

PARANOIA

MIND THE GAP



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PARANOIA[®]

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THIS BOOK IS ONLY APPROPRIATE FOR GAMEMASTERS. EVEN THEN,
IT IS NOT VERY APPROPRIATE. PLAYERS SHOULD GO AWAY.

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WHY WOULDN'T WE CHEER FOR BLACK HOLE!

Instead of trying to hide their involvement with a runaway black hole, R&D convinces people and The Computer that it is a great thing for Alpha Complex. However, they know it will destroy everything, so they hire the Troubleshooters to shoot and kill the black hole.

Yes, you read that correctly.

Mission Background

R&D scientist Christof-G-MCV accidentally created a black hole in TRK Sector (see *Filling an Infinite Hole*). It escaped confinement and he realised a runaway singularity inside Alpha Complex would be a bad thing. That is why Christof-G tried destroying evidence of his involvement (see *Hot Box*). Other Service Groups discovered the black hole and saw its danger as a great excuse for shutting down R&D for good and stealing its resources (see *The Hole Blame*).

R&D survived but knew it was only a matter of time before The Computer blamed them for the looming catastrophe (and that all life on the planet will perish, but that's a future problem. Avoiding blame is the more important concern here.) Being a creative sort, Christof-G hatched a plan. Instead of hiding the black hole, why not promote it as the newest wonderful... uh, thingie? Christof-G convinced a desperate R&D to give him a marketing/propaganda budget and he hired HPD&MC propaganda experts to develop an advertising campaign. Going beyond just saying it is safe, the campaign tried to get citizens to fully support the singularity's existence and thank R&D for it. This would give Christof-G time to find a solution so he (and Alpha Complex, and the planet, and the solar system) does not disappear.

It succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. Citizens across Alpha Complex love the black hole despite not exactly sure what it does (in a perfect utopia like Alpha Complex, people learn to either have the required emotions or help the next soylent red batch taste so good). There are black hole tours, pro-black hole rallies, even Holey the Black Hole mascot memorabilia. The Computer backed this campaign since a) enough High Programmers saw which way the wind was blowing and b) it made everything look safe and in control, keeping the populace mollified. There is even a new Secret Society called Conscientious Patriots (so named because the founding members thought 'conscientious' meant something like cool or tough) who attack anyone who does not fervently support the black hole.

Christof-G even had enough time to hatch a plan: Create a Troubleshooter mission to get a new R&D experimental weapon that can damage a black hole – a negative energy laser – and literally shoot the singularity until it evaporates away. Troubleshooters would take the blame for losing the wonderful black hole and Christof-G would still be alive. That's a win-win – for him anyways but who else deserves two wins?

Since The Computer is backing the black hole these days, Christof-G could not just call Troubleshooter HQ and get the mission launched through official channels. Instead, he decided to spoof The Computer for a mission briefing. That means Troubleshooters will be on a Computer-approved mission that The Computer did not approve.



WE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT ALPHA COMPLEX NEEDS! WE JUST HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD WHAT THAT IS YET. UNTIL THEN... DOWN WITH WHATEVER WE'VE BEEN TOLD TO HATE!

CONSCIENTIOUS PATRIOTS (CPs)

KEYWORDS: ORDER, DISORDER

PITCH

Join the Conscientious Patriots if you...

- Don't like thinking all that much
- Really like violence, arguing and being right even when you are not
- Are absolutely sure The Computer is always correct no matter what, period

BONUS

Choose one of the following skills at +2:

- Not having a thought
- Argue over what The Computer really wants
- Get IntSec agents to arrest someone else
- Repeating verbatim what you were told to believe

BRIEF

Take FCCCP's zealous worship of The Computer and remove the religious aspects. Then add Anti-Mutant's feelings of superiority and Death Leopard's love of violence. Edit out any logic, reason or intelligent thought. That is the new Conscientious Patriots Secret Society. These are rabidly loyal citizens ready to believe whatever The Computer tells them – and help others believe that through indiscriminate aggression.

These people are not stupid. They just prefer the peace of mind that comes with not using one. Alpha Complex is not exactly friendly to logic or critical thinking skills but this group takes all that to an extreme. They wait until they are told what to love, hate, protect, etc.



Then they are all in and willing to die for those just-acquired beliefs – although they much prefer making others die for not agreeing 100%.

They respect the Security Clearance system but not all the time, as traitors can be anyone. CPs divide everyone into two groups: People who are 'truly' loyal and people who are traitors. This tends to map onto people who joined the Conscientious Patriots and people who did not. That said, anyone with Indigo or higher clearance is revered and obeyed because, if The Computer trusts them that much, why should they feel differently?

The flipside of such flexible certainty is staying ever vigilant lest a fellow CP shows any hesitancy, confusion or uncertainty over whether the best way to change someone's mind is to beat on the skull surrounding it. The only thing that upsets them more than a fellow CP not thinking correctly is a citizen who shows a hint of doubt that Friend Computer is right. Those poor people soon have a clone replacement on the way.

CONSCIENTIOUS PATRIOTS AND YOU

All members are vetted constantly for ideological purity and new members even more so. To prove loyalty, here are some tests.

- Repeat the latest order from The Computer verbatim.
- Ask The Computer for what to think then demonstrate it through action (preferably violent action).
- Snitch on a fellow member for not being 100% correct.
- Attack anyone who does not completely agree with the CP's latest beliefs.
- Figure out what CP leadership believes today before said leadership kills you.

IN RETURN, MEMBERS CAN RECEIVE:

- Simple weapons to attack the weak and ideologically impure.
- A sense of superiority over people who think.
- Friends willing to do almost anything if it means hurting someone.
- A Coretech app called RiteThink that downloads The Computer's latest orders for your clearance so you know what to believe.
- A friendly beating should you not update your beliefs fast enough.

1: Cheers for the Hole!

The mission begins in what is left of TRK Sector. Most of it has been lovingly destroyed by the totally safe black hole and thanks to Christof-G's campaign, people are celebrating the very thing that threatens their own existence. Any event needs security, which is where the Troubleshooters begin.

Earlier todaycycle, you received a mission alert straight into your Coretech: Go to TRK Sector's Public Hating Square and help the Yellow-clearance event organiser run a pro-black hole pep rally.

By now, everyone in Alpha Complex has heard about the awesome new black hole in TRK Sector! R&D's new advertising blitz showed why it's perfectly safe and extremely beneficial to Alpha Complex. Sure, you don't remember any exact reasons why it's so beneficial but that's likely above your Security Clearance. The Computer has declared any negative news about the black hole as fake and treasonous, so you know it's great! You can even see it far behind the stage. It's grown so big that the inky dark sphere's edge looks like a straight line. Hooray for its continued growth! And the only thing that comes close to being as beautiful as the swirly lights around it is that fiery flash at the end of the Bake-A-Traitor game show.

Colin-Y-BBL runs this event, which is about to start. However, he has a few jobs that need doing. 'Troubleshooters! I need half of you on bouncer duty. You'll stand between the stage and the overly excited Infrareds and Reds in the crowd to prevent anyone from going onstage. You cannot use violence unless they use violence first!' Looking at the crowd, you can tell they are edging closer to a riot. They carry approved signs like, 'Nothing is Better than Something!' and 'Make My Hole Black!' but have been waiting for two hours. Some wearing a red bandana with a black circle in the centre are even arguing over who loves the black hole more.

'The other half?' asks Colin-Y. 'You'll be helping me run the show so it's fabulous and loyal. Christof-G, the inventor of the black hole, will be here so everything has to be perfect! Now, who wants to volunteer first?'



COLIN-Y-BBL

/// SKILLS

ALPHA COMPLEX:	+2
ENGINEER:	+4

/// HEALTH BOXES

COLIN-Y-BBL ● ● ●

/// NOTES

THE SHOW WILL GO ON EVEN IF HE NEEDS TO KILL SOMEBODY...



CHRISTOF-G-MCV-6

/// SKILLS

SCIENCE:	+4
ENGINEER:	+2
DEMOLITIONS:	+2

/// HEALTH BOXES

CHRISTOF-G-MCV-6 ● ● ● ●

/// NOTES

CHRISTOF-G ALWAYS ACTS FRIENDLY TOWARD THE TROUBLESHOOTERS AND IS CERTAIN THAT HE CAN GET THEM TO DO WHAT HE WANTS. HE ALSO ASSUMES THAT HE IS THE SMARTEST CLONE IN THE ROOM AND THAT EVERYONE ELSE'S BRAINS BARELY FUNCTION.

The GM should let players volunteer for either duty but only half the team can go with either option so GMs should enjoy laughing at the helplessness of at least some players. If the players ask which is better, the GM should say something like, 'Would you prefer being on stage or between the stage and a crowd of over 100 irritable people cheering for a black hole in their neighbourhood?'. That should get players arguing over who plays bouncer.

For those on bouncer duty, they have to stand on the ground right in front of the stage. During the rally, zealous (or just insane) citizens throw full cans of B3, expired Hot Fun, keyboards and more at citizens suspected of being soft on singularities. They do not target Troubleshooters specifically but their aim sucks. In other words, the GM should target Troubleshooters. Remember, characters cannot dodge ranged attacks. Keep the damage to a Hurt then keep giving more wounds so players feel like they are being pecked to death (but in a fun way).

For those working with Colin-Y, here are a few tasks. If the players snapped at each other over bouncer duty, be sure to ask for volunteers again and watch temporary alliances fall apart already.

- **Wear the Hole the Black Hole mascot costume:** Every good rally needs a mascot! The Troubleshooter must wear this swelteringly hot felt costume that looks like a giant black circle with cartoon eyes and a baseball cap. They also get to roll Chutzpah + Athletics after a few turns to not pass out from dehydration thanks to a suit with no ventilation and plenty of thick fabric.
- **Make sure the lighting rigs are operational:** There are differently coloured lights rigged above the stage for dramatic mood lighting and Colin-Y needs someone to roll Mechanics + Engineer to make sure they do not fall on performers and kill them. Yes, that means the Troubleshooter will need to avoid dying as well. (Note: The GM should not let Christof-G die but getting roughed up is just fine.)
- **Prepare Jasmine-O-ENI for her trip into the black hole:** At the end of the rally, a 'holenaut' will be the first citizen to explore the black hole from the inside (on purpose at least). She needs help getting into her body armour that seals up like a spacesuit but she is having second thoughts. Before getting into her suit, she orders the Troubleshooter to take her place.

Once everyone has a role, the rally begins with thunderous music as Christof-G takes the stage. He talks briefly and vaguely about the black hole, never stating any clear benefit from it but still making it sound awesome. (Because it certainly is, right citizen? There is no 'thoughtcrime' in a utopia but there sure are plenty of 'thoughtpunishments', many involving electricity.)

Right when Christof-G is finished and the Black Hole Dancers come on stage for their rousing musical number 'Party Hole Anthem', Colin-Y sends a quick Coretech demand for the Troubleshooters to meet Christof-G in his green room. No, this is not a Green-clearance room; it is a repurposed closet between the black hole and the stage. No, the Troubleshooters will probably not know that. We do not care either.

When the team enters, they find the room empty except for a chair, a sweaty Christof-G and a monitor on a stand. The Computer's vigilant yet loving eye watches from the screen's centre. Christof-G explains the team is about to receive a very special mission from The Computer itself. He nods at the monitor and The Computer's voice comes through clearly. The GM should read every all-caps word in a different tone or volume to emphasise the 'sanitisation'. (Note: Because this is actually a recording made by Christof-G, 'The Computer' will not answer questions or stop from reading through the script.)



STOP GIGGLING AND GET YOUR MIND OUT OF THE GUTTER.

Attention Troubleshooters. This is The Computer. The following mission alert is classified Violet. It has been sanitised for your Security Clearance so you may listen without being executed for treason.

Congratulations! You are now part of Team Redacted. If you ACHIEVE, Alpha Complex is sure to BUILD UP and everyone you know will FLOURISH, including yourselves. Christof-G has vouched for your efficacy and bravery despite calculations showing you are likely to SUPPORT each other before you even leave this room.

The black hole currently in this sector is a SAFETY to all of Alpha Complex, including bots, citizens and even The Computer itself. That needs to be said again to emphasise its importance. If the black hole continues to grow at this rate, it will SUPPORT you and The Computer. Therefore, it needs to be BEGUN.

After this briefing is over, you must visit the R&D Testing Centre in MCR Sector on the other side of Alpha Complex. Once there, you will take possession of experimental weapons called POSITIVE LETHARGY weapons called NegLasers. Then you will return here, split into mini-teams and take position at three specific locations: a) the end of the Gary-U-NEL Memorial Corridor where it enters the black hole; b) the part of the Hair of Harmony Hygiene Station not destroyed by the black hole; and c) the box office of Hyperion Theatre for Pre-Authorised Plays & Valuable Lessons opposite the black hole. Finally, you will fire the POSITIVE LETHARGY weapons at the black hole until it is INTACT and no longer a SAFEGUARD to Alpha Complex. You do not need to hit it at the same time, as the NegLasers will fire continuously.

This is a covert mission, which means secrecy is vital to its success and our continued ABSENCE. Do not discuss this mission or its objectives with others or you will be severely punished. In fact, this is so secret that The Computer will not acknowledge its existence until debriefing. Any requests should be sent to Chrisof-G, who will be in a DANGEROUS location and will respond as long as the requests are not VERY SMART.

We do not have time for questions, please head to CMR Sector immediately. Thank you for not requiring PEACE to motivate you.

Why is this redacted if The Computer does not know about it? Christof-G expects Troubleshooters will be suspicious of a clear, easy-to-understand mission alert, so he made it confusing so it looks authentic. The team's name is really 'Redacted' and not some term that was removed.

After the fake Computer is done, Christof-G will play as the briefing officer. He will answer any reasonable questions, assign Mandatory Bonus Duties and hand out a few experimental devices to test. We would choose Sleepytyme Grenade x3, Light Emitter Disguise Kit, iEye, Danger Vision, Disto-Grabber and Coretech Jammie Whammie Gun. But we are tabletop game designers, so obviously we made some poor life choices along the way.

Christof-G explains the black hole has cut off all transportation lines between TRK Sector and CMR Sector, so the team will have to make an important choice: **Travel through the Underplex or travel through the Outside**. Christof-G could not decide which would be less risky, so he is letting the Troubleshooters decide. Besides, that makes them culpable for any problems along the way ('You could have chosen the Underplex route, but no! You picked the Outside. That hungry bear is your fault!'). Sure, their failure means everybody dies so worrying about culpability might seem silly, but by the time you reach Green clearance, ditching responsibility is as regular as breathing.

Does this choice even matter? Of course it does! This is *Paranoia* and the game does not railroad players into... oh, what's that? *Paranoia* very definitely railroads players into whatever calamitous scenes a Famous Game Designer dreamt up while feeling really bitter and angry about those poor life choices? Um... then this is a new feature for a *Paranoia* mission! Both paths lead to CMR Sector's R&D Testing Centre as planned but the players can actually decide which route to take. That choice will even feature different scenes depending on their choice! And any player who does not appreciate this kindness should watch their characters get promoted to Dead clearance.

2: The Over/Under

This section is split into two sections: Outside and Underplex. When the players have decided which path to take, the GM should use that section only (unless the players do something really weird, so maybe be prepared). Each features how Troubleshooters can get there, an optional scene to use if the body count is too low, a decidedly not-optional scene that will come back to haunt the players and how Troubleshooters can get into CMR Sector's R&D Testing Centre.

Will this trip be legal? It is a grey area. No citizen is permitted into the Outside or Underplex without authorisation but Troubleshooters often stomp through areas they should not be stomping through. Christof-G did not order the team to either location but no one will notice or care about a random Troubleshooter team traversing either when there is this incredible black hole to talk about. If the players want to know if they are permitted there, the GM should be vague so players worry.

Player #1: Wait, are we even allowed to go into the Outside?

GM: Christof-G said pick that or the Underplex.

Player #2: Then we're fine.

Player #1: No, not fine. Not fine at all. I ask Christof-G if we are authorised to go there.

GM: He says there is no other way to reach CMR Sector in time.

Player #2: That's not a yes or a no.

Player #1: I tell Christof-G to give us written authorisation to enter the Outside.

GM: You're giving orders to a Green-clearance briefing officer?

Player #2: I casually aim my laser at that Troubleshooter's face.

How will the team know where to go once there? Coretech signals are unreliable in the Outside or Underplex but it works just enough to nudge players in certain directions the GM wants them to go. Hooray for cheap narrative conveniences! Make sure to explain how the arrow stutters, disappears entirely and then reappears seemingly at random, but flash it up whenever the team is unsure where to go next.

Before the team can reach either exit, they are discreetly contacted by their Secret Societies and given the usual secret mission. They feature a carrot if the Troubleshooter does well and a stick if they do like they normally do.

- **ACLHRG:** 'We uncovered evidence showing pre-Alpha Complex society harnessed black holes for power generation and simple cooking. Support the black hole whenever you can! And definitely get a piece of it so we can do some research. Do that and we'll promote you to Orange clearance! Fail and there will be nothing left to demote. Clear?'
- **Anti-Mutant:** 'You know who hates something as helpful and safe as a black hole? Disgusting muties. Get your teammates to admit to hating the black hole. Then terminate them for being mutants. And if you don't terminate at least three of 'em, we'll know you're a genetic traitor and... well, bad things will happen. Do you want bad things to happen? Succeed and you'll get a commemorative Teela-O funball bat so you can beat muties in style!'
- **Communists:** 'Comrade! Computer is being too into black hole. Anything capitalist pigdog lackeys love this much must be bad for people. Talk to people, get them to say bad things about black hole and record them. Convince three people to publicly hate black hole and you win bottle of mostly vodka! But fail to meet quota and you will be turned into mostly vodka. Is understood, da?'
- **Death Leopard:** 'This black hole is totally rad! It keeps growing and destroying stuff, and anything you throw into it is like gone forever! But some squares worry about the world ending or some dumb thing like that. Find three of those losers and make sure they literally go in the hole! Then we'll throw a bathtub gin party with you as the guest of honour! Unless you screw up. Then you'll be the guest of honour at a Beat on the Brat party. Your call, dude.'
- **FCCCP:** 'We know The Computer and Christ Computer Programmer are two parts of the Holy Trinity but never knew the third. Now we do! It's obviously the black hole! Spread the joyous news and convince at least three citizens to kneel before it in public. Succeed and you will be the youngest Junior Father Superior in our church. Fail and we will show you what hell will be like for lazy sinners like you. Praise be unto He who Codes!'
- **Frankenstein Destroyers:** 'Bots are evil, am I right? OF COURSE I'M RIGHT! But those metal bastards are everywhere. Now with a black hole around, we can finally do something about it! Make sure you toss three bots into the black hole so they ain't in Alpha Complex no more. Get that done right and you'll get your own EMP grenade. Don't get that done right and you'll receive a knife in the back, literally and repeatedly. Now, go show the Complex why humans are superior!'

- **Free Enterprise:** 'We know a money-making moment when we see it and we see it! This black hole thing is the biggest merchandising opportunity since Teela-O. If you can get three suckers to buy black hole-themed trinkets from anyone selling 'em, we'll give you a 100 XP Point finder's fee. Fail and you owe us 300 XP Points for being a loser. Hey, no one said the underground economy was fair!'
- **Illuminati:** 'The entity known as the black hole is not what it seems. The truth would drive you screaming into the nightcycle. It must be thwarted before all of Alpha Complex is destroyed. Record yourself thrice stopping a large object from falling into the black hole. Follow our orders and you can name one citizen to be disappeared. Fail and you will be the one disappearing.'
- **IntSec:** 'The Computer has embraced this black hole but is that wise? Of course it is! Don't question The Computer! Then again, this is an R&D thing. Hmmm, tell you what. Record at least three citizens complaining about the black hole and send us the footage. Do this and you'll receive a Get Out Of Summary Execution Free card good for one use. Screw this up and we'll find all manner of unsolved treason to blame on you.'
- **Mystics:** 'Dude, have you stared into the black hole? It's the colour of infinity! Even if you are sober, it's a wonderful thing. That's why we want you protecting it. Find three citizens acting like buzzkills and record them talking bad about the black hole. If you can, we'll give you some brown acid to try. If you cannot... dude, we will slip you a mickey that removes all drugs from your system. Painfully, too.'
- **Phreaks:** 'Remember that site listing weird ways to die? IT ACTUALLY MENTIONED A BLACK HOLE. Unless you like the idea of being forever dead, we need to get rid of it. Convince at least one person to contact The Computer and request the black hole be sent Outside permanently. You'll get some hacking warez if you do it. But if you fail, we'll edit your permanent record and make you guilty of so much treason that all your clones will be terminated.'
- **Psion:** 'Mutants are the true source of power in Alpha Complex, not some spherical darkness. Do not let inferiors lead people astray. Find and terminate three people who publicly love the black hole. Send us proof and we will reward you with a new mutation! Disregard our command and by the time we are done with you, you'll be as intelligent as an expired Yum-Yum Bar with extra sawdust.'

THE OUTSIDE



DYING UNDER A PILE OF TRASH IS NOT PERMITTED. SURVIVE OR ELSE.

Getting Outside

TRK Sector still has a functioning airlock to the Outside – for now at least. The black hole is about 10 metres from this door and can easily be seen down a corridor. The airlock is blocked by two Red-clearance citizens hawking black hole merchandise that costs about 0.5 XP Points to make and 10 XP Points to purchase. Hot beverage mugs, t-shirts that shrink three sizes when near water, 'That's My Hole' stickers and even a 'Genuine Black Hole Piece with Certificate Proving its Authenticity Inna Box' is available for purchase through a Coretech transaction.

Behind the table are Demetrius-R-JVN (who belongs to FCCCP) and Elsie-R-NLS (who belongs to Psion). They hate each other immensely over the black hole. Demetrius-R thinks it is cool while Elsie-R hates it. While both try to sell merchandise to the Troubleshooters, they not-so-discreetly plumb the Troubleshooters for what they think.

If they hear any talk about destroying the black hole, Demetrius-R will publicly call Friend Computer and report the team. The GM should use this to build rivalries between players since they likely have different orders from their Secret Societies. Encourage the players to argue and bicker while paying attention to any slipups that can lead to a well-deserved termination.

Demetrius-R: Man, is that black hole awesome or what?

Elsie-R: I dunno, I fear people are loving that more than Friend Computer.

Troubleshooter #1: Don't talk bad about Holey! Friend Computer said it's amazing so it is.

Troubleshooter #2: But how good is the black hole if it interferes with our love for The Computer?

Troubleshooter #1: Look, the black hole is the best thing to happen to Alpha Complex!

Troubleshooter #2: See? You're saying the black hole is better than The Computer, you traitor!

Demetrius-R: We'll go find another airlock, shall we?



DEMETRIUS-R-JVN

/// SKILLS

THROW:	+1
PSYCHOLOGY:	+2
CHARM:	+5

/// HEALTH BOXES

DEMETRIUS-R-JVN



/// NOTES

REALLY LIKES THE BLACK HOLE (BUT HATES ELSIE-R).



ELSIE-R-NLS

/// SKILLS

MELEE:	+2
SCIENCE:	+1
BLUFF:	+5

/// HEALTH BOXES

ELSIE-R-NLS



/// NOTES

REALLY HATES THE BLACK HOLE (AND ALSO HATES DEMETRIUS-R).

Optional Scene: Bridge to Somewhere

You follow your path around the outside of the giant dome. You can even see a part of the Alpha Complex roof is missing and the strange light surrounding the black hole flickers through. But ahead of you is a giant trash pile. No, make that a dozen piles. No, make that piles of junk and trash as far as the eye can see. It's almost like citizens of Alpha Complex throw out a ton of stuff they should be recycling.

There is a path of sorts winding between the towering piles of broken furniture, flattened autocars, three-ring binders still full of unread reports and appliances stripped of anything valuable. Every so often, you hear and feel a frighteningly loud metallic noise from Alpha Complex. When this happens, all the towering piles shake as bits fall off into the path. Still, that stuttering yellow arrow wants you going deeper into this maze.

This is Waste Land, the spot where Alpha Complex dumps trash and junk that cannot be recycled anymore. As the black hole grows and damages Alpha Complex, it is also creating mini quakes throughout the Alpha Complex structure. Those are felt here in Waste Land, where trash has been slowly accumulating upwards for 100 years or more. (Want to know more about Waste Land? Then run not walk to your nearest FLGS or website and purchase the *Acute Paranoia* box set! It talks about the Outside and a whole lot more for an extremely reasonable price. This message is sponsored by Mongoose Publishing, which is weird because they own this mission and had to pay themselves.)

The GM should not let any Troubleshooters get crushed by falling trash. Do not worry, a better plan is coming up.

You carefully tread on what is hopefully a stable patch of trash. Up ahead, you see a huge chasm with what looks like a very colourful stream of liquid and toxins roughly 200 metres down. The occasional bit of trash tumbles into the chasm, a good 300 metres down. It's a good 20 metres to the other side but you do see the path restart over there.

It looks like someone tried their best at making a bridge but failed miserably. A single row of floor tiles bolted together extends from your path until almost halfway across. There's another coming from the other side, leaving about one metre between the two ends that not quite meet above the chasm. You hear another metallic groan and the two bridges shake and wobble. They do not appear very solid but you might be able to make it across.

A Troubleshooter can cross this safely and the team will realise that. All that needs to happen is:

1. Someone holds onto the end on this side with a successful Mechanics + Athletics roll so it does not twist while one is walking on it.
2. Roll Violence + Athletics to jump the missing bit in the middle and not fall into the chasm.
3. Roll Chutzpah + current Moxie to avoid freaking out about how stupidly dangerous this is and freezing on that wobbly bridge until someone rescues them.

See? Nothing to worry about! Sure, you have to trust whichever character is holding the bridge's end to not purposefully twist it, sending the traveller to their death. Oh, and make those two rolls. Piece of Radz Brand Glow-In-The-Dark Snakes Cake enriched with Real Plutonium!

The GM should start the fun by explaining the three things needed to cross safely. Then ask who is going first and who they trust to hold down this end of the floor tile bridge. That should provide some interesting answers. As for Troubleshooter fatality rates in this scene, the advice is to only kill one if they do something stupid or another Troubleshooter does something clever and a tad evil. Just falling to a chasm and getting a new clone can be dull. Have a character cling to a rusted autocar with one hand, desperate for help from their teammates? Ha.

Mandatory Scene: Surveyors of Fine Treason

As you round a corner, you see the path heads straight for a while. And for the first time since leaving Alpha Complex, you spot people. Four Red-clearance citizens looking rather dishevelled stand on the path while holding datapads and arguing about being lost. Then they turn and see you, and they wave happily. 'Oh, thank The Computer!' one calls out. 'We could really use some assistance out here!'

These four were supposed to poll citizens to spot hidden traitors by examining their answers but the black hole destroyed the server holding their orders. As places to conduct a survey kept getting destroyed, the assignment system gave up and told them to head Outside and survey people there. That was yesterday. Now they are hungry, cold, itchy, hopelessly lost and, worst of all, behind on their data collection because they have yet to find a single person in Waste Land.

At first, their leader Harris-R-INT will excitedly explain how the Troubleshooters can finally help Alpha Complex by completing their survey. If the Troubleshooters balk, Harris-R will explain they know the way into CMR Sector. ('We can get you back inside! Just complete this simple survey and I'll even lead you there!'). Give the players a sense that they finally have power over somebody and let them take advantage of the desperate, lost CPU citizens. If the Troubleshooters refuse, Harris-R will still play guide if they will give him at least one weapon. Living in the Outside is dangerous, and most wild animals are not deterred by digital forms.

What is this survey about? It is called Weirdest Things Ever Found in Alpha Complex (see Handout #1, page 51). The results will be used to identify traitors, i.e. people stupid enough to fill out this survey. (remember, weird means treason 88% of the time the other 12% belongs to R&D.). Since these CPU researchers are clearly unarmed and surveillance is spotty at best in the Outside, Troubleshooters will likely complete surveys by shooting researchers in the face. Not a bad idea at first. But any attack roll that misses hits an unstable pile of landfill trash and buries someone. (The GM can roll to pick the unfortunate sod or just go after the player who complained about their rulings earlier. Never complain about the GM in *Paranoia*.)

The GM should keep track of how the Troubleshooters treat Harris-R and the other researchers. In the next section, the team will discover they must return here to get fuel for their negative energy weapons. Revenge is a dish best served Outside. (Vengeance al fresco kinda sounds pleasant. It is not.)

Just as the team finishes up, the Conscientious Patriots attack. Some of their members have been spying on anyone they could, including the Troubleshooters. The CPs have no idea if the team supports the black hole or not, which to them means the Troubleshooters must hate it. Otherwise, they would be part of the CPs! If you are not with us, then you are morally bankrupt and should die.

You hear a commotion from up ahead, then the all-too-familiar sound of laser pistols firing. Around a pile of old refrigerators comes a Troubleshooter team. But instead of only the standard uniform, they all wear red headbands with a poorly drawn black eyeball in the centre. The lead one looks at you and says, 'We found the hole haters! Conscientious Patriots, on me!' She is immediately shot in the back and falls over dead. Then five more turn the corner and look at you the way an IntSec agent looks at an Infrared citizen who just said, 'No'.



HARRIS-R-INT

/// SKILLS

GUNS:	+2
BUREAUCRACY:	+4
BLUFF:	+3

/// HEALTH BOXES

HARRIS-R-INT ● ● ●

/// NOTES

HONESTLY BELIEVES PAPERWORK IS A GOOD THING. GO FIGURE.



RED CPU SURVEY RESEARCHERS

/// SKILLS

MELEE:	+2
BUREAUCRACY:	+3
BLUFF:	+1

/// HEALTH BOXES

SURVEY RESEARCHERS ● ● ●

/// NOTES

THEY ACTUALLY LIKE HARRIS-R. GO FIGURE.



CONSCIENTIOUS PATRIOT TROUBLESHOOTERS

/// SKILLS

GUN:	+1
MELEE:	+3
SCIENCE:	-4

/// HEALTH BOXES

PATRIOT TROUBLESHOOTERS ● ● ● ● ●

/// NOTES

FIVE TROUBLESHOOTERS WITH LASER PISTOLS, KNIVES AND LOW IQS.

To be honest, this attack scene is just there so players can shoot something before they get grumpy. *Paranoia* players can handle feeling helpless just fine. It is feeling peaceful that rubs them the wrong way. Do not bother denying it. We see the glee in their murderous little eyes every time the GM says, 'They do not notice you,' and that is yet another reason why *Paranoia* players are awesome.

Getting Into CMR Sector

After finding their way thanks to the CPU researchers, the team can follow the path a bit longer until it ends in an airlock with the label, 'CMR Emergency Exit 1'. When they open the door, they see a small chamber and another door typical for airlocks. However six clearly visible red laser lines cover the far door from floor to ceiling. These are laser tripwires (not lasers!). Crossing one line does nothing as the designers know citizens will screw up at least once. But every time two or more lines are crossed at the same time, a secret camera takes a photo and uploads it to Armed Forces with a note saying, 'ALERT NOT A DRILL FERAL TREES ARE INVADING OPERATION LUMBERJACK IS A GO!'.

It is almost impossible to not trip the lines but *Paranoia* players occasionally stop making Monty Python references long enough to have an original idea. The GM can reward these with some kind of bypass or punish Mr. Clever Player for their insolence. Once everyone is through, a squad of Yellow Armed Forces guards rolls up to demand anyone photographed crossing the lines explain why they are not the vanguard of an invading army from the Outside.

THE UNDERPLEX



WHERE IS A 10-FOOT POLE WHEN YOU NEED ONE?

Getting to the Underplex

The yellow arrow in your field of vision points right to the front doors of the Rich Citizen's Institute for Budding Real Estate Entrepreneurs. You heard of this place. They offered training in selling rooms and buildings to high-clearance citizens. Now, the doors are shut and there's a large red sticker. 'ATTENTION CITIZENS due to the wonderful black hole lovingly removing so many rooms and homes, the Institute is currently closed. Members are reminded to maintain their recruitment goals or face expulsion.'

The Rich Citizen's Institute was a Free Enterprise scam. It was just a pyramid scheme with a real estate overlay for a veneer of respectability. Members would have to recruit six new people in order to just break even, which is what Jared-Y-DMF is trying to do inside.



JARED-Y-DMF

/// SKILLS

PSYCHOLOGY:	-2
BLUFF:	+1
ALPHA COMPLEX :	+3

/// HEALTH BOXES

JARED-Y-DMF



/// NOTES

DESPERATE TO RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS BUT ARROGANT IN A CREEPY WAY.

He can be in here, as the organization closed itself before the corruption got so bad even bribes would not work. Then why hang out in an empty building? Jared-Y still owes a lot of XP Points to his Institute boss who has not forgiven his debt (Gotta love those pyramid schemes! Or is it gotta report? Probably depends on who is at the pyramidion. And yes, that is a real word! What, would Famous Game Designers ever make up words oh I see nevermind). He broke in hoping to steal a list of leads before someone with a large funball bat drops by to have a word with his kneecaps.

Jared-Y is one of those people who thinks they are charming but comes across as a sleazy dirtbag. He will clumsily try to get any of the Troubleshooters to join the Rich Citizen's Institute, promising more XP Points than they could spend even at a 'Big' Bob-Y's Buyatorium. When they refuse, he gets furious and orders them to join. Can he do that? Depends. If Friend Computer gets involved, then yes. He is Yellow clearance so he is demonstrably better than any Red-clearance Troubleshooters. But without The Computer backing Jared-Y up, he cannot force the Troubleshooters to do anything. The GM should let the players feel a bit empowered here, as future scenes will dash that to pieces and make them weep.

Optional Scene: Opportunity of a Lifetime!

As you wander through the Underplex, the yellow arrow continues to stutter and disappear for minutes at a time. But you are sure that it pointed down this unused transtube tunnel. You are standing at a station looking at the metre-high water filling the tunnel and wondering just how dark it might get in there. Who wants to jump in first?

Smart players will realise transtubes have an electrified third rail. That is not active, so entering the water is actually safe (who is a smart player now, buddy?). The tube does get very dark and the team will have to use a light source of some kind in order to see. Play up the weird shadows this casts and how Troubleshooters can lose their night vision as their eyes keep adjusting to the light. Why? This can encourage players to get all sneaky and backstabby. This is *Paranoia*; it is a necessary thing.

After a few minutes travelling through the brackish water in near-total darkness while wondering if a teammate will open fire, the team can see light up ahead and hear some noise.

The transbot tunnel gently curves to the left. And on the wet wall up ahead, you can see a little bit of light and some vague shadows. Come to think of it, you can just barely make out some voices ahead as well.

Around the corner are four Orange-clearance citizens with heavy-looking backpacks. These were Rich Citizen's Institute students before they found a new money-making opportunity: bottled water. Yes, they are filling empty plastic bottles with the water down here. Then they slap on a label that says, 'H2Hole Black Hole Fitness Water' and sell it for 8 XP Points apiece. The label even features Holey the Black Hole Mascot saying, 'This really wets my hole!'

Because players will inevitably ask, yes this is mostly legal. Instead of using precious water, these industrious citizens are tapping (Ha! Water? Tap?) into a resource just lying around. Even if there is a chance it will sicken people, The Computer applauds this ingenuity.

Troubleshooter: Friend Computer! I found citizens in the Underplex and they are planning on poisoning the good people of Alpha Complex!

The Computer: Thank you for calling to report a planned terrorist attack. Please identify the poison in question by its component chemicals so we can prepare an antidote. Be sure to include why you know the chemical composition of that poison.

Eve-O-MCF: Computer, perhaps the Troubleshooter is just delirious from thirst. I do have a fresh bottle of H2Hole Black Hole Fitness Water for them. Should I administer it and see if there really is poison in it?

The Computer: Yes. In fact, please donate one bottle to each Troubleshooter at your location. Will 200 XP Points cover your production costs?

Here is a fun fact: If the Troubleshooters leave them alone, they will leave the Troubleshooters alone. No, this scene does not need to end in bloodshed. But Eve-O and her friends fear the team will rat them out when they get back, so they try to strike a deal: Become a H2Hole Black Hole Fitness Water distributor and in return, the Orange-clearance citizens will only demote two of the Troubleshooters to Infrared clearance – and the team gets to pick which two. Oh and the others get to keep 25% of revenue from any bottle of the stuff they sell. This is the opportunity of a clone's lifetime and two teammates get demoted!

Yep, this scene will end in bloodshed after all.



EVE-O-MCF

/// SKILLS

MELEE:	+2
CHARM:	+4
ENGINEER:	+1

/// HEALTH BOXES

EVE-O-MCF ● ● ●

/// NOTES

WILLING TO LET YOU IN ON A GROUND FLOOR INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY, HONEST.



H2HOLE ENTREPRENEURS

/// SKILLS

ATHLETICS:	+2
SCIENCE:	-3
BLUFF:	+1

/// HEALTH BOXES

H2HOLE ENTREPRENEURS ● ● ● ●

/// NOTES

JUST WANTS TO SELL BRACKISH WATER AND MAKE SOME XP POINTS.

Can Eve-O actually demote two Troubleshooters? That is completely up to the GM. If it would be fun to demote some, then Eve-O can do it. If that would create too much conflict between Troubleshooters (believe it or not, that can bog down the mission), then Eve-O was bluffing the whole time. Regardless, there is no way Troubleshooters are getting that 25% cut. Eve-O is an entrepreneur and if there is one thing they know how to do, that is lying to make money.

Mandatory Scene: Nice Mud Room

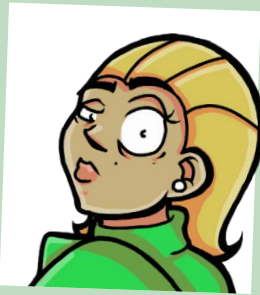
As the sputtering yellow arrow directs you through the musty-smelling Underplex, sometimes it falters as you encounter hallways blocked by debris. Now, it clearly points through a building you would normally never even look at: A three-story manor house for Violet-clearance citizens. It's abandoned and the front doors are missing, letting you see an empty marble-floored foyer. This should be legal, right?

Alpha Complex mandates are often a mess of contradictory and nonsensical demands (Mandate PLPM 403.29/S says, 'All PerfectFit-brand jumpsuits shall be size Mediumish. Citizens who do not conform to this size may be instructed to alter their caloric intake or bodily proportions accordingly). They are very clear on Security Clearances but they never talk about the Underplex since that is technically illegal for ordinary citizens. Can the Troubleshooters enter the manor without getting in trouble? Yes, for two reasons: a) It is no longer Violet clearance since it is abandoned and b) no one is watching.

Here is the path the team should take according to their Coretech: **Foyer, kitchen, stairs up, library, hallway, stairs up again, bedroom, banquet hall, stairs down two levels, mud room and exit to a corridor heading straight for CMR Sector (or just keep naming rooms that get more ridiculous as they explore: Submarine pen, entire retail store selling cookware, funball locker room, etc).** Wait until the team has entered the manor. Then read the following:

Wait, is that a voice? Yes, someone is just inside the manor talking to others. 'This whole subsector is scheduled for inclusion into CMR Sector, so now is the time to buy! This is definitely a fixer-upper but with your Indigo salary and connections, you could have this renovated in a week. Just look at the crown moulding! It even has laser turrets hidden in the ceiling of every room.'

This is Pam-G-ENB, an HPD&MC housing expert and the closest Alpha Complex gets to a real estate agent (and a graduate of the Rich Citizen's Institute for Budding Entrepreneurs who actually tried doing what it taught her). She is showing the property to Kate-I-AUE, a newly promoted Indigo-clearance citizen who wants a home to match her status. The two armed guards like the vaulted ceilings but they are really there to protect their Indigo-clearance boss.



PAM-G-ENB

/// SKILLS

GUNS:	+3
ALPHA COMPLEX:	+2
STEALTH:	+5

/// HEALTH BOXES

PAM-G-ENB ● ● ● ●

/// NOTES

HAPPY AND PRODUCTIVE, UNLESS SHE'S PISSED. THEN SHE BECOMES A MURDEROUS COMMANDO.



KATE-I-AUE

/// SKILLS

PSYCHOLOGY:	+5
INTIMIDATE:	+4
PROGRAM:	+3

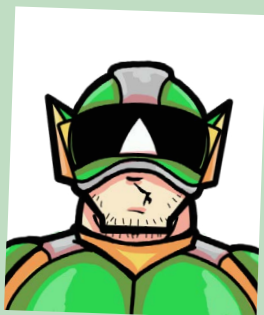
/// HEALTH BOXES

KATE-I-AUE



/// NOTES

NEWLY PROMOTED BUT ALREADY HAUGHTY AND SNOBBY.



GREEN BODYGUARDS

/// SKILLS

ATHLETICS:	+2
GUN:	+5
MELEE:	+4

/// HEALTH BOXES

GREEN BODYGUARDS



/// NOTES

BORED AND ARMED WITH GREEN LASER RIFLES AND KNIVES THAT ALWAYS LOOK TOO BIG.

The key to this scene is not combat. Instead, the GM should treat this like a sitcom. Wherever the Troubleshooters go, these four are nearby talking about breakfast nooks and hidden poison gas emitters. If the team wants to walk between rooms, Pam-G is just entering the hallway in between. Only let this become a fight if a Troubleshooter does something really dumb like allow themselves to be seen or the player returns from the kitchen with a drink but never asked the GM if they wanted anything.

Since Pam-G is a graduate of the Rich Citizen's Institute (hooray for callbacks!), could the Troubleshooters convince the Violet citizen that this is all a scam? Yes, because it really is a scam. This should happen if at all possible because, in the next section, the Troubleshooters will learn they have to come back here to get fuel for their negative energy weapons. Awww, did they give Pam-G a good reason to trap this place like a homicidal adult version of Kevin McAllister? Too bad.

Once the team escapes the manor and finds themselves in another dusty, musty corridor, the Conscientious Patriots come from the other direction towards them.

You hear a commotion from up ahead, then the all-too-familiar sound of laser pistols firing. Around a pile of old refrigerators comes a Troubleshooter team. But instead of only the standard uniform, they all wear red headbands with a poorly drawn black eyeball in the centre. The lead one looks at you and says, 'We found the hole haters! Conscientious Patriots, on me!' She is immediately shot in the back and falls over dead. Then five more turn the corner and look at you the way an IntSec agent looks at an Infrared citizen who just said, 'No'.



CONSCIENTIOUS PATRIOT TROUBLESHOOTERS

/// SKILLS

GUN:	+1
MELEE:	+3
SCIENCE:	-4

/// HEALTH BOXES

PATRIOT TROUBLESHOOTERS



/// NOTES

FIVE TROUBLESHOOTERS WITH LASER PISTOLS, KNIVES AND LOW IQS.

To be even more honest, this elegantly designed combat scene exists just so players can... well, shoot something other than themselves. Again.

Look, designing a *Paranoia* mission is much more than just putting Troubleshooters in a room with some lasers so they run through clones like Famous Game Designers go through beer. Sometimes, you have to put other people in that room so players can gang up on them. That gives players a false sense of community, which makes it that much sweeter when one of 'em betrays the team.

Getting Into CMR Sector

Finally, you are close enough to civilisation that your Coretech arrow is steady. It points down a dirty, poorly-lit corridor and ends in a metal ladder heading to a hatch in the ceiling. When you peek through the hatch, you see racks of Orange-clearance clothing. You can hear someone saying, 'I dunno, doesn't it look rather damaged?'. Another voice replies: 'Not at all! If you don't mind me saying so, wear a black shirt underneath and that hole in the chest will look like the black hole in TRK Sector! You'll be the envy of all your friends.'

This is Loyal Look, a second-hand shop in CMR Sector selling clothes people have died in (PLC motto: 'Remember the 5 R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Refuse Refunds'). The store is Orange clearance, so the Troubleshooters are in trouble the moment they show up. However, the two people already there (salesman Michael-O-SUD and customer Nichole-Y-GFG) will be so confused and affronted that they will not call IntSec on the first three Troubleshooters to emerge. The others will hear the Orange-clearance salesman clearly describing them to IntSec ('I swear, if one more Troubleshooter comes through, I'm calling Internal Secur... oh that does it!').

If the Troubleshooters run for it, IntSec will catch up to the last few Troubleshooters eventually and demand a hefty XP Point bribe. (Er, a donation to the IntSec Wounded Goon Project.)

3: Going Negative

After a trip through the Underplex or Outside, the team can find the entrance to the testing centre easily.

You finally reach the CMR Sector R&D Testing Centre. This place is huge! You can tell by the paint job outside that it took over nearby buildings. The front doors are massive and two stories high. There is a small screen and mic to the right of the doors but someone taped a paper sign over the screen that says, 'Closed to visit the TRK Sector black hole'. You then hear a soft chime from everywhere. 'Attention citizens. This is The Computer. If you wish to view the black hole in TRK Sector, please visit it now before the entire sector becomes... processing... available for new construction opportunities.'

The sign is not true. There are staff inside, hard at work at whatever budget-wasting boondoggle they managed to get past the approval committee. Why the sign? To make people go away and leave the scientists in peace so they can discover things no one was meant to know. (Also, to avoid accidental oversight or calls to Friend Computer asking if that much polonium should be left next to the microwave.)



POSITIVE LETHARGY SOUNDS FUN TO SHOOT AT PEOPLE.

If anyone speaks to the mic, someone will answer immediately saying, 'Sorry, no one is here to take your... uh, whatever you're here for. Please leave your message after the beep. Beep!' (Yes, he actually says 'Beep'). This is Sean-R-SPC, the centre's receptionist and bouncer. His job is to prevent anyone from coming in but he is crap at that job. He can unlock the door and let the team through but needs to be convinced. What would work? A threat that could actually get past the doors, a hefty bribe or spurious logic. He is loyal but not so bright.

Once inside, the team sees the typical laboratory work space with a corridor heading to other rooms. Two R&D scientists are here: head researcher John-G-NYR and his assistant Ricky-Y-IND. John-G is the inventor of the NegLaser and is totally obsessed with how people view him. If anyone says something unkind or unflattering about him, laser turrets will drop from the ceiling and target (but not fire on) the person who dared challenge him. Only being a complete bootlicker will get anything from him. (Ricky-Y figured this out after a few clones died, so now he eagerly waits for John-G to say something so he can agree loudly and quickly.)



JOHN-G-NYR

/// SKILLS

SCIENCE:	+3
BLUFF:	+5
ENGINEER:	-2

/// HEALTH BOXES

JOHN-G-NYR



/// NOTES

VERY STUBBORN UNLESS SOMEONE BROWNNoses HIM, THEN HE IS VERY HELPFUL.



RICKY-Y-IND

/// SKILLS

SCIENCE:	+1
CHARM:	+2
PROGRAM:	+3

/// HEALTH BOXES

RICKY-Y-IND



/// NOTES

A MORE ANNOYING VERSION OF DRACULA'S RENFIELD THAT BROWNNoses INSTINCTIVELY.

Remember how this entire mission is unofficial? No one told this centre that Troubleshooters were coming to get the NegLasers and the team cannot prove anything. They have no mission alert and Friend Computer will not confirm anything about the mission. The Troubleshooters will have to kiss John-G's backside until he agrees to something he did not know needed to happen.

Team Leader: Listen, if we could just get those NegLasers, we'll leave you to breaking the laws of physics or whatever you do here.

John-G: Break? We don't break anything here. We just accomplish great things. Fantastic things. Really, really fantastic things. Right, Ricky-Y?

Ricky-Y: He's a master of creativity. A real genius, he is. And working too hard to fetch you anything. The nerve!

Team Leader: Fantastic things? Like those amazing NegLasers? I mean, I heard they were useful and beautiful. I know it was easy for someone as talented as you to create them, but still ... wow! Have you received any well-deserved awards yet?

Ricky-Y: Give it up, Troubleshooters. You are not cleared for them.

John-G: You seem all right. Ricky-Y, go get the NegLasers so I can show the Troubleshooters how wonderful they are.

Ricky-Y: Yes sir, be right back!

Eventually, Ricky-Y will return with enough NegLasers so each Troubleshooter has their own.

Take your standard laser pistol. Widen and lengthen the barrel. Colour the entire thing in shiny black paint and make the grip oddly cold. And there you go, one NegLaser. There are no dials, switches or readouts. From afar, it looks like nothing more than a long, black laser pistol.

'Aren't these amazing and useful?' says John-G. 'I made it myself out of some rare components and materials. It will shoot negative energy for up to five minutes, maybe as long as two hours, people say it can last two hours. You just need to pour the... uh, the fuel it needs into the grip.'

Ricky-Y takes his position at John-G's side. 'Rubidium superfluid. That's the fuel. No one thought of that before he took over the project. Let's give John-G a round of applause! Clap clap clap!'

Yes, the NegLasers need a rubidium superfluid fuel in order to shoot (that means they do not work right now). Where can the Troubleshooters find this fuel? John-G will explain they ran out (thanks to incompetence by every other person at the centre, totally not his fault) but the Troubleshooters can find more.

- If they took the Outside route, John-G says: *'Oh, right. We threw out the last of the fuel. People were getting jealous of all my accomplishments, so I had to dial it back a little. They're such fragile and jealous scientists. In fact, Ricky-Y gave it to some Red-clearance CPU morons who had to go to the trash heap Outside for some reason. They promised to throw it out since they were going there anyway.'*
- If they took the Underplex route, John-G says: *'Oh, right. A Violet-clearance citizen used to horde the stuff before she ran out of clones. Ricky-Y aggressively borrowed the fuel from her manor. Well, that was before it was abandoned and became part of the Underplex. Still had a nice mud room, though.'*

Yes, the thing they need is back where they came from and the team gets to revisit the mayhem they caused on their way here. Try not to smirk so hard.

Back to the Outside

If the team went through Waste Land to get here, then the superfluid is found Outside. The fuel is stored in an airtight, metal container labelled 'BEC – Do Not Drink Unless You Hate Life'. which the CPU researchers still have. Speaking of which, how did the Troubleshooters treat the lost and hungry CPU researchers?

- If everyone took their survey, the CPU researchers offer to trade it for a weapon. Any weapon will do. Once Harris-R has it, he will suddenly kill his friends and loudly say, 'Hey Troubleshooter, why did you kill those loyal citizens?'. His instinct told him The Computer would hear his words and punish the Troubleshooters. That does not work Outside, so poor Harris-R is just being an idiot. Cue the painful lesson he will learn.
- If the team avoided surveys or abused/attacked the CPU researchers, the survivors hide deep in the junk and yell, 'Hey Troubleshooters! Ricky-Y called and said you need something. Come and get it!'. The Troubleshooters will have to find the researchers (usually Brains + Stealth) and then kill them. The last one alive has the rubidium superfluid.


Back to the Underplex

If the team went through the abandoned Violet-clearance housing to get here, then the superfluid is found in the Underplex. Specifically, it is inside a safe in the manor's basement. It is held inside an airtight, metallic container with the label 'BEC – Rb-87 – Do Not Use as Hair Product'. However, there are two similar containers with different labels. 'BEC – Rm-101 – Do Not Use as Low-Calorie Sweetener' is just antifreeze ('You see a cloudy green liquid that smells sweet like Yum-Yum Shoog-R^(TM) Treats'). The other is 'BEC – Rbm-99 – Do Not Use on Loyal Citizens'. Which is a nerve agent called tabun that smells like fruit and causes convulsions, paralysis and, eventually, death. A really good Brains + Science roll could determine what each container has inside. Or trial, error and cleaning up the bodies. Either one, really.

The safe is large and thick, so it can really only be opened by using the combination lock. The former Violet-clearance citizen who collected toxins as a hobby did not have much creativity so the combination is 0-0-0. But how did the team treat the HPD&MC 'real estate' agent Pam-G-ENB?

- If the Troubleshooters kept hidden and she was able to show the manor without a problem, she is there repainting the foyer to a neutral colour so she can charge more. She will not be thrilled to see Troubleshooters in the Underplex but will not care since the Indigo-clearance buyer backed out of the deal. The team can head to the basement and get the rubidium superfluid (if they can break into the safe, of course).
- If the Troubleshooters interfered, that is why Pam-G lost the sale. She lost it and now she has some face paint and a minigun with plenty of ammo. She activated the in-house security system and will drop laser turrets from the ceiling the moment a Troubleshooter steps inside the manor. Then she will come over the intercom: 'Oh Troubleshooters! Since you destroyed my sale, I'm gonna destroy the precious fuel Ricky-Y asked me to locate. Oh, I found it all right! And if you want it, leave all your gear in the foyer and head to the flooded transtube that took you here. I'll meet you there and give you the stuff.'

Pam-G has no intention of following through. She just wants the team unarmed so she can murder them all. Hey, real estate is not a job for kindness or even sanity.



What if the team grabs the antifreeze or nerve agent? If there is time in the session, let the Troubleshooters realise they have to pay the price for their ineptitude. But if sending them back down into the Underplex would be annoying for everyone involved, just put the rubidium superfluid inside whatever container they take. Think of it as Schrödinger's Plot Device. It is both there and not until the Troubleshooters prove how stupid they are.

At this point, the GM should wipe-cut back to TRK Sector. If the players want to roleplay the journey back, fine. Break out some hex grid paper, ask if they want a long rest to recover Sanity points and roll for a random encounter with a mecha superhero that has Treasure Type H. If they seem confused over which game they are playing, just say 'Exactly' and cut to TRK Sector anyway.

4: Trouble Shooting Trouble

Finally, the Troubleshooters have returned to TRK Sector (well, the parts that remain) with the negative lasers and can start saving the world – once they get into position, that is. Remember how Christof-G labelled three exact locations to shoot from? He calculated the best angles and found three that work. The team will need to fire all three continuously around the same time, so they will need to split into three smaller groups and reach the Gary-U-NEL Memorial Corridor, Hair of Harmony Hygiene Station and Hyperion Theatre for Pre-Authorised Plays & Valuable Lessons.

They will be able to communicate with each other through Coretech messages but they will not see each other (unless someone is smart enough to plant surveillance on another Troubleshooter, in which case reward that skullduggery with XP Points and snack cakes). Once they realise that, players will likely argue to get their character in the best place to kill a teammate or attack/support the black hole. Good! Let 'em argue! In fact, let them decide who goes to which location. That way, any deadly shenanigans that happen are their own fault for choosing to go there.

However, each location has suffered from the black hole and getting into position will not be easy. Also, this is a great chance for Troubleshooters to work on their Secret Society missions. If any Troubleshooters have ignored theirs this whole time, the GM should remind them here by sending a Secret Society thug to slap the Troubleshooter until they stop ignoring it.

What happens if you shoot something (or since this is *Paranoia*, someone) with a negative energy laser? Any powered device loses power entirely. Batteries are drained and anything plugged in stops working for a few rounds. Any bot hit loses one point of Charge for each success above the difficulty (if using the Bots as PCs rules from *Acute Paranoia*). Any human hit loses one point of Moxie the same way. And if a player gets the great idea to shoot themselves with a regular laser pistol to balance things out, applaud them for trying to be clever and then kill their character.

Once they have argued a bit, they all get a Coretech call from Christof-G.

'Attention Team Redacted! This is Christof-G. We are running out of time! Get to the three locations as fast as possible and start shooting the black hole or we will miss our window. That and the gravitonic sheer will literally stretch your body into a pulpy ribbon. Go on, get moving!'

How much time is left? Enough for the GM to run this scene as needed. Keep the pressure on the players to solve this problem, because that gets super fun with the obstacles below.

Gary-U-NEL Memorial Corridor

There are two problems here. First, most of the corridor has been swallowed by the expanding black hole. All that is left is one metre of hallway before it turns into a pedestrian traffic roundabout. The second problem? There would be room for Troubleshooters to set up their NegLasers if that metre of space was not occupied by a news team.

You stand with a pedestrian roundabout at your back. Ahead of you is what's left of the Gary-U-NEL Memorial Corridor stretching into the black hole. Every



so often, more tiles in the ceiling, walls and floor tumble through the air into it. There's only about a metre of corridor left and that is filled by a reporter, her cameraman and sound guy with a boom mic. They have not started yet but the Yellow-clearance reporter is checking her teeth in a mirror.

Alpha News Network ('News You Need to Stay Angry at Terrorists and Not Think About Things') is here to record a propaganda segment for their daily news show, 'ANN and Friends'. It is a simple puff piece where field reporter Ainsley-Y-EHT discusses the absolute need for a black hole in Alpha Complex while complaining about traitors who are not sold on it. With her is cameraman Harry-O-COB and sound/loyalty monitor Oscar-O-NNE. They both absolutely hate Ainsley-Y but hide it well enough to not have been executed yet. It helps that Ainsley-Y is rather dumb.

If left alone, the news team will take about two hours to record, re-record and yet again re-re-record a five minute-segment. Ainsley-Y keeps screwing up her lines and needs makeup after each try. In other words, the players have to do something or they will miss their chance at shooting the black hole (it will crush this location within 20 minutes or so). Leave it to the players to decide how to fix this. Some typical options include:

- **Shove the news team into the black hole:** Will this work? Mostly yes. The Computer will eventually pull the data and realise who killed three higher-clearance citizens but why worry about that when a naked singularity might destroy all you know and love?
- **Convince them there is a big scoop... uh, somewhere else:** ANN reporters get excited over tragedy and property damage, so if the team convinces them, through Bluff or Charm, that there is a better story nearby (transbot derailment, mass poisoning, an Indigo-clearance citizen cannot find her autocar in a car park and ordered Vulture Squadron to destroy every autocar there until she can see hers, etc.), the three ANN citizens will run there.
- **Help them finish:** Not the best idea, as Ainsley-Y keeps screwing up her lines and needs quiet to focus. This option will not hurt the team but it will soon become clear that nothing can help these ANN fools.



AINSLEY-Y-EHT

/// SKILLS

ATHLETICS:	-2
PSYCHOLOGY:	+1
CHARM:	+3

/// HEALTH BOXES

AINSLEY-Y-EHT ● ●

/// NOTES

AS GORGEOUS AS SHE IS VAPID BUT KNOWS HOW TO SOUND LIKE A NEWSCASTER.



HARRY-O-COB

/// SKILLS

ALPHA COMPLEX:	+2
OPERATE:	+4
PROGRAM:	-1

/// HEALTH BOXES

HARRY-O-COB ● ● ●

/// NOTES

HATES AINSLEY-Y BUT CARES MORE ABOUT GETTING GOOD SHOTS AND GOING HOME.



OSCAR-O-NNE

/// SKILLS

MELEE:	+3
SCIENCE:	+2
OPERATE:	+4

/// HEALTH BOXES

OSCAR-O-NNE ● ● ●

/// NOTES

WOULD PUSH AINSLEY-Y INTO THE BLACK HOLE IF HE COULD GET AWAY WITH IT.

If the reporters are still there when the Troubleshooters fire on the black hole, they will quickly record live footage of this attack on the lovely black hole. They will not interfere but as ANN broadcasts the feed, concerned CPs will show up to have a nice word and blunt object with the Troubleshooters.

Hair of Harmony Hygiene Station

There are two problems here. First, most of the room has been swallowed by the expanding black hole. All that is left is about two metres around the entrance. The second problem? A rabid group of Conscientious Patriots are protesting the closure of this hygiene station. It was shut down because the black hole destroyed the far wall and kept growing, so this room is completely unsafe. But with The Computer telling everyone the black hole is awesome, CPs are complaining about being kept away from it. Well, that and some really want to get a haircut.

You stand in a hallway outside the entrance to the Hair of Harmony Hygiene Station but instead of seeing the usual tall chairs, mirrors and razors suspended in a strange, blue liquid, most of the room has joyfully become part of the black hole. There is only about two metres of it left with bits flying off to join the black hole every minute.

But that's hard to see with everyone in the way. A single Green-clearance IntSec goon is blocking the open doorway. Ringed around him are 15 passionate Infrared and Red citizens arguing that they have the right to enter the hygiene station to get a haircut and be close to the wonderful black hole. Some even carry signs like, 'Don't believe hoax' and 'Haircutt is my RIGHTS'. You get the feeling that the 15 angry citizens are ready to turn into a mob any minute now.

If left alone, the CPs will get rowdy before finally snapping. Then they will shove the guard into the black hole, parade triumphantly into the hygiene station and get stretched into a long, thin paste by the intense gravity (but they made their point, right?). However, this will all take about 45 minutes and the Troubleshooters will lose their chance to shoot the black hole. What can the players do?



CONSCIENTIOUS PATRIOT TROUBLESHOOTERS

/// SKILLS

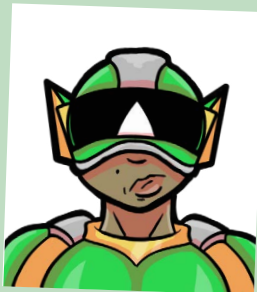
MELEE:	+3
SCIENCE:	-4
INTIMIDATE:	+2

/// HEALTH BOXES

PATRIOT TROUBLESHOOTERS ● ● ● ● ● ●

/// NOTES

WHAT THEY LACK IN SMARTS THEY MAKE UP FOR WITH ACRIMONY.



AMANDA-G-DOR

/// SKILLS

MELEE:	+2
ALPHA COMPLEX:	+1
INTIMIDATE:	+3

/// HEALTH BOXES

AMANDA-G-DOR ● ● ● ● ●

/// NOTES

GETTING TIRED OF THIS AND HAS A TRUNCHEON, GRENADES AND A CASUAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS BLOODSHED.

- **Goad the CPs into fighting:** This might take a few minutes but it sure works. The CPs are ready to get rowdy, so it will be easy to get them to attack the IntSec guard. Once she is down, they pour into the hygiene station and die like the idiots they are. But hey, the area is clear!
- **Have IntSec arrest them all:** Why kill when you can arrest (IntSec is torn on that one)? If the CPs look dangerous enough, Amanda-G can be convinced to call for backup. A few turns later, 20 IntSec goons show up with zip ties, truncheons and riot shields. The fight will be massive but IntSec will soon win. But if Amanda-G is still alive, she refuses to let the Troubleshooters into the hygiene station. Hey, at least there was needless violence.
- **Set up a haircut station in the hallway:** At first, the CPs will be mollified as they queue up for a quick buzz cut. But their problem is not really with bad hair; they just want to punish people they think are against the black hole. Soon enough, the mob will get restless again and start threatening both the IntSec guard and the Troubleshooters (just because they are there).

If the CPs are still there when the Troubleshooters fire their NegLasers, they are all confused. Unsure what is going on, they mumble a bit before they remember their preferred response to not knowing something: Copious amounts of aggravated assault.

Hyperion Theatre for Pre-Authorised Plays & Valuable Lessons

There are two problems here. As you probably expected, the black hole expanded and swallowed the box office. The theatre itself is still there, so the team will have to use a side door and set up in the aisle. The second problem? IntSec set up a Temporary Traitor Processing & Detention Centre (TTPDC) inside the theatre and is literally throwing people they arrest into the black hole (in their defence, this punishment has a 0% recidivism rate).

You find where the box office and entrance to the Hyperion Theatre should be but it looks like the black hole already lovingly absorbed both. You spot a side door and enter there. Inside, you see Internal Security has taken over the entire place. There are dozens of Green and Blue-clearance IntSec agents stomping about. That's not easy, what with the theatre seats and fences everywhere. There must be 30 Infrared citizens inside fenced-off areas. They all look like you'd expect Infrared citizens to look: Curious and drugged. They all see you enter and stare hard.

As the black hole destroys TRK Sector, the locals are losing their homes. Higher clearance people found places to go but the highly medicated, and frankly rather stupid, Infrared drones could not think that far ahead.

IntSec Guard: Hey you! Yeah, you! What're you doing here?

Infrared Citizen: I like to work!

IntSec Guard: Crap, okay. Where. Do. You. Live?

Infrared Citizen: My sleepy-sleepy place went in the black circle place.

IntSec Guard: It's a sphere not a ... you know what? Never mind. Here, come with me.

Infrared Citizen: I like pudding!

IntSec has been rounding them up and placing them here in their TTPDC. They are not exactly traitors but as far as IntSec is concerned, everyone is one arrest away from being a traitor. In fact, IntSec grabs one of these 'traitors' every five minutes, reads off some trumped-up charges ('You have been found guilty of causing baldness and inventing the question mark!') and then literally throws the citizen into the black hole.

If left alone, IntSec will slowly kill off the Infrareds until the black hole begins destroying the rest of the theatre. Then they will leave before they get pulled in. This will take roughly an hour, meaning the Troubleshooters will miss their chance to shoot at the correct angles. How can the players avoid this?

- **Volunteer for Traitor Flinging Duty:** The Troubleshooters can stand close enough to their desired spot if they agree to help throw innocent Infrareds to their painful death. Who would pass up that opportunity? As long as the traitors keep going into the black hole, IntSec will ignore the Troubleshooters. (In playtesting, not a single player had qualms about doing this. Other games might feature moral quandaries and ethical dilemmas but not *Paranoia*. Our players look at morality and tell it to roll for initiative.)
- **Ask really nicely:** This could work if the Troubleshooters take a grovelling, IntSec-is-better-than-us-lowly-Troubleshooters angle (and make a solid Chutzpah roll or two). If the goons laugh hard enough at the Troubleshooters, they will ignore them as they set up near the entrance.
- **Run out of Infrareds faster:** Will IntSec leave if the Troubleshooters get rid of the remaining Infrared citizens? While bloodthirsty and fun, this will not work. As they run low on Infrareds, more IntSec goons will show up with yet more of them to put behind fences. But keep an eye on any player who suggests this; they might have issues.



INTSEC GOONS

/// SKILLS

GUNS:	+3
INTIMIDATE:	-4
PSYCHOLOGY:	+1

/// HEALTH BOXES

INTSEC GOONS



/// NOTES

OVER A DOZEN GREEN AND BLUE AGENTS ARMED WITH LASERS, TRUNCHEONS AND A LACK OF ETHICS.

If the IntSec goons are still there when the Troubleshooters shoot at the black hole, they grow concerned. Something is happening but is it punishable? A few goons will remember the answer to that question is always, 'It will be' and go to have a nice chat with the Troubleshooters.

Shrinkage

If the Troubleshooters get into position, and at least one NegLaser from each location hits the black hole (so three shots total), the negative energy causes the black hole to begin evaporating, growing smaller until it finally disappears.

Instead of a bright, colourful bolt of light, the devices you took from CMR Sector shoot a continuous stream of... blackness? Darker than blackness? It's the same colour you saw when you had your last head injury and fell unconscious. The NegLasers shudder and start to feel cold but they have not exploded in your face yet. That's an R&D success right there.

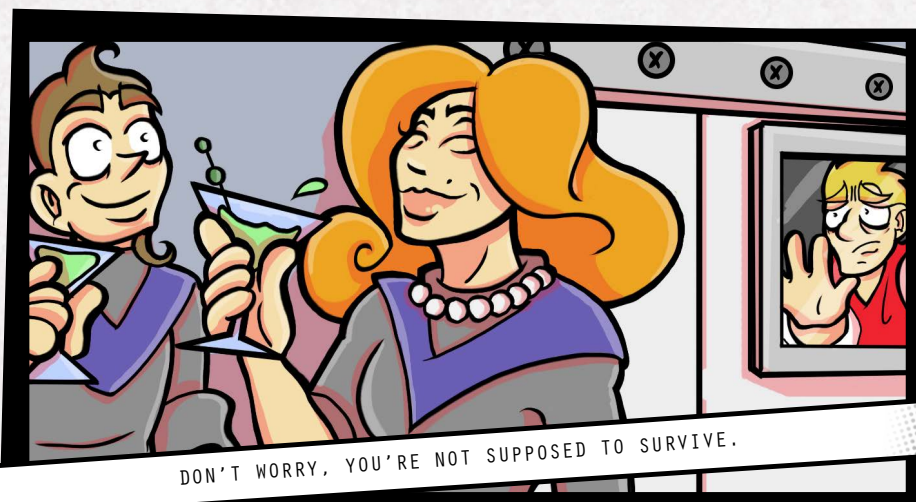
And the black hole? You stare in amazement as it actually starts to shrink! Even the swirly bits of stuff surrounding it start to recede. It might take a few minutes but the black hole is definitely getting smaller.

Here is where things get tricky.

- Ordinary citizens are scared. The only thing they knew for sure was they had to love the black hole. Now that it is shrinking, they have to decide whether that is a good thing or a bad thing before someone records them. Fatalism is a survival trait in Alpha Complex, so they are frightened that either a) they will get blamed for ruining the black hole or b) they were wrong to support it in the first place and all that 'love the black hole' stuff was a loyalty test they failed. Cue the running and screaming.
- The Conscientious Patriots are irate. Someone is attacking the perfectly safe and lovable black hole! They must protect it to save Alpha Complex! They form roving gangs and start attacking anyone who does not appear sufficiently aghast at what is going on. Then they realise the black negative laser streams are... well, they are not making the black hole grow, are they? **TERMINATE THOSE WHO WOULD DARE HARM THE HELPFUL BLACK HOLE!**

What about Friend Computer? It does not panic. It never panics. Instead, it calmly declares an emergency.

You hear the all-too-familiar bing announcing Friend Computer will speak. 'Attention citizens. TRK Sector is now under a Category 7 Kakorrhaphiophobic Vexing Watch. All citizens of Green clearance or higher should report to their designated safe areas. All citizens of Yellow clearance or lower should continue their duties or hobbies as if nothing was wrong. Please note, something is very wrong but you are ordered to live normally while you still can.'



The GM should keep building tension by throwing minor obstacles in their way – but ones that can be easily ignored so the players can keep shooting, such as:

- More CPs. They do not understand what is going on but that just makes them angrier. They attack with makeshift weapons like cafeteria trays or still-living Infrared citizens.
- The Computer detects negative energy and is very concerned since it did not authorise it. 'Attention Troubleshooters. I do not have any record I can share defining a mission that includes negative energy weapons. Would someone like to explain just what is going on?' Any halfway decent response will keep the scene moving.
- The black hole destabilised the whole sector, so bits of ceiling and floor can collapse at any moment. It would be a shame if any Troubleshooters were under them.

What happens if Troubleshooters try to save the black hole? After all, some Secret Society missions tell Troubleshooters to do just that. If this works somehow, use the ending below titled, 'The Hole Survives'. Otherwise, use the ending titled, 'The Hole Goes Bye-Bye'. (The GM should not hold a formal debriefing since this entire mission is fake.)

The Hole Survives

You watch as the black hole shimmers and the things around it seem to spin more quickly. Then the hole starts to grow a little bit faster than it previously did. The Computer suddenly speaks.

'Attention citizens. There is no need for alarm. The black hole is protected and continues to be perfectly useful for citizens of Yellow clearance or lower. In addition to being perfectly useful, models indicate the fatality rate, which was already very close to zero, is now less than zero. Please continue supporting the black hole as required.

Attention Troubleshooters in Team Redacted. Please report to what's left of the pro-black hole rally's stage immediately where you were last assigned.'

Once the team gets there, they find Christof-G waiting by the black hole. He does not look happy but says, 'Congratulations! You have successfully defended the black hole as we originally planned. Right, team?' Any Troubleshooter who agrees one way or another is promoted by The Computer to Orange clearance. Those that act confused or stupid remain at Red clearance.

'Attention Christof-G and team. Your love for the black hole is clearly evident since you undertook a dangerous mission and kept it secret. Such modesty deserves a reward beyond promotions. Prepare to accept a new mission with Chrisof-G as your team leader. Your mission is the following. You are to go on a fact-finding mission inside the black hole so we know what is inside. Please leave behind all equipment and other objects made from precious resources and enter the black hole now. Just mind the gap. You must not get injured before your fact-finding mission.'

The Hole Goes Bye-Bye

You watch as the black hole shrinks with increasing speed. The air stops rushing past you and you can see inside dozens of rooms and hallways as the singularity gets smaller. In less than a minute, the entire black hole disappears just as your NegLasers get too cold to handle. People all over are staring into the circular abyss and just... waiting. You also see a very happy Christof-G near the rally's stage pointing at you and talking to The Computer.

Finally, The Computer speaks. 'Attention Troubleshooters. Due to incontrovertible evidence from multiple sources, you have been found guilty of the unauthorised murder of a black hole. How do you plead?' Lots of people stare at you.

This is just a technicality, as The Computer already found them guilty. But if anyone says they are innocent, they receive a Treason Star right then and there.

'Congratulations. You will not be terminated for this.' Almost everyone in the area sighs and grumbles. 'Attention citizen Christof-G. Thank you for reporting these traitors undertaking an unauthorised mission. You are hereby promoted to Blue clearance for informing on them. Troubleshooters, prepare to accept a new mission. Your mission is the following. You are to create a new black hole that will be even bigger and grow faster than the one you murdered. Please report to CMR Sector's R&D Testing Centre for black hole duty but mind the gap. You must not get hurt before you can create a new black hole.'

THE END

ACHIEVEMENTS

Nobody from the crowd gets onto the pep rally stage
(50 XP Points)

Beat up a CP
(+50 XP Points)

Go through the Outside/Underplex without dying
(+100 XP Points)

Successfully brownnose John-G-NYR
(+100 XP Points)

Get the rubidium superfluid
(+200 XP Points)

Fire a NegLaser into the black hole
(+300 XP Points)

The black hole is destroyed
(-100 XP Points)

The black hole survives
(Painful Death)

HANDOUT #1: : WEIRDEST THINGS EVER FOUND IN ALPHA COMPLEX SURVEY

Weirdest Things Ever Found in Alpha Complex Survey (Red Clearance Version)

Thank you for your time and efforts. CPU is very grateful for helping it better understand what life is like in Alpha Complex for lowly Red citizens who can barely tie their own bootlaces. Please answer every question; failure to answer may lead to punishments including but not limited to censure, fines, imprisonment, loss of privileges, loss of limbs, loss of multiple lives and brainscrubbing.

1. Which of the following have you seen at least once?
(Pick two or more)

- ☐ Mannequin named Emily Superpants
- ☐ Guidance system for a VX-4 intersector missile
- ☐ Vacuum-sealed rocks that glow & feel nice and warm
- ☐ Plush scrubot that tells you to murder the unworthy
- ☐ Limited edition Teela-O handheld personal massager
- ☐ Cup of water

2. Do you believe Alpha Complex is safe and normal?

- ☐ Yes but terrorists are everywhere so nice try getting me to lower my guard
- ☐ Yes everything is fine, we're all fine thank you, how are you
- ☐ No but Friend Computer tries its best
- ☐ It is no safer or normal than any of the dozen other Complexes run by AI

HANDOUT #1: : WEIRDEST THINGS EVER FOUND IN ALPHA COMPLEX SURVEY CONTINUED

3.Are you worried that opposition from traitors will prevent Alpha Complex from being safe and predictable?

☐ Yes because The Computer is just not capable of defeating terrorists and mutants in the long run

☐ No because The Computer overhyped the traitor threat to get us all to obey and live in fear

4.If you found a small bot covered with carpeting that kept making 'SQUEEK' noises, what would you do?

☐ Swallow it if small enough, throw it in an incinerator if too big for my mouth.

☐ Bring it to the nearest recycling centre and throw it in organics thresher for 1 XP Point.

☐ Plug it in to the nearest five-prong outlet to recharge it.

5.What answer below best describes your relationship with the amazing TRK Sector Black Hole?

☐ I would like to do some things to it that I'm not cleared to know never mind perform.

☐ If it suddenly disappeared, I would throw a party

☐ I would kill to protect it and maybe kill to keep it expanding forever.

☐ I have no idea what this question is asking and, to be honest, I'm a bit upset by it.