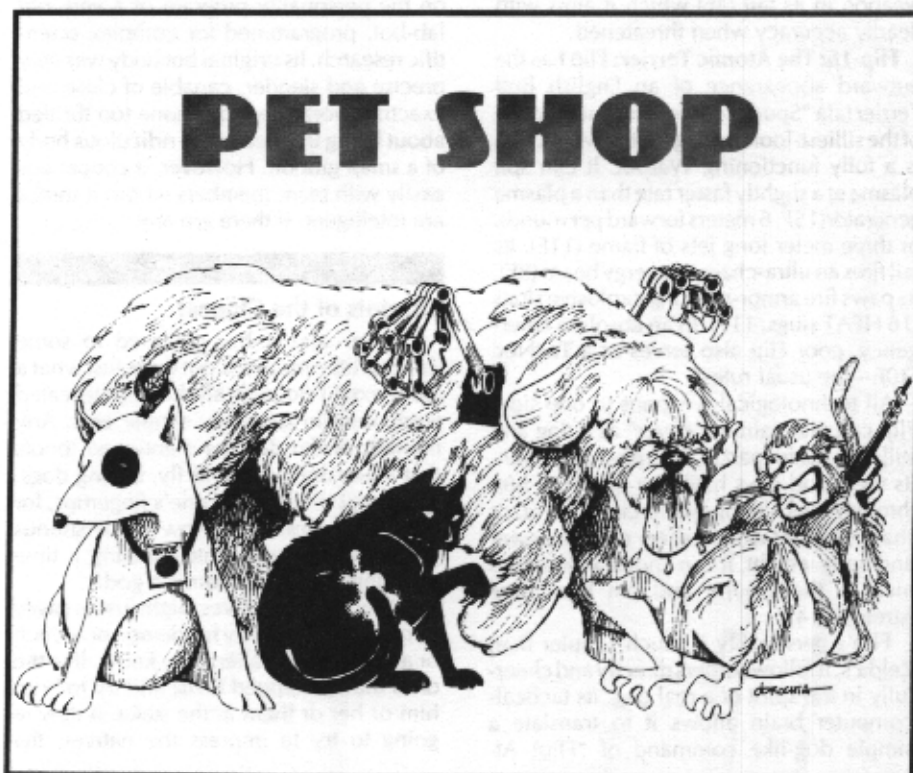
How much is that Petbot in the window?

Spot-19: Sheepdog Docbot: Spot is jammed full of all the high-tech medical equipment one can jam into your average sheepdog (as a sheepdog, Spot hasn't a single spot on it. The name was chosen for its frequency in historical research, not for any practical reasons). Spot can even perform battlefield surgery with a pair of finely crafted arms and hands which fold out from its shoulders.

Its laser-scalpel (6L, range 3 meters) can be used as a weapon in close quarters, but Spot generally try to avoid this. It speaks with a gravelly voice and is relatively intelligent, as Alpha Complex bots go.

Zelda-13: Library Catputer: Zelda, who has the appearance of a small black and white cat, has as much historical information as can fit in a small black and white cat — which is considerably more than is available to Alpha Complex historical files.

It usually waits to be asked a question, but might offer information freely if it feels like it. Like any cat, it generally appears totally disinterested in its surroundings.

In fact, Zelda is continually recording all that occurs (especially during a mission) and collating new historical data into its databanks. It is capable of independent thought and of forming accurate conclusions about any given era from whatever information it gathers.

In any bot, the price you pay for high intelligence and independent thought is an unpredictable personality. Zelda has its moods, but can generally be dealt with reasonably. It has a low grade energy weapon in its tail (4E) which it aims with deadly accuracy when threatened.

Flip-16: The Atomic Terrier: Flip has the outward appearance of an English Bull Terrier (ala "Spuds Mackenzie"), surely one of the silliest-looking dogs in the world. Flip is a fully functioning Warbot. It can spit plasma at a slightly faster rate than a plasma generator(15F, 6 meters forward per round), or three meter long jets of flame (11F). Its tail fires an ultra-charged energy beam (8E). Its paws fire armor-piercing explosive slugs (16 HEAT slugs; 11P). In an absolute emergency, poor Flip also serves as a TacNuc (30F—the usual rules).

All technological weapons to one side, Flip can maintain its "cover" as a dog and still be a useful part of a combat operation. Its teeth and jaws have the power to bite through steel plating (6I), its claws are razor sharp (4I), and with its sheer muscle power and body weight, it can knock an armored man to the ground and pin him there (strength 14).

Flip's personality is much simpler than Zelda's. It follows orders directly and cheerfully in the spirit of a real dog. Its tactical-computer brain allows it to translate a simple dog-like command of "Flip! At-

tack!" to "Opponent wearing reflec-armor. Armor-piercing shells will penetrate armor, but 'Kill' command not given. Opponent under one meter away. Pounce maneuver most appropriate. Initiating ..." within micro-seconds. Its loyalty generally rests with the Team Leader, but Flip can extend it to other Vultures if they treat it well. If anyone should challenge the Team Leader, the dogbot invariably takes his master's side.

Nickt-I designed the Flip-16 with the help of Sargent-R-OCK.

Beppo-5: The Ultra Monkey: Beppo was designed in an attempt to roll up all the talents of the other petbots in one animal robot. Beppo has no actual electronic refinements. No lasers shoot out of its eyes or anything like that. However, as a chimpanzee (or electro-chimpanzee) it has an advantage that the dogbots and catbots don't have — opposable thumbs.

With opposable thumbs, Beppo can pick up and fire a laser pistol, something its fellow petbots are incapable of. Likewise, it's quite adept at turning doorknobs and driving cars. It has been programmed with medical and historical information, and while its information is not as complete as Zelda's or Spot's, it is still greater than whatever the Vultures know. Beppo could be a valuable member of the team, save for the fact that pet monkeys have never been that common.

Beppo's personality is a little on the cynical side. It was the last of Nickt-I's creations, and Nickt-I rushed the job by grafting on the personality program of a very old lab-bot, programmed for complex scientific research. Its original bot body was very precise and slender, capable of close and exacting work. Beppo is none too thrilled about being trapped in the ridiculous body of a small gibbon. However, it cooperates easily with team members whom it thinks are intelligent. If there are any.

Chariots of the Clones?

We're sure it has occurred to some devious little monsters out there just what a clone could do with all this sophisticated equipment in relatively simple eras. Any number of the devices mentioned (boots that make one appear to fly, talking dogs, lasers that shoot out of one's fingertips, for a few examples) could wow a superstitious and naive audience into thinking a time traveling Troubleshooter is a god.

Of course, the natives might just as easily think such an anomaly is a demon or a witch or a vicious UFO alien (you know, like the ones that kidnapped Elvis) and try to burn him or her or them at the stake. If they're going to try to impress the natives, the

Vultures had better make darn well sure that they have a clear understanding of local mythology. They don't want to tell the natives they're the wrong god.

When the Vultures are using the "god gambit," there exists a strong possibility that a chrono-blip will occur. Any appearance by a god is a big event in the life of a civilization, and the clones have to be careful they avoid impacting the future of a major world religion by doing something stupid like rescuing Christ from the cross.

Of course, the chrono-blip rules have a very strong "ignore at will" corollary attached to them. Personally, we WFGD feel that the "wow the natives" approach is as subtle as a freight train and should be eschewed for something more tasteful and subtle, like >ahem< we would think up.

Once Upon A Collapsatime

To start a *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* campaign, one must begin at the beginning. If you've already run our totally exciting three-part Collapsatron adventure, you've got your characters and you're ready to go. If not, what, are you asleep? Are you paying attention? This is your last chance to increase our fabulous wealth by purchasing and playing *Alice Through The Mirrorshades, Twilightcycle: 2000,* and *Doctor Whom and the Paranoids of Alpha* — in that order. Of course, you don't necessarily have to buy them in that order. You do, however, have to play them in that order.

Once this is done, you're ready to go on. As we said earlier, start with some small unimportant introductory adventure. Something to familiarize your players with the concepts and characters of the Vulture Warrior Collapsateer program, the ins and outs of time travel.

And now, all systems are go, all the parts are in place and you are ready to proceed to the next section: five fabulous campaign scenarios for *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X*!! Try not to be so overcome with joy that you have a heart attack before you can turn the page. We'd hate for that to happen.

We need you alive and buying the *Vulture Warriors* tee-shirts, *Vulture Warriors* lunch boxes, *Vulture Warriors* action figures, *Vulture Warriors* bed sheets, *Vulture Warriors* tooth brushes, *Vulture Warriors* cd albums, *Vulture Warriors* sandwiches, *Vulture Warriors* coloring books, *Vul* ... >ahem<.

Sorry.

And now back to our regularly scheduled programming.

Chapter Six: Mark and Vultures' Excellent Campaigns

Five Easy Campaigns

Herewith are set down the outlines for five possible adventure campaigns involving the Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III. They are not fully laid out adventure modules ready for playing. They are simply some really great ideas that you can use to set up campaigns. You can change them or expand upon them in any way you wish. They are yours to play with to your little (or large) heart's content.

They are, in order of appearance, "Wingo of the Wormholes," "Citizen KAN," "The Clone Who Would Be King," "Entropolypse, Now!" and "Five Things To Rule Them All." Enjoy!

Wingo of the Wormholes

In this campaign, our fearless Vultures get caught up in a cosmic space/time war between the forces of Good and Evil. The Collapsateers must help the heroic Captain Wingo of the Futuremen defeat the horrible Dr. Spacenose and his Entropoids before they can totally rupture the very fabric of the universe!

Now, we know what you're thinking: this all sounds just a little bit silly. You're right; it does. But only because you don't know the whole story—the senses-shattering Origin of Captain Wingo and the Futuremen. Before we introduce the opening of the campaign itself, it is important to provide the background that set the initial conflict in motion long before our Vulture Warriors got involved.

Prologue

In the late 25th century, on Earth Outpost Satellite 7011 (a small base on Pluto's moon Charon) Doctor Pincus Weinstein lived alone. In the hundreds of years since the Asteroid, the research station had gradually lost contact with the Earth, finally becoming abandoned by the start of the twenty-fifth century.

Weinstein himself was an immigrant from the Titan colonies, who had picked the deserted science station as the perfect place to continue his dangerous research away from populated areas. He thought the peace and quiet would help him to unravel the mystery he had been working on for 60 of the 80 years he had been alive.

Weinstein was experimenting with tachyons (particles that travel faster than the speed of light) and anti-matter particles, in an attempt to understand the relation between the speed of light, black holes and the possibility of an "anti-matter universe." What he actually ended up discovering was something completely different.

Inevitably, there was an accident.

While running a concentrated stream of tachyons through anti-matter, Doctor Weinstein's shielding broke down. He found himself pelted with a beam of anti-tachyons. In his desperate need to escape, he found himself bounced into the past.

His mother had never told him about the strange old man who appeared one day in the living room when he was a little boy, gasped and vanished as mysteriously as he came. For a few crazy moments, Weinstein found himself in all corners of time and space as he tried to get back to his lab. When he arrived there, he was in for an even bigger surprise.

He found his own body slammed back against the wall of the lab, unconscious. The harsh radiations had withered and wrinkled "his" skin to an incredible degree, but he was still alive. Dr. Weinstein A woke up Dr. Weinstein B, who then, with monstrous strength, threw Dr. A to the ground. The Anti-Weinstein (Weinstein B) stood over the fallen doctor and laughed, "We have total mastery over time and space! The universe is ours!"

"Don't you feel we should share our discovery with the rest of civilization?" offered the original Weinstein meekly.

The Anti-Weinstein laughed and vanished into thin air. A week later he reappeared with a small force of unfathomable things (he later named them "Entropoids") from whom the good doctor barely escaped with his life.

Dr. Weinstein realized he had a very big problem on his hands. Both he and the Anti-Weinstein seemingly had the ability to travel through time and space at will, through some effect of the anti-tachyons. Somehow, at the moment he had escaped into the past, he split into two distinct entities, leaving the Anti-Weinstein there on the floor of the lab to be bathed in anti-tachyon radiation.

He felt sure that the Anti-Weinstein was not only more powerful than he, but also completely out of his mind. Dr. Weinstein even noticed his own mental facilities becoming confused. Who was Weinstein A, and why was the Anti-Weinstein Weinstein B? And if he called the Anti-Weinstein "A," then who would Weinstein "B?"

Something inherent in the nature of time travel was dangerous to the mental health of highly developed minds. He realized he would need some help.

The Origin Of Captain Wingo

Weinstein thought the problem over for days. As grim as it seemed, he was going to have to hunt down and destroy the Anti-Weinstein before it destroyed the universe and ruined his credit rating with bad charges.

He thought and thought, until he remembered something from his childhood: Superheroes. What he needed was a superhero. And since the 25th century was not a time of superheroes, he would use his new-found powers to locate or create one. He didn't need a real superhero (the anti-tachyon ray and cloning equipment would take care of that), just a big strong guy willing to run around in tights, be known by a silly name, and dedicate his life to fighting evil.

Of course, there were other requirements as well. Dr. Weinstein had hypothesized that time travel was so filled with paradoxes and impossibilities that it would drive any scientist who really understood it completely mad after a few trips.

Therefore he needed a man who could operate on simple morality and fight the good fight without really understanding the

implications of what he was doing; a man with an incredibly strong will and sense of reality that couldn't be shattered by chrono-blips, divergent timelines, Entropoids and parallel universes.

Lastly, he needed a man who could be removed from the time stream without causing a chrono-blip. He would have to pluck some hero from the moment of death, clone him and transfer the brainwaves to the new body. It was going to be tricky.

Dr. Weinstein read all the history books he could until he finally found the perfect man for his task.

And so it was that Dr. Weinstein transported himself to June, 1959 in North Hollywood. He appeared in the bedroom of a washed-up actor; bitter and resentful over having been type-cast a hero, the former celluloid crimefighter was staring at the gun in his hands. As the formerly (and fictionally) bulletproof man raised the gun to his temple in despair, Dr. Weinstein stepped out from the shadows.

Before the weary actor could move, Weinstein grabbed him and transported them both to his laboratory on Charon, a room with a spectacular view of the moon's surface. There, once the actor recovered from shock, the doc made his offer.

Dr. Weinstein was no fool, however. He realized that he was talking to a man from the distant past, who probably envisioned the future as an Art Deco Utopia: Better Living Through Science. Therefore, Dr. Weinstein decided to cater to this vision — he would tell a story consistent with the brightly-colored comic book universe the actor had embodied to a world of fans. And he would solve the remaining A-B confusion by using a comic book-style alias.

"Welcome to the 25th century, Bucko! My name is Professor Hugo Forehead of the Futuremen. The universe faces a dire threat, Bucko, and the Futuremen need you! An Evil time-traveling Genius named Doctor Spacenose is on a rampage that will end with the destruction of everything there is. He must be stopped, and you are the only man who can do it!"

Bucko, whose real name was Marion or Chumley or Leslie or something, stared for a moment at Weinstein/Forehead.

"Why me? I can't fly or bounce bullets off my chest. I'm just an actor! I must have finally lost my mind ..."

The aged scientist smiled. "Of course. You don't realize your great potential. You may be just an actor, but you have the soul of a hero. That's why you've become so depressed. You weren't meant to struggle through life like the rest of humanity — you were meant to fly! Bucko, this is your destiny; the greatest role of all! With my help, you will become Captain Wingo, Savior of Space/Time and Champion of the Chronosphere!"

"Geez, Captain Wingo? This is all so crazy, Doc, I just don't know ..."

"Of course you do. I kidnapped you from 1959 moments before your suicide. The man who inspired an entire generation with his heroism deserves a nobler fate. I'm offering you eternal life, youth and enormous power. In return all I ask is that you fulfill the role for which the universe has so carefully prepared you; Superhero! Join me, Bucko, and together we will defend all of Space and Time from Cosmic Evil! You will protect our Universe from the Dark Forces of Entropy! What do you say?"

The middle-aged actor, his eyes brimming with tears, offered his hand to the old professor. "I'm your boy, Doc."

And so was born ... the celebrated Captain Wingo of the Futuremen.

(Remember, you heard it here first.)

Roman Holiday

The mission begins with the summoning of the crack Vulture Warriors to the Collapsacave. Swift-Y briefs the assembled team.

Late in the previous daycycle, a strangely dressed man appeared in the midst of Alpha Complex. He wore partial steel armor and a short skirt. He was armed with a short sword. After a short struggle, he allowed IntSec Blue troopers to disarm him and take him to a holding tank. He did not speak or make any other sort of sound; scans of his body gave no information, as though he were surrounded by a force field. On a hunch, he was transferred in total secrecy to Swift-Y's Special Crisis Unit Management (the cover operation for the Vulture Program). Mark scanned the intruder.

"I have detected that the Invader is in fact a time alien from over 2000 year-cycles back. I have traced the chrono-blip caused by his appearance here to originate in the region of the Mediterranian Sea in the year 58 B.C., Old Reckoning. When I advised Swift-Y of the possibility for a dangerous paradox, he suggested that we fend off the effects of the chrono-blip by returning him to his native time."

So says Mark. Swift-Y thinks it might be wise for a fully armed Vulture Warrior squad to accompany the intruder and find out who could possibly be sending little chrono-blips from a technology totally incapable of time travel.

That's what you tell the players, anyway. The truth of the matter is (big prizes for those who guessed) the intruder is an Entropoid posing as a Roman Centurion. "For what purpose?" you may ask. Read on ...

No Place Like Rome

After the standard outfitting from Nickt-I-SLA, the Collapsateers herd onto the launching pad with the Pseudo-Roman in tow. If one of the players picked up a pair of "Armitage Lenses" from Nickt-I, he or she stands a chance of seeing the Entropoid for what he really is. Should that occur, Swift-Y is doubly eager to investigate. Whatever happens, the Vultures are ready (as they'll ever be) to go.

Mark says, "Remember to stay in contact and be very careful. You are arriving at the exact moment that this gentleman departed his original timeline. We're all behind you 100 percent. Here goes ...."

In the next instant, the Vultures find themselves inside the great Colosseum of Ancient Rome. It is night, and in the absence of electric light, they can't see a thing. As they are donning their helmets, the Entropoid vanishes — which must be a trick indeed as he was rather tightly bound and handcuffed.
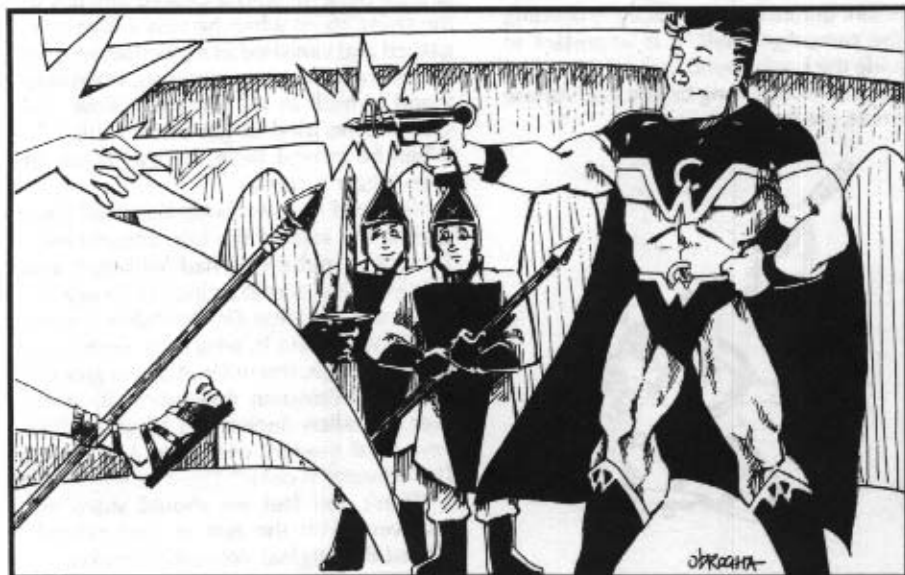
Here he comes to save the day!

Of course, an Entropoid can change shape at will, but the PCs don't know that yet.

They switch on their helmet lights, only to dicover that Mark has set them down in the middle of a large lion cage. Odds are pretty good that those bright lights wake the big cats up. Ooops.

After (one hopes) defeating the lions, the players race after the missing Centurion, searching through all the lower levels of the Colosseum. They encounter a few frightened slaves who may be asked for information. It is doubtful they refuse to help armored non-Roman knights, particularly if they express anti-Roman sentiments.

Following clues provided by the slaves, the Vultures find the missing Centurion in a room with ten other Roman Guards. The possible Armitage Lens-wearing player is able to say that this is in fact a room full of vicious alien beings. Whether someone has the glasses or not, the Entropoids attack. When they realize that the swords and spears they are armed with are having no effect, they start to drain the life-forces out of the Vultures.

Allow this to go on long enough to give the players a vague idea of what Entropoid fighting is like. Unless they are particularly lucky, they should start losing, as they are outnumbered. Maybe a few fall unconscious. Just when all appears lost ...

■ Enter Captain Wingo!

The Vultures probably watch, stunned, as a large man in an absurd costume appears from nowhere and starts blasting the Entropoids with an enormous Plasma Pistol. When he's finished with them, he turns to the Vultures.

"Say, aren't you fellows in the wrong part of town?" he asks calmly.

When the players explain their mission and origins to Wingo, he tells them that the whole set-up seems like a trap. He thinks that a certain Dr. Spacenose was curious as to what threat this Alpha Complex time travel program might pose to his nefarious plan of destruction and conquest.

If they ask him, he gives a quick explanation of Entropoids and what they are, but he has little or no real knowledge of science.

Wingo says, "I think you troopers had better ride with me for a while until we get this whole Spacenose thing under control. Otherwise, next thing you know that Alpha Complex of yours will be knee-deep in time aliens."

At that very moment, Wingo is summoned back to the Fortress of Chronitude by Doctor Forehead.

■ The Fortress of Chronitude

The Science Spa Beyond Time. After recruiting Bucko to become Captain Wingo, Weinstein/Forehead realized he would need

a new base of operations beyond the reach of his evil twin, who had already attacked him once at his laboratory on Charon. He chose to hide himself in time as well as space, and after popping through time to find a proper location, he discovered a deserted Earth military station on the far side of Earth's Moon.

In the remote 30th century, he and Bucko moved in. Bucko was cloned, his thoughts transferred into a 30 year-old body. He trained for months with superior technology, while Forehead devised instruments that would help them (mostly Bucko) in their battle with Dr. Spacenose.

Now, with robot servants to help them, and all of Forehead's ultra-sophisticated tracking devices in hand, Captain Wingo is an efficient fighting force, protecting the time stream at all points from Entropoid incursions.

As Captain Wingo gives the Vultures a tour of the grounds and facilities, warning klaxons begin to sound. The Fortress is under attack! Robot tanks advance across the surface of the Moon. Forehead realizes, too late, that the bogus Entropoid Centurion must have tagged the Vultures with a homing device of some kind.

The seige is fierce and awesomely violent. In it, the brave Captain Wingo is cornered by several Entropoids, who begin to drain his life force. They are turned back, but not before the valiant superhero falls, gravely wounded.

The Vultures rush Wingo to the Fortress's medical center. Before passing out, he implores them to take up the fight while he is incapacitated.

Meanwhile, Forehead was able to trace the retreating Entropoids to their point of origin, possibly the stronghold of Dr. Spacenose himself. The Vultures should, in a fit of loyalty, bravery, or just plain pique, vow to carry the fight right to the Evil Genius himself!

■ To Hell With Spacenose

... whose stronghold happens to be set into the side of a dormant volcano in the Age Of Dinosaurs. Spacenose's fortress is well guarded by heavily-armed Entropoids and the occassional Terrible Lizard. The Vulture Warriors break into his fortress and battle with his minions, but Spacenose is ready for them. Though he now hides his withered appearance behind a mask, he has grown quite powerful from the radiations he absorbed.

The Vultures are captured.

The Vultures escape.

You know, campaign-type stuff. Captain Wingo returns to help them.

In the final battle with Spacenose, the truth of his identity as Weinstein B (or was it A?) is revealed. This gives Wingo pause, but he keeps fighting anyway. When

Do Not Disturb— Chrono-Blip in Progress.

Spacenose realizes he is losing, he escapes, bouncing through history, just as his hidden stronghold starts to collapse.

He embarks on the fiendish plan outlined earlier as an example in the Development and Sub-plots sections. The Vultures and Wingo behind him at every turn, he attempts to shoot down Lindbergh, atom bomb Lincoln and feed Moses to a *Tyrannosaurus rex*. On the slopes of Mt. Sinai, he is destroyed or stripped of his powers (unless, of course, you and yours have become big fans of his and want to keep him around for possible "escaped EGOTIST" sequels).

Wingo offers the Vulture Warriors charter membership in the Futuremen. The Vultures return to Alpha with whatever Entropoid/Futuremen/time-native technology and toys they could pick up. Swift-Y, while not sure what they accomplished, is pleased that no other weird things have shown up at Alpha. He passes out the appropriate rewards and commendations.

Citizen Kan

■ Int: Collapsacave — Night

After completing their first Collapsatron "test mission," the Vultures return to the Collapsacave to sleep. That night, as they sleep, Mark teleports them quietly onto the launching pad. They awake, grumbling and surprised.

Mark: I'm sorry to interupt your well-deserved sleep like this; it's terribly rude of me, I know, but there's an emergency and I need your help immediatly.

Vulture Leader: That's all right, Mark. What's the emergency? Where's Swift-Y?

Mark: Uh, Swift-Y and Dave are not available at this time. I'm to give you your briefing and equipment.

In the first scene, Mark briefs and equips the trusting Vultures. Their mission is to travel to Tenochtitlan, Mexico — heart of

the Aztec Empire in 1518 — to find a time-alien there who must be recovered and brought back to Alpha Complex unharmed.

Mark provides them with disguises, Aztec eagle warrior uniforms vaguely similar to their own Vulture Warrior Collapsateer suits. Of course, the eagle warrior suits are complete with Hypnon rays, hidden energy weapons and Jet-Moccassins. As usual, the transdimensional auditrons enable the team members to converse with the Aztecs in their own language.

They depart for Tenochtitlan, having no idea what the true nature of their mission is. More clever Vultures may have surmised that something is wrong from the bizarre way they were sent on the mission, without anyone but Mark being involved.

Leave the players wondering what is going on, but don't be so mysterious that they are discouraged from going. After all, Mark is a computer, right? It knows what it's doing. Computers can't lie, can they? Certainly Our Friend The Computer never lied. Hmmmmm ...

Montezuma Beach

The Vultures arrive in the island city of Tenochtitlan in 1518, several months before the Spanish Invasion. Mark told them that its chrono-blip sensors had detected a steady stream of blips coming from the area, indicating the long-time presence of a time-alien in that era.

The Vulture/eagle warriors nose around the city. At first they might be disappointed by the lack of an obvious time-alien — nobody is sitting around an Aztec Pyramid wearing a tuxedo and eating Hot Fun.

The squad looks and listens for signs of anyone who has strange powers, or is considered a relative newcomer to Tenochtitlan. After some false leads, they hear of the hermit Chazfoskan who is rumored to have great powers and who never leaves his pyramid on the edge of the city.

The Collapsateers are on their way to go find this Chazfoskan, when suddenly they are spotted by a troop of warriors from the neighboring city of Coyoacan (recently conquered by Tenochtitlan), who attack them. The team must decide whether to use the indigenous Aztec weapons they carry and possibly lose, or to use their superior firepower and possibly tip the natives that they aren't what they seem.

Chazfoskan

Arriving at the pyramid of Chazfoskan, they enter. It seems deserted. However, as they explore the temple, they find it to be defended; first by time-native traps like wild animals and disguised pits with spikes in them, and then by killer robots and laser defense systems.

When they reach the center of the pyramid, far underground, they find Chazfoskan himself, sitting in his control room. He looks vaguely familiar to them, but they are not sure why. He is enormously fat, with a deep booming voice. He is dressed in a twentieth century-style smoking jacket. They state their mission, and he laughs at them, springing his last trap. A mighty stun beam blasts them all into unconsciousness.

They awake hours later in the same spot they fell. The control room is now empty. Chazfoskan is gone.

Manhattan: 1939

The Vultures probably ask Mark for instructions. Mark assures them that this is just a minor hitch. It has tracked the rogue time traveler to Manhattan in 1939. It sends them new clothing, more attuned to New York in the late thirties, and sends them on their way.

Of course, one of your dumber Vultures might forget to take off the jet-moccasins, or the eagle warrior helmet. Something about a man in tailored evening clothes carrying a spear and wearing moccasins is bound to draw some attention.

They arrive in New York on October 31st, 1939 in the early evening (of course, on October 31st — Halloween — they might just get by with whatever wardrobe mistakes they've made). Since the trail is so fresh, Mark has tracked the former Chazfoskan to a sub-basement at the CBS radio studios.

The Vulture team manages to sneak into the studio, just in time to see their target slip out an underground loading dock into a car

No whining before it's time.

driven by several of his robot guards from Tenochtitlan. The Vultures can steal a car of their own and chase him through the streets of New York, possibly engaging in a fight with the primitive native-time slugthrowers Mark has sent along with them.

Chazfoskan's car ducks into the Holland Tunnel and heads for New Jersey with the Vultures in hot pursuit. Perhaps police join the chase, until they can be ditched.

Chazfoskan eventually stops in a deserted field by the roadside in New Jersey. The Vultures get out and look for him, perhaps changing into their battlesuits as they do so. They are unaware that this is the night of Orson Welles' famous *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast. The nearby townsfolk are out roaming the woods in large numbers to find Martian war machines.

The robot guards fight a delaying action for Chazfoskan while he escapes. The Vultures engage the robots, and a crowd of terrified New Jerseyans see the flashing laser-fire and flying men in the distance.

By the time they have finished off the robots, they find themselves hip deep in angry villagers with shotguns. Unable to pursue their target any further, they pile back in the car and speed off. In the car, it is likely that someone gets clever enough to want to talk directly with Mark.

Vulture Leader: All right, Mark, what's going on here? This mission totally stinks. Who is this guy? He just lead us into a trap that you'd have to be an incredibly knowledgable historian to come up with. Why can't we talk to Swift-Y or Dave?

Mark: >CRRRZST< I'm sorry Vulture Leader, but your >CZZT< signal is breaking up. I can't hear you. We've spotted his signal in Northern California in 1981. >BBZZT< That will be your next stop. Remember >CRSTZZ< we want him alive!

Now or Napa

The Vulture Squad is probably none too thrilled to find themselves — complete with moving 1939 Hudson — suddenly driving down a mountain road in Napa Valley, California in 1981. It is broad daylight, and they are momentarily blinded by the immediate transition from the dark 1939 night in New Jersey. They may even drive their suddenly classic car off the road out of sheer shock.

They drive around the area, looking for clues as to their mysterious target's final destination. Eventually, an old gas station owner claims that he's heard there's somebody living up at the old Kane vineyards. The mysterious millionaire that bought the place years and years ago supposedly finally got around to moving in to the big mansion he had built up there.

The Vultures ask this fellow the way there, and move on. He remarks how nice it is to see folks dressed nice (assuming the Vultures are still wearing their fine 1939 evening clothes).

At the Kane mansion, they find an enormous wrought iron gate topped with a giant "K." Much like the temple at Tenochtitlan, they find themselves faced with another bewildering variety of time-native and time-alien defenses. They fight their way through to the central control room, and again find the man of mystery sitting in his control chair. Mark signals the team leader to take out the remote control.

Kane: I congratulate you on once again finding me. At first I thought you had stumbled on me by accident, but now I can only assume that your technicians have activated my Mark III. I warn you that I will destroy myself before I ever return to that Hell. Which one of my former colleagues sent you?

The Vultures may get the "my Mark III" clue and realize who it is they've got in front of them. Whether they do or not, Mark addresses its creator.

Mark: They were not sent by any High Programmer, Great Kouble-U-KAN. I sent them. I have new information for you that may change your outlook.
Vulture Leader: You sent us, Mark? Why you double-crossing ...
Vulture Warrior: Wait a minutecycle! This guy is Kouble-U-KAN, inventor of the Transdimensional Collapsatron?

KAN assures them that it is in fact him. KAN asks Mark how it found him. Mark tells KAN that his presence in Tenochtitlan for so long was starting to create a chrono-blip problem. Mark was searching Aztec times for KAN anyway — his codename for his new destination had given Mark a substantial clue: Rosebud.

The rose was an Aztec symbol for life, therefore a rosebud was the state before life

but not quite death. Mark felt this image fit the Great KAN's need for escape.

Kan: It's my own fault. I built you too well. But what was so important that you had to drag these brave warriors around time to tell me about?

The Once And Future KAN

Mark then proceeds to tell Kouble-U-KAN of the Crash, and the political and social unrest that followed. It suggests that the time is ripe for the Great KAN to return and seize power to lead the people of Alpha Complex out from under the shadow of the Computer forever.

In all probability, the Vultures are stunned. They have never heard so much openly subversive material before in their lives; particularly from a computer! The big question is, how do they respond?

As much as they might all be closet revolutionaries, Mark has just completed totally manipulating them to accomplish a personal end. This might remind them uncomfortably of a certain other Computer only just recently unplugged. As for KAN, he might be the nicest, gentlest wisest man who ever lived, but it might be difficult to forget that he's just spent the last several days trying to kill them with every weapon at his disposal. The legend of Kouble-U-KAN could sway them either way, depending on who told it to them.

To some KAN is a vanished folk hero — champion of the people: to others, the absent High Programmer is a dangerous commie mutant sympathizer whose goal is the eventual destruction of everything good and decent in Alpha Complex society. In truth, he's a little bit of both. This is where the Vulture team has to decide its loyalty. You may want to put them to a secret ballot.

Of course, the Vulture Squad could simply follow orders and bring him back to the Complex without deciding, just to see what Swift-Y does.

In any case, now that he knows that a time-alien cannot live too long in an alien time without eventually causing Major Chrono-Blips, Kouble-U-KAN decides to return to Alpha Complex willingly. He tells Mark and the team that he's not sure what he'll do once he gets there. They should have no idea whether this is the truth or another manipulation.

Back To The Future, Too & Free

Unknown to Mark, Swift-Y has the Vulture Warrior quarters and the launching pad monitored at all times. One of his HP flunkies (probably that Dan-Y-QLE-4 guy he promised he had fired) wakes him up in the middle of the nightcycle to tell him that the Vultures have been sent somewhere by Mark without any prior authorization.

Swift-Y, being a fairly sharp guy for a High Programmer-in-disguise, has been expecting this for a little while now. He contacts Sargent-R-OCK and tells him to prepare a reception for whatever Mark is bringing home to roost. Swift-Y is pretty sure it must be none other than the Great Kouble-U-KAN himself.

Dave-B-OMN is awakened by the alarm system he set up to notify him if the Collapsatron was ever used without his notification. He rouses his fellow scientists and reminds them to arm themselves. This might get ugly.

Sargent-R reviews his tough IntSec Blue troopers in the Collapsacave staging area. He's got 20 armored troops, picked from various IntSec units for a Collapsatron emergency situation Code Violet — imminent arrival of dangerous time-aliens. The standard guard unit that protects the Collapsacave has been given the night off. They might think twice before gunning down their own Vulture Warrior superiors.

Now it all comes down to what the Vulture Warriors decide to do when the emerge from the time stream onto the launching pad. Whatever their political bias, they might make their decision based on the 20 Blue troopers standing by when they arrive. Odds are, a highly trained and elite Armed Forces unit isn't going to like the idea of handing their prisoner over to a bunch of IntSec losers. Either way, the fate of Alpha Complex is in their hands. Will Kouble-U-KAN lead the Vultures to take over the Collapsacave — and eventually the High Programmer Enclave? Will the Vultures simply surrender their prisoner and go back to their barracks to await the next mission? How will Swift-Y take it out on the Vultures and Mark should they fight and lose?

Only one way to find out, true believers. Play the campaign! (Do write us here at West End and tell us how it turned out.)

The Clone Who Would be King

The High Programmer elite has reviewed its slipping position in the polls. Why don't the clones of Alpha Complex show them the love and respect they used to?

(Perhaps their lives aren't as obviously in danger? That is, of course, the real reason, but we don't think they want to face that. The High Programmers used to think they were respected for their exalted positions and natural right to rule. Hardly the first time this sort of thing has happened ...)

In a secret meeting, the High Programmers decide that they are losing popularity because they lack charisma and natural leadership ability. Well, at least they got something right.

They ask Mark and Dave to scan history for personages of great charisma who commanded the love and respect of millions. Dave and Mark, not knowing the reason behind their research, simply follow orders, compiling a list of those who seemed to sway entire civilizations on charisma and force of personality.

The HP Enclave pores over the list and its sketchy biographical material for days. They settle on four people: two entertainers, one dictator, and one elected official.

The reasons for the selection of the final four are varied. All four had captured the attention of the masses in vastly different ways—some through apparent wisdom, some through apparent strength, some through apparent sex appeal. Whether they really possessed any of these qualities is (of course) totally unimportant.

Once the HP Enclave has decided on its Fabulous Four, they call in Swift-Y and outline their plan. Swift-Y, in turn, calls in the *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* for a brief mission briefing.

Their mission: obtain tissue samples and brain wave patterns for clone duplication. Targets: Abraham Lincoln, Benito Mussolini, Marilyn Monroe, and Elvis Presley. Once duplicated, these magnetic personalities would be used as media tools to capture the imaginations of the public. Could happen. Sure. What could possibly go wrong?

Map To The Star's Times

Nickt-I-SLA outfits the team in the standard uniform of the Collapsateer suits.

For the times they are visiting, they won't stand out too much. He also gives the team a complete body-snatching kit: a brain wave recorder and a series of small cell sample jars. The Vultures need any piece of tissue they can collect from their targets to create the clone.

Nickt-I supplies each Vulture with holocube representations of the target celebrities so that they can be identified by sight.

An Important Note

Of all the campaigns suggested here, this one is by far the silliest. Chasing after famous historical figures for a tissue sample? Kind of out there, we know.

However, it also has some great humor potential which should not be wasted. Sneaking up behind the world-renowned with the intention of clipping their nails or cutting their hair is likely to be misinterpreted as a hostile act. Let the players get real close, then take the chance away from them.

Because of its very silliness, this one needs to be very difficult, to make the players feel as ridiculous as possible.

Even so, this is going to be a little tricky. The targets have to be cloned at the height of their powers — times at which they will be most closely guarded.

All equipment concealed in their Collapsateer suits, they stand upon the launching pad and Mark sends them into the past.

(Entropoid note: This sort of mission, with its potential for close contact with Important Historical Figures, is a fairly wild violation of the laws of probability and time. If things start to go badly, a few chrono-blips or a couple of Entropoid attacks occur. Worse yet, Captain Wingo can show up to prevent any major catastrophic paradox they Vultures might cause.

Just a thought for advanced players.

Also, in the event of a major failure, the HP Enclave might decide to scrap whatever celebrity they were after and go for the next one. Or they might change celebrities to a secondary target in the same era.)

Four Score and Four Hundred Years Ago ...

The Vultures find themselves on the Presidential train on its way to Gettysburg in 1863. Lincoln is two cars up and, of course, heavily guarded as he prepares for the Address. The Vulture uniforms bear the gold trim of Union officers from some obscure regiment. They discover that the train should pull into Gettysburg in under an hour. They must decide when and where they should try to get close enough to Abe to grab some skin or a piece of hair.

It would be clever of the Vultures to think of holding the President's hat for him while he sits down or steps off the train or something. There are sure to be some stray hairs and flecks of dandruff in Abe's topper. If not, they are going to have to get real close with a nail file or a pair of clippers.

Of course, there is always asking. Who knows, old Abe might be flattered if one of his generals asked him for a hair from his beard to carry with him into battle. On the other hand, he might think the guy was totally queer in his attic, and have him locked up. All depends on his mood, really.

The other problem is the brainwave recorder. It is a small tube with a little light at one end. It needs to be less than 30 meters from the subject and pointed more or less at his head. Pointing anything at a President's head and getting away with it is not an easy task.

Just as the Vultures complete their assignment, they are ordered to join a Union cavalry force to ensure the President is safe from a nearby Confederate band.

"Very sorry, Captain, but this an emergency. We need every horseman we can

"Gory, Gory, What's it to ya? I nuked my teachbot, hallelujah!"

Another Important Note

The inability of Mark to provide an immediate rescue, demonstrated in the previous adventure, should prevent the Vultures from doing anything really sloppy because they're sure they'll be lifted out of any mess they get themselves into.

It's a little too easy for them to just stun twenty fascist guards, jump Benito and pop out before the entire military might of Fascist Europe jumps down their time-traveling throats.

If they try this, now or at any other time, make sure another chrono-blip prevents Mark from pulling them out until they've been (repeatedly) creamed by Fascist troops. They'll learn.
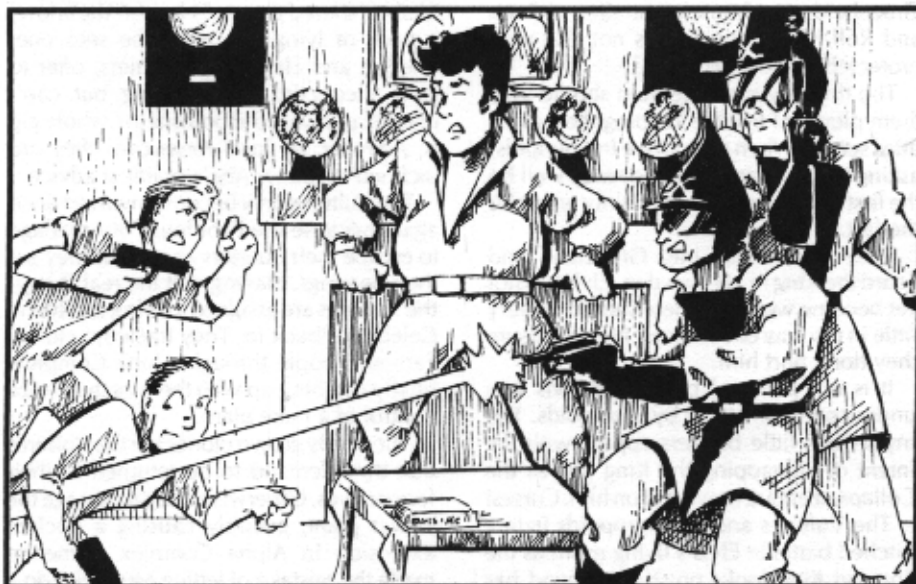
get. You'll be riding with the Michigan regiment under Colonel Custer." If the Vultures signal Mark to rescue them from further involvement in the Civil War (a smart move on their parts), a chrono-blip blocks the transmission.

So the Vultures, who have most likely never been on horseback, find themselves galloping wildly across the Pennsylvania countryside amid cannonfire and clashing swords. This little encounter should keep them from ever relying on Mark for a quick escape. You probably should let the blip clear up in time for Mark to rescue them from the hands of J.E.B. Stuart's Confederate Cavalry—or whatever marauding bands might still be roaming near Gettysburg four months after the great battle.

Mark's rescue is short-lived. The jar and the brainwave cassette with Abe's vibes are transported back to Alpha. The Vultures, however, find themselves sent instantly to their next assignment.

Il Duce Vita

The Vultures find themselves in Rome, 1938. They (or Mark) remove the Union Cavalry insignia and replace it with Italian Fascist party regalia. Luckily, black was the color of choice for fascists in 1938.

This guy is even more difficult than Lincoln. Mussolini is a dictator, constantly surrounded by guards. Also, the easiest type of tissue sample to steal — hair — doesn't work in this case. Benito Mussolini is bald like nobody's business. He frequently makes public appearances, so at least the brain waves shouldn't be too hard to collect.

To get to Il Duce, it would seem they will need to sneak into his palatial sleeping quarters and hypnotise him while they get a skin sample. Maybe they could bribe his manicurist for a few toenails.

In this adventure, you have a few Special Bonus Celebrities you can throw in. Maybe

Don't you step on my Blue Suede Shoes!

Uncle Adolf (you know, that German trouble-maker) could pop by for a visit. Famous film director Federico Fellini is just hanging out somewhere in Rome trying desperately *not* to get drafted. Maybe you see him at Fascist Headquarters, presenting bogus medical records attesting to his inability to serve due to chronic bad health. Then again, there's always the Pope — he's good for a few laughs.

So we assume the Vultures get what they came for and make their retreat. Again, the bottled dictator vanishes and they find themselves elsewhere.

The Seven-Year Switch

Marilyn Monroe is next on the hit parade, and not quite so closely guarded. This time the players find themselves in Hollywood in 1957. They once again convert their multi-purpose uniforms, this time emerging as a bunch of guys in black suits. They remove the Italian insignia and slip on skinny ties, provided by Nickt-I.

They have no vehicle, of course, and while Hollywood is a crazy town, it *still* would stop to notice flying men in black suits. They may want to steal a car.

Mark directs them to Marilyn's home, where they are just in time to see her pull out of the driveway. They may follow, but are unable to catch her until they reach Spago's, a fabulous nightspot on Sunset Blvd. Unless some clever Vulture thinks to use a Hypnon ray on the doorman, they're not likely get inside. They could always shoot their way in, but that would be a little conspicuous even for Vultures. No?

Once inside the restaurant/nightclub, it's a Special Guest Celebrity overload. Kirk Douglas, Cary Grant, Marlon Brando, basi-

cally any Hollywood movie star who was alive and working in 1957 hangs out at Spago's. Including a certain Marilyn lookalike named Jayne Mansfield.

Now, they don't look that much alike, but there is about a 50-50 chance that some dopey Vulture takes a tissue sample from any blonde starlet in the room. This could be very embarrassing for the Vultures once the sample reaches Alpha Complex. At least, we know that we would be kinda bummed if we wanted Marilyn and ended up with Jayne.

The Vultures may have to pose as Italian movie producers looking to put Marilyn in a big picture, or some other lame ruse. Maybe Mark disguises the Vultures in famous movie star masks; they could appear to be Humphrey Bogart, Eddie G. Robinson and Jimmy Cagney, or the Marx Brothers, etc. It would be particularly embarrassing if they are disguised as someone who is dead (as Bogart was in 1957).

Remember, the key here is the humor and the frustration of a bunch of yo-yos from the far-flung future mingling at a Hollywood party so they can grab a piece of Marilyn for cloning. Keep things ridiculous. If (when) the Vultures manage to get a sample of Marilyn (without someone like Gregory Peck socking them for bothering her), they move on to the next adventure.

Dawn Raid on Graceland

Next stop: Elvis.

Once the Vultures are finished with Marilyn, they get a little surprise. In an effort to cut the budget, the Collapsatron is not taking them to their next assignment. A passenger train from Union Station in Los Angeles will bear them to Memphis and

Graceland, new home of the King of Rock and Roll. Once again, he's not that well protected. Should be a snap.

The three days on the train should give them plenty of trouble keeping their identities secret. When they arrive in Memphis, asking to see Graceland, they may well be the first of millions; they certainly won't be the last.

They must sneak into Graceland and beard the King in his own den. Elvis has not yet become weird, so there should be very little in the way of defences. Just make sure they don't hurt him.

It is our personal belief that Elvis was under continual attack by Entropoids. The mysterious little buggers appear with the intent of kidnapping the King just as the Collapsateers are moving in on him. Curses!

The Vultures and the Entropoids fight a pitched battle in Elvis's living room as the amazed King looks on. If this squad has never faced these beings before, it should be pretty interesting. Once they've defeated the Entropoids, it's likely the Vultures have to search for Elvis, who probably ran away or called the cops.

Having obtained their little piece o' Elvis, the Vultures are finally returned to the Collapsacave, there to see the fruits of their hard and harried labors.

Epilogue

Several days later, the new clones are at last finished.

The High Programmers offer the former celebrities power and wealth if they cooperate and help them control the populace. Mussolini is outraged at having been "kidnapped," not to mention this ridiculous idea of "shared power." Honest Abe knows a pack of lying rats when he sees one. Marilyn and Elvis, as performers, offer to give a concert or something but can't understand what the point of the whole gig is. Anyway, as good Americans they are inclined to follow Abe's political advice.

The Vultures only become involved once again because the Fabulous Four manage to escape their quarters as soon as they get their bearings. Having met the real things, the Vultures are assigned to bring the Rogue Celebrities back in. They track the cloned Famous People through Alpha Complex, finally catching up with them as they seize control of a nuke plant.

The newly grown clones tell the Vultures that they demand to be returned to their former lives. Otherwise, they'll damage the power plant, possibly causing a nuclear explosion in Alpha Complex (someone made the mistake of letting Mussolini do a little reading on the structure and power systems of Alpha Complex. He may not understand the physics behind nuclear power, but he knows which wires to cut).

We like to leave things with a good moral dilemma (like the climax of "Citizen KAN"). The Vultures could take a chance of rushing the cloned celebrities and risk Benito blowing up most of Alpha. They could try talking them down, somehow convincing them they can't go back (this could be done using the Collapsatron — show the clones what happens when two identical Elvis's — Elvii? What's the plural form of Elvis? — inhabit the same moment in space/time).

Perhaps some compromise could be worked out. Maybe Elvis wouldn't mind performing for clones. Perhaps Abe can try to run for office in Alpha Complex. Maybe Mussolini would like to try his hand at keeping the transport tubes running on time. Probably they'd all rather be sent to some desert island to retire.

Whatever way, the Vultures are responsible for their presence in Alpha; when things get out of control the HP elite claims that the whole problem is the Vultures' fault — bringing these psychopathic samples back from the past like that.

The resolution is up to you. Who knows? Elvis might just make one rough and tough Vulture Warrior ...

Entropolypse, Now!

One fine morning in the Collapsacave, the Vultures awaken to the sound of an alarm. They pile out of their barracks to find the Collapsacave under attack.

Entropoids, dressed in armor and carrying energy weapons and slugthrowers, are emerging from an open wormhole on Mark's launching pad. Mark should be able to send them back to wherever they're coming from, but it seems to be non-functional.

Right now, Sargent-R-OCK's Blue IntSec guard is putting up a shaky defense against the ebony Monsters from Beyond Space and Time. The Vultures can grab Plasma Weapons from Nickt-I and help turn the tide until Mark comes back on line and sends them Back Where They Came From.

Swift-Y calls a meeting for himself, the Vulture Warriors, Mark III and Dave. Mark and Dave feel that this sort of horrifying attack on the Collapsacave can only be the result of some monstrous paradox glitch; somewhere out there is a Major Chrono-Blip that needs to be fixed big time.

Mark scans the space/time continuum and finds a bizarre chrono-blip that seems to stretch from 1937 to Alpha Complex in the present day. Swift-Y decides to send the Vultures to the blip's point of origin in 1937 to clear the matter up, as Mark and Dave check for the presence of a time-alien in Alpha Complex. Mark sets the time of arrival for several days before the creation of the blip, and the Vultures are off — once again in their Collapsateer suits.

This is an emergency; there is no time for historical research with the fabric of space/time unravelling at the edges.

Seven Stranded Castaways

The Vultures find themselves suddenly on a small tropical island. Checking for signs of life, they find a small military outpost. The men wear tan uniforms and their flag is a rising sun (of course, the Vultures wouldn't know a Japanese outpost if they tripped over one — and they have). All seems quiet on the island; no sign of a major space/time rip going on here.

While Tony-O slept, greatness eluded him.

Yes, the young woman is Amelia Earhart, the famous aviatrix who vanished in a Lockheed Elektra 10 over the South Pacific in 1937. It is our wildly conjectured opinion that she must have been captured by a Japanese air patrol, since this makes for a dramatic storyline we can, and certainly will, exploit.

In defense of the (quite probably mythical) Japanese, we should mention that Amelia is on a spy mission for the U.S. government. Her captors may be unnecessarily brutal, but they are correct in their assumptions about her.

So, the Vultures wait patiently, secure in the knowledge that something absolutely terrible will happen any second. They are not disappointed. A tri-motored propellor aircraft flies over the camp, a trio of smaller aircraft on its tail firing wing-mounted slugthrowers at it. The first plane catches fire and the Vultures see the pilot leap out, opening a parachute.

The Vultures reach the landing site just in time to see the pilot captured by the troops. She is an attractive young woman with short hair. The Vultures hear her call her captors all sorts of nasty names. "You Jap ********! You killed Fred! You'll pay for this!" she cries as they carry her off.

Your task as gamemaster is to trick your Vultures into freeing Amelia. *They* create the chrono-blip that causes all the trouble in the first place. How brilliant! How subtle!

Perhaps you can suggest that the Japanese aircraft don't look "primitive" enough, or the Japanese soldiers resemble Entropoids to the Vultures. Play on their sympathies — this poor young woman about to be tortured for no apparent reason by a group of soldiers.

If this doesn't move your heroes to action, have a Japanese soldier discover their presence on the island — that should force their hands.

In any case, get Amelia back to Alpha Complex — if necessary she jumps into Mark's wormhole before it closes. As the Vultures arrive with Amelia, they begin to realize their horrible mistake.

■ Collapsacave Bats

The *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* materialize on the launching pad with Amelia Earhart. Swift-Y and the R&D scientists slap their foreheads with their open palms. What a bunch of dopes!

"Don't you realize what you've done!" yells Swift-Y. His last words are lost in the sound of twenty four-inch long Japanese fighter planes (Mitsubishi Zeros) coming roaring out of the Wormhole behind Ame-

lia (need help with the sound effects? Watch WWII movies—*Tora! Tora! Tora!* is the absolute classic).

For a moment they look cute; then they start firing needle-sized slugs and dropping bombs the size of cigarette lighters. The Vultures fight the tiny time-alien fighters until all are destroyed.

When it's all over, Mark explains the mini-Zeros to the Vultures.

"I'm afraid that by bringing Miss Earhart to Alpha Complex you've *created* the chrono-blip we sent you back to erase. As long as the blip is aggravated by her presence outside her native timeline, we will be besieged by bizarre paradox creatures such as the miniature Japanese aircraft.

"You must somehow return things to normal or the fabric of space/time may completely unravel. It's all rather depressing to me ..."

But how, the Vultures ask? How can we set things right without handing this very nice young lady over to the nasty Japanese to be killed?

Before Mark can answer, the nearest IntSec Blue trooper dissolves into a black hole which engulfs Amelia and then disappears. An Entropoid Agent in their very midst! The swine! They'll pay for this!

■ Our Heroes Finally Get To Rescue Somebody

Mark plots the coordinates of the departing Entropoid spy and gets a fix on his final destination — Wall, South Dakota in 1978. We bet that without thinking twice, the Vultures go off in hot pursuit. Whatever the Entropoids want with her, it will probably

endanger the entire universe and all of history. At the very least.

The Collapsateers, emerging from the Wormhole, find themselves on Corn Boulevard. Mark seems to think Amelia is inside the building in front of which they are standing. The sign says "World Headquarters — First Church Of Gizmology" with a banner underneath that reads "Really Big Meeting Tonight."

It would seem that the Entropoids have some plan of presenting Amelia to the followers of "Scienetics." The potential for horrifying disaster seems obvious to us. A small lunatic-fringe religion uncovers the real Amelia Earhart, missing now for 40 years. It could increase their membership, give them power and influence or, worse yet, sell copies of their books. This mad plan must be stopped!

The Vultures must rescue Amelia from the clutches of Gizmology and the Entropoid agents without causing even more paradoxes and chrono-blips. Subtlety is called for here, in the form of stun-guns and Hypnon rays. A major shootout is to be avoided at all—well, most—costs.

The Special Bonus Celebrity in this adventure would be none other than L. Ron Dullard himself, author of "Scienetics." Dullard is a cynical man who once wrote cheesy science fiction stories before turning Best-selling Guru. His followers are cheerful fanatics. (Note: Dullard died in 1986, yet he has had two new books — 500 page books — on the bestseller lists every year since then. Perhaps he is a robot, or maybe some kind of Entropoid Clone Doppelganger. Worth looking into, for sure.)
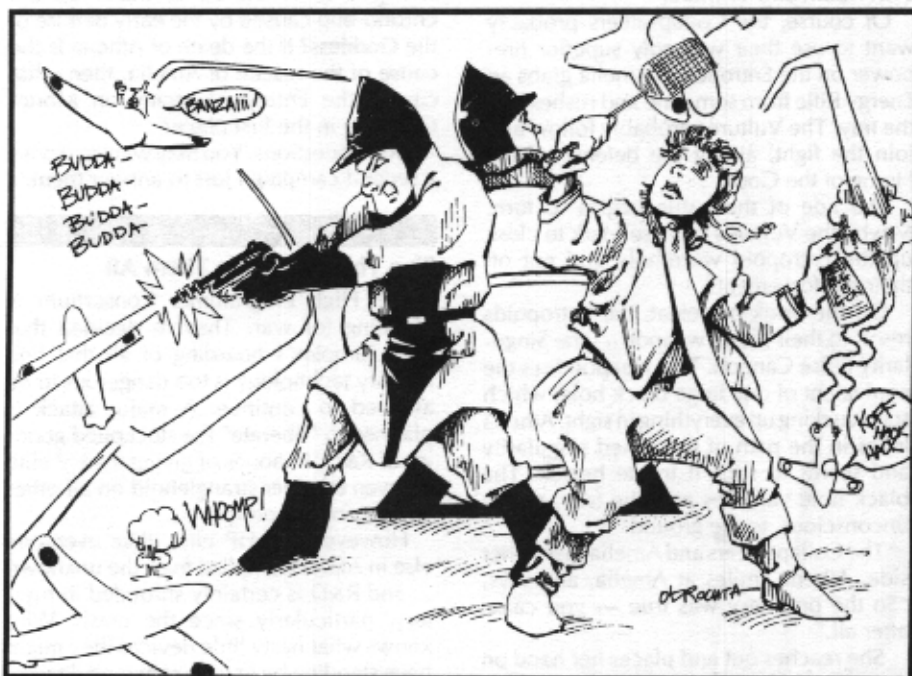
Obviously, something has gone horribly wrong.

After liberating Amelia from the clutches of Applied Gizmology, the Vultures are still left with that big, ol' Moral Dilemma. What to do with her?

It's All Greek To Us

Back at the Collapsacave with the Timelost Aviatrix, Our Heroes argue her final fate. Suddenly, Mark breaks in.

"Excuse me for interupting, but we have yet another Major Chrono-Blip coming up the line from the very distant past. I suggest that you investigate before it reaches us and instigates further attacks on the Collapsacave. As it is probably tied in with the presence of Miss Earhart, I further suggest that you bring her along." (If you can come up with a better rationale for her presence — by all means, use it.)

On Mark's advice (or not), the Collapsateers leave immediately for Ancient Greece, only to find themselves emerging from the time stream amidst a great battle. They are on the lower slopes of Mount Olympus; mountain home to the Greek gods.

A large army of Entropoids (disguised as Napolean's Grand Armee) are advancing up the side of the mountain. A greatly outnumbered force of Athenan soldiers is fighting them off, but their swords and shields are no match for cannons and rifles. The Entropoids are swarming through a still-open wormhole and there seems to be no end to them.

Leading the Athenans is a flying woman dressed in flowing robes who looks quite like the Timelost Amelia. She seems to be calling down lightning on the heads of the Entropoid troops. She is Athena, Goddess of Wisdom and Warfare.

Of course, the Collapsateers probably want to use their wickedly superior firepower on the Entropoids. Amelia grabs an Energy Rifle from someone and rushes into the fray. The Vultures probably follow and join the fight, aiding the defense of the Home of the Gods.

The tide of the battle begins to turn. Maybe the Vultures can use Mark to close up the Entropoid wormhole and cut off their reinforcements.

On the brink of defeat, the Entropoids resort to their secret weapon — the Singularity Pulse Cannon. This weapon fires the equivalent of one large black hole, which starts sucking up everything in sight. Athena leaps in the path of the naked singularity and seems to suck it inside herself. The black hole vanishes and she falls, nearly unconscious, to the ground.

The Collapsateers and Amelia rush to her side. Athena smiles at Amelia, and says, "So the prophesy was true — you came after all."

She reaches out and places her hand on Amelia's forehead. A blinding burst of

energy transfers the Goddesshood from the dying Greek to the Timelost American. Athena dies, still smiling, as Amelia rises off the ground, glowing. She speaks to the (stunned, we'd bet) Collapsateers.

"It is over — the chrono-blip has been removed and the time stream continues uninterrupted. Thank you, Warriors, you have helped us to fulfill our joint destiny. Pallas Athena/Amelia Earhart are now one being in Goddesshood."

Mark contacts the team and tells them that he can no longer detect any major chrono-blip activity. We'd bet that, utterly confused, the Vultures return to Alpha.

Allow the players some post-game time to argue about the meaning of this little campaign. Was the Vulture interference part of the natural flow of events since the beginning of time?

Did the Vulture interference cause the death of Athena, or was it designed (or arranged or whatever) to patch up the chrono-blip caused by the early demise of the Goddess? If the death of Athena is the cause of the rescue of Amelia, then what causes the Entropoid attack on Mount Olympus in the first place?

Good questions. You may want to devise a second campaign just to answer them.

Five Things to Rule Them All

The High Programmer Consortium is planning for war. They've decided that R&D Simplex's hoarding of all that fine military technology is too dangerous to be allowed to continue. A major attack is planned to "liberate" the stockpiled goodies of R&D, in hopes of giving the HP elite an even stronger stranglehold on all other groups and simplexes.

However, the HP elite, (like everyone else in Alpha Complex) fears the unknown ... and R&D is certainly shrouded in mystery, particularly since the crash. Who knows what nasty little devices they might have standing by in case someone decides

to pull a fast one? This problem is keeping the High Programmers up at night, and they need their sleep.

They tell Swift-Y to send those Vulture Warriors of his back to the past for some powerful weapons that can give them the much needed edge over the R&D arsenal. And they want it done yesterday.

Swift-Y takes their little shopping list and tells them it will be done. Yesterday.

Now, the gag in this particular campaign comes from the content of that shopping list. What the HP Enclave knows about Ancient History could probably fit on one sheet of loose-leaf paper. What they think they know could fill several very large books. The "shopping list" of Ancient Weapons should prove that military history is one of the subjects covered in the large books, not scrawled on the loose-leaf paper.

To keep the joke fresh, each mission objective must remain in a sealed container until the Vulture Team has been deployed in the past. Once there, they open the container and find out what object of great power they have to steal.

Once they hear the objective, all of your players should immediatly realize that the mission is utterly impossible to complete as outlined by the HP Consortium (or so we hope. If not, the state of public education in this country is as bad as they say), although their characters may see nothing unusual about their targets. Your gaming group must be true roleplayers and try to figure out the mission as best as they can without making assumptions based on their own knowledge of history.

So, the Vultures don their Collapsateer suits for their first foray of the mission.

There are five separate trips to pick up five separate artifacts. To keep these military secrets from leaking out, they are not even being told where and when the missions send them. They are to return to the Collapsacave between missions to receive their new instructions. Mark sends them off in complete ignorance (not an enormous change from the usual, actually).

"Nuts!"

The **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** find themselves knee-deep in snow, somewhere in a forest. Explosions boom all around them. In the distance they can see groups of men in grey and green armor blasting at each other with primitive slugthrowers and grenades. Lumbering vehicles that might be early warbots are also visible in the fray.

Opening his mission briefing canister, the Vulture Leader reads the following to his men.

Brave Vultures:

You are just outside of the complex called Bastogne in the year 1944. The conflict you see around you is known as Double-you Double-you Eye Eye in history books. No one is quite sure why.

The legend of the Battle of Bastogne (also known as the Battle of the Bulge — again, no one is quite sure why this is) is as follows:

A small group of American soldiers under the command of a General MacAuliffe were completely surrounded by the German army. The German general asked his American counterpart to surrender. How could he expect his troops to hold out any longer?

MacAuliffe replied, "Nuts!"

Somehow, the Americans managed to hold out until reinforcements arrived to save them. It is not known what "Nuts" are, or how they can be used in combat. However, the HP Enclave wishes to have as many "Bastogne Nuts" as you can possibly procure to aid them in strengthening the armed forces behind the HP consortium.

Thank you and Good Luck,
Swift-Y-LZR-6

Of course, we here in the twentieth century know that Chester MacAuliffe was just being a typical American faced with certain defeat. Vulgarity is the best defense. However, our poor little Vultures are going to be stuck asking potentially embarassing questions.

Asking to see another soldier's "Nuts!" is bound to cause misunderstandings.

G.I.: Say, you guys look lost. What's your outfit? I don't recognize that patch.

Vulture: Uh, we're with a special commando unit: the 202nd Vultures.

G.I.: Never heard of 'em.

Vulture: Well, it's, uh, real top secret. By the way, we were wondering if we could see your "Nuts." We're all out.

G.I.: Oh, a wise guy, huh?
    >POW<

It's sure to cause a little confusion and maybe a fist fight. We are hopeful the Vultures can wise up and get out of there before they become Panzer-food (uhp, we're lying. We're not hopeful at all, but it seemed rude to say that). Remember, they have walked into a combat zone — the German army is closing every minute.

Extra credit: The American division under MacAuliffe was a paratrooper group known as the 101st Airborne — the Screaming Eagles. This seems sure to put the Vultures onto the idea of capturing a "Screaming Eagle" if the whole "Nuts" thing doesn't work out quite right.

As for Bonus Celebrities, for one you've got old MacAuliffe himself. He should need no description; his character is pretty much summed up by his response to the surrender request. The American general who eventually shows up to rescue him is George Patton, commanding the 3rd Army. Patton is rather like MacAuliffe — a tough nut.

Encounters here include all varieties of German (and American, for the politically ambivalent) soldiery. Your basic German or American soldier carryies a semi-auto rifle or automatic machine gun. German Tiger tanks carry about the same armor as your average big-time warbot. American Sherman and German Mark IV panzers are somewhat weaker.

■ Big Cats With Wings

The next mission actually has a vague possibility for success. The Vultures find themselves on a tropical island. Once again they open their mission briefing canister.

Vulture Warriors,

Okay, so our information was a little spotty about Bastogne. So sue us. This one should be easier. A cake walk.

You are now at Pearl Harbor in the year 1941. The afore-mentioned Double-you Double-you Eye Eye is still going on. Or rather, is going on before. I mean, it was going on before your last mission and here it is going on again. Enough, already. You know what I mean.

You are in what was commonly known as the Pacific Theatre, though there doesn't seem to have been a great deal of professional drama performed in that

time. Anyway, we believe Pearl Harbor has one of America's greatest secret weapons during the war — The Flying Tigers. The Flying Tigers were huge beasts that helped the Americans defeat Japan. A combination of stun guns and Hypnon rays should be able to immobilize them for capture.

Don't Forget To Write,
Swift-Y-LZR-6

If the Vultures pose as tourists and ask around, they might get to see the Curtis P-40 Warhawk, a single-engine fighter craft that was actually obsolete against the Japanese Zero. The Warhawk pilots who volunteered to fight the Japanese in China often painted the noses of their planes with a snarling animal snout. As such, the squadron, and the planes, came to be known as "Flying Tigers."

The date of arrival at Pearl Harbor? Maybe December 5th? If so, the players had better rush stealing their aircraft. In two days, almost every Warhawk on Pearl will be a twisted and burning wreck.

Of course, a bunch of funny-looking guys wandering around Pearl and clumsily asking questions about American fighter planes might find themselves imprisoned as Japanese spies. It would be very unfortunate to be in jail as a Japanese spy after the bombing of Pearl Harbor — lynch mobs can be so ugly. Of course, if the Vultures live long enough they can be executed formally by the U.S. Army.

More squeamish GMs who wish to avoid the carnage of the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl are directed to 1937-40 China where they can have a little more fun with the real "Flying Tiger" squadron. The original "Tigers" were American mercenaries paid by the Chinese government to fight the Japanese. They set up airfields outside of Chinese villages and harrassed the Japanese forces from the air.

They are unlikely to be too thrilled about attempts to steal their Warhawks. Special Bonus Celebrities: General Chiang-Kai-shek, leader of the Chinese Nationalists and "Pappy" Boyington, pilot for the "Flying Tigers" and subject of the TV series *Black Sheep Squadron*. Boyington, a cynical mercenary, quits the "Flying Tigers" because he's not getting paid.

■ Red Thread?

The HP elite are beginning to lose their patience with this mission. At least this last time the clones brought them back one funny-looking ancient aircraft which the most rudimentary Alpha Complex Vulture Fighter could shoot down in a few seconds. We're sure they were real impressed.

This time, the Vultures emerge from the wormhole on a dusty African plain. The mission briefing canister —

Collapsateers:

So far this isn't going too good, I know, but have a little faith — this time for sure.

You are in Africa during what they called "The Zulu Wars." Below you in the valley is the British Colonial Outpost at Roarkes Drift.

According to legend, a major "Zulu" attack ensues within two days. The vastly superior force of Zulu warriors is repelled by the British, using a weapon known only as the Thin Red Line.

You must locate this weapon and bring it back to Alpha Complex. You may have to wait for the British to employ it in their own defense, otherwise there is the risk of a major chrono-blip.

As usual, we have the greatest confidence in you, etc. etc. Just get the thing and come on back, okay?

Enough, already!

Swift-Y-LZR-6

As in the previous missions, there is no secret weapon known as the Thin Red Line. In the historical battle of Roarkes Drift, the Zulus almost completely wiped out the small British garrison. However, the dwindling group of Colonial Troops managed to hold out just long enough for reinforcements to arrive. It was actually a pretty horrifyingly violent battle.

The Thin Red Line refers to the thin line of British troops (in red uniforms) that held out against the Zulus (of course, before you start thinking, "Gee, what heroism!" do remember that the Colonial troops had breechloading rifles and revolvers. The Zulus had some very pretty spears with dangly feathers, and bows).

The NPCs your Vultures are liable to run into during this encounter are a couple of hundred British Colonial troopers and a couple of thousand Zulu warriors. The Zulus are armed as stated above.

British officers have swords. The Colonials are your standard lower-class Cockney Rudyard Kipling characters. The Zulus are some very angry and incredibly tall (aver-

aging around six-four) black men. They are fierce, but not necessarily savage. Of course, where it comes to white men — particularly white men with guns — they are not real nice, to say the very least. What color are your clones?

If the Vultures are able to grasp what the Thin Red Line actually is, Alpha Complex could end up with a new guard unit of British Colonial Troops. High-ranking officers in the British Army wore black uniforms at that time, so it is conceivable that the bewildered troops might actually follow the Vultures' directions (most Colonial Troops were sprung from prisons or scraped out of the gutters of London, and weren't given to lengthy cogitation).

Vulture: All right, Lads! New orders! Step through this door!

Trooper: 'Ere, now. That looks like a bleedin' rotatin' black 'ole! What you want us in there for, eh?

Vulture: Fresh rations and comfortable sleeping quarters, right this way!

Trooper: Well, that's a different story, then, i'n' it? Into the black 'ole we go!

■ Rocket Men

Another exercize in futil—uh, mission of utmost importance. The Vultures step out of the wormhole to find themselves in Massachusetts in 1775. Again, the mission briefing canister —

Guys:

Okay, so that last one was a little messy. We're really, really sorry. Never happen again. Promise. No hordes of angry natives this time. No siree!

During the Revolutionary War, the American Colonies somehow defeated the superior British army. We've long wondered how they were able to do it. Now at last, the mystery has been solved: They had Minutemen!

We had previously thought that nuclear weapons were invented around a hundred and fifty years later, but our researches have revealed that the revolutionary army's first line of defense was the Minuteman, which we know to be a small TacNuc.

We have placed you at Concord one day before the first major engagement of the Revolutionary War. At the battle of Concord, the first Minutemen were employed. It souldn't be any trouble for you to grab at least one Minuteman to bring back to Alpha for study.

One more thing, the Battle of Concord was begun by firing the Shot Heard Round The World. The gun that fired such an awesome shot would certainly be a valued prize.

This one's got to work, guys. My job is on the line, here.

Regards,

Swift-Y-LZR-6

So, they're in 1775 looking for a nuclear missile. Not real likely. However, the Vultures might kidnap some poor minuteman, hoping perhaps that he functions something like the "exploding Scotsman" *Monty Python* weapon from the treasonous Old Reckoning video. One can only hope they realize the poor guy isn't a nuclear missle before they cut him open or something gross like that.

Vulture: Hello, there. We're looking for the Minutemen.

Innkeeper: Shhh! Keep your voice down! Do you want every Tory to hear you?

Vulture: Sorry ...

Innkeeper: See that man over there in the corner? His name is William Blandstock; he's a minuteman.

Vulture: Huh? That guy is a minuteman?

Innkeeper: That's right.

Vulture: He, himself? A minuteman?

Innkeeper: Sure.

Vulture: *(to comrades)* Amazing! They haven't even developed internal combustion, yet they've invented perfect nuclear killer androids!

Vultures are likely to encounter British troops and colonial minutemen in this time. Both sides are armed with muzzle-loading rifles and muskets, though the British are likely to be better equipped.

At the Battle of Concord no cannons or cavalry were used (the British officer had a horse, but it was shot out from under him at Lexington on the way to Concord; two field cannons were supplied as reinforcements at Lexington on the way back *from* Concord, but they only had seven balls a piece. Almost sounds like a Troubleshooter mission, doesn't it?), just foot-soldiers. Vultures may also run into the afore-mentioned "Tories"; colonial civilians who opposed the Revolutionary movement.

The Shot Heard Round The World was fired by a fairly ordinary musket; the type your average Vulture Warrior doesn't have a long enough attention-span to learn how to load. Should give Swift-Y a heart attack if they manage to get it back to Alpha.

This scenario is positively dripping with Special Bonus Celebrities. You've got Paul Revere, Samuel Prescott and William Dawes (think how much easier for the men if they had Jet-Boots and megaphones), Sam Adams, Thomas Paine, John Hancock — that whole wacky and zany Revolutionary bunch. See the movie *1776* for the singingest portrayals of these politicos.

And don't forget the pizza!

How do you launch it?

And some really great quotes came out of this conflict, too: "Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes," and "The redcoats are coming!" and "Disperse you Rebels, immediately!" should make Alpha clones feel completely at home.

Lots of fun for the whole family.

Little/Big Clone

The Vulture Warriors appear on the dusty, rolling hills of South Dakota in 1876. For the last time, they open the plastic mission briefing canister.

Troops,

We're still trying to figure out how to launch this guy you brought us, but he doesn't seem to have any controls and he yells a lot. Likewise the rifle — it's not all that loud. Maybe we're using the wrong ammunition.

Anyway, this will be your final weapon collection mission, and by far the easiest. Absolutely no combat is involved whatsoever. Thought you'd be glad to hear that!

The object this time is not even a weapon, really. It's a musical instrument. Something called a Little/Big Horn. Legend has it that a certain General Custer used it to summon hordes of "Indians" to his aid during a large battle. Possibly it was some advanced combat-communications device. It is located somewhere in the hills we have dropped you in. A multi-sized instrument like

that shouldn't be too hard to locate.

So it's real simple, just get the Horn and come back. There is a secondary objective though, if you can do it for us.

We've placed you one day before Custer first used something called the "Last Stand." We don't know what was placed on this "Last Stand" — it is a very sketchy description of the object. Perhaps it is some sort of missile launcher which could help us fire this "Minuteman" you brought back. In any case, Custer should be finished with it in two days time; we find no mention of him using this "Last Stand" more than once. When Custer is through with it, see if you can get it from him.

So this should be no problem, right? A horn and a stand. How hard could it be?

See you back at the Collapsacave ...
Swift-Y-LZR-6

The Vultures have thus been set up for any number of very unpleasant surprises.

Vulture: Hello, there! We were wondering if you could show us the way to the Little/Big Horn.

Crazy Horse: *(Giggles)* Why do you want to go there? Collecting arrows?

Vulture: Uh, ha ha, no. Actually we heard Custer's Last Stand was going to be there and we wanted to see it.

Crazy Horse: *Gasp!* Powerful Medicine indeed! You touched with the gift of prophesy! Tonight you camp with my tribe!

Vulture: Gee, you know, that's awfully sweet but we'll just be on our way ...

At any rate, this time there are very few objects which the Vultures can interpret as or substitute for what they have been sent after. Maybe one of Custer's bugles.

Your Special Bonus Celebrity situation is pretty clear-cut. If someone wasn't involved in the battle of Little Big Horn you won't be seeing them. That leaves you with Custer and Crazy Horse — two violent loony-tunes with ego problems. Neither man takes kindly to strangers. Best for the Vultures to keep a low profile.

Extra credit: Major Reno and Captain Benteen are two officers in Custer's 7th Cavalry who are ordered to split from the main regiment, and as such survive the massacre. The Vultures may want to hang out with those guys a while.

Five Things To Fool Them All

So, if the Vultures have been enormously successful, the HP elite now has a strange assortment of goodies, possibly including: a bag of peanuts donated in confusion by General Chester MacAuliffe; one Curtis P-40 Warhawk fighter plane, complete with Flying Tiger markings; 20 very confused British Colonial troops; one equally confused minuteman, complete with an ordinary musket; and one United States Cavalry bugle, circa 1876.

To wrap this whole campaign up, you may want to stage the HP Enclave's attack on the R&D Simplex, supplementing their regular troops with these five magic talismans from the ancient past. Perhaps as confused as they are by the objects' apparant worthlessness, HiPSiC still has faith in the legends.

One can imagine that R&D would make some pretty short work of these ancient toys and out-gunned troops. But there is a possible ironic twist — what if the R&D Simplex believes the legends? They might shrink in terror as the minuteman stands calmly before them and states, "I am a minuteman. Surrender now or I'll explode."

They just might drop their weapons.

Time to Go

The matter of the Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark III and the *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X* is now deposited into your eager little hands.

Good Luck!

Now it's your turn. You are free to take the bizarre concepts and ideas herein and run with them. Forget chrono-blips and totally mess up history! Transport all of Alpha Complex into Prehistoric Times! Send
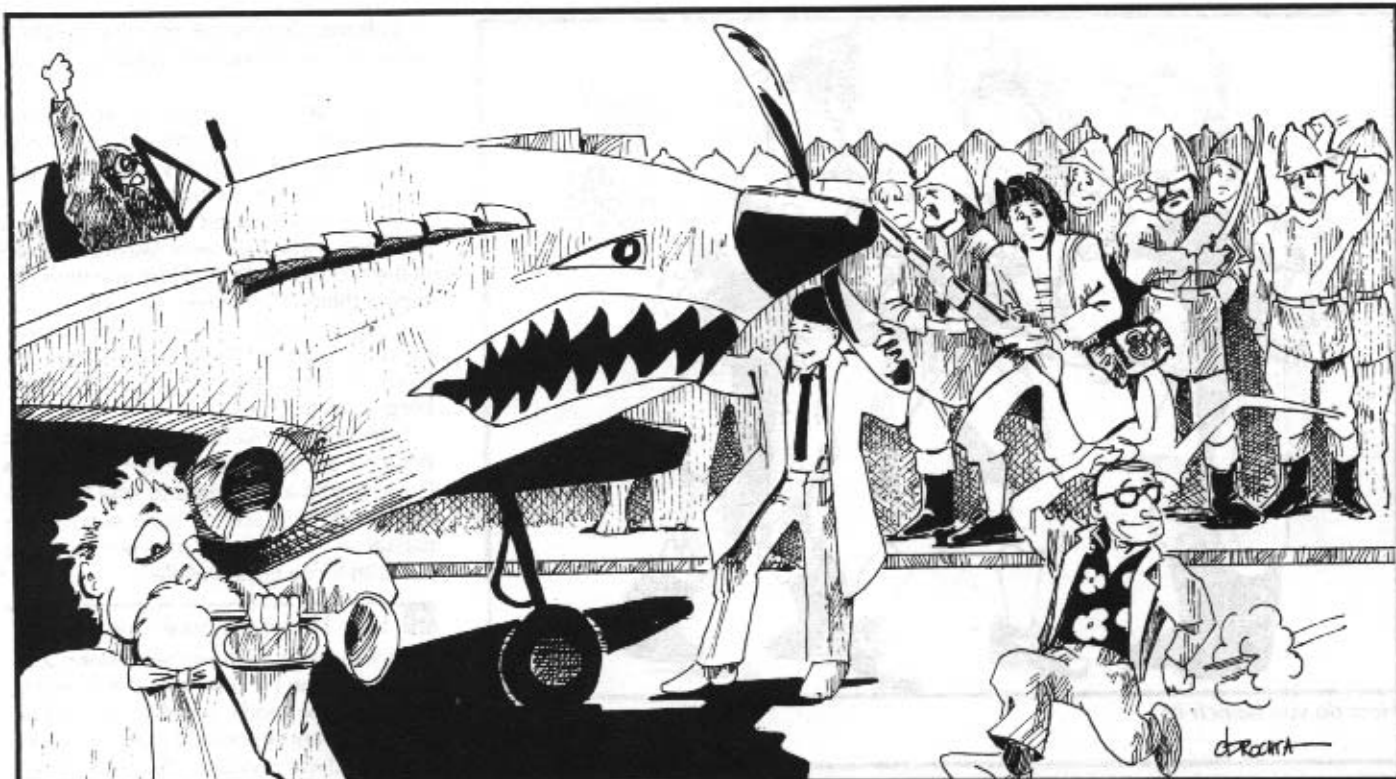
Five things to rule them all, five things to stump them, five things to scatter their troops and in the trough room dump them!

some Romantics back to Renaissance Italy and let them see how they like life without indoor plumbing! Fix it so McGovern wins the U.S. Presidential election in 1972! Join Captain Wingo on his quest for Cosmic Justice! Send Sylvester Stallone to Viet Nam and see how he likes it!

Ahem<

Anyhow, the whole point is; it's all up to you now.

We hope you've enjoyed our little tour of Time and Space. Now remember to do

your homework and brush up your physics, 'cause there's gonna be a test on all you learned. It's right there in the Pullout Section after the Entropoid Excursion table.

It isn't? Are you looking on page 95, in the bottom left quarter?

Blast those Entropoids, they've done it to us again!

Well, then we guess you'll have to fake it, because that's all for now, Wingo fans. Check out the forth-coming *R&D Catalog*

for your favorite Troubleshooter's decanting-day present.

And keep those cards and letters coming! We need plenty of fan support to push for *The Return of Captain Wingo*. Until then, it's like Captain Wingo says, "See you later! Of course, we may meet at an earlier point in the time stream, in which case it would be 'See you earlier.' That's why I always say, 'See you next Time!' Uh, isn't that what I always say, Doc?"

PC#1: Walt-R-JON-4

Secret Society: Romantics
Secret Society Rank: 3

Mutant Power(s):

Hypersenses

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: The Time Pundits

Loyalties:

Freelance Trouble-shooter

Assassin

Background: All of this time-travelling has pretty much slaked your thirst for high-ballistic, high-impact modes of transportation. You're still a swaggering, gunslinging, tobacco-spitting Texan, but deep in your heart of hearts, you'd like to head back to plain old Alpha for quiet nights in the bunkhouse. It's a mite rough out there!

On the up side, you did manage to pick up a ten-gallon hat — well, maybe five-gallon, and it's kinda too perforated to hold water — from a time-native who was no longer in need of headgear. And you've learned lots more Texas slang here in the past, like "Mash those roaches!" and "Y'all come back now, y'hear?" Finally, you've actually found real chewing tobacco. You're so happy about that you could spit — and frequently do.

Goal in Life: Get Back Home

Description: Standing 1.8 meters (6' 3") in height, you are rather sizable considering the standard of malnutrition among your teammates. The chips and buttons and things that you superglued to your skull have been worn and torn and sloughed off, leaving a few shiny pink patches of skin peeking through the 3 centimeter bristles of your hair. Your ponytail is now braided with a handful of wires and fiber-optic strands, courtesy of a petulant cyber-babe. You don't think there are any permanently achored connections.

Your cowboy duds are none the worse for wear, but you lost your spurs in a hand of rot-gut rummy, and you haven't been able to find another pair. You make a habit of speaking in a thick Texas drawl ("Howdy, y'all!").

PC#2: Broost-R-LNG-2

Secret Society: None
Secret Society Rank: 0

Mutant Power(s):

Regeneration

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: The Time Pundits

Loyalties:

Self, self, self, not necessarily in that order.

Junior Trouble-shooters

Background: Sometimes, kids grow up fast. Sometimes, like you, they don't.

Goal in Life: Get Back Home

Description: Short and stocky, you wear riot armor stolen from Internal Security. Like all teenagers, you have little concept of personal hygiene, and as a result, your skin looks tanned and your short hair is spiked with accumulated grease. You strut and sneer and are violent and in all ways act like an egocentric teeny-bopper.

PC#3: William-G-BSN-7

Secret Society: FCCCP
Secret Society Rank: 1

Mutant Power(s):

Machine Empathy

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: The Time Pundits

Loyalties:

Who cares, anymore?

Background: You thought you'd finally made it. Clone Six. The Last Creche Mate. You even felt a stab of joy when you realized there was no way to dodge the mower.

But then the unthinkable happened. Mark activated *clone seven!* You've been racking your brain to figure out what went wrong. You've reviewed all of your previous terminations, and you have the right count. You burn with the question, and you must return to Alpha and **find out the truth.** No more burn-out. No more nostalgia for the Rapture. Only surface blandness remains. *Why do you have a seventh clone!!!?*

Goal in Life: Get Back Home

Description: Although you're still dressed in drab colors, it's a different color of drab. Your preter-natural blandness is hardening into uniformity. You're not too thin, kind of tall, and you've proven yourself an untalented hair dresser. But now you have a burning need, and the fire shows.

PC#1:

Name Then: John-R-WLT-2
Name Now: Walt-R-JON-4

Former Service Group: Armed Forces

Security Clearance:
Private: Red
Public: Red

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (18)
Damage _____ +1
Carry _____ 55 kg

Endurance (19)
Macho _____ 2

Agility (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Unarmed _____ 8
Spit _____ 15

Chutzpah (13) Skill Base _____ 3
Bribery _____ 6
Intimidation _____ 10

Dexterity (8) Skill Base _____ 2
Projectile Weapons _____ 8
Laser Weapons _____ 10
Vehicle Aimed Weapons _____ 12

Mechanical (8) Skill Base _____ 2
Vehicle Op. & Maint. _____ 15

Moxie (6) Skill Base _____ 1
Old Reckoning Cultures _____ 9

Power (10)

Personal Equipment
Crusty clothes
Naugahyde vest and chaps
Kevlar undershirt
One slugthrower, 3 reloads
Red Laser
Heavy boots (+ 1 damage roll in melee combat)
Chewing tobacco (actually WW I chewing gum)
Canteen full of raw grain alcohol

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
							83
Slugthrowers	8	P	9	40	yes		
Red Laser	10	L	8	50	no		

Armor	Rating
Naugahyde and Kevlar	I2P3

PC#2:

Name Then: Ferd-NAN-1
Name Now: Broost-R-LNG-2

Former Service Group: None

Security Clearance:
Private: Infrared
Public: Red

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (19)
Damage _____ +2
Carry _____ 60 kg

Endurance (17)
Macho _____ 1

Agility (14) Skill Base _____ 3
Unarmed _____ 10
Nunchuks _____ 13
Grenad _____ 6

Chutzpah (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Con _____ 10
Interrogation _____ 12
Oratory _____ 7

Dexterity (6) Skill Base _____ 1
Laser Weapons _____ 5

Mechanical (13) Skill Base _____ 3

Moxie (9) Skill Base _____ 2
Biochemical Therapy _____ 10
Stealth _____ 8
Electrical Engineering _____ 6
Video Production _____ 17

Power (7)

Personal Equipment
Nunchaku
Hand mirror
Mirrorshades (left lens cracked, both scratched)
Red IntSec armor
Make-up for close-ups
Pet rat (dead)
Smal tinny tape player (Dead Kennedys cassette)
Indelible marker
Can of spray auto primer

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
							190
Nunchaku	13	I	10	—	no		
Red Laser	5	L	8	50	no		

Armor	Rating
IntSec Red	L4I2P1

PC#3:

Name Then: Rob-R-HLN-3
Name Now: William-G-BSN-7

Former Service Group: CPU

Security Clearance:
Private: Red
Public: Green

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (8)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (10)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (7) Skill Base _____ 2
Unarmed _____ 7
Neurowhip _____ 12

Chutzpah (9) Skill Base _____ 2
Bootlicking _____ 11
Fast Talk _____ 12
Spurious Logic _____ 16

Dexterity (16) Skill Base _____ 4
Laser Weapons _____ 14

Mechanical (18) Skill Base _____ 5

Moxie (18) Skill Base _____ 5
Security _____ 8
Programming _____ 10
Data Search _____ 17
Data Analysis _____ 16

Personal Equipment
Drab clothes—olive drab
A newer print of Mary, Mother of God (June Vargas Girl)
1/2 case of K-rations
Green mylar reflec
Laser pistol with two Green barrels
Neurowhip
Postcards of Dallas, Honesdale and San Francisco

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
							25
Neurowhip	12	E	10	—	no		
Green Laser	14	L	8	50	no		

Armor	Rating
Green mylar reflec	L4P3AP1

Juno Complex

TORTIS Lands Here

Water Pipe

Ventilation Shaft

Water

Secret HQ of EEVAK

To the Catacombs

To Ordinator

The OPU

Concealed MALOKs

Dave Ross

PCs die — er, enter here

The Ordinator

Generic Control Panel

Наклбн

Penny Here

Ditto

1 ¢

Quarter Here

Nickel Here

Nickel Here

One Thin Dime Here
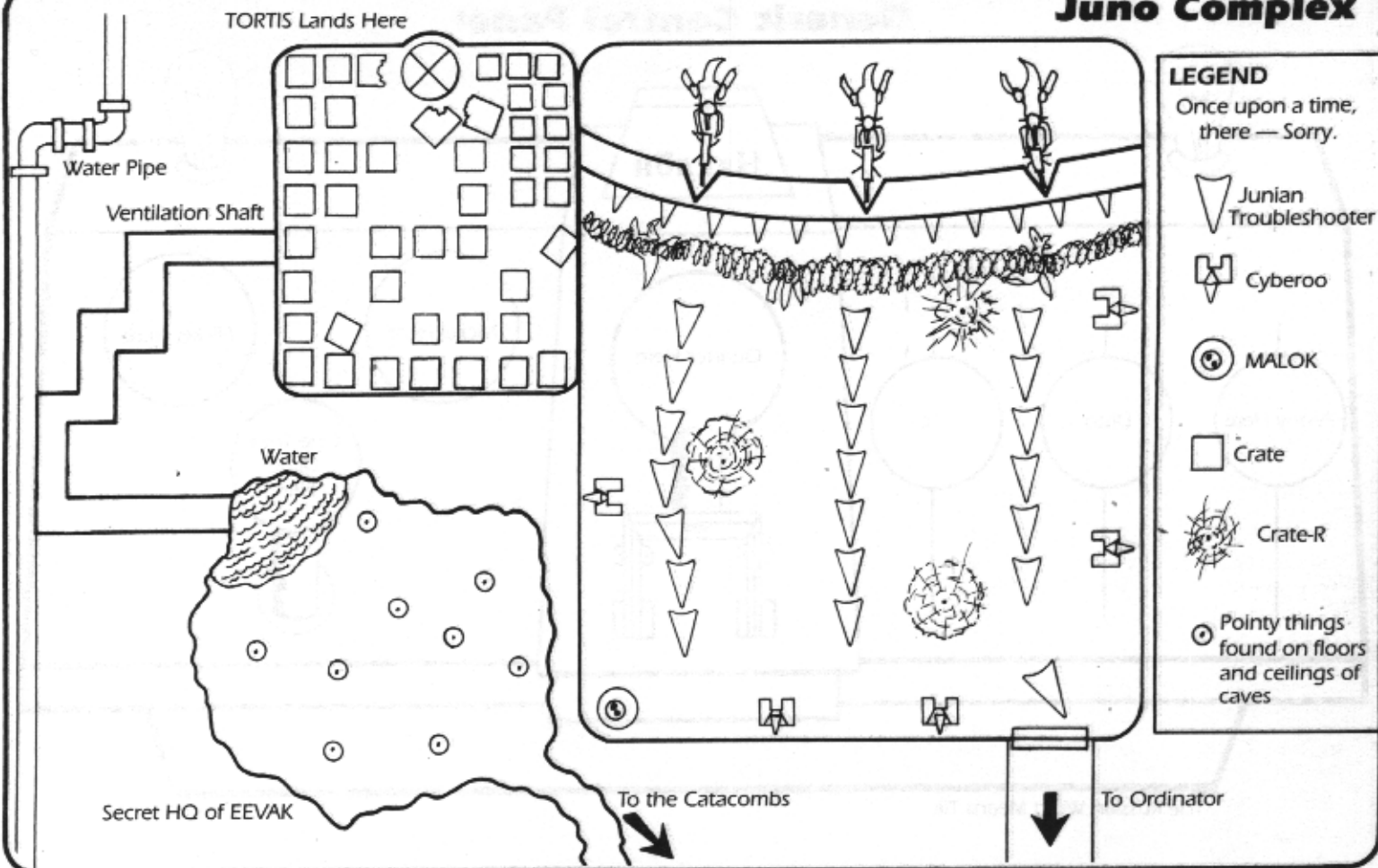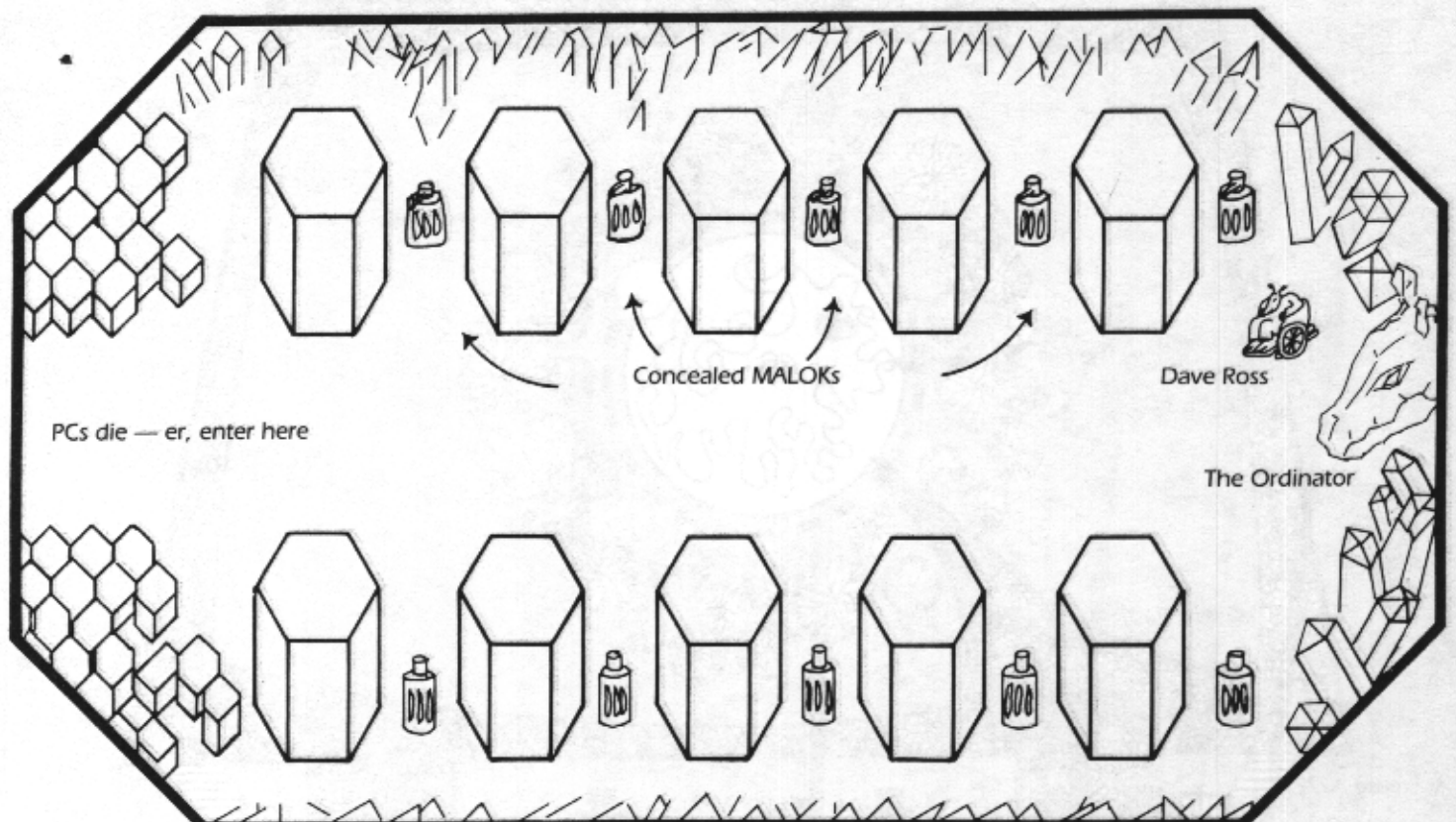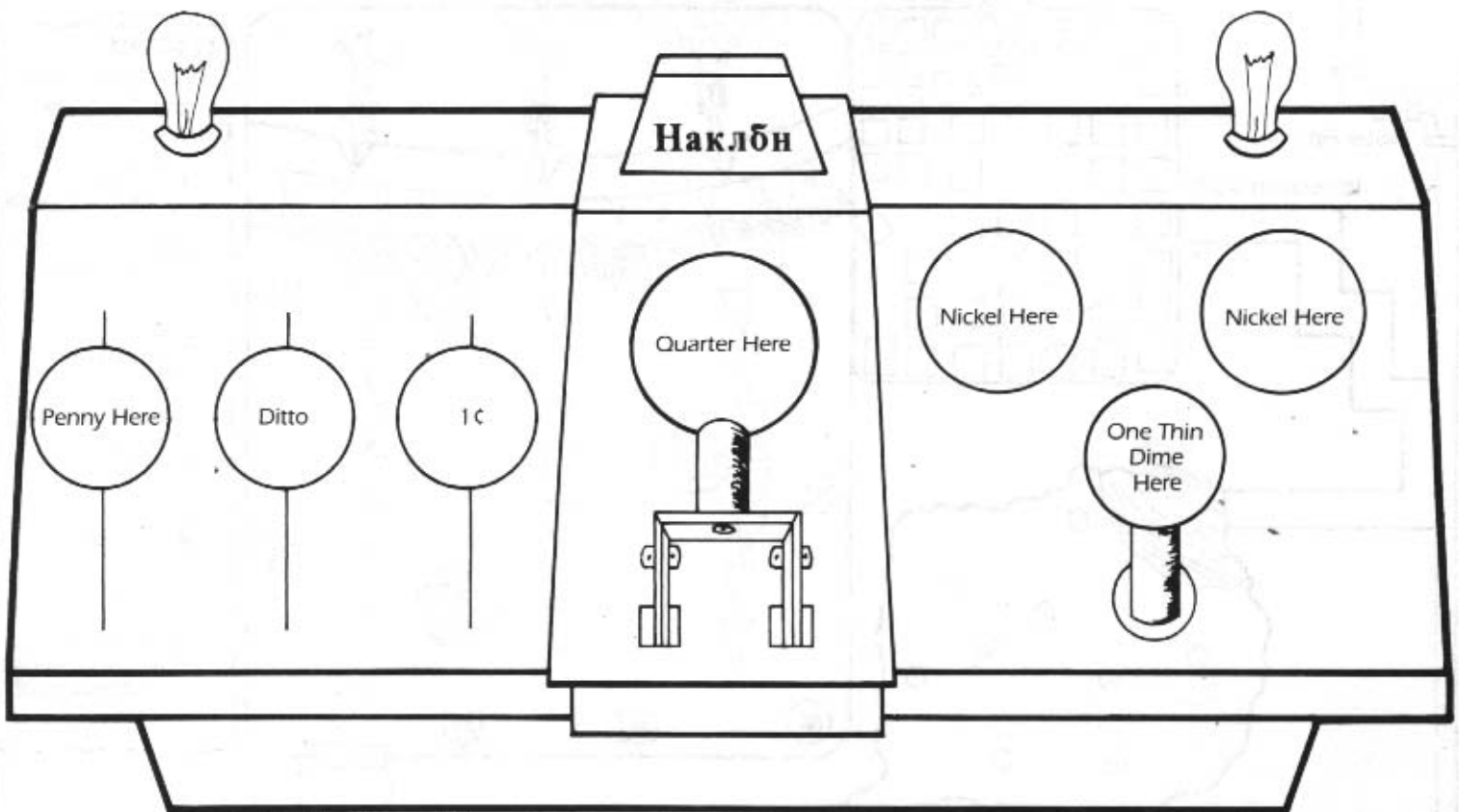
The Russian Word Means Tilt

The Utopian CPU

Grass

Trees

The Computer

The Evil

Gravel Path

Staircase P-7/E

Hordes of MALOKs
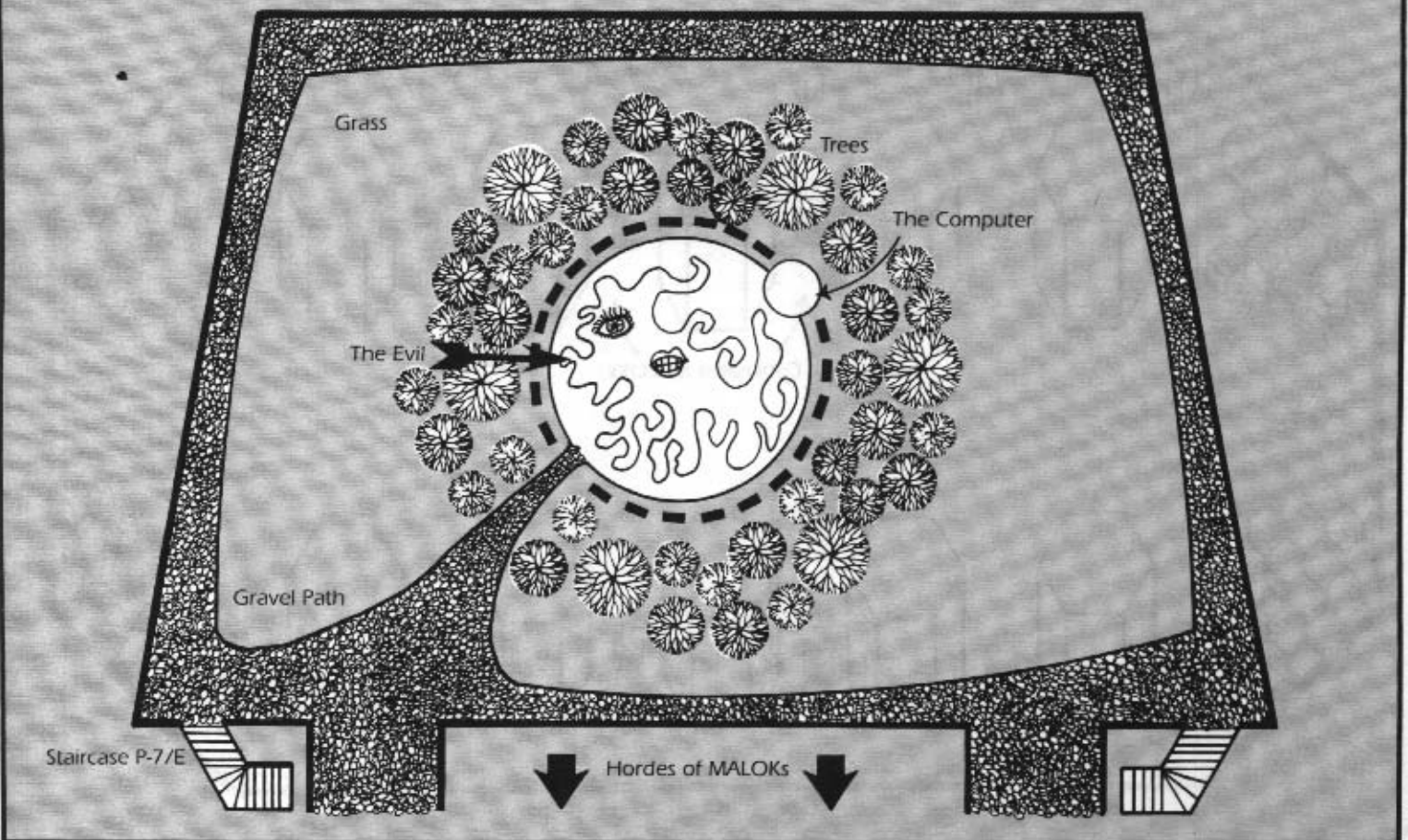
Ritual Card 1

Assume a solemn expression and stick your thumbs in your ears. Wiggle your fingers while chanting : "om mani padme om" over and over. Keep a serious expression on your face at all times.

Ritual Card 2

Gaze into space with a mystical air, and cross your eyes repeatedly. Intone the mystical chant "Moooo." Try it in reverse: "Oooom." Then sneeze: "Achoo!" Repeat.

Ritual Card 3

You must utilize the bell, book and candle. A die can be your bell, a character sheet your book, and a pencil your candle. Put the bell on the book and whack it with the candle, while saying: "I terminate thee in the name of The Computer and all that is holy."
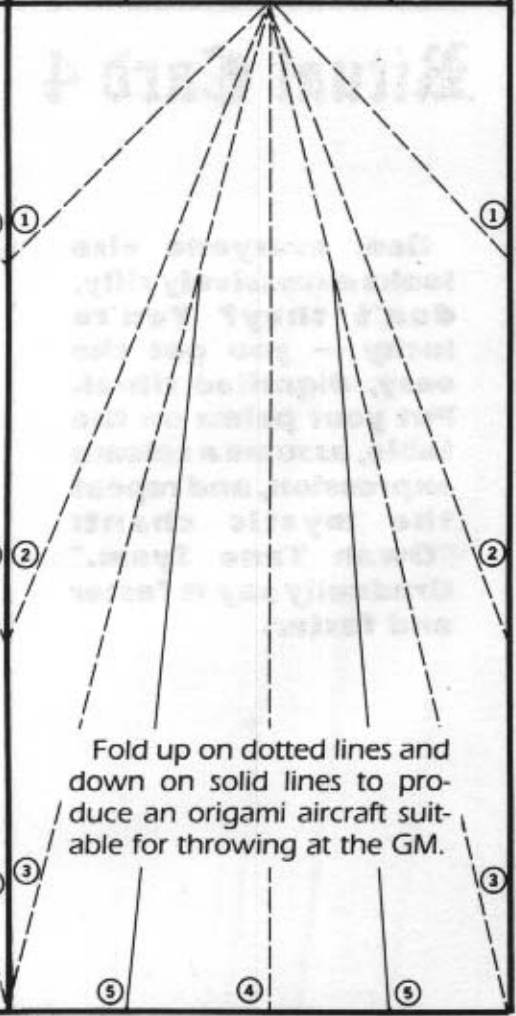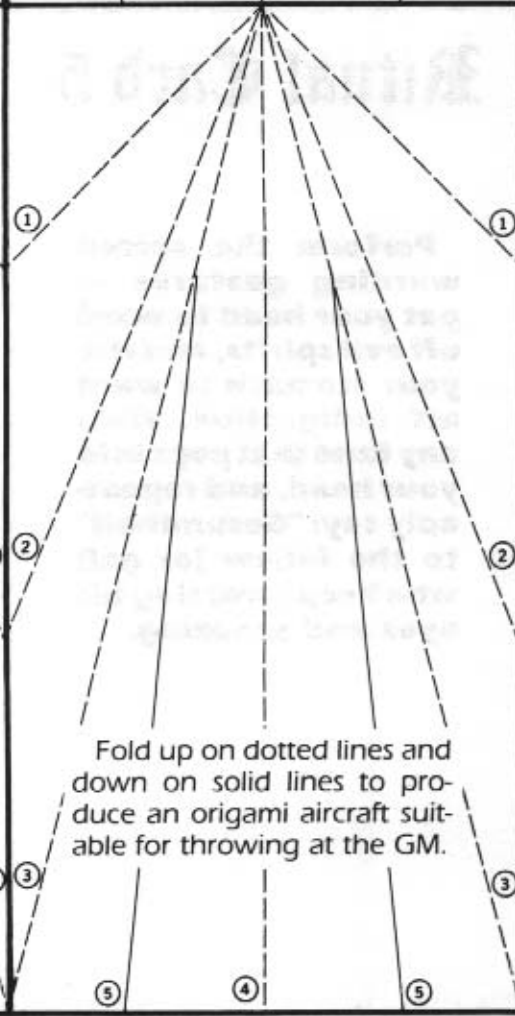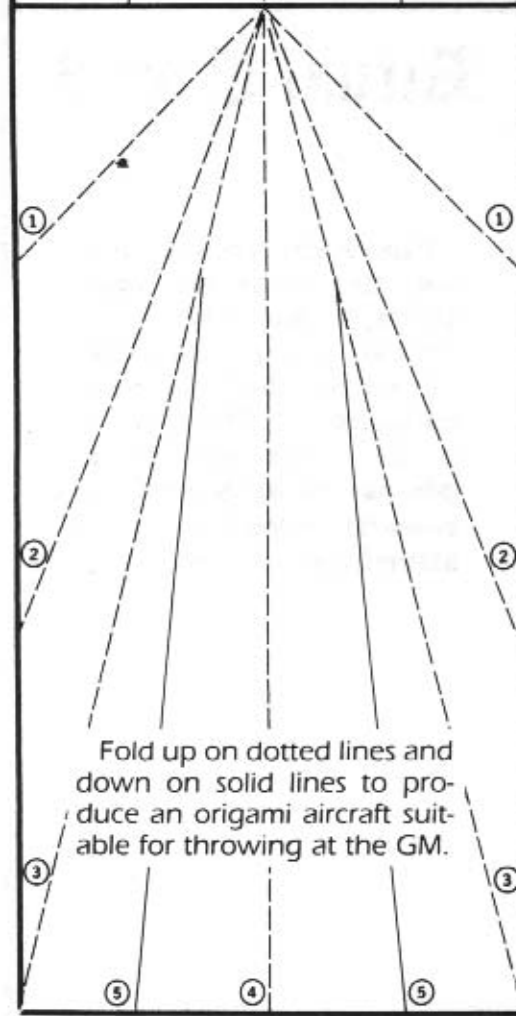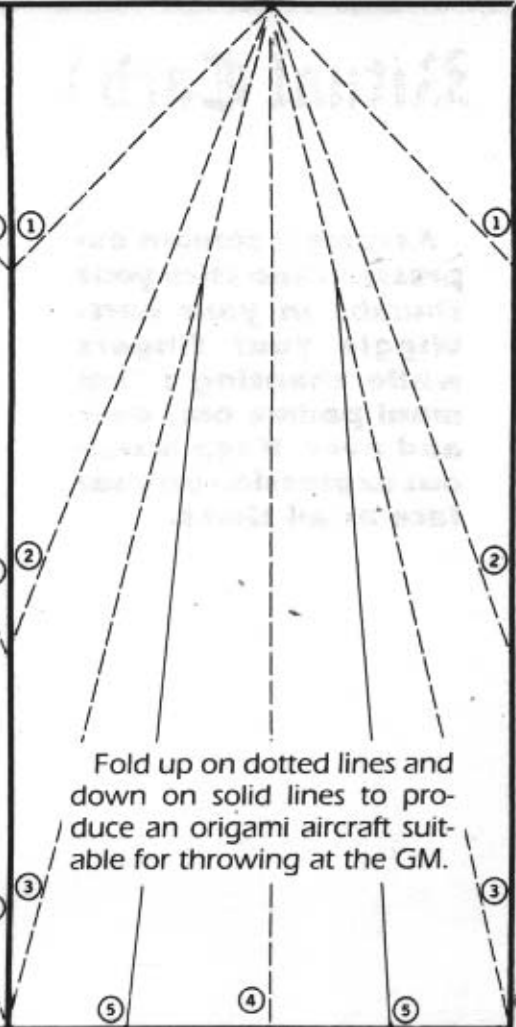
Ritual Card 4

Gee, everyone else looks excessively silly, don't they? You're lucky — you get the easy, dignified ritual. Put your palms on the table, assume a solemn expression, and repeat the mystic chant: "Owah Tana Syam." Gradually say it faster and faster.

Ritual Card 5

Perform the sacred warding gestures — pat your head to ward off evil spirits, and rub your stomach to ward off indigestion. Hum any tune that pops into your head, and repeatedly say: "Gesundheit" to the fellow (or gal) who keeps crossing his eyes and sneezing.

Ritual Card 6

Place the ritual card on the seat of your chair, and sit on it. Proclaim your mantra: "Eye Kant Duit, It Stew Embare A Sing." Repeat this mystical phrase to anyone who speaks to you. Remain silent otherwise.

Fold up on dotted lines and down on solid lines to produce an origami aircraft suitable for throwing at the GM.

Fold up on dotted lines and down on solid lines to produce an origami aircraft suitable for throwing at the GM.

Fold up on dotted lines and down on solid lines to produce an origami aircraft suitable for throwing at the GM.

Fold up on dotted lines and down on solid lines to produce an origami aircraft suitable for throwing at the GM.

Fold up on dotted lines and down on solid lines to produce an origami aircraft suitable for throwing at the GM.

Fold up on dotted lines and down on solid lines to produce an origami aircraft suitable for throwing at the GM.

PC#4:

Name Then: Gertrude-I-RKR-2
Name Now: Rude-Y-RKR-4

Former Service Group: Technical Services

Security Clearance:
Private: Indigo
Public: Yellow

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (6)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (16)
Macho _____ 1

Agility (7) Skill Base _____ 2
Unarmed _____ 4
Primitive Melee Weapons _____ 7

Chutzpah (16) Skill Base _____ 4
Bribery _____ 11
Motivation _____ 12
Psychescan _____ 13

Dexterity (11) Skill Base _____ 3
Laser Weapons _____ 6

Mechanical (9) Skill Base _____ 2
Robot Repair and Maint. _____ 16

Moxie (14) Skill Base _____ 3
Demolition _____ 13

Power (9)

Personal Equipment
A bag of chips (potato, no ridges)
Clam digger
Happiness cloak
Case of snak-kakes
1/2 Case of Mr. Frost-Y instant ice cream
A few explosives
Soft sculpture unicorn with yellow satin horn
Laser Pistol with one Yellow barrel and one Green barrel
Metal forearm that jingle jangle jingles

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
Green Laser	6	L	8	50	no
Yellow Laser	6	L	8	50	no
Clam Digger	7	I	9	—	no

Damage Status

Credits 48

Armor — **Rating**
Happiness Cloak — L2 (All colors)

PC#5:

Name Then: Agnes-B-MIL-3
Name Now: Shirl-Y-JON-4

Former Service Group: Power Services

Security Clearance:
Private: Blue
Public: Yellow

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (8)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (10)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (15) Skill Base _____ 4
Unarmed _____ 9
Primitive Melee _____ 12
Play Guitharp _____ 5

Chutzpah (17) Skill Base _____ 4
Con _____ 9
Forgery _____ 12
Oratory _____ 8

Dexterity (14) Skill Base _____ 3
Laser Weapons _____ 7
Energy Weapons _____ 11

Mechanical (7) Skill Base _____ 2

Moxie (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Biochemical Therapy _____ 16

Power (9)

Personal Equipment
Dented Harmonica
Empty vial
One Blue laser barrel (no gun)
Energy Pistol
1/4 Spool of wire
Yellow reflec
Leather jacket
A handful of safety pins
WWII slug thrower with six napalm slugs

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
WWII Slugthrower	3	F	8	50	no
Energy Pistol	11	E	8	50	yes
Blue Laser	7	L	8	50	no

Damage Status

Credits 167

Armor — **Rating**
Leather & Yellow Reflec — L4I1

PC#6:

Name Then: Inna-U-EAR-3
Name Now: Greg-B-EAR-3

Former Service Group: Head of R&D, EAR Sector

Security Clearance:
Private: Ultraviolet
Public: Blue

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (8)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (9)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (11) Skill Base _____ 3
Unarmed _____ 6

Chutzpah (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Intimidation _____ 7
Fast Talk _____ 8

Dexterity (10) Skill Base _____ 2
Laser Weapons _____ 8
Projectile Weapons _____ 8

Mechanical (9) Skill Base _____ 2

Moxie (18) Skill Base _____ 5
Medical _____ 12
Biosciences _____ 19
Engineering (all sorts) _____ 14

Power (16)

Personal Equipment
Conductor's baton
Shabby lab jacket
Ice gun
Laser pistol (no barrel)
US Army-issue can opener
WWIII grenade launcher (think cone rifle)
Kevlar flak jacket

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
WWIII grenade launcher	8	P	11	200	yes
Ultraviolet Laser	8	L	8	50	no
Ice Gun	8	P	8	50	yes

Damage Status

Credits 612

Armor — **Rating**
Kevlar flak jacket — L1P2

PC#4: Rude-Y-RKR-4

Secret Society: Sierra Club
Secret Society Rank: 7

Mutant Power(s):
Deep Probe

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: The Time Pundits

Loyalties:

Sierra Club

The SoftWhere (see below)

Food Vat Workers (they supply you with Algae Chips)

Background: Boy, are you glad to be going home. Very little in your time travels has been at all close to your ultimate goal of finding the SoftWhere. You have a feeling that Mark is actually steering you into damp, prickly, harsh places. On purpose. You are now convinced that the SoftWhere is back home, where you ought to be, too.

But one thing — they have the greatest supply of edible chips you've ever seen in Old Reckoning San Fransisco. So many flavors besides Algae! Now if only you could get rid of this metal sleeve they gave you ...

Goal in Life: Get Back Home

Description: Your girth has gotten slightly smaller, and you don't jiggle like one of those colloids in the creche any more. In fact, you're almost developing muscles. You wear your happiness cape at all times.

Your hair is long and mostly white — there's a chartreuse strip over your right ear, though, and you're not sure how it got there. It showed up at the same time as the metal casing on your forearm. The bracelet compounds the impression, thanks to your metaphysical turns of phrase ("If we could enter the SoftWhere, we'd live forever") that you're a Corpore Metallic.

PC#5: Shirl-Y-JON-4

Secret Society: Death Leopard
Secret Society Rank: 4

Mutant Power(s):
Electroshock

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: The Time Pundits

Loyalties:

Death Leopard

The band (*Rockin' SHarp*)

Music

Background: This time travel stuff is maxxed-out rad, fer sher; an all-out Death Leopard Paaaarty! You even got the rest of the gang to accept your idea for the team name — The Time Pundits. You can't wait to get home and spread the newest, hippest, baddest slang and fashions — why, you're a shoe - in for the Head Honcho! Then again, do you have to go home? It was just freakin' excellent when you found the dude with the threads that matched your head-ink. Maybe it was a sign that Time Travel is your Star.

Goal in Life: Get Back Home — Usually

Description: You wear as little as possible, and what you do wear is fashionably ratty. However, you've traded in your Alpha duds for some neon-holo-spandex shreds from your San Francisco stop that were pure inspiration. And the new scars you got while rolling the crystal-head add a certain *je ne cest qua*.

You lost your guitarp in the shuffle, but one of those nice Commie soldiers had a harmonica. You've gotten really loud at playing it, too.

PC#6: Greg-B-EAR-3

Secret Society: Eugenecists
Secret Society Rank: 10

Mutant Power(s):
Polymorphism
Precognition
Energy Field

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: The Time Pundits

Loyalties:

R & D Priests

EAR Sector

Self

Background: Your time-travels have given you a whole new universe of musical influences, not to mention lessons in timing and dissonance. But you ache to get back to good old Alpha. Your travels have also reinforced your lack of respect for other people with less wit and musical acumen, unfortunately the vast majority of the creatures you've encountered.

Goal in Life: Get Back Home

Description: You look exactly like Jeff Goldblum in *The Fly*. But your fellow Troubleshooters are getting used to it — they only jump when you catch them unawares. Simple physical things often escape your lofty thoughts. Things like snapping your flak jacket up straight. You got a terrific hair cut in a Cybarber shop, though, and the skull-and-A-bomb pattern is much easier to not comb, as the bristles are only about a quarter-inch long as yet. You've even improved at dodging gunfire. But you still, when you're not otherwise occupied, tend to wave your baton.

The Collapsacave

The Rest of Alpha Complex

Energy Shield

Blast Door

Big Nasty Warbot

Vulture Warrior Barracks

R&D Team Living Quarters

R&D Conference Room

R&D Team Labs

Dave-B-OMN-2 Office and Living Quarters

IntSec Security Detachment Barracks

HP Conference Room and Comissary

Sargent-R-OCK-4 Living Quarters

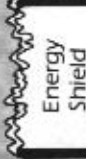Swift-Y-LZR-6 Office and Living Quarters

Staging Area

Launching Pad

Transdimensional Collaspatron Mark III

Sargent-R-OCK's Vulture Conversion Charts

This section of the Bogus Screen summarizes all of the Post-Crash Changes to *Paranoia Classic*. If you have the *Crash Course Manual*, you already have this information, but in a much looser, rambling expositional style. This is short. And sweet.

In Foldout A of the second edition rulebook, we included a handy-dandy Character Generation Summary Chart. We will now repeat that information, with appropriate modifications, here.

Character Generation Summary

1. Take a character sheet. You can use the one from the rulebook Foldout C; we haven't changed anything substantial.

2. Choose a name. All bets are off as far as names go. Clones who sign up to be Vultures may change their names to reflect their exalted status, or they may take an historical apellation as a souvenir of a particularly scorching campaign. Or not. Clone numbers strictly optional.

3. Roll once for each attribute.

4. Post-Crash you get *four reroll options* instead of two (see also Purestrains in the "New Clones" section). This does not help already-rolled characters. They get one roll (due to Sargent's training) to try to improve a chosen stat. Record rolls on the character sheet.

5. Determine carrying capacity, bonuses, and skill bases just as before.

6. Determine service group. The first service group roll on the standard table tells what group the clone belonged to before the crash.

Then *roll a second time:* if you roll the same group, the character lives in a service-group splinter Simplex (note that characters won't belong to the Empire without prior GM agreement). Otherwise, the character *used* to belong to the service group rolled first, but it's irrelevant now, except for skills previously learned … and perhaps a bit of animosity if he or she runs into any former mates.

For already-rolled characters, let the player decide if he wants to stick with either his old service group or the Empire (be stingy about allowing this) or go off on his own.

7. Determine mutant power. Post-crash characters have *half the rolled Power attribute* (round up), unless the number rolled is "13," in which case the Power is 13. This also happens to already-rolled characters: halve the Power attribute unless it's a 13. See "Using Sleepers" rules if you roll a 'one' or have already-rolled characters transitioning to Post-Crash Alpha.

8. Determine secret society. See "New Secret Society Table."

9. Choose skills. Post-Crash characters will already have their skills, taught them by their service groups and in the creches. This does not change.

On the other hand, if you plan to include nature babes as characters (superfast growth), or your campaign is set farther into the future), the skill list is quite different, since many of the skills listed on the standard *Paranoia* character sheet are no longer available.

Since the skills offered by various Simplexes and secret societies are so varied, you'll have to make up your own skill summaries. Keep in mind that technical skills such as engineering, repair, and maintenance become almost nonexistant, since even those who believe in such things have a hard time accessing the proper information.

In addition, certain treasonous and Old Reckoning skills that were difficult to learn become common knowledge, as Sierra Clubbers and Romantics come out of the closet and attempt to educate their fellow clones.

10. Select and record equipment. See the forthcoming *R&D Handbook* once it's available; until then, use the old equipment chart and Chapter Five and "What's New from R&D" (that should cover all our bases).

A New Secret Society Table

Transition characters may be forced to re-initiate in their old society, or they may even be expelled, depending on their former society (some society expulsions can be quite messy). If so, or if a new character rolls "no society," then he or she must seek out contacts and perform the initiation rites before he may become a part of any society.

Die Roll	Secret Society
1-2	Anti-Mutant
3	Communists
4	Corpore Metal
5	Death Leopard
6-7	First Church etc.
8	Frankenstein Destroyers
9	Free Enterprise
10	Humanists
11	Mystics
12	Pro Tech
13	Psion (with usual restrictions)
14-15	Romantics
16	Sierra Club
17-18	No Society
19	Other (with usual restrictions)
20	Roll again:
	1-4 = Illuminati
	5-8 = PURGE
	9+ = Computer Phreaks

Using Sleepers

For each character who was alive before the crash (nature babes don't got tongue prints), *when rolling for the Power attribute, if the roll is a 'one,' the character is a sleeper*. If you're transitioning already-rolled characters through the crash, have each one roll a D20; if the roll is a 'one,' the character is a Sleeper.

Sleepers are clones whose tongue-prints are no longer cross-filed with the master database, due to crash damage. Because of a programming bug, if the security database is confronted by an authenticated tongue-print that nevertheless does not exist in its files, it goes into an infinite loop, dropping the entire memory pointer to a sub-level where all kinds of interesting programs are contained.

What this means to the player is that each time he or she finds and accesses a working terminal (and is not interrupted by greedy Empire officials trying to cut his or her tongue off), something unusual pops up on the screen, or out of a nearby Multi-Purpose Chute.

These can range from lists of clones scheduled for termination just prior to the crash, to locations of fabulous caches of wealth, to actual pieces of equipment. Be sparing.

New Mutants Table

Die Roll	Result
1 - 10	PC gets what he/she wants. (No, really.)
11 - 12	As above, but also with a physical tag (i.e., a third eye for Deep Probe).
13	PC gets the wrong mutation. But don't tell.
14	No mutation, just a physical tag. ("I wanted a better sense of smell, and I got an elephant's nose!")
15	Desired mutation replaces one current mutation.
16	Lose one current mutation.
17	Virus just makes PC sick, with mutation-specific symptoms.
18	PC gets an anti-mutation. ("Everyone can read my thoughts!")
19	PC develops antibodies (and thus total immunity) to the gene-splicing virus.
20	The encoded DNA mutates the carrier virus, producing a new super plague which wipes out half of Alpha Complex. (If this happens more than twice, just make up a new super-disaster.)

These experimental genes can be as bad as experimental devices. Like:

Dragon Breath: The mutant can breathe fire just like a Red Dragon in *That Children's Fantasy Game* (tm). Every time he does so costs one Power. The fire damages on the column number equal to his current Power and has a range of ten meters. If the character has eaten a lot of Chinese food or garlic lately, the damage can be up to double normal. Unfortunately, the beginning mutant is not wildly accurate. Another problem with this power is that smoke and small licks of flame constantly emanate from the character's mouth. This is hazardous to moustached characters. Also, traveling companions had better hope the mutant doesn't catch a cold, as sneezes can be disastrous.

Other Notes on Characters

There are a few other things for the Post-Crash Vulture Warrior to keep in mind. The High Programmer Enclave doesn't have any ins with the Clone Priests, and they're on very shaky footing with R&D Simplex, to mention two potential difficulties. Vultures are going to have to make their own arrangements for resupply of good guys and goodies.

Sleeper Drop-Through Bennies

Die Roll	Result
1-11	Not very valuable. Pre-crash treason listings, old news files, vidshow tapes, etc.
12-18	Valuable, but only to a limited group. Old Reckoning instructions on camping, secret society membership lists, ability to *change* treason files, etc.
19+	Very valuable. Weapons caches, repair instructions for bots, equipment vouchers, etc.

In addition, *on any even roll*, security alarms are tripped by *this access*, and the Empire dispatches local Internal Security to the site. Of course, just to confuse your players, you might make it on any *odd* roll. Or on any roll ...

New Clones

Clone replacements are few and far between these days. One of the first things a new group of player-characters might want to do is embark on an expedition to the Clone Priests and make some kind of replacement arrangement. The HP elite don't have any other alternatives, other than the time-hopping method mentioned in *Twilightcycle: 2000*.

But the clone replacement system still works sporadically (not even the priests are sure where every Emergency Clone Replacement Capsule is located) and even a character who has no special favor with the priests might find himself with a new clone, especially if he hasn't died too often.

When a character dies the player must make a *continuity roll* on one six-sided die. *If the number rolled is equal to or greater than the clone number to be received, the clone arrives.* If it is less, there is no replacement clone. Surviving members of the party may make a special appeal to the Clone Priests, if they manage to recover any of their fallen comrade's parts.

Direct cloning is the second most prevalent form of reproduction. For a fee and a tissue sample, a PC can buy another clone of himself. Shorter deadlines are more expensive both financially and biologically. Real rush jobs cost an arm and a leg. These can often be liberated from the recently deceased predecessor, if carefully preserved and promptly delivered.

Vultures, to avoid carrying parts over a lengthy period of Time (remember, they can't interrupt the mission and return later), are encouraged to carry a few extra of those sampling kits they got in "The Clone Who Would Be King" campaign (see Chapter Six).

Purestrains: Since The Crash, disgusting primitive hormonal copulation has been the most widely used clone generation system. So much so that the pervasiveness of mutations has been altered. In fact, there is a whole new sub-breed of citizens; the so-called 'Purestrains.'

In game terms, *if a natural-born character rolls a lucky 13 for Power, that character has a mutation.* On the other hand, a natural-born character gets *six reroll options*, and may choose the higher number of each reroll. If the character has no mutation and all his attributes are 10 or greater, he/she is considered "Purestrain."

Natural-born kids also stand a good ten centimeters taller, develop brawnier, and have clearer complexions, so to speak, than everyone else.

Designer Genes: Some clones may attempt to enhance their current bodies, now that conformity is not mandatory. Designer genes involve an injection of a carefully engineered virus which attacks every cell in the body, adding DNA to the clone's genes, and hopefully producing a new mutant ability. It is hardly a foolproof method, as the "New Mutants Table" illustrates.

Cyberjunk: If a clone doesn't want to risk his genes, he can still find a way to acquire improvements. It helps greatly if he can produce an injury first, though.

Rumor has it there's a group of R&D priests who have begun experimenting with fusing machine and man. There's a lot of spare bot parts without bot brains to run them.

Cyborging? Gosh, no, cyborging is treason, and no one in R&D will deny their reactionary facade by engaging in treasonous activities. This is the Biologically Interfaced Option for Newly Injured Citizens. Makes citizens more likely to take care of equipment if it's grafted onto their bodies. And with the Corpore Metallics running around, there's no shortage of volunteers for BIONIC equipment.

Incidentally, all clones of a given family must submit to identical operations to provide statistical assessment of the procedures. And, supposedly, those who have too many mechanical appendages grafted on begin suffering from a psychological disease called narcissistic cyberosis. But that's just hearsay — or perhaps heresy.

What's New at R&D

We are reprinting these devices in full, in case you didn't want to grab the *Crash Course Manual* (in which they originally appear) off the shelf again.

Submachinelaser: A logical development of the trusty pistol and rifle, the only danger inherent in the submachinelaser is the tendency of PCs to use it in excess of its capacity. It is a reliable piece of equipment, firing three shots per round to a range of 50 meters for 8L damage. It is a spray weapon, and can use the spray fire rules on page 66 of the 2nd edition rules.

Unfortunately, many players will forget that the submachinelaser still uses standard laser barrels. In other words, only the first six shots are safe. Well, five shots, really, because the heat generated by rapid fire means that the sixth shot fired by the submachinelaser has a one in twenty chance of malfunctioning, and this chance increases by one for each subsequent shot.

So, if a PC is being charged by hordes of Commies and cuts loose with this weapon for three consecutive rounds, on the third round the laser shots will malfunction on a roll of 19, 18, and 17, respectively. This means that on the third round of full autofire, there's an almost 40% chance the submachinelaser will malfunction. Then it's inquisition time. But that's what they get for abusing the equipment!

Son-Y's Walkclone: The walkclone is an AM/FM clock radio with alarm and snooze buttons, small enough to hang from your belt. It comes with a pair of earphones to protect others' right to peace, to say nothing of your own privacy.

The walkclone's wide reception band insures that it can receive all of the stations that have sprung up since the crash (KNEW, Romantics; KOMI, Communists; KKAM, Anti-Mutant; KPTL, FCCCP; and of course the Illuminati's subliminal broadcasts. For more on this, see "Radio Crash" in *The Crash Course Manual*). The earphones fit snugly inside the ear (sort of like a hearing aid), providing high-fidelity reproduction and effectively blocking out most ambient noise (we've all had to contend with walkman joggers, right?). The earphones' snug fit also means the citizen will be blown out of his socks by the volume of the alarm. Unless he pulled the earphones out during his sleep, which means the alarm will be inaudible.

The only other drawback is that walkclones are coveted items, and invite muggings and robbery. There is no truth to the rumor that some walkclones have been sabotaged to electrocute the user's brain.

Neutronium Nightstick: The ultimate in melee weapons, this is a short (half meter) rod housing a small power cell and a magnetic field generator. The generated field holds a small (two kilogram) piece of neutronium about an inch away from the tip of the rod.

Neutronium, for you who failed physics, is solid wall-to-wall matter; none of that intermolecular space in this stuff. It's one step short of a black hole. Even small amounts of neutronium generate horrific gravitic attraction at short distances, sucking in matter in much the same way as a black hole would. If a person (or anything else) is touched with the neutronium, it will gouge a divot five centimeters in diameter. If it's swung across someone's chest, worse things happen.

In game terms, the neutronium nightstick does 15L damage and ignores physical armor. Electromagnetic armor of any sort helps against it. One drawback of the neutronium nightstick is it's a purely thrusting weapon. Overhand swings are generally ineffective, as the target is more frequently impacted by the rod intead of the neutronium. Imagine swinging a club at a dodging foe and trying to miss by as small a margin as possible. It just don't work.

Worse yet, any matter the neutronium draws in is itself crushed by the high gravity and deposited (as more neutronium) on the small sphere. Conservation of matter and all that rot. So the more it's used, the heavier the neutronium sphere gets. Sure, the increased gravitic attraction means it starts doing more damage, but it also gets more tiring to carry and more cumbersome to wield. Chop up a couple opponents and soon the neutronium nightstick will get too heavy to swing with one hand.

And if the neutronium sphere gets big enough it will overcome the strength of the built-in magnetic field and start pulling in the rod. And if someone manages to drop the nightstick and it lands on its end ...

Action Enhancement Tables

These tables are essential for the time-traveling gamemaster's *savoir faire* and *joi de vivre* and all those other French terms for knowing what you're doing and doing it effortlessly. Many of them interrelate, so that you go from the "Time/Space Continuum Table" directly to the "Chrono-Blip Table" without even reading the "Nothing Happens Table" in between. Fortunately, they are pretty much self explanatory. Roll 'em and Read.

Time/Space Continuum Table

Every once in a while you may feel that your players are taking advantage of your sunny disposition by messing around with history too much. Or maybe you're just bored.

Either way, it may be time to check up on the condition of Mr. Time/Space Continuum and see how He's feeling.

Die Roll	Result
1-2	Nothing Happens. Go back to your game. That's it. That's all. Just a useless waste of space on an otherwise brilliant table.
3-6	Nothing At All Happens. Guess the ol' Universe is feeling just fine. Sure. Better check the "Nothing Happens Table," anyway. Just to be sure.
7-9	Several Coincidences Happen in a row. Could be just that — coincidence. Or it could be that the clones have stirred up a synchronicity storm. Make 'em sweat it out with a Moxie roll.
10-12	Several Large Ripples Appear in the sky. Ooops. No Chrono-Blip yet, but it is a good bet that one might be on its way. A Timeguard or two (i.e., Captain Wingo or Doctor Whom) arrives to see what's going on.
13-15	The Forces of Entropy take an interest in the Vulture team's activities. Refer to the "Entropoid Incursion Table."
16-18	The "Ripple-in-the-Sky" Effect is Stronger, and coincidences abound. The NPCs swear they know the mother of a team member. Communication with Mark is garbled and full of static.
19-20	They've Finally Done It: a real, dyed-in-the-wool Chrono-Blip. See the "Chrono-Blip Table" for the magnitude of their transgression.

Nothing Happens Table

Okay, so it's not like *nothing* happened, just nothing immediately detectable with the naked eye. That's all. Roll here to find out what's *really* happening, even if it *is* nothing.

Are you following all of this?

Die Roll	Result
1-2	Huh. Guess it really *was* nothing. Sorry to make you go to all that fuss.
3-4	Mark's voice sounds hollow and tinny (try talking into an empty soup or coffee can). If the Vultures don't mention this to Mark, he cuts out altogether for two encounters. Loose wires.
5-6	Contact with Mark is full of static. Players miss one or two crucial words from each transmission. How long do you *want* it to last?
7-8	All contact with Mark is temporarily lost. The duration of this event is up to the GM: we suggest two or three encounters.
9-10	Players' actions have generated a small Chrono-Blip (see the "Chrono-Blip Table" for relative size descriptions). It will block any attempt by Mark to retrieve the team until they correct whatever paradox they have created.
11-12	The Vultures happen upon a KABwOOMM (see "Duty Now For The Future" in Chapter Three) who has nothing to do with the current plot — but needs to be set straight. Or else.
13-14	Unknown to the players, a Timeguard unit has arrived in the area and is monitoring their actions, ready to step in if things get out of hand.
15-16	The Vultures stumble into a Timeguard unit in the midst of their duties, and are whisked away to the unit's stronghold/dungeon/staging area. The Vultures are held until they can explain themselves with sufficient clarity to obtain their own release.
17-18	Mark has broken down and will be unable to pick up the team for an unspecified time. Unless you want to specify it.
19	Mark interprets his lack of contact with the team as evidence that the Vultures have been terminated, and sends their next clones through.
20	Meanwhile, back at Alpha Complex, the Collapsicave has been seized by the Simplex/Society of your choice.

Entropoid Incursion Table

So, it looks like you've got some Entropoids. Entropoids almost always attack time travelers. Remember, Entropoids only appear in prime numbers (numbers divisible only by 1 and themselves); adjust the strength of the Entropoid squad to fit your storyline.

Die Roll	Result
1-2	One lone and undisguised Entropoid wanders out of a wormhole. If sufficiently outnumbered, or if the players recognize him for what he is, the Entropoid is likely to retreat.
3-4	Two Entropoids wearing wildly inappropriate disguises try to sneak up on the players. For example, if the players are in ancient Greece, the Entropoids are disguised as cowboys from the American West.
5-6	Two Entropoids disguised as local (and well-armed) time natives turn up with as much stealth as the situation allows (i.e., they don't step out of an open wormhole).
7-8	Three undisguised Entropoids step out of a wormhole. They're angry.
9-10	Three poorly disguised Entropoids (Eskimos in Palm Beach) attempt to surround the Vultures.
11-13	Three well-disguised and well-armed Entropoids make as quiet an entrance as possible, including winks and nods as if they're with the Vultures on this one (whatever the clones are attempting to pull off).
14-16	Five undisguised Entropoids practise their fumble drill — and the Vultures are the ball (can you say "squish?").
17-19	Five Entropoids in the wrong disguises (Egyptian pharoahs in WWI Manhattan, maybe?) make a heavily armed appearance.
20	Seven Entropoids and an EGOTIST get the drop on the Vultures, either trapping them in a room, or dropping a net or cage over them in the open. The EGOTIST taunts the Vultures with his plan (whatever it is — this gives them time to plan themselves. If they think of it).

Chrono-Blip Table

Ooops. This could be trouble for our intrepid Vultures. Chrono-Blips that are not dealt with escalate into the next-sized blip on the Table. Any action taken towards reversing or erasing the paradox that caused the blip weakens the blip down to the next level of intensity, even if it doesn't succeed.

Die Roll	Result
1-2	A ripple appears in the sky. Relax. This is a minor blip that the Vultures can correct by simply leaving the era they are in. If they don't want to leave yet, they have ten minutes before the blip escalates.
3-5	Several ripples distort the sky. The Vultures notice something odd (a plant standing on its blossoms, etc.) they didn't see before. They have nine minutes to stop it before it escalates.
6-8	A Mini-Chrono-Blip. The air shivers, and a wormhole the size of a lunchbox appears. If they're not looking at it, they might not notice right away (make a Moxie roll). They have eight minutes to fix the paradox.
9-11	A mid-sized, economy Chrono-Blip. A wormhole opens up within sight of the Vultures. They have seven minutes to start work on reversing or erasing any paradoxes before things get more ugly.
12-14	A full-sized, luxury Chrono-Blip. The wormhole opens, and occasional stuff dribbles out (a stray basketball, those rubber-coated wire grid chairs, etc.). They have six minutes to get it fixed.
15-17	A Major Chrono-Blip. The wormhole opens up and starts pouring out time-alien people and things (i.e. dinosaur eggs, Elvis records, Mookie Wilson, chariots, Christopher Columbus, etc). The paradox must be corrected in five minutes, or the blip will again escalate.
18-19	A Monster Chrono-Blip. The air shivers around the edges of the worm hole, as if little wormholes were trying to calve off, the way icebergs calve off glaciers. Stuff pours out faster. They have four minutes to heal the paradox in the fabric of space/time.
20	Mega-Blip. A pretty psychedelic experience. Several wormholes now open up and pollute the world with metric tons of time-alien things. Better call the Timeguards!

VULTURE WARRIORS

OF DIMENSION X

by Joseph Anthony and David Avallone

DO NOT ASK FOR WHOM THE X MARKS ...

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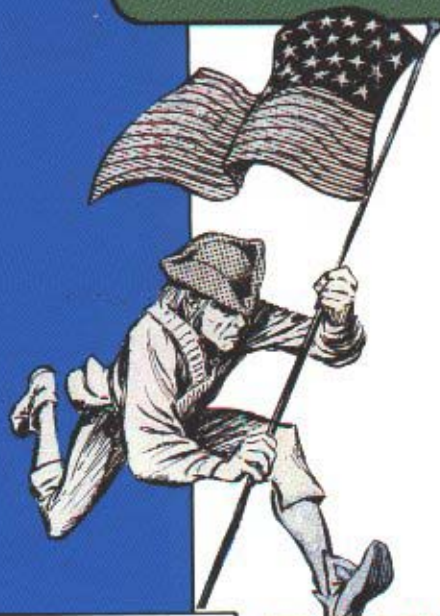
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