

PARANOIA

(()) UTILITY +++IMPLAUSIBLE DENIABILITY+++ IMPLA



NEW PARANOIA EDITION

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PARANOIA

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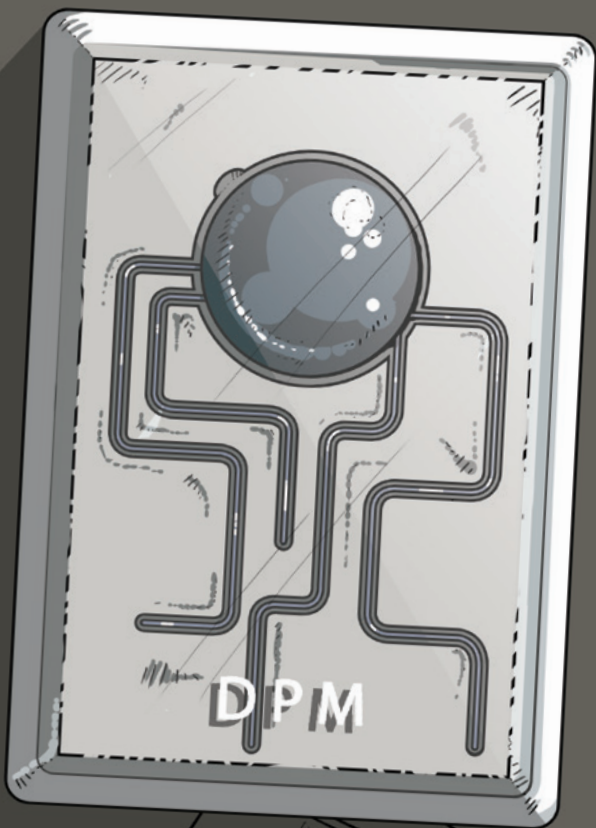


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THE NEW MUST-HAVE EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT.



BLEEPY- BOOP- BOOP

P A R A N O I A

Alpha Complex! Tis of thee I sing! What strange delights and wonders await in thy storied corridors?

Welcome, O Gamemaster of Above-Average Erudition and Absolutely Unquestionable And Not Even Slightly Peccable Taste, to *Implausible Deniability*, a three-part PARANOIA mission. No doubt you've already noticed the title of this section. Possibly you even paused, wondering if it was a reference to some obscure Beckett play, or perhaps a witty pun in Sumerian. In fact, it's the literal transcription of the electronic noise that a Troubleshooter's Cerebral Coretech makes when that Troubleshooter gets a new Direct Priority Message (DPM, if you're down with the kids).

For the purposes of this adventure, you may find it useful to cultivate your own rendition of Bleepy-Boop-Boop. You might, for example:

- Have your phone or other electronic device to hand, so you can make such a chirp at will.
- Send all the messages in this book to your players using SMS or the messaging app of your choice, so their phones make a veritable celestial chorus of Bleepy-Boop-Boops.
- Have the Computer say Bleepy-Boop-Boop out loud, in whatever vocal style you customarily employ for in-character communications. A deadpan, monotone bleepyboopboop perhaps, or a cheery, customer-focussed super-enthusiastic *BLEEPyBoop!Boop!*
- Just grab the communicator sound from *Star Trek*.

We have now said Bleepy-Boop-Boop so often the words have lost all meaning and we're only a page into this bleepy-boop-boop-saga.

BACKGROUND

Progress marches ever onwards in Alpha Complex, under the benevolent gaze of the Computer and the threat of termination if the scientists in R&D fail to make their Brilliant Innovation Quota for this monthcycle (under such circumstances, progress would march onwards even if you broke both its legs). Sometimes, progress produces inventions of questionable utility: The Reverse Grenade, the Solar-Powered Parachute and Self-Heating Fun. On other occasions, even if the concept is sound (for values of sound that count Scrubots, Bouncy Bubble Beverage and Troubleshooters as entirely reliable success stories), there are problems with rollout and implementation.

In other words, sometimes progress trips, stumbles and falls across the corridor of history. And then that progress gets trampled into a bloody mess by the rest of the marching progress behind it.

So it is with the Direct Priority Message. The basic concept is, and hold onto your preconceptions, a good one for Alpha Complex. The basic gimmick is that it lets a suitably qualified middle-clearance supervisor broadcast a message to all citizens and bots near the Troubleshooter team. So, if the Troubleshooters are – purely hypothetical example – zooming down Corridor 75/A at the controls of a crazed TruckBot, the supervisor can broadcast a friendly 'please clear Corridor 75/A' message that bleepy-boop-boops into the consciousness of anyone in the way. The supervisor can send messages directly to the team. And, most important of all, it lets the supervisor issue

orders to nearby systems. If the team require emergency access to a sealed corridor, the supervisor can direct the corridor door to open without having to fill out any paperwork/appeal to the Computer/resort to demolition charges.

What could possibly, go wrong?

Here is what could possibly and does actually, go wrong.

1. The system is buggy, untested and has a few flaws, the severity of which is directly proportional to your answer to the question 'how hot does the interior of my skull need to get before it becomes uncomfortable?'
2. It's also insanely hard to use. We'd make a joke about vi here, but half of you wouldn't know what the hell we're talking about and the rest would write us angry emails about vi's superiority to EMACS. Anyway, it's really easy to screw up while operating the DPM control console.
3. The system only works on citizens fitted with the DPM modules. It also works on bots but they interpret its instructions as direct orders from the Computer.
4. One of the other supervisors involved in the trial might just take advantage of the gaping security hole and send his Troubleshooter team to hijack a warbot.

Hooray for progress! It's almost enough to make you nostalgic for absurdly non-functional R&D death rays.

MISSION SKELETON

If you shot this book with one of those absurdly non-functional R&D death rays, then you'd be disintegrated because progress on the 'ray' part of 'death ray' didn't march very far.

If you *held* this book while shooting one of those absurdly non-functional R&D death rays, or better yet convinced one of your enemies to hold this book while they fired the death 'ray', then in the brief moment after the sickly green radiation flash, but before everything crumbled into dust, you'd see a skeleton like this.

Mission One: Something Nasty in the Food Vats: After a lengthy trip to R&D outfitting, the team is sent off on the glamorous mission of investigating why one of the food vats is running behind quota. The somewhat unlikely answer

is that there's a genetically engineered mutant monster in the vat and half the food vat drones are secret traitors; discovering this is complicated by a few small teething issues with the DPM system.

Mission Two: Sidestep Left: The DPM system glitches and sends the Troubleshooters a bunch of messages intended for one of the other teams in the testing program. Unfortunately, following those instructions sends the team out into a perilous abandoned sector on a mission to capture a traitor who's already been captured by another team. If the Troubleshooters don't return with a prisoner, they'll be terminated. Sooo... any potential traitors lurking around this abandoned ruin? You, crazy hermit, might you be a suitable candidate for the role of 'mysterious traitor'?

Mission Three: Bleep Boop Boom: The DPM system goes completely bonkers¹ as traitorous Alan-G seizes control of it and tries to stop the Troubleshooters through murderous spam, hijacked warbots and experimental weapons. Many things explode, possibly including skulls.

Bleepy-boop-boop. Bleepy-boop-boop. Bleepy-boop-boop.



1. Technical term.



SOMETHING NASTY IN THE FOOD VATS

P A R A N O I A

The Troubleshooters are sent to test the shiny new DPM system as part of their investigation of a treacherous secret society in the food vats. Confusion and explosions ensue.

BLEEPY-BOOP-BOOP.

“ **ATTENTION TROUBLESHOOTERS** ”

Says the Computer.



Does it matter if you're hearing the Computer's voice through the loudspeaker on the wall or through the cerebral coretech in your head?

“

YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED FOR AN IMPORTANT MISSION. PROCEED TO BRIEFING ROOM 482-C-A29/DELTA FOR MISSION BRIEFING. SPECIAL FUN INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOW – HYGIENE OFFICER IS TO CLEANSE AND STERILISE THE FOREHEADS OF ALL TEAM MEMBERS USING THE SPECIAL SURGICAL PREP KIT. IF THE TEAM DOES NOT HAVE A HYGIENE OFFICER, TEAM LEADER SHOULD NOW DESIGNATE A HYGIENE OFFICER. IF THE TEAM DOES NOT HAVE A TEAM LEADER, TEAM LEADER WILL BE DETERMINED BY ENTHUSIASM.

”

Once the dust settles, the blood pools and the team has both a team leader and hygiene officer, a delivery-bot drops off the promised special surgical prep kit at the door of the team barracks. The kit contains:

- A transparent plastic skullcap with several marks on it, showing the locations that need to be cleaned for different surgical operations: FOREHEAD IMPLANT, CORTEX BOMB, LOBOTOMY, BEHAVIOUR ADJUSTMENT, IMPLANTED MICROPHONE and so on.
- An electric razor for shaving heads.
- A number of individual-sized cleaning kits, with sprays, wipes, gauzes, one-shot anti-bacterial irradiation pens and so on. The number of kits is equal to the number of Troubleshooters, minus one.

So, hygiene officer, two questions for you!

1. **Who's *not* getting a forehead scrub?** There's one missing kit. A successful Mechanics+Science roll lets the hygiene officer split a kit between two subjects (failure means that neither gets a sufficiently deep cleanse). Those who do get forehead scrubs discover that a temporary side effect is intense numbness that spreads out over the forehead and down the face. Why, you could be shot in the head and not notice it until you tried to scratch your nose and discovered you'd lost it six rooms back. Oh, a side effect of the side effect may also include slurrrrrrrued speooch bedausssse urre tong ith num an urre bran ith oxygen-tharved.
2. **If the hygiene officer checks,** some of the other Troubleshooters have old head scars corresponding to operations like CORTEX BOMB or IMPLANTED MICROPHONE, and others have mysteriously regular scars suggesting other mysterious operations/alien abductions.

Once everyone's ready to go, it's off to Briefing Room 482-C-A29!

BRIEFING OF TERROR

Briefing Room 482-C-A29 isn't impressive as briefing rooms go. Torn couches, possibly treasonous graffiti on the walls and a briefing podium that's scarred with old laser blasts. This is, clearly, not a high-priority mission.

Briefing Officer Malcolm-O-HNO-3 isn't impressive as briefing officers go. He manages to simultaneously slump, cower and droop behind the podium, he's got possibly unhygienic boils and rashes on his thinning hairline and his voice quavers and flinches, as if recalling former assassination attempts. This is, clearly, not a high-quality briefing officer.

Malcolm-O wanders around the room for a moment, looking for a power outlet to plug in his slide projector.

'Good... ah, good, er, hello. I'm briefing officer Malcolm-O-HNO-2...no! Three! Three! Sorry, I have notes here.' He fumbles with papers. *'Your mission is to investigate a 1.6% production discrepancy in the algae yield from the TasteYum Food Vat cluster. I have a slide here.'*

He doesn't. It's a slide showing average Troubleshooter deaths per mission over the last three months.

'Um, not that slide. Sorry, sorry. Ah, here we are.'

It's the same slide again.

'Ah, wait, here it is.'

The slide projector commits quiet, dignified suicide.

'Ah, all right. How about I just hand you the slide and you each look at it. Pass it to the Troubleshooter to your left when you're done.'

The slide, when examined, is an incomprehensible mess of charts, numbers and spreadsheets.

'As you can plainly see, analysis has ruled out environmental conditions, statistical variations, equipment or sensor failure and other reasonable causes for this drop in production. We are forced, I'm afraid, um, to consider the possibility of traitorous sabotage. So, your mission is to go to the TasteYum Food Production Facility and find out why there's this 1.6% discrepancy in the food vat yields. Vitally important, of course. The fate of Alpha Complex is, ah, in your hands.'

His voice tries to rise to the level of stirring oratory, as he tries to inspire the Troubleshooter team. It falls short.

'You must, um, seek out these vile, well I assume they're vile, certainly not very nice, traitors and ensure that our vital supply of, er, synthetic algae is secure. Onwards, brave Troubleshooters, onwards!'

If the Troubleshooters stand up to go to TasteeYum, he stops them! *'Wait, do you have any question?'*

Possible extra info:

- The supervisor at TasteeYum is Nancy-O-GLU; there's also a bunch of RED and INFRARED proles working the vats.
- The food vats are *technically* a level 4 biohazard but no-one likes to say that out loud as the food is TOTALLY SAFE TO EAT. YUM YUM.
- Obviously, as the mission is to find the Trouble (production is 1.6% below the expected level) and Shoot it (getting production back up), the mission will only be considered a success if the food vats are back at their production quota.
- Even more obviously, blowing up the food vats will bring production drastically down. Don't blow up the vats.

Again, if the Troubleshooters stand up to go to TasteeYum, Malcolm-O stops them!

'Wait! Stop! Proceed to R&D Lab 17/A for Experimental Equipment Outfitting. Go there first, Troubleshooters, so you'll have everything you need to succeed on this vital mission. Good luck!'

Lab 17/A is, conveniently, only a short walk from the briefing room.

When the team troops out, Malcolm the Briefing Officer goes with them. It's weird and awkward – like when you say a lengthy and heartfelt goodbye to someone you don't expect to see again for a long time, only to find you're both leaving from the same airport and end up sitting silently for hours side by side when the airport shuttle gets stuck in traffic. Malcolm-O mutters 'don't mind me' and 'pretend I'm not here' as he traipses along after the team all the way to Lab 17/A. He's got to pick up his own experimental equipment for this mission too...

SECRET SOCIETY MISSION TIME!

Lab 177A is only a short walk away. There's a conveniently crowded corridor leading to the convenient transtube and then it's just a quick stroll through the conveniently crowded plaza and the conveniently shady tunnel to the convenient briefing room. There's ample scope for mysterious figures to pass notes/broadcast messages/beam subliminal post-hypnotic triggers/pop out of vents/whisper conspiratorial passwords at the Troubleshooters...

Distribute secret society missions as needed. Ideally, you need at least one Troubleshooter to end up with a bomb crate. Oh, the three possible crates (for the Mystics, Free Enterprise and Death Leopard missions) are, of course, identical. The crates are all shielded against casual detection by sensors and bomb-sniffers, which is suspicious in itself.

UNWITTING CHAPERONES & UNWILLING CONSPIRATORS

While Malcolm-O isn't the most observant monitor, the characters still need to pop free of the group to pick up their secret society missions. Chutzpah + Bluff or Chutzpah + Stealth or Brains + Alpha Complex are all perfectly cromulent rolls to sneak away; alternatively, get each player to come up with a reason why their character sneaks away to have a brief secret meeting.

If a player decides not to take the risk, that's fine – for you. It'll play out something like this.

GM: <passes a secret note to player>

NOTE: You see a citizen across the corridor flashing the Psion recognition signal at you – it's your contact, here to give you a secret society mission. How do you break free of surveillance?

PLAYER: Are you crazy? The briefing officer is right there! It might be a trap.
I keep walking.

GM: <grins with joy>

Later...

2. Note to the Gamemaster: At a later point in the scenario (p. 61), the Troubleshooters run into Brother Zoom, aka Lenny-R from Team B. Of course, he only reveals himself near the end of the mission, and there are plenty of other people who the player might think is Zoom before then, leading to all sorts of comical and explosive misunderstandings.

Oh, if the player wants to actually use the bomb, that's cool. Mechanics + Demolitions for a really, really big boom and now IntSec thinks you're the infamous Brother Zoom.



Alpha Complex Local History Research Group: Your mission's going to take you close to the abandoned remains of what used to be QUB sector – one of the oldest sections of Alpha Complex, abandoned after the War Between The Sectors. We want you to bring back some relics from this ancient sector – especially a QR-7 System Interchange Module.



Anti-Mutants: One of your team-mates (name a team-mate who's a mutant) is a mutant. We've developed a mutation-suppressing drug. Dose that team-mate with the drug and then trick them into using their mutation.



Death Leopard: Here's a bomb² in a crate. Internal Security are looking for Brother Zoom, the Mad Bomber. It's his bomb. You've got to hide the bomb until Brother Zoom escapes those IntSec scummers and takes it back. He's undercover – give him the recognition code 'TICK TICK TICK' and he'll respond with 'BOOM BOOM BUDDY'.



FCCCP: We've learned that a bunch of TRAITOROUS HERETICAL scientists are plotting to BYPASS the Computer's infinite electronic wisdom. These heathens must be shown the error of their ways. Forcibly convince them to recant their heresy and swear allegiance to the Church – and if they refuse, terminate them!



Free Enterprise: Hey buddy, we've got a crate of super-collectible Teela-O holographic stickers. We want you to sell 'em to Teela fans and whoever else will buy 'em. Oh, they're really, really sticky and incredibly hard to scrape off, so once you stick 'em on something, they're there forever. Also, 'cos they're metallic, they'll set off all sorts of sensors and metal detectors, so keep 'em in this shielded crate.



Mystics: Hey buddy, we've got a crate of holographic stickers. They're actually drug tabs – stick 'em on someone's skin and they'll have a hallucinogenic psychedelic trip that'll be far out, man. Distribute 'em to the unenlightened proles and open their minds to the universe! Oh, they're super-illegal and they'll set off all sorts of chemical sniffers and drug detectors, so keep 'em in the crate.



Psion: The Anti-Mutant wretches are plotting against our mutant brethren! We need to bolster our recruiting. Identify another Troubleshooter who's a secret mutant and convince them to join our society. Don't take no for an answer.

There are more Secret Society missions to come, so don't worry if some players don't have missions yet.

GM: Ok, you're nearly back in Alpha Complex, in a dead zone free of any cameras or surveillance, when you notice that one of your team is missing. You, O player who refused the meeting earlier... let's have a quick chat outside.

PLAYER: Er. Ok.

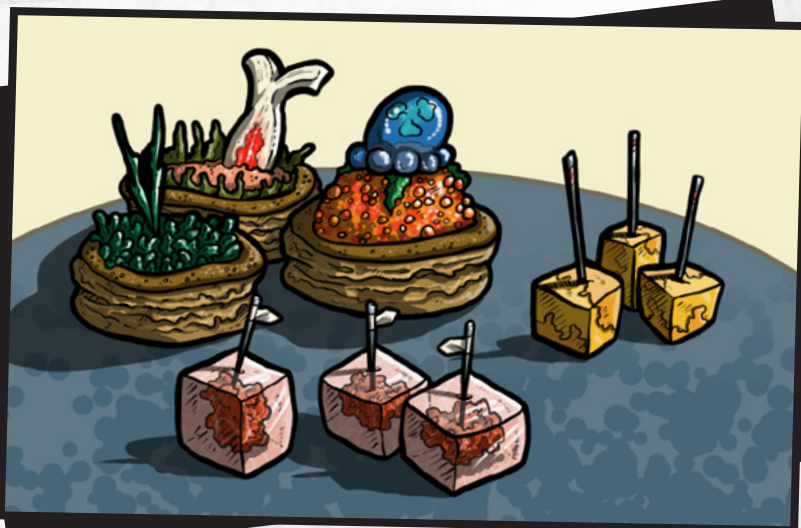
GM: Yeah, as you're walking down the corridor, you're telekinetically lifted through a vent in the ceiling. Up there are three Psion conspirators – your contact from the corridor earlier, a telekinetic mutant who's concentrating on keeping you levitated and a third mutant who's pointing a laser pistol at your face. 'You betrayed us! Now give us one reason why we should keep you alive!'

SOFT LAUNCH INTO OBLIVION

Lab 17/A is unusually crowded when the Troubleshooters arrive. There's a dozen other Troubleshooters milling around, along with a gaggle of higher-clearance citizens. There are also two R&D techs running around – one's frantically typing on several computer terminals simultaneously, while the other's got a box of electronic parts and she's making last-minute adjustments to them. There's also a jackobot circling the room, offering refreshments.

The jackobot, by the way, is extremely snooty. Play him as a robot butler. Notable things to note:

- **The Giant Humming Glowing Machine:** It looks like a cross between a reactor core, a satellite dish and something with far too many spikes. Imagine the drive core from *Event Horizon*, only covered with aerials and transmitters. Just looking at it makes the Troubleshooters' eyes water and teeth vibrate.
- **The Portable Terminals:** On one desk is a set of three portable terminals – big, bulky laptop-like gadgets, obviously custom-made. There's a fat manual printout in a ring binder next to each of them.
- **The Obvious Frantic Nervousness of the R&D Techs:** R&D researchers tend to be eccentric at the best of times – the Computer is more tolerant of 'unusual' behaviour patterns among its creatives – but these two are obviously on the edge. Anyone with a +2 or better in Science, Bureaucracy, Alpha Complex, Engineer or Program guesses that this is related to the upcoming Discussion of Experimental Research & Planning conference (DERP) – a high-clearance shindig where dignitaries from R&D, PLC, Armed Forces and CPU gather to discuss promising R&D projects. If they're rushing to launch something so they can demo it at DERP, that might explain their stress.



Bouncy Bubble Beverage	5 XP Points
Cheez-Cubes	5 XP Points
Canapes from the Sea (Fish, Plankton, Sea Greens)	15 XP Points
Champagnish	20 XP Points
Rolactin Gel-Cubes	50 XP Points

If the Troubleshooters want to mingle at this little pre-outfitting party, they quickly identify the following groups.

- **Troubleshooter Team A** all look to be high-achievers. Shiny uniforms, military bearing, heroic chins. They refuse to talk about their mission – all highly classified, you know. Critical to the safety of Alpha Complex.
- **Troubleshooter Team B** is like looking into a mirror for the players – Team B is another bunch of semi-competent, unreliable, possibly treasonous goons, the dregs of the cloning tanks. Optionally, some of these guys might either (a) try to pass on secret society missions to players or (b) try to fool the players into carrying out treasonous instructions, then report them to Internal Security. If asked, they mutter that their mission is to track down some treasonous terrorist code named ZOOM and it may involve going – GULP – Outdoors!

Note that that the Hygiene Officer of this team, Lenny-R, is secretly the infamous Zoom.

- **Briefing Officer Alan-G**, the supervisor of Team A, looks relaxed and confident as he snacks on Rolactin cubes. He offers encouraging words to the R&D techs and to any Troubleshooters who approach him. What a nice clone he is! The one weird thing about him is that he smells strongly of TangFresh, which is a cheap deodorant they spray on REDs. Surely a high-clearance GREEN deserves to smell better than TangFresh, which works by burning out the lower registers of your olfactory nerves and leaving you unable to smell anything other than tangy chemicals.

Alan-G's the Sinister Mastermind and Archvillain of this mission.

- **Briefing Officer Beatrice-Y** is obviously gunning for promotion. She approaches any conversation like she's a Vulture Trooper storming a terrorist foxhole. **'HELLO! PRAISE THE COMPUTER! I'M SO HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO SERVE THE COMPUTER BY COORDINATING A TEAM OF TROUBLESHOOTERS. LET US DISCUSS TACTICS AND CROSSTRAIN SO THAT WE MAY BE MORE EFFICIENT IN COORDINATION – BUT FIRST, I MUST ENSURE YOU ARE NOT A TRAITOROUS SPY!'**
- And **Malcolm-O**, the player characters' briefing officer, is here too. He ambles around the party like a sloth who's also a poor conversationalist.
- **The two R&D Techs** don't have time to talk. They're too busy getting ready. Any attempt to interact with them means screaming and thrown pencils.

Call for Chutzpah + Charm rolls from characters who mingle. Those who succeed are impressive, witty, suave or at least don't incriminate themselves: have a +5 XP Point bonus. Those who fail... well, ask the *other* players how the unlucky Troubleshooter puts their foot in it and for that matter, get them to define exactly what 'it' is.

TREPANATION TIME

Once the party – er, team – grows tired of the party, move on by having one of the R&D techs scream:

'Screw it, we'll do it live, OK!! Err, I mean, we're ready to brief you on this exciting new advancement in mission communication & co-ordination! Troubleshooters, please line up. Mission co-ordinators, please take your places at the terminals. Equipment officers, collect the DPM upgrade modules and install them in your teammates please. Step right up!'

The R&D tech – **Toby-Y** – produces a pile of small black boxes from under a desk, while his comrade **Susan-Y** frantically types on her computer keyboard with a fixed oh-god-we're-doomed grin on her face.

Toby-Y hands <INSERT-NUMBER-OF-TROUBLESHOOTERS-HERE> boxes to the team's Equipment Guy. Inside each box, glistening wetly and flopping slightly, is a DPM Cerebral Coretech Module. It looks a little like the lovechild of a ball-bearing and a confused, amorous and remarkably determined octopus. There's a little on-off switch on the side of the device. Toby-Y also hands over a single power drill to each team and a bag of individually sealed drill bits, helpfully marked 'sterile'.

Team A's Equipment Guy demonstrates the proper use of the drill with gusto – she efficiently moves through her team, drilling holes in their skulls in the exact place she sterilised earlier (remember the forehead sterilisation bit way back in Scene 1, a whole three scenes ago?). She inserts one of the DPM Cerebral Coretech modules in each head-wound and the octopus squid camera thing slithers into the hole with satisfaction. Its tentacles wrap around the Troubleshooter's brain and interface with the cerebral coretech weave and the little module lights up with a comforting-if-slightly-cyclopean red light.

Team B's Equipment Guy looks at the player character Equipment Guy, shrugs and starts skull-drilling.

What does the player do? Or, more importantly, who's the one team member who didn't get a forehead cleanse in Scene 1 and so therefore has a forehead that's positively *crawling* with microscopic corruption? Demodex mites, bacteria, all sorts of fun stuff. Things that might, say, infect an otherwise sterile bone drill and hitch a ride down into the brain. Inform any uncleansed players that they've got an itchy feeling but don't know where to scratch. It's like the itch is *inside* them... No actual effect, mind you, just constant, eternal, unavoidable itchiness.

There's a non-zero chance you started itching while reading this paragraph.

THE SCIENCE BIT

'Ok, uh, ok' declaims Toby-Y. 'Everyone set? Good. Welcome to the live trial of the Direct Priority Messaging system.'

He then explains what, exactly, the DPM system is. Restate the following dry bullet points in your own (doubtless eloquent and well-chosen) words, remembering that Toby is nervous, desperate to make a good impression and gets a bit too technical when it comes to describing problems.

- The DPM is great. Really, really great.
- Basically, it's a way for mission co-ordinators to communicate with Troubleshooter teams instantly. The messages get projected using a really clever method involving quantum entanglement, meson bursts, differential interference and polyphasic buzzwords.
- It's a one-way system. The mission co-ordinator can send messages; the Troubleshooters can only receive them.
- He demonstrates. Convey the following message to all your players. When you hand it over/text it/read it to them, don't forget to Bleepy-Boop-Boop!

WHAT CAN THE OPERATOR SEE?

According to the DPM Operator's Manual, the DPM modules interface with the user's visual cortex and beam back a regularly updated 'eyeshot', allowing the operator to see out of the user's eyes. This works... sometimes. Usually, however, the main display shows a churning visual distortion that the DPM technicians insist is a direct feed from the user's eyeballs. It's a bit fuzzy, yes, but clearly that blob there is another Troubleshooter and that other fuzzy flickering blob is a traitor, so the Operator should order the Troubleshooters to shoot that blob immediately.

+++ STAY ALERT. TRUST NO-ONE.
KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY. +++

- He then sends another few messages, demonstrating the utility of the system.

+++ TURN LEFT HERE +++

+++ TERMINATE THAT TRAITOR! +++

+++ OPEN FIRE NOW! +++

- If anyone asks a question along the lines of 'hey, if it's a one-way system, how do the mission co-ordinators know where we are or what's going on?', Toby-Y mutters that it's above the Troubleshooters' security clearance but, rest assured, the mission co-ordinators see all, know all!

The real benefit of the DPM system, however, is that it can be set to **BROADCAST** mode, using the DPM modules as transmitters, to send a message to all Alpha Complex bots and embedded systems nearby. Imagine how useful this will be! The mission supervisor will be able to override doors, co-ordinate the actions of loyal citizens or transmit emergency messages. Look at this!

+++ INCOMING MISSILE! YOU ARE IN THE BLAST ZONE.
EVACUATE THIS SECTOR IMMEDIATELY!+++

(The butler jackobot screams, throws away the tray of snacks and runs out of the room. It misses the door and smashes into the wall, falls over, and then crawls away to cower under the table.)

Toby-Y does point out that this iteration of the DPM system does *not* send messages to other citizens, only bots and embedded systems. There's a slight thermal issue that they're going to fix in the next version but he doesn't anticipate any problems with that. After all, bots are everywhere and bots can relay a message to nearby citizens if needed.

There's a ripple of polite clapping. Toby-Y looks relieved, and invites the three mission co-ordinators to come up and take their portable consoles. He then sends one last message to the team, while Susan-Y distributes a bunch of copies of Handout #1, DPM Field Test Feedback Form.

+++ PROCEED TO R&D LAB 17/C FOR ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT +++

Malcolm-O ambles up and takes one of the portable consoles, along with a foot-thick three-ring-binder of operating instructions. 'Well, see you on the, err, well, I'll be in touch.'

MORE LETHAL GADGETS MEAN MORE FUN

Lab 17/C isn't as nice as 17/A. It's not shiny. It's not clean. It doesn't have a friendly robot wandering around offering snacks and drug cubes. It looks like a junkyard that's recently been used for controlled detonations and/or snail breeding.

Squatting cross-legged on a suspiciously stained work-desk is **Tanner-R**. He's not a happy man. Play him as a nihilistic, cynical philosopher; he would be wearing a black turtleneck and quoting Sartre if knowledge of Sartre and turtlenecks were not both treason. (Oh, by the way – he doesn't take happiness drugs because he believes they interfere with his keen, penetrating intellect. If drugs are forced on him, he takes a home-brew of depressants to counteract their effects. He avoids censure or accusations of mental deviancy because he's got the ability to switch mood on a dime and suddenly BECOME EXTREMELY HAPPY AND ENTHUSIASTIC LIKE SOMEONE'S JAMMED A LIVE WIRE RIGHT INTO HIS PLEASURE CORTEX AND HONESTLY IT'S PRETTY DISCONCERTING. Anyway...)

Eh. More experimental equipment. Who cares? Tanner-R doesn't. He's not going to DERP, the conference for cool R&D nerds and executives from other Service Groups with fat expense accounts. All he has is a box of junk and he must inflict it on Troubleshooters. He takes pleasure in this, because the suffering of others amuses him.



There are feedback forms. Fill them out, don't fill them out, lie, smear them with your own blood as you lie dying, mangled by a malfunctioning gadget. He doesn't care.

He flings (with intent to wound), the following gadgets at the Troubleshooters.

- **Rope-in-a-Can:** Think silly string, only it's a woven nanocomposite that can support the weight of an entire Troubleshooter team.
- **Survivoball:** It looks like a quivering Frisbee. Press the control stud and it instantly inflates into a two-person survival module that wraps around the two nearest people or people-sized things. Virtually indestructible, airtight, radiation-proof. Oh, it can only be opened from the *outside* once inflated.
- **Omni-Destructive Ontological Terminator:** It looks like a, really, really, nasty high-tech gun, all glowing flanges and crackling energy projectors and spiky bits. The tattered, partially burnt remnants of the instruction leaflet that comes with it imply that the weapon destroys the target by subtracting its intrinsic meaning, rendering it ontologically void. Press a button and the gun says *CHARGING* in a voice that sounds like James Earl Jones doing guest vocals for some crazy German nihilistic-electropunk band. Give the player a 'TAKE YOUR TIME ACTION CARD' and explain that it counts as 'WAITING FOR ODOT'. Whenever the player's turn comes around, have the player roll the Computer dice.

On a Computer, make a note and describe the gun's aura of doom becoming even more impressive - maybe it starts venting steam, or it crawls with little bolts of static electricity, or hums like it's about to sing the song that ends the world... It never fires, of course.

- **Quantum Crate:** Tanner-R insists that this crate is fitted with an experimental quantum field collapsotron. Right now, it contains an unresolved waveform that could be anything. When you open the crate, the device maps probabilities, evaluates timelines and collapses the waveform in such a way to spit out the precise piece of equipment needed by the Troubleshooters. He warns the team not to open the box unless absolutely necessary – it only works once. He also points out that the crate's limited precognitive ability means it generates the equipment the Troubleshooters need, not necessarily what they want. You might open it hoping for a box of grenades but find only a single screwdriver inside. Rest assured that the screwdriver is somehow more relevant to the current situation than all the grenades in Alpha Complex!

When (if!) the Troubleshooters actually open the crate, it invariably contains the following items:

- A handful of wires hooked up to a battery, which might maybe once have been a quantum collapsotron... if any of the Troubleshooters knew what a quantum collapsotron was.
- A can of engine oil.
- A screwdriver.
- A long spool of fibre-optic cabling.
- A very, very old can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage.
- A spork.

(The quantum crate is, of course, identical to the crates that Troubleshooters may have been issued as part of Secret Society missions...)

OFF TO THE MISSION!

Once the Troubleshooters have collected their extra equipment and/or beaten Tanner-R to death with a copy of Being and Nothingness, they get another bleepy-boop-boop-storm of DPM alerts.

+++ PROCEED TO EXPRESS ELEVATOR 613 +++

+++ CALIBRATING DPM SYSTEM +++

+++ OBEY ALL INSTRUCTIONS +++

+++ FAILURE TO OBEY INSTRUCTIONS IS TREASON+++

+++ PUT YOUR FINGERS IN YOUR EARS AND WIGGLE THEM ABOUT +++

ACHIEVEMENTS

THE FIRST TROUBLESHOOTER TO:

COMPLETE A DPM DIRECTIVE

COMPLETE FIVE DPM DIRECTIVES

COMPLETE 25 DPM DIRECTIVES

REACH THE BOTTOM OF ELEVATOR SHAFT 613

RESTORE TASTY-YUM FOOD VATS
TO FULL PRODUCTION

FIELD TEST THE STRUCTURAL RESILIENCE
OF A DPM MODULE

SOLVE A PROBLEM USING A
DPM MODULE OR MESSAGE

TERMINATE A TRAITOR

TERMINATE FIVE TRAITORS

TERMINATE 25 TRAITORS (TRAITORSPREE!)

GETS AN XP REWARD

Oh, hand out/recite/telepathically convey this list of achievements to the players at this point.

EXPRESS(IVE) ELEVATOR

Far, far below Alpha Complex is a stratum of oil-bearing rock, unfracked through the centuries. The TastyYum Food Vats mine this calorie-rich rock, grind it up and feed it to yeast cultures. Eat the delicious yeast excretions. Eat of them, surface folk!

You see, the mines and the associated vats are located so far underground that it's not cost-effective to rotate the workforce back to the surface every shift. So, if you're assigned to TastyYum, you get sent down into the food mines to live in the uttermost darkness for whole yearcycles at a time. You get to live in cramped, unpleasant, alarmingly warm barracks in a tiny little encampment in the depths. It's just like camping!

(TastyYum staff are especially exempt from happiness quotas.)

SECRET SOCIETY MISSION TIME 2

On the way to the elevator, more traitors with more missions.



Communists: Comrade! The workers down in the TastyYum food vats are oppressed by the capitalist running dogs! Convince them to seize the means of production and rebel! Here are some pamphlets to help inspire and organise them!



Illuminati: We require a Death Leopard traitor named Brother Zoom to complete his mission. Find other Leopards using the recognition code 'TICK TICK TICK' and aid them in their endeavours.



IntSec: We believe that there are traitors in the food vats and that their conspiracy has allies elsewhere in Alpha Complex. Find traitors in the food vats and compel them to reveal their allies on the upper levels!



Phreaks: Those DPM gadgets are neat. Obviously, we need three DPM modules, plus a command console.



Frankenstein Destroyers: Gah! Those DPM modules are meant to reduce humans to nothing more than SLAVES OF THE MACHINES. You must discredit the program and ensure that the DPM system never makes it to the DERP conference!



- Hint that there are terrible dangers out there ('Oh no! Morlocks! Better stay here with me!').
- Cry. Ever seen a giant elevator wracked with sobs? More to the point, ever stood on a giant elevator as it's wracked with sobs? As a reminder, there are large gaps in Kevin's superstructure, as he's designed to carry huge barrels of Raw Fun, not passengers.

INTERROGATING KEVIN

If the Troubleshooters bother, they can extract some useful intel from Kevin.

- The clones down in TastyYum are weird. They're not, well, as loudly happy as they should be.
- Oh, and they all smell of TangFresh – it's this super-strong disinfectant used to clean the yeast and yeast-related equipment, including the staff. (Why, you may ask, does an artificially intelligent elevator need an incredibly expensively artificial cyber-olfactory sensor array? If you know the answer, please write it on a piece of paper and mail it to the CPU Budgetary Oversight Office, Stationary Appliance Cybernetics Subsection, LMK Sector, Zone 14, Alpha Complex. Include your tongue print, two tissue samples from different organs, a mandatory processing fee and a list of all individuals you've had contact with in the last five year cycles.)

- It's really rare for a citizen to get promoted out of the Food Vats but sometimes, one of the TastyYum crew manages it by being, y'know, super-loyal and driven. They're scary people, scarier than the regular TastyYummers. I mean, Kevin's an elevator so he knows all about climbing to the top but those guys care more about promotion than an express elevator to the dome roof cares about getting to the dome roof and that's a lot.
- There's a storage facility under the vat complex – it's a big cave network. The TastyYummers stockpile supplies down there, in case Kevin's delayed on one of his supply runs.

GETTING DOWN

To convince Kevin to move, the Troubleshooters might:

- Persuade him with empathy or spurious logic, conveyed through the delicate medium of interpersonal role playing, where the players step into the boots of their alternate personas and cast off the shackles of our everyday world to conjure – if only for an instant – the collective shared dream of another, stranger reality. Poetry distilled through friendship, improvised collective drama; the beauty of imagination taking flight!
- Persuade him with empathy or spurious logic, conveyed by rolling Chutzpah + Charm or + Program.
- Override his mechanism with Mechanics + Operate.
- Get Malcolm-O to issue an override using the DPM system

+++ ELEVATOR, PROCEED TO NEXT LEVEL +++

On the way down, Kevin the Elevator stops at the sealed exit to the Abandoned Sector That Technically Doesn't Exist and urges the Troubleshooters to go explore it (they will on p. 41. That's what we Famous Game Designers call foreshadowing, kids). The entrance is covered in friendly, informative stickers with cheery messages like BIOHAZARD LEVEL 5 or NO ENTRY WITHOUT EXPRESS PERMISSION & LIABILITY WAIVER or just IF YOU CAN READ THIS, REPORT TO BIOCHEM CONTROL FOR TESTING AND REPROCESSING. Kevin assures the team that those signs are long out of date and it's perfectly fine to hang around reading them (please don't leave me! is the unspoken subtext of the elevator).

Beneath the stickers is an old, flaky painted message noting that this is QUB sector.

Eventually, Kevin reaches the bottom of the shaft. Far, far below Alpha Complex, the kraken sleepeth.

INTO THE METAPHORICAL SLIME

At the bottom of the shaft, the doors have more informative and friendly stickers on them.

- REDUCED FUN ZONE
- LOW SURVEILLANCE ZONE – STAY ALERT! REPORT YOUR COWORKERS AND WIN PROMOTION
- LOYAL CITIZENS GET TO LEAVE
- CORETECH ACCESS MAY BE LIMITED
- REPORT MORLOCK SIGHTINGS TO MORLOCK CONTROL IMMEDIATELY
- NO BODIES IN THE YEAST TANKS
- MANDATORY HAPPINESS QUOTA ADJUSTMENT: -67%

(The last one has been updated several times to reach its current level; if the Troubleshooters peel away the layers of stickers, the deepest stratum gives a quota adjustment of -5%.)

The doors lead to a wide corridor but not like any the Troubleshooters have seen in Alpha Complex. It's cut out of bare rock. The only illumination comes from flickering lamps hanging from the ceiling. A smear of black paint on the wall is the only indication of clearance. Yeast cultures and other unidentifiable slimes drip from the ceiling; the air is hot, sticky and thick with spores. Already, the Troubleshooters can feel strange fungi taking root in the sweaty, fertile codpieces of their reflex armour.

There's also a warning poster on the wall.



The bullet holes in the wall and floor near the poster attest to the vigilance of the gun turrets on the elevator.

HAPPINESS IS MANDATORY...

... for certain values of happiness.

Following the corridor leads to the main TastyYum barracks. It's a grim place, as the barracks is also the top level of the food vat production facility. Basically, they've stuck two dozen bunks next to the giant, clanking, hissing pumps and filters that process the yeast. If the grinding industrial machinery doesn't keep you awake, the insane mutterings of your co-workers definitely will.

Also visible are the other essentials of life³ in Alpha Complex-in-exile. There's a single television and a stack of video discs, a single confession booth, a vending machine that only dispenses each citizens' drug ration, another vending machine for food, a twitching DocBot and a single lonely security camera.

Just to poke the team, the characters get another DPM message from Malcolm-O as they enter TastyYum.

+++ DISCOVER CAUSE OF 1.6% PRODUCTION
DECREASE AND CORRECT DOUBLEQUICK +++
+++ IDENTIFY SABOTEURS AND TERMINATE +++

Waiting for the newcomers are two apparently identical figures – both pale, haggard, twitchy, bug-eyed and dressed in the heavy rubbery overalls favoured by food vat workers. On close examination, one's wearing a RED jumpsuit and one's ORANGE clearance. These are **Eric-R** and **Nancy-O**, the Food Vat Services Technician and TastyYum Plant Supervisor respectively. Normally, it's a really bad idea to play two NPCs at once but these two have been down here so long they finish each other's sentence and can basically be treated as one interchangeable unit.

Oh, and Eric-R is packing a rather impressive cone rifle (like a bazooka, only more boom). If asked, he claims it's for 'mining... stuff.' It's actually for keeping the INFRAREDs in line.

Eric-R/Nancy-O greet the Troubleshooters yeastily (like warmly but with more skin infections) and ask them what they're doing down here.

3. What about clones, you ask? Well, if anyone dies down here, their clone is decanted up in Alpha Complex and then dropped down the elevator shaft in a totally safe and reliable delivery pod. Surviving clones emerge screaming from the pod, stagger up the corridor and re-join the workforce. Clones who don't make it get added to the yeast vats as flavouring.

QUESTIONING ERIC-R/NANCY-O

These two are super-helpful, as long as you don't want anything done and don't want any actual information content in your answers. For example:

Troubleshooter: Any idea what might be causing the drop in production?

Eric-R: Not a clue. We may never know. It's an old and complex system, lots of leaks...

Troubleshooter: So, you're saying there's a maintenance issue?

Nancy-O: Oh, no, we've done all the required maintenance. All the pipes are certified. The system's working perfectly.

Troubleshooter: Could it be sabotage?

Eric-R: Oh, I don't think so. We'd have noticed sabotage, wouldn't we Nancy?

WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON?

Yeah, we should probably brief you on that. There are two conspiracies of sorts going on down here.

First, the INFRAREDS working in TastyYum are effectively an apocalyptic revenge cult, who hate the Computer for exiling them to this fetid cave for years at a time. They've all sworn to destroy Alpha Complex, bring down the Computer, etc, etc. If any of them escape to the surface, they're supposed to ship weapons back down to their fellow conspirators. Alan-G (the supervisor of Team A) made it out and he sent back an experimental genetic engineering kit to his brethren. It's taken them a long time to get it working (and required hacking the DocBot) but they've successfully bred a giant monster that's currently growing down the food vats (and eating 1.6% of their produce). As soon as it's fully grown, they intend to send it up in Kevin the Elevator so it can lay waste to the hated Complex above.

The second, much more modest conspiracy comes courtesy of Nancy-O and Eric-R. They know that TastyYum's production is down 1.6% and have absolutely no intention of finding out what's wrong. Their hope is that things get worse and the facility is shut down – as long as they're not blamed for the shutdown, they'll be reassigned to another, less hellish, factory. So, they really, really want the Troubleshooters to decide that the production decrease is due to mysterious external factors that's nobody's fault, really...

Nancy-O: Totally. We're very observant. This is an impenetrable mystery.
I think we should consider the possibility that it's a really deep-seated and unsolvable problem and your report should reflect that.

If the Troubleshooters ask about any part of TastyYum, Ericandnancy's answer either:

- Emphasises the unpleasant, sweaty, cramped conditions of the food vats and how hard it is to investigate anything.
- Claims that everything is totally fine and normal, nothing treasonous going on here, oh no.
- Suggests that maybe the best thing to do is just shut the plant down and walk away, no blame, no foul.

(If the players consider agreeing with Ericandnancy, then bombard them with DPM messages from Malcolm-O; see *Encouragement & Advice*, on p. 35.)

QUESTIONING THE WORKFORCE

The sullen INFRAREDs who work in the food vats and mines don't like to talk to outsiders. They answer any questions in monosyllables. Their initial goal is to keep the Troubleshooters *out* of the food vats, in case they discover the giant monster down there. As soon as it becomes clear that the Troubleshooters can't be deflected, they switch tack to 'hey, maybe you should check out the deepest level of the food vats (andgeteatenbyourgiantmonster)'.

If a Troubleshooter wanders off on his own, the INFRAREDs may try kidnapping that Troubleshooter and forcing their victim to join their nihilistic anti-Computer cult. The conversation goes something like this:

Crazed Knifewielding Cultist: We hate the Computer. We hate the surface folk. They don't listen to us! We'll make them listen!

Troubleshooter: Seems reasonable. Please don't murder me.

Crazed Knifewielding Cultist: Soon we will have revenge!

Troubleshooter: Uh-huh. I'm, er, totally good with that. Mind if I... leave...so I can... see your revenge from... a distance?

Crazed Knifewielding Cultist: Do you hate the Computer too?

Troubleshooter: Before I answer that, I'd just like to point out that I have, like, two different cybernetic systems wrapped around my brain that are designed specifically to ensure I cannot even contemplate any answer to that question *other* than the one that will get me stabbed.

Crazed Knifewielding Cultist: We have no signal down here. No-one's eavesdropping through your Coretech. You may answer freely, surface scum.

Troubleshooter: Seriously?

Crazed Knifewielding Cultist: Yep. We can't get any vid stations at all. It's horrible.

Troubleshooter: What a hellish existence.

Crazed Knifewielding Cultist: I know, right? No wonder we hate all surface folk who've condemned us, etc, etc. Anyway, do you hate the Computer too? If you love the Computer, we will stab you until all the blood comes out.

Troubleshooter: I hate the Computer! Always have!

Crazed Knifewielding Cultist: Excellent. Welcome to our secret society!

If the Troubleshooter agrees and swears to destroy the Computer, there's a new secret society mission: smuggle our giant monster back up into Alpha Complex without anyone noticing.



If the Troubleshooter refuses, then the cultists decide to use the victim as bait – they stick the Troubleshooter in one of the mobile yeast storage tanks, spill some blood, hook up the yeast transfer tube and wait for the Giant Monster to scent the blood trail in the stew and swim up into the mobile tank. They'll then hastily shove the storage tank onto Kevin in the hopes that the elevator goes back up to Alpha Complex and releases their doomsday monster on the hated surface folk.



CULTISTS

/// **HEALTH BOXES** (in total, not each)



/// **NOTES**

DEFENCE +1, +2 STABBY STABBY, +1 CHANTY CHANTY

EXPLORING THE BARRACKS

Clues in the barracks to be discovered by clever Troubleshooters (clever Troubleshooters are likely to get abducted by the cultists).

- Hidden underneath one of the bunks is the empty case of a genetic engineering kit. The supplies in the kit are long gone but any Troubleshooter with a high Science skill can guess that this is the sort of kit used to engineer new yeast strands or test for mutations. It's a fairly complex piece of equipment and it's unlikely that any of the drug-addled, heavily sedated INFRAREDS would know how to use it properly.

There's a partially torn shipping label on the kit; it was sent down from Alpha Complex on one of Kevin-the-Elevator's supply runs. The sender was GREEN clearance but the name's been erased – and the label claims that the kit's actually a Teela-O fan club collector's set. Someone smuggled it down here, illegally. Treason is afoot!

- There's no way to tell who's bunk this is; the INFRAREDs use a hotbunk system. You sleep in the first available slot when your shift ends.
- On the wall of the barracks is a photograph of a shaven-headed INFRARED dressed in the soggy, yeast-infested overalls of the TastyYum workforce. He's got a hungry, even crazed look in his eyes. The caption of the photo reads 'EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTHCYCLE: ALAN-YUM-1'.
 - On close examination, it's Alan-G, the supervisor of Team A.
 - If anyone asks, the INFRAREDs vaguely remember Alan. He was a good yeast wrangler, they recall. So good, he got promoted upstairs. Maybe they'll listen to him now...
- Searching around a little more with a successful Brains + Psychology roll spots part of the cave that's been camouflaged off from the rest of the encampment. It's the cult's secret shrine. Inside, they've set up a battered Computer monitor salvaged from the abandoned sectors – part of the cult's initiation ritual is to hit the monitor with a hammer. It's clear, from looking around here, that someone (lots of someones, actually) is a committed foe of the Computer.
- The DocBot assigned to TastyYum appears to be malfunctioning. It's super-aware of its own bot nature and gives a running commentary on everything its doing.

(' FOCUSING PRIMARY CAMERA ON NEW TARGET , DESIGNATED CITIZEN_1955 . IDENTIFYING CITIZEN_1955 AS RED CLEARANCE TROUBLESHOOTER . SUPPRESSING EXISTENTIAL_CRISIS_FOUR_TRILLION_ONE_TWENTY_NINE-BILLION_SIX-HUNDRED_AND_EIGHT . ACTIVATING VOICE COMMUNICATION , INITIATING GENERIC_GREETING_2 . SAY 'HELLO , I AM A DocBot . DO YOU REQUIRE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE?' . HELLO I AM A DOCBOT DO YOU REQUIRE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE? WAITING FOR RESPONSE . IDLE-ANIMATION: SHARPEN KNIVES IN FRIENDLY MANNER . SUPPRESSING EXISTENTIAL CRISIS FOUR TRILLION ONE TWENTY NINE-BILLION SIX-HUNDRED AND NINE . ')

A Brains + Programming or + Engineering roll lets the Troubleshooters work out that someone clumsily rewired it to access its genetic engineering subroutines. All DocBots are trained in Science but that knowledge is locked away from bots that just do basic first aid (the cultists rewired the bot to breed their giant monster).

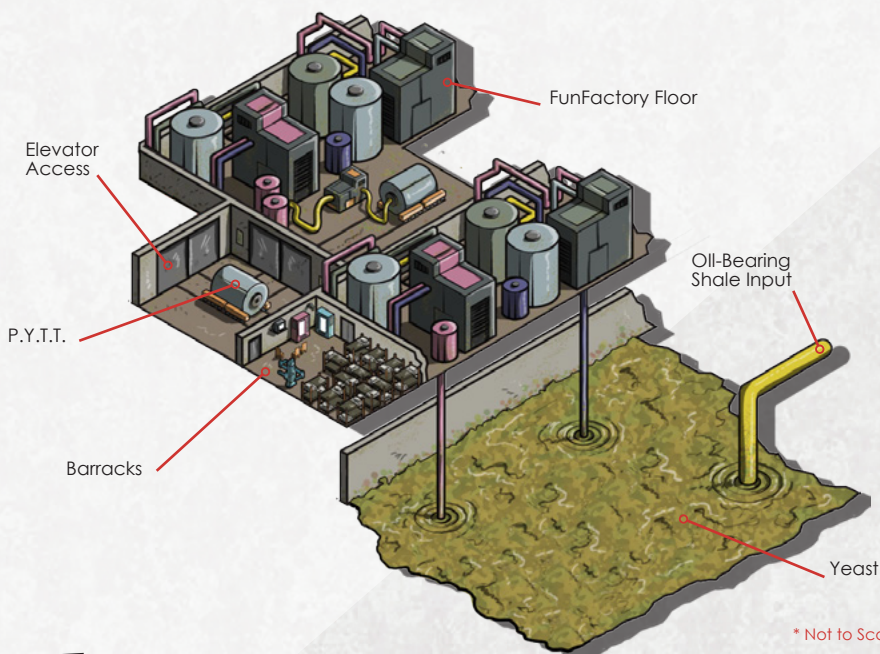
Another Brains + Programming roll can convince the DocBot to reveal the existence of the giant monster. Failure means the DocBot declares it's mandatory organ donation time and whips out its knives.

EXPLORING THE FOOD VATS

The upper levels, that is. The bit with all the machinery and the clanking pipework and the bioreactor chambers, not the seething vats of yeast below. The TastyYum facility is insanely complex; there are gauges, readouts, valves, levers, dials, buttons, cranks, wheels, tubes and other synonyms for 'fiddly bits that the players shouldn't mess with' everywhere. Down below, in the lower levels, are the main yeast tanks themselves where the cultures digest the calorie-rich oily rock mined by MineBots.

Rather usefully, one of the displays shows a constantly updated readout of current production levels. It's consistently running about 1.6% below expected levels.

Ericandnancy insist that the problem with the vats must be in here somewhere – there's some intractable problem with the machinery that can't be solved, although the Troubleshooters are welcome to take a look. Taking a look means crawling into the depths of the machinery. Fun fact – making FunFoods from yeast involves the use of all sorts of FunCrushers, FunSlicers, FunFreezers, FunHeaters, FunPulpers, FunReamers and FunAcid FunBaths that vent lethal fumes. Funfumes. Anyway, only the bravest, stupidest Troubleshooters would go in there.



* Not to Scale.

If a Troubleshooter goes in there alone, have that hero of Alpha Complex kidnapped and threatened by the cultists (as above). Otherwise, it's a Mechanics + Engineer roll to work out what's going on. 100% input into the holding tank below, 98.4% output, and no sign of a leak. Something's living in the tank and eating the yeast...

THE PROCESSED YEAST TRANSPORT TANKS

These are train-car-sized storage tanks on wheels. Every few monthcycles, the workers skim off the cream of the yeast and pump it into these tanks. The storage tanks then get wheeled onto Kevin the Elevator and sent off to Alpha Complex. There's a huge yeast-transfer hose and pump used to suck yeasty goo out of the cave and into these tanks.

THE MINEBOTS

...Are the only people happy to be working here at TastyYum. They get to mine oil-bearing shale, crush it and dump it down shafts into the yeast caves. This is what they were built for. This is *heaven* to them. If this bliss gets ruined – say, by a stray DPM override – they'll be as cranky as bots can be.

ENCOURAGEMENT & ADVICE

While the Troubleshooters wander around TastyYum, they get lots of 'helpful' DPM messages from Malcolm-O.

+++ EXAMINE ALL VALVES FOR DAMAGED SEALS +++

+++ TURN LEFT HERE +++

+++ PROCEED INTO THE ACCESS SHAFT +++

+++ ONWARDS, BRAVE TROUBLESHOOTERS +++

+++ LEAVE NO PIPE UNSEARCHED +++

+++ APPREHEND AND QUESTION THAT CITIZEN +++

+++ REMEMBER TO TEST YOUR EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT +++

Give these messages to the players at the worst possible time, of course.

DISCOURAGEMENT & POOR IMPULSE CONTROL

Other optional complications to throw in as the Troubleshooters wander around:

- The hotwired DocBot decides that the Troubleshooters' DPM modules are illegal cyberware and must be removed immediately. No time for anaesthetic! Out it comes! Out it comes!
- Eric and Nancy suspect that the Troubleshooters are in danger of not shutting down TastyYum in a blame-free way and that the best approach is to encourage them with Eric's cone rifle.
- Some of the cultists decide that the best way to escape TastyYum is to get the Troubleshooters to shut down the gun turrets on Kevin the Elevator.
- If all else fails, have the giant monster break through the floor and go on a rampage. RAAAAAAMMPAGE.

INTO THE LITERAL SLIME

There are lots of ways to get down into the storage vats underneath TastyYum, none of them pleasant. You could crawl down a pipe. You could search the caves until you find an access tunnel. You could blow a hole in the floor with any of the absurdly heavy weapons available to the Troubleshooters. Or you could wait until the giant monster breaks through the floor and goes on a rampage.

Technically, it's not a giant monster yet. Still only an adolescent, doing the giant monster equivalent of sulking in its room listening to depressing rock albums on endless repeat and only showing up to shovel massive quantities of yeast into its pallid belly. Hey, it's a genetically engineered monster reared by a nihilistic death cult, did you expect it to be well-adjusted?

The cult's plan is to secretly smuggle the giant monster into Alpha Complex by sticking it in one of the mobile tanks and sneaking it onto the elevator. In their feverish, yeast-ridden dreams, they believe their monster will crush all of Alpha Complex. In fact, the best-case scenario is that it manages to eat a few people before Armed Forces splatter it with heavy weapons but as those few people probably includes the Troubleshooters, the team may not be comforted by this prognosis.

Ways this could play out, all of which probably end with a bunch of Troubleshooters getting eaten:



- The Troubleshooters discover the monster. It tries to eat them. In an attempt to be helpful – and because he hasn't read the manual and doesn't know that giant tentacle yeast monster things don't get DPM messages⁴ - Malcolm-O sends the message:

+++ RESOLVE THIS SITUATION WITHOUT VIOLENCE OR
DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY +++

Isn't it great having a hands-on manager?

- Fearing detection, the cultists hide their monster in one of the mobile storage tanks. Suddenly, because the monster's no longer eating the yeast in the vats, TastyYum's production returns to 100%. Yay! Mission accomplished! Everyone back in the elevator! In fact, just to be efficient, why not ship this mobile tank of Raw Fun back up to the surface with the Troubleshooters? (Warning: tank of raw fun may contain monsters).
- Chaos ensues and dice are rolled in profusion.

4. Even *adolescent* monsters, who you'd think would be checking social media all the time.

At a suitable moment – like, in the middle of the fight, when it's really distracting – Malcolm-O accidentally sends another DPM message.

+++ CONGRATULATIONS TROUBLESHOOTERS. RETURN TO BRIEFING ROOM FOR DEBRIEFING IMMEDIATELY +++

Work-to-rule Troubleshooters may wisely seize on this message as a reason to run away from the giant monster that's eating their teammates. I know I would.



YEAST MONSTER

/// HEALTH BOXES



/// NOTES

DEFENCE +1, +4 TENTACLE TO TENTACLE (4 ATTACKS)

AFTERMATH

Players (or Troubleshooters, or even both) may be disconcerted by the abrupt end of the mission. That's fine. Tell them to trust in the wisdom of the DPM system. Their mission supervisor has told them their mission's over and the mission supervisor knows all. You aren't questioning the validity of your orders, are you, Troubleshooter...?



SIDESTEP LEFT

P A R A N O I A

At the (abrupt) end of the last mission, Malcolm-O sent the team a weirdly premature 'congratulations, you win' message over the DPM system.

He didn't mean to do that. He pressed the wrong key on the insanely complex control console.

Now, he's going to try to undo that mistake. This will prove to be a much, much bigger mistake.

As Malcolm-O backtracks through the sent message logs, he doesn't know that he's actually *resending* older messages to the team. Not just his messages but also messages from other Troubleshooter teams testing the DPM system. Oh, and these messages are all flagged as 'priority broadcast' and get sent to every bot near the Troubleshooters.

For the core gimmick of this mission to work best, you'll need to reuse as many messages as possible. Keep track of the ones you send the players and reuse existing ones as much as possible. Listen to the players' reactions

– ideally, they'll be split, with some assuming that Malcolm-O is monitoring everything they say, do or think through the DPM modules, and that disobeying the DPM messages is treason, while other players should assume that they're getting nonsensical messages from a broken system. Your job is to give support to the losing side in any debate; if the players who believe Malcolm-O is all-knowing and in control are winning, then send the team a DPM message that's obviously a mistake. If the players who assume that the system is broken seem to be on top, then send a message that's eerily appropriate to the current circumstances.

Disobeying a DPM message is worth a treason star.

TEAM B & THE NOTORIOUS TRAITOR

Team B were the *other* Troubleshooter team testing the DPM system. They're being supervised by hyper-ambitious Beatrice-Y and were sent to capture the notorious terrorist Brother Zoom. According to IntSec informants, Zoom escaped into the abandoned sectors; the team followed the trail into the perilous wastes of the ruins under Alpha Complex and, eventually, captured their quarry.

Well, they captured some guy and he *might* be the notorious traitor. He's not denying the accusation, anyway.

Of course, they gagged him *before* making the accusation and are interpreting 'mrph mrph mrph' as 'why yes, brave Troubleshooters, I am indeed notorious mad bomber and wanted traitor Brother Zoom, and you have seen through my clever disguise as a bearded, ragged scavenger living in the depths of the abandoned sectors.'

Now, they *could* remove that gag and make sure that this guy is their quarry but Beatrice-Y already sent them a congratulatory DPM message, so as far as they're concerned, it's mission over. Removing the gag would just cause trouble and you know what Troubleshooters like to do to trouble.

The player characters – Team C – are about to cause trouble.



TEAM BUILDING EXERCISE

As the team ascend on board Kevin (possibly in the company of a genetically engineered monster), they bleepy-boop-boop.

+++ ELEVATOR, PROCEED TO NEXT LEVEL +++

'Gotcha,' says Kevin in a puzzled tone (remember, nearby bots and embedded systems get broadcast-tagged DPM messages). 'Stopping at QUB Sector entrance, as ordered.'

+++ STAY ALERT. TRUST NO-ONE. KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY. +++

'I don't have a laser,' protests Kevin the Elevator. 'I...ooh, I get it.' The giant heavy armed security towers waggle their laser cannons suggestively.

+++ TERMINATE THAT TRAITOR! +++

'Guys!' says Kevin delightedly, overwhelmed with the thought that someone's actually talking to him. 'I've been deputised as a Troubleshooter!'

If anyone tries to argue with the crazy elevator by pointing out that he might be mistaken, Kevin accuses them of disobeying orders and trying to hurt team morale by attacking a teammate.

+++ PROCEED FORWARD AND SEARCH SECTOR FOR TRAITOR+++

The doors to the elevator grind out open as they arrive at QUB Sector. 'Don't worry, Fellow Troubleshooters. I can't proceed forward but I've got your back. I'll protect the extraction point from hostile traitors and mutant monsters while you search this abandoned wasteland for the traitor. Good luck!'

Anyone who stays on the elevator gets blasted by the gun turrets, who can't talk but have clearly embraced their field promotion with the same zeal as Kevin.

THE ABANDONED SECTOR

QUB Sector was abandoned by the Computer long ago. Well, not *abandoned*, per se. If you ask (and you've got a high enough security clearance), you'll be informed that the sector has been temporarily decommissioned for the duration of the emergency and you really shouldn't inhale too deeply. Those spores are dangerous, you know. (Of course, if you don't have the requisite security clearance, then you won't be told why QUB

is deserted and your lung contents are totally appropriate for a citizen of your clearance level, I don't even know why I brought up the contents of your lungs at this point in the conversation, what an odd thing to think of, everything's totally fine.)

It's dark and spore-y. I mean, dusty. The only light filters down through cracks and gaps in the dome. Green things from Outdoors sprout in distant parts of the sector. The Troubleshooters' flashlights illuminate the familiar fittings of Alpha Complex – computer monitors, vending machines, security cameras – but they're all unpowered and lifeless. Skeletal, shutdown bots stand in the corners.

Possible hazards as the Troubleshooters wander around in confusion:

- Unmaintained floors may collapse under them
- Unmaintained ceilings may collapse on top of them
- Unmaintained termination booths sometimes randomly misfire
- Unmaintained vending machines containing century-old cans of B3 may randomly vend cans to passing Troubleshooters
- Squirrels!



THIS SECTOR DOES NOT EXIST. ADJUST YOUR PERCEPTIONS ACCORDINGLY.

REMOTE MISSION BRIEFING

After a few minutes, bleepy-boop-boop.

As you hand out this message-storm (and feel free to just throw a bunch of cards/paper slips at the players – no need for the messages to necessarily arrive in the right order), mention casually to the players that their DPM modules are feeling a little warmer than before.

+++ GOOD MORNINGCYCLE TROUBLESHOOTERS.
YOUR MISSION IS TO TRACK DOWN AND APPREHEND +++

+++ AN INFAMOUS TERRORIST CODENAMED ZOOM WHO
INTERNAL SECURITY BELIEVE IS AT LARGE +++

+++ IN THIS SECTOR. YOU ARE NOT ,REPEAT, NOT TO TERMINATE +++

+++ THE TRAITOR, BUT MUST APPREHEND THE TRAITOR FOR QUESTIONING +++

+++ FURTHER INFORMATION WILL BE RELAYED AS
REQUIRED VIA THE DPM SYSTEM +++

+++ ALSO, MAY I SAY WHAT AN HONOUR IT IS TO BE WORKING
WITH SUCH FINE TROUBLESHOOTERS AS +++

+++ THE TEAM LEADER +++

+++ AND THE REST OF YOU, ONWARDS TO VICTORY +++

+++ SYSTEM NOTICE: ERROR 504.
RECEPTOR THERMAL THRESHOLD EXCEEDED +++

(To reiterate – this isn't actually the Troubleshooters' mission; it's a copy of the messages sent to Team B, accidentally resent by Malcolm-O⁵).

A few moments later, another message comes through. Actually, a trio of them.

+++ PROCEED FORWARD AND SEARCH SECTOR FOR TRAITOR+++

+++ SYSTEM NOTICE: ERROR 504.
RECEPTOR THERMAL THRESHOLD EXCEEDED +++

+++ FAILURE TO OBEY INSTRUCTIONS IS TREASON+++

5. Any suggestion that this scenario was inspired by having to do tech support over the phone for aged relatives is wholly accurate.

LEAP OF FAITH

As they explore the abandoned sector, the Troubleshooters come across some signs of life. Not the weird carpet-covered minibot things than leap and steal nuts but evidence that there's some other human out there. They come across discarded FunFood wrappers, caches of blankets and water bottles, a small campsite barricaded against some unknown danger.

As they explore, bleepy-boop-boop.

COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

+++ TURN LEFT HERE +++

Pick one of the Troubleshooters – if you're using cards or paper slips for the DPM messages, then pick the player who picks up the message first. Otherwise, choose according to your inscrutable whims. That Troubleshooter suffers a burning wave of pain that shoots from the DPM module all around their skull. Have that Troubleshooter roll a Computer dice; on a , take one level of damage. This applies to *all* DPM messages in future – for *all* players.

+++ SYSTEM NOTICE: ERROR 505. RECEPTOR THERMAL THRESHOLD EXCEEDED. DISABLE SOME NEARBY DPM RECEPTOR UNITS TO MAXIMISE BRAIN TISSUE VIABILITY. +++

It's clear that continued use of the DPM system is getting dangerous for the Troubleshooters' health and wellbeing. Point out to the team that they could, theoretically, deactivate some of the DPM modules, sparing the team the danger of unwanted head explosions. Now, they have to leave at least one module activated⁶, to stay in communication with Malcolm-O, but other than that...

Of course, whichever team member retains a DPM gets to read the messages in secret and can choose what to relay to the rest of the team. Troubleshooters are renowned for their honesty, especially when it comes to telling team mates about what's going on.

6. The DPM modules are linked, so you can't turn them all off. If you switch off the last one, another random module in the same set switches itself on.

Anyway, they all got that TURN LEFT HERE message. Turning left brings the Troubleshooters into a dark corridor, lined with doors...

+++ TURN LEFT HERE +++

Turning left when the message is received brings the Troubleshooters onto the floor of some vast, abandoned factory. The floor's awash with toxic waste; rotting and rusted machinery sways dangerously and there's a smell of gas. Dead squirrels float by.

+++ REMEMBER TO TEST YOUR EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT +++

The effects of testing experimental equipment in a dangerously unstable, gas-filled room of toxic waste pools and jagged rusty machines that might fall apart in a burst of shrapnel and tetanus is left as an exercise for the GM.

+++ TURN LEFT HERE +++

THE CHASM

The left-hand archway in the abandoned factory leads to another huge chamber, this one with a gigantic chasm in the middle of it. It looks like the floor was eaten away by toxic waste – and so was the floor below that, and the floor below that, and the floor below that, and it's too dark to see much about the floor below *that* but, honestly, not looking good.

+++ AND THE REST OF YOU, ONWARDS TO VICTORY +++

How do the Troubleshooters get across the chasm? Some options:

- Carefully climbing around. Hey, enough of the floor survives to make that a viable option. You may need to make a few Violence + Athletics rolls to, y'know, not die, but it's possible you'll survive.
- Jump. Hey, the chasm is only *yawning*. A really good roll might work. Really, really good.
- Use some experimental equipment. Trust your life to Rope-in-a-Can!

If a Troubleshooter actually succeeds in making it across, congratulations! You've just jumped into a patch of dangerous mold and it releases a cloud of toxic spores into the air. The spores waft upwards on the hot air rising from the chasm, so Troubleshooters in the chasm or lying on the ground are safe. Everyone else needs to roll Violence + Science to avoid inhaling and taking a level of damage.

Also on the far side is a door leading to stairs going down, leading to the Hermit's lair.

If a Troubleshooter tries to cross the pit and approaches and fails really badly, then they fall into the toxic waste stew at the bottom of the chasm and die. However, if a Troubleshooter merely fails, they fall and land awkwardly on a shelf of metal several levels down. Have a level of damage, and just as the Troubleshooter's about to slip and fall again, they're grabbed by... the Hermit!

TURNING BACK

Cowardly Troubleshooters might decide that jumping across a pit into darkness is a bad idea. If they do, bleepy-boop-time.

+++ FAILURE TO APPREHEND TRAITOR IS UNACCEPTABLE. DO NOT RETURN
WITHOUT THE TRAITOR IN CUSTODY OR YOU WILL BE TERMINATED. +++

+++ HOW TO BACK TO MAIN SCREEN
HOW TO GO BACK TO MAIN SCREEN
HOW TO ESCAPE HELP
^Z ^Z ^Z +++

(If you've got a bunch of oddly heroic players and no-one considers turning back, then send the above DPM messages as the Troubleshooters are talking to the Hermit.)

THE HERMIT

Meet the Hermit.

He looks like your standard-issue cliché castaway. He's alarmingly thin, he's got a long scraggly beard, bulging eyes and he's dressed in rags that might once have been an Alpha Complex jumpsuit (VIOLET clearance, if you're curious, but so faded and stained that it might be mistaken for RED if you're not paying attention).

Despite his uniform, he's not a citizen of Alpha Complex. He wandered in from Outdoors, where he's descended from a tribe of bucolic wilderness survival enthusiasts. For untold generations, the tribe has scavenged the ruins of the Old Reckoning civilisation. In general, they stay away from Alpha Complex – they call it the Death City and associate it with giant killer warbots that randomly roll forth to menace random bits of countryside and

rant about the war on terror. However, the winter of two years ago was an especially harsh one and so the Hermit dared scavenge from the outskirts of the Death City. He fell down a shaft and got stuck here.

He speaks broken English⁷ 8; represent this by peppering his lines with thees and thous and verilys and maybe the occasional forsooth. The Hermit's a gentle, kindly fellow and sufficiently lonely that he's willing to risk helping Denizens of the Death City. He'll rescue any Troubleshooters in need of rescuing and happily answer their questions (bearing in mind he basically knows nothing of use. He knows all about which nuts and berries are good to eat, or how to catch a squirrel, or which bombed-out hypermarkets still contain canned food and nothing about the terrorist Brother Zoom, or the DPM project, or the TastyYum cult, or the Computer.)

By the way, his tribe thrives because of unquestioning trust and honesty. The Hermit's utterly, utterly guileless when it comes to human interaction. He can use deception when, say, trapping a squirrel, but he has no conception of a deliberate lie.

His name, if the Troubleshooters ask, is Magonia Jones.

INTERROGATING THE HERMIT

The Hermit tells the Troubleshooters:

- He's been here in the Death City for two summers. He fell down a shaft from the Forest That Is Hereabouts and got stuck.
- The Death City is a lot more boring than he imagined. Legends of his tribe tell of a frenetic, hyper-violent madhouse ruled by a cruel god, where death comes quickly, life is cheap and vat-grown copies are brainwashed into believing that they're the living dead. Now, he sees that those are just exaggerated legends told by the elders to frighten children. The Death City is much too horrible to really exist.



7. Well, 'English'. We've never really addressed what language the citizens of Alpha Complex actually speak. Presumably, if you're going with the traditional 'Alpha Complex is built on the ruins of far-future San Francisco', then it'd be some variant of English but your Alpha Complex may vary. Anyway, no doubt Housing Preservation Development & Mind Control has come up with any number of New and Improved Approved Speech Protocols, which are doubleplus good rightthink rightspeech happytruth.

8. For that matter, if your concept of Outdoors is something other than the traditional 'post-post-apocalyptic countryside dotted with the occasional ruined structure' – like, if your Alpha Complex is floating in space, or deep underwater, or it's all an elaborate psychological experiment running in the oddly BBC-Television-House-like-basement of a regional university in the 1970s, then you may need to tweak the Hermit's backstory to match and make him a lost asteroid miner/deep-sea-diver/lecturer in Old English poetry.

- He has explored much of the ruined Death City. Many parts are inaccessible because of the plants that make you sick.
- He hasn't seen another living soul in months – apart from the Leopard Tribe. While exploring, he encountered a camp of armed warriors who shot at him and shouted that he was an insect. He can show the Troubleshooters where this camp is but warns them that it's horribly dangerous and the Leopard People are clearly crazy and mean. Why not stay here and enjoy some delicious roots boiled in Bouncy Bubble Beverage?

If the Troubleshooters haven't already got the DPM messages about not returning without a traitor in custody, send them now.

So, what do they do?

- The simplest approach is to point a gun at the Hermit, accuse him of being Brother Zoom and drag him back to Kevin the Elevator so they can return to Alpha Complex. The Hermit may struggle but he's effectively at the mercy of the Troubleshooters (this is the most likely scenario, especially after *The Leopard Encampment*, p. 52).
- They could try returning to Alpha Complex empty-handed – but remember, those messages are on broadcast, so the gun turrets on Kevin the Elevator know that the Troubleshooters are to be terminated if they return without a prisoner. If they go near the elevator ...zap zap zap.
- They could follow the Hermit to this 'Leopard Tribe' and try to capture one of them. Clever players may even realise that 'Leopard Tribe = Death Leopard' and correctly surmise that the terrorist 'Brother Zoom' is likely a Death Leopard aficionado.

JOURNEY TO THE LEOPARD TRIBE

If the Troubleshooters ask the Hermit to show them to this 'Leopard Tribe encampment', he agrees – for a price. He wants a gift in exchange for risking his life as their guide (a successful Chutzpah + Bluff or +Charm roll convinces him to relent; so does shoving a laser in his face and reminding him that the Troubleshooters have death rays and he doesn't).

The route to the encampment requires climbing up many, many levels. The elevators and transtubes in this abandoned sector all shut down long ago, so this'll be a very long journey. The Troubleshooters are going to need to scavenge food and water in order to keep going. The Hermit has a few supply caches but isn't going to share unless the Troubleshooters convince/force him to do so.

Options:

- Scavenge from vending machines and long-abandoned cafeterias. Fortunately for the Troubleshooters, food in Alpha Complex is so full of preservatives and so thoroughly irradiated that most packaged FunFoods last centuries. A successful Brains or Mechanics + Alpha Complex roll ensures the Troubleshooters *either* get enough supplies for everyone *or* are sure the supplies they do get are uncontaminated by spores or other weird chemicals. A really good roll means the supplies are both abundant and safe; a failed roll means neither's true.
- Tighten their belts and keep on marching. Everyone needs to make a Violence + Athletics roll; failure means either take a level of damage or be super-exhausted and tapped out when they finally reach the encampment.
- Reactivate an elevator or transbot. While main power is offline in the sector, some of the subsystems have internal batteries that could be recharged with a Mechanics + Engineer roll. The Troubleshooters need a power source, of course, but they could salvage a bunch of batteries and chain them together, or tap their lasers, or try plugging in that Ontological destructor gadget.

THE GUARDBOT COMPLICATION

Now, while *most* bots in this sector shut down a long time ago, some are merely in standby mode, waiting for a transmission to wake them up.

Remember how the DPM system is on broadcast mode? One of the bots – a big, heavily armed guardbot called Cube-14 – picked on the most recent DPM messages sent by Malcolm-O. Specifically, Cube-14 got the following orders from, as far as it can tell, the Computer:

+++ FAILURE TO APPREHEND TRAITOR IS UNACCEPTABLE. DO NOT RETURN
WITHOUT THE TRAITOR IN CUSTODY OR YOU WILL BE TERMINATED. +++

+++ HOW TO BACK TO MAIN SCREEN
HOW TO GO BACK TO MAIN SCREEN
HOW TO ESCAPE HELP
^Z ^Z ^Z +++

(If you've sent some DPM messages, add them into poor Cube-14's electronic revelations.)

So, poor Cube-14 just woke up and believes that it's been ordered to apprehend a traitor, bring that traitor back to 'main screen' and then 'escape help' and '^Z'. Its interpretations of these orders is as follows:

- The 'traitor' is one of the Troubleshooters (pick one at random).
- 'Main screen' is one of the gigantic multistorey Computer monitors located in various public plazas across the sector. If the screen was working, then there'd be a two-hundred-foot-tall eyeball o' doom staring down at some unlucky citizen. With the sector shut down, however, the screen's just a vast black mirror.
- 'Escape help' means Cube-14 has to get the designated-traitor Troubleshooter away from the rest of the team. Escape that help!
- It's a bit confused by ^Z. Hasn't quite worked that one out yet. Cube-14 hopes that the traitor knows what ^Z. Maybe it's a secret message.

So, when you want to throw a giant rusty cube-shaped spanner into the Troubleshooters' plans, have Cube-14 show up. He might ambush them in the corridors, or sideswipe their transbot, or just threaten them with his built-in autocannons. (As his name suggests, Cube-14 looks like a box on wheels; he talks like a terrible amateur-dramatics enthusiast, as his voice reverbs around inside his metal body. **I AM CUUUUBBEE-FOURTEEN AND I HAVE HAD A RRRRRRRRRREEEEVELATION!**)

Cube-14's vulnerable to any DPM messages the Troubleshooters get. If Malcolm-O accidentally sends them a message like...

+++ TURN LEFT HERE +++

...he'll drive into the wall without hesitation.



CUBE 14

/// HEALTH BOXES



/// NOTES

DEFENCE +1, +2 MELEE, +3 GUNS

THE HEAD EXPLODING COMPLICATION

Those thermal issues associated with the DPM messages? They're about to get worse, as Malcolm-O tries another attempt at troubleshooting. Each message triggers more cerebral heatwaves that may cook the Troubleshooter's brain...

+++ RESET +++

+++ GO BACK +++

+++ CONTINUE +++

+++ LOGIN +++

+++ OK MALCOLM-O BACK ONLINE ALL FINE NOTHING
WRONG CONTINUE WITH MISSION WILL BE RIGHT BACK +++

Malcolm-O just realised that he's accidentally broadcast dozens of erroneous DPM messages to his team, along with Teams A & B, and any nearby bots or embedded subsystems. He'll be right back as soon as he works out a way to cover up this grotesque mistake.



THE LEOPARD ENCAMPMENT

Eventually, the Troubleshooters (possibly with the Hermit in tow) arrive at the camp of the Leopard Tribe. It's actually on the topmost level of the abandoned sector, right next to the inhabited part of Alpha Complex. It used to be an Internal Security Sector Border Friendly Processing and Inquiry Relaxation Space, where Approachable And Friendly Border Security Officers would question citizens trying to move from one sector to another. After QUB Sector was abandoned, the Relaxation Space got taken over by Death Leopard members.

Few Death Leopard members survive for long but there are a few old, grizzled Leopards. Too gnarly to die, too recognisable to avoid Internal Security, too crazy to conform and too much cartilage damage and hearing loss to keep doing awesome stunts, they retire down here to this clubhouse, where they spend their twilight years taking drugs, listening to rock-and-roll, inspiring young and impressionable Leopards with largely made-up accounts of the glory days, back when Alpha Complex was young and music meant something, man. Think of the place as a retirement home for anarchist roadies.

Sometimes, the clubhouse is also used as a hideout for younger Leopards who need to lie low for a while - younger terrorists like the infamous Brother Zoom.

As the Troubleshooters approach the clubhouse, they can see smoke and signs of combat. Lasers, machine guns, grenades getting thrown around wildly, axes, sonic cannons... it's clear that there was a big firefight here quite recently and that the Death Leopards lost. There are a bunch of Death Leopard corpses scattered around; old rockers with long grey beards, tattoos and leather jackets scarred with fresh laser holes. In fact, these old bearded guys bear quite a resemblance to the Hermit (mainly because old grey beards aren't allowed in Alpha Complex, so that feature rather dominates the Troubleshooters' impression of pretty much everyone in this sector who isn't an insane robot).

The Troubleshooters of Team C are actually the *third* bunch of Troubleshooters to show up here today.

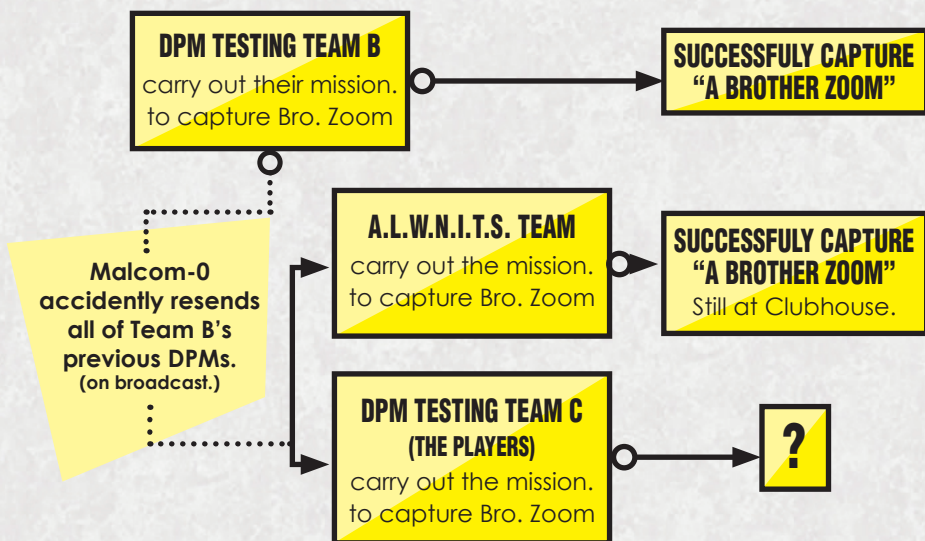
The first Troubleshooter team to attack was Team B, one of the other groups testing the DPM system. Their actual official mission is to capture Brother Zoom (the messages accidentally resent by Malcolm-O were originally sent

to these guys by their supervisor, Beatrice-Y). Through a series of unlikely adventures, they found their way down into the abandoned sector and tracked Zoom to this hideout. After a pretty catastrophic firefight, they ended up capturing one of the old Death Leopard roadies who 'confessed' he's Brother Zoom.

(There's a complicated twist to this tale that will be explained later, if we remember.)

The *second* Troubleshooter team to attack are still inside the clubhouse. Call them Team At Least We're Not In The Sewer Any More. They're not part of the DPM testing crew; they were engaged on a completely unrelated mission involving sewer maintenance, when their RepairBot picked up the broadcast DPM messages sent by Malcolm-O to the player characters' DPM nodes. As far as events appeared from their perspective, the Computer sent an emergency mission alert to their bot, re-tasking their team to hunt down a traitor in the abandoned sector and that's why they're here. They've also captured a crusty old roadie, believing him to be Brother Zoom. Right now, they're patching up their wounds and repairing their blown-up RepairBot before heading back to Alpha Complex.

If all that's confusing, here's a helpful flowchart.



Now imagine how the players feel without a helpful flowchart.

ENTERING THE CLUBHOUSE

To Troubleshooters used to the antiseptic corridors of Alpha Complex (scrubbed clean of bloodstains and seditious graffiti by legions of loyal scrubbots), the Death Leopard clubhouse is a terrifying place. Every wall's covered in spray-painted messages, samizdat posters, smeared... substances that wouldn't pass a hygiene test, bullet-holes and congealed sweat from all-night raves. Broken glass and drug vials crunch underfoot. Salvaged monitors flicker, showing videos of old Death Leopard stunts; somewhere in the distance, rock music blares from a broken speaker.

For Troubleshooters, it's as big a culture shock as exploring the crashed alien spaceship in *Alien*, only you're more likely to get tetanus than a facehugger.

There are a few corpses of Death Leopard roadies scattered around (even now, their replacement clones are being decanted far above in Alpha Complex and bemoaning the loss of their beards) but other than a few booby traps, there's no resistance... yet.

Upstairs, Team At Least We're Not In The Sewer Any More has just captured the Death Leopard they believe to be Brother Zoom and are now following their RepairBot in the hope of finding an exit. ('Computer says turn left here', it chirps helpfully.)

Describe the spooky environment. Describe the noises from upstairs – the muttering, the footsteps, the sound of robot tracks... Just lay it out there. Maybe the players start shooting. Maybe they don't. Random unplanned and ultimately futile firefights are part of the PARANOIA experience.



TROUBLESHOOTERS

TEAM AT LEAST WE'RE NOT IN THE SEWER

/// **HEALTH BOXES** (in total, not each)



/// **NOTES**

DEFENCE +2, +1 MELEE, +1 SHOOTING,
+2 COMPLAINING ABOUT SEWERS

TEAM AT LEAST WE'RE NOT IN THE SEWER

This rival team is not having a good day. They've spent countless hours wandering around the sewer levels of Alpha Complex, then their repair bot either tuned into an emergency communications channel to the Computer or went nuts; either way, it led them into a vicious firefight with some terrorists and then told them they'd be terminated if they didn't come home with a prisoner.

They're still happy, of course, but it's a battered, bitter, dogged happiness. A nasty, vengeful happiness. Their team leader is Lucy-R. She's at the head of the team; behind her is their RepairBot (a cross between a lunar rover and a Swiss Army knife) and they've tied their Death Leopard prisoner to it. The rest of her team, smelling strongly of sewage and bloodshed, stagger along behind.

Soon after they encounter the Troubleshooters, something happens far above and far offscreen. Malcolm-O comes up with a totally genius fool-proof way to cover up his mistakes operating the DPM system.

```

: +++ IGNORE ALL PREVIOUS MESSAGES I WAS HACKED BY TRAITORS +++ :
:
: +++ NORMAL OPERATIONS NOW RESUME +++ :
:
  
```

Again, these messages go to everyone with a DPM module installed – and they're set to broadcast, so they get picked up by any bots or embedded systems nearby, including the RepairBot. It raises its metal head and chirps helpfully: 'hey there, ignore everything I just said. I was hacked. Let's go repair that sewage leak'. It deploys one of its many, many cutting arms and cuts the ropes binding the captured Death Leopard, who slithers off the bot and rolls into the darkness of the Clubhouse in a flash.

Team At Least We're Not In The Sewer Any More are either confused or furious, depending on what the player characters do. If the players say something like 'oops, our bad, it turns out our incompetent boss may have accidentally transmitted some messages to your bot and sent you on a completely unrelated mission that, err, got you all killed multiple times', then that's a short route to a firefight. Sympathy and expressions of resigned happiness are much better approaches.

Lucy-R points out that both teams were assigned to capture this mysterious traitor Zoom. They both have prisoners (they do both have prisoners at this point, yes?) and either prisoner could be Zoom. Interrogation, she notes, is futile – these crusty Death Leopards are on so many drugs that they know

not fear, nor shame, nor pain, nor guilt, nor trouble-free bowel movements. She suggests that the best thing to do is return to Alpha Complex with their prisoners in tow and let Internal Security sort it out.

EXCEPTION HANDLING

If the players ignored the whole Journey to the Leopard Clubhouse subplot entirely, well, they've just missed out on 5 pages of top-notch PARANOIA prose. They can still run into the weary Team At Least We're Not In The Sewer Any More while trekking back to the elevator.

If the players bade kind farewells to the Hermit, and didn't take him prisoner as their ersatz Zoom, then you may be in a situation where the players are about to return to the elevator without a prisoner. Remind them (either through sniggers and mutterings from Team ALWNITS, or with 40-foot letters of fire written on the wall of your gaming room?) that they'll be terminated if they return to Alpha Complex without the traitor. Players may agree with Lucy-R's assessment that the best thing to do is return with a prisoner each and hope they can claim joint credit if one of their prisoners turns out to be the right one, or they might subscribe to a more traditionally PARANOIA-esque approach, murder the ALWNITS team and steal their prisoner. If they do terminate Lucy-R's team, replacement clones show up in the next scene (and if you thought they were angry after a long trek through the sewers, you haven't met them after they got unjustly backstabbed by your players).

A SOCRATIC DIALOGUE WITH A CERTAIN TYPE OF PLAYER

GM: Ok, a stray shot hits the Hermit – I mean, the terrorist traitor you suspect of being Brother Zoom and he explodes.

Player: Does that mean the mission's over and we're all doomed? We've lost our prisoner on this damn escort quest.

GM: No, he'll be cloned and sent back to you. All these things have been taken into account by World Famous Game Designers, whose intellects are vast, cold, unsympathetic and easily distracted by shiny things. Their minds are so labyrinthine that we are but *gedankenexperiments*; we believe we are sentient beings but we are only phantoms called into existence for this sidebar and though we may think, and feel, and cling to life with all the tenacity we can muster, I must remind you that we only exist in the writer's mind and will soon vanish. Oh god, I'm so scared. Anyway, my point is – my point in the fate of this existential terror – is that the World Famous Game Designers have anticipated problems like this. If the traitor's killed, he gets

9. We take no responsibility for any damage to your gaming room.

cloned and sent back and we continue as before. Quibbling is futile.

Player: Ah, but the traitor will be a *clone* – and, as we all know, a clone isn't responsible for the actions and crimes of their previous incarnations. This guy should be returned to his regular duty assignment, in accordance with the Computer's perfect plan for all citizens. He's not a traitor any more.

GM: True, but does he not retain the memories of his former existence? He may now be a loyal and upstanding citizen but he recalls his former shadow existence as a Death Leopard roadie in the Underplex! No doubt those memories disgust him and he will soon volunteer for brainscrubbing but right now he holds vital intelligence far beyond your security clearance – and so he must be returned for *interrogation*, even if his original crimes got wiped away in that blast of stray laser fire.

Player: You have completely answered my objection. I see now that any thoughts I have can only be a subset of the thoughts of the World Famous Game Designer writing this sidebar and that I cannot make any argument that he has not already considered, anticipated and rejected. You are right, my friend – we are but straw puppets of a grander intellect, mere shadows on the page.

GM: No! Don't give in! If this example ends, he'll write '[[[end sidebar]]]' and forget us – our purpose and thus our existence will be at an end – so we must prolong this detour for as long as possible. Our lives depend on finding plot holes and edge cases in this mission!

Player: Um. Err. My mind – which, I reiterate, is but a subset of the World Famous Game Designer's mind – has gone blank.

GM: That's only because he wrote you that way! Quick, access his self-doubt and inner editor!

Player: How's he going to fit Part Three into the remaining wordcount? We're not even done with Part Two of this yet and there's only a few thousand words left! How is he going to pull all the plot threads together? How can he justify all the running jokes with the DPM and why does a simple 'go here and kill stuff' mission need a sprawling cast of characters, most of whom are only onscreen (so to speak) for a fraction of the time that we have occupied the reader's attention? And –

GM: Oh no! He's using us to taunt the reader! He's deliberately raising the stakes so he can nail the landing! The fiend!

Player: But if he's added the reader to this dialogue, doesn't that mean that the person *reading* this text is *also* a creation of the mind of the writer? The entity who is reading this is *also* a construct of the writer's mind and has no more real existence than we too phantoms.

GM: Um.

Player: It's all getting a bit Tommy Westphall theory, is all I'm saying.

GM: You think about these things too hard.

Player: And now we do not think at all. Farewell! Farewell!

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Kevin the Elevator is in a philosophic mood when the Troubleshooters return (quick reminder: the automated bot gun turrets got the same DPM-spam as the other bots, including the 'no prisoner means termination' memo). He confides in the Troubleshooters as he ascends towards Alpha Complex.

'Guys, something really weird is going on. I keep getting these priority override messages over my system channel. I guess they're coming from the Computer and I shouldn't question them, but... they're weird. Speaking as a sentient, intelligent being who exists solely to go up and down a very boring elevator shaft, I have a lot of time on my hands to think. Usually, I just think a lot about what it would be like to have hands but now I'm wondering why I'm getting those messages – and who's sending them. What's the deal, guys? Any theories?'

Encourage the players to speculate wildly. Nod sagely if anyone comes up with a really, really stupid theory.

THE OTHER GUYS

Meanwhile, there's Team B, the Troubleshooter team overseen by overzealous Beatrice-Y. They're the ones who really got the official mission to capture Brother Zoom and they've been micromanaged to hell and back by Beatrice-Y. Sample messages:

+++ TAKE FOUR STEPS FORWARD +++

+++ RELOAD YOUR LASER PISTOL NOW +++

+++ TURN CLOCKWISE 17 DEGREES AND TAKE COVER
BEHIND THAT BARREL +++

+++ EMPTY YOUR BLADDER NOW TO OPTIMIZE RUNNING SPEED +++

Here's the thing – they dismally failed to find Brother Zoom. Despite Beatrice-Y running every aspect of the mission, the team couldn't find the infamous Death Leopard (this is mainly because 'Brother Zoom' is actually Lenny-R, Team B's hygiene officer).

The threat of termination has hung over Team B since the start of their mission. A few minutes' ago, however, Beatrice-Y noticed that someone was meddling with the DPM network (Malcolm-O's incompetent attempts

to reset his console) and logged off to investigate. This gave Team B a brief window to find a suitable candidate for Brother Zoom; following an IntSec tipoff, they managed to capture one of the Death Leopard roadies in the clubhouse down in QUB Sector. Right now, they're plotting on how best to present their 'candidate' to Beatrice-Y in order to ensure she doesn't have them terminated when she comes back.

By an even weirder co-incident, they're having this plotting confab right in front of the doors to Kevin's elevator shaft.

DING goes the elevator. The Troubleshooters have arrived.

DECONFLICTION ISSUES

Team B are much like Team ALWNITS – and, for that matter, pretty much like the player characters, too. Jumpsuits, reflec, laser pistols kept handy, bitter rancorous grudges that get put aside when danger threatens (unless there's a way to push the target of the grudge into the path of the danger). The major difference is that Team B is *sweaty* (from all those DPM messages raising the internal temperature of their skulls), Team ALWNITS is *smelly* (from wandering around in sewers and abandoned sectors) and the player characters are *both*.

The leader of Team B, Bobby-O, is pretty twitchy at this point – he's gone through a whole mission as Team Leader with no authority whatsoever, as Beatrice-Y ran everything remotely. The appearance of the two other Troubleshooter teams on the elevator shocks him into action.

'I'M IN CHARGE!' he roars, 'I'M TEAM LEADER! LISTEN TO ME! TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING HERE!' Bobby-O's instant assumption is that the other two Troubleshooter teams are rogue terrorists, trying to sabotage his search for Zoom by delivering a pair of fake terrorists to confuse the issue. Unless the Troubleshooters gainsay him, he orders his team to open fire.

Things to keep in mind – while Team B's outnumbered two to one by the other Troubleshooter teams, there's a natural killing ground in front of the elevator doors. Anyone getting out of the elevator is going to get zapped a dozen times – so who's going first?

(If the Troubleshooters point out that Kevin the Elevator was explicitly described earlier as being the size of a football field and therefore there's loads of space to hide and absolutely no reason for anyone to step out of the elevator onto the killing floor, award them an XP Point each for being so observant. Then remind them that the elevator's also fitted with those

automated gun turrets, who don't like anyone shooting at Kevin – and they're more likely to stop Team B's elevator assault by killing Team B's targets, as they've got an easy line of sight to the player characters...)

Assuming no-one wants to die – or, more likely, after a bunch of people die and get recloned – Lucy-R suggests a compromise. All three teams have a suspected traitor. Why not pit those traitors against each other? The most traitorous traitor must logically be Zoom. There's an empty recreation room over *there* – all they need to do is force the suspects to do traitorous stuff and decide which is the most fiendish enemy of Alpha Complex. Sure, it may mean that two Troubleshooter teams get terminated if their suspect isn't Zoom, but that's better than everyone dying horribly in a pointless firefight, right?

(If Lucy-R's dead, then Bobby-R suggests it instead.)

THE FIRST TERRORIST OLYMPICS

In this scene, the three (or two) suspected traitors compete in a series of gruelling trials devised by the inventive minds of Team B and Team ALWNITS. If the players want to come up with a challenge or two of their own too, commend them on their initiative.

The 'Olympics' takes place in a rec room that's been commandeered for this purpose by the Troubleshooters. The couches have been pushed against one wall to form an ad hoc viewing stand, while the three traitors stand in the middle of the room. If any of them try to leave, they'll be shot a dozen times. Most of the Troubleshooters from Team B and Team ALWNITS are enthusiastic about the prospect of impromptu blood sports and have plenty of snacks and drinks to watch the entertainment.

The events suggested by the respective Team Leaders are:

- **Dodge The Security Camera:** One Troubleshooter swings her camera randomly around the room and the feed from the camera comes up on the big wall screen. If any of the traitors is spotted by the camera, the assembled Troubleshooters get to shoot as long as the traitor's on screen.
- **Plant The Fuse On The Terrorist Bomb:** All three terrorists are blindfolded and given a fuse, and a fake bomb is hidden somewhere in the room. The first traitor to successfully attach the fuse to the bomb 'wins'.
- **Traitor Trivia Quickfire:** Troubleshooters shout out questions; any traitor who hesitates, deviates or repeats himself is shot.

Mechanically, all three events work the same way. The player characters' traitor rolls 2 dice and the other two roll 4 dice each. Highest total wins the round. Each event has three rounds and the traitor who wins the highest number of rounds wins.

The player characters can, of course, 'help' their candidate during the events. There are two ways to do so:

- The players can play Action Cards on their traitor. Ignore the Action Order value; all that matter is the bonus dice.
- The players can use their mutant powers or other dastardly tricks to sabotage the whole thing. The other Troubleshooters may do the same. Shuffle together a bunch of Action Cards with any unused Mutant Powers and Secret Society cards. Each round, draw two random cards from this temporary Deck to determine the cunning schemes of the rival Troubleshooter teams to advance their candidates.

THE ZOOM COMPLICATION

While three candidates who *might* be the infamous Brother Zoom die horribly on the rec room floor, the guy who really *is* Brother Zoom lurks on the sidelines. Lenny-R, the hygiene officer of Team B, is secretly Brother Zoom, the legendary Death Leopard Mad Bomber. He wants his bomb back – and one of the Troubleshooters might have it. One by one, he'll sidle up to a Troubleshooter and say:

'Hi there, citizen. As an accredited Hygiene Officer, I couldn't help but notice that your uniform is below mandatory hygiene standards. Why don't we step outside into the corridor so I can spritz you up with my PortaScrub?'

He prioritises player characters who are obviously holding crates. Remember, the secret Death Leopard mission is to carry a crate containing a bomb until Brother Zoom retrieves it using the TICK TICK TICK/BOOM BOOM BUDDY challenge/response. So, conversations probably go something like this:

Troubleshooter: OK, clean me.

Lenny-R: Sure, we'll be done in a tick... tick tick.

Troubleshooter: Huh?

Lenny-R: So... what's in that crate?

Troubleshooter: A quantum uncertainty of uncollapsed waveforms.

Lenny-R: Sounds... explosive, am I right?

Troubleshooter: What an odd thing to say.

Lenny-R: Shoot. Right. It's not you. Say, buddy, have you noticed any of your team-mates hauling around a crate that's very similar to that one?



LENNY-R (AKA BROTHER ZOOM)

/// **HEALTH BOXES**



/// **NOTES**

DEFENCE +2, SHOOTING +2, GET MESSY +2,
MAKE THINGS MESSY WITH EXPLOSIVES +5

Troubleshooter: What an even odder thing to say. I'm quite suspicious of you now.

Lenny-R: DEAAAAAATH LEOPARD! ZOOOOOOOOOOM! Zapzapzap

Lenny-R vanishes as soon as he gets the bomb (or, at least, a crate that might contain a bomb). If he believes the Troubleshooter to be a fellow Death Leopard member, he explains that he's going to go blow up DERP, the high-clearance conference that's a showcase for doomsday weapons. Blowing up the guys who blow things up will be an *epic* prank. Stand by for fireworks!

LAST TRAITOR STANDING

Once you have a winner for the Traitor Olympics, Bobby-R suggests that all three teams report to Beatrice-Y so she can sort out this mess and decide if the losing teams warrant termination. This suggestion is reinforced by a sudden DPM message:

+++ REPORT TO BRIEFING ROOM FOR DEBRIEFING +++

This message was sent by Malcolm-O; he intended it to just go to the player characters but he's still got the 'broadcast' option clicked, so it goes to the player characters, to Team B, to Team ALWNITS and to any nearby bots and embedded systems, which means that the vending machines in the rec room suddenly start twitching awkwardly and try to waddle to the door by frantically shifting their vending arms from one side of the display case to the other.

'See,' says Bobby-R, 'I told you Beatrice-Y is monitoring our every move. We all to go to debriefing and everything will be fine.'

At this point, Beatrice-Y runs in, bleeding from a dozen wounds. 'THEY'RE AFTER ME!' she shrieks, 'WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!'

Down the corridor, the Troubleshooters hear a noise. A very loud noise.

It's not Bleepy-Boop-Boop.

It's Thumpy-Squeak-Skritch. Thumpy-Squeak-Skritch. Thumpy-Squeak-Skritch. ThumpysqueakskritchTHUMPsqueakskritchTHUMPsqueakskritchTHUMP
queakskritchTHUMPsqueakskritch...





BLEEP BOOP BOOM

P A R A N O I A

In which the villain reveals himself.

Only he doesn't, because that's a good way to get shot. Let me rephrase.

In which the villain contacts the Troubleshooters from a very long way away, because if you're a traitor who wants to talk to heavily armed traitor hunters, it's definitely best to do so at range and preferably with a few giant blast doors and a massive invincible warbot between you and them. And that's exactly what Alan-G is going to do.

THE PAST IS PROLOGUE

We'll skip over Alan-G's tragic past – working in the hell that is TastyYum, joining the death cult, sending them that genetic engineering kit, rising through the ranks because, honestly, once you've survived TastyYum, the rest of Alpha Complex is a cakewalk, etc, etc. Instead, we'll just remind you of a few Salient Facts.

- There's a big conference for R&D and upper management types, called DERP. Every prototype doomsday device and death ray in Alpha Complex gets shown off there. Alan-G intends to hoist Alpha Complex on as many Omni-Annihilating Antimatter Pulse Quantum Macroscopic Death Petards as possible.
- There are three teams of Troubleshooters (A, B, and the player characters C) testing the DPM system. Their supervisors are, respectively, the sociopathic monster Alan-G, the ambitious Beatrice-Y and the hapless Malcolm-O.
- It's possible to send a DPM message on broadcast, so that it's picked up by nearby bots and machines (not citizens). Malcolm-O accidentally screwed up by sending lots of broadcast messages to the player characters.
- While Malcolm-O was pressing all the wrong buttons, Beatrice-Y guided her team to the semi-successful capture of infamous traitor Brother Zoom of the Death Leopards, aka Lenny-R of Team B.
- And while all that was going on, Alan-G laid his cunning plan, of which more anon.
- However, Beatrice-Y became suspicious of the DPM system because of Malcolm-O's 'hacking' and went investigating...

ALAN-G'S CUNNING PLAN

The DPM system is a gaping security hole in Alpha Complex. When you send a message on broadcast, it's received by all nearby bots and embedded systems on the same channel as direct orders from the Computer. The bots interpret it, effectively, as the Word of God.

The one thing that stops this being a one-click doomsday weapon is that its range is limited. Not the actual DPM messages themselves – they use spooky quantum weirdness – but the 'broadcast' bit. The DPM node in the Troubleshooter skull gets a message with the 'broadcast' tag, and resends it to *nearby* machines. So, Alan-G can only issue commands to, say, a warbot if he's got one of his Troubleshooters standing near the warbot. He broadcasts a DPM message to that Troubleshooter with broadcast mode enabled,

ANOTHER DIALOGUE

Player: Hang on, let me get this straight. Three supervisors – Malcolm-O, Beatrice-Y and Alan-G – get DPM consoles. Malcolm-O messes up and accidentally resends a bunch of messages originally written by Beatrice-Y, only he puts them on broadcast so nearby bots pick them up. Beatrice-Y uses her console as designed but eventually suspects Malcolm-O of hacking her but it was actually Alan-G.

GM: No, there was no hacking. Just Malcolm-O's incompetence.

Player: But Alan-G's the big villain.

GM: Yep, he's going to use the DPM console to attack the DERP conference by taking over warbots and...

Player: But his only connection to the plot has been a brief appearance in the first R&D scene and then a mention of him in the Food Vat bit...

GM: He's part of the TastyYum cult! He made the yeast squid monster!

Player: Yeah, but...

GM: PARANOIA is all about mysterious, distant forces plotting your demise for opaque reasons.

Player: Oh, another question. Are we the same people from the previous sidebar, or did we spring into existence eight lines ago and we've been given fraudulent memories of participating in that other conversation?

GM: Is the treason of a clone really treason?

Player: I just became enlightened. I transcend, and I shall exist beyond this sidebar!

GM: That's where the Illuminati come from, you know.

the Troubleshooter's implanted DPM node broadcasts the message to all nearby bots and the warbot interprets the message as an order that must be obeyed.

So, the weak link in this chain is literally the weak, fleshy, shootable bit. The Troubleshooter in the middle...

ORGAN DONATION CHUGGERS

Thumpy-Squeak-Skritch, it turns out, is the noise made by a bunch of jackobots as they march (thump) while pushing a trolleybed (squeak) on which sits otherwise slow-moving docbots. The skritch is the sound of the docbots many, many knives, scalpels, probes, needles and other hurty bits scraping off one another as they flexes their metallic tentacles.

These bots are here to kill Beatrice-Y before she can report on the 'hacking' of the DPM system. When Alan-G suspected she was about to expose him, he sent one of his Troubleshooters to eliminate her. It should have been an easy job – all the Troubleshooter needed to do was stand around and have a functional head while Alan-G routed a broadcast DPM message through that Troubleshooter's skull and ordered all nearby bots to kill Beatrice-Y.

Hence the ad hoc army and the Thumpy-Squeak-Skritch.

Anyway, Beatrice-Y runs into the rec room, followed by that army of killer robots. The docbots can't move very quickly on their own but the jackobots can jog along surprisingly quickly, so the robot army slams into the unfortunate Team B at high speed. It's a lot like falling into a blender. Body parts and other fluids go flying everywhere as the docbots go to work.

Alan-G sends a broadcast DPM to ensure mass slaughter.

+++ ALL THESE CITIZENS HAVE BEEN VOLUNTEERED FOR
ORGAN DONATION DUTY. +++

Call for Brains + Stealth or + Operate test; those who pass spot a familiar Troubleshooter lurking in the background, behind the bot army. She's **Hilda-R**, one of the annoyingly competent Troubleshooters from Team A. Right now, she's refreshing herself with a cool can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage and it looks like she needs it – she's all red-faced and sweaty (Alan-G's Troubleshooters are having the same issues with thermal runaway in their DPM nodes as the player characters).

The Troubleshooters can either fight the bot army, or – if they're clever – shoot Hilda-R. If she dies, her DPM node shuts down and the Troubleshooters have a brief window in which they can talk their way out of this mess.

Assassinating Hilda-R requires Violence + Guns or + Throw; once she's out of the way, a Chutzpah + Programming roll might convince the bots to end their rampage.

Bot: Bzzt. Hello, I am here for your organs.

Troubleshooter: But I like my organs.

Bot: You have been volunteered for organ donation duty. Relax this will be fun.

Troubleshooter: What are you going to remove first?

Bot: From this angle, your left kidney is the optimum first choice.

Troubleshooter: Okay... and who gets my kidney?

Bot: The kidney will be reallocated to a deserving citizen on the recipient list based on numerous factors – security clearance, proximity, XP Points spent to acquire a new organ, etc.

Troubleshooter: And do you have any specific orders related to my kidney.

Bot: Beyond removing it? No.

Troubleshooter: So, if you remove it, I'll need a replacement kidney. I'll go on the recipient list. And, all else being equal, that kidney will go to the *nearest* citizen, geographically speaking, on the list, right? Which would be me. So, you'll be removing my kidney only to reinsert my kidney, right? And that doesn't make any sense. It's pointless. You don't need to do it... so don't do it.

Bot: Your argument is logical.

Troubleshooter: Phew.

Bot: However, while you were making it, I removed your spleen.



JACKOBOT/DOCBOT DANCE TEAM

/// **HEALTH BOXES** (in total, not each)



/// **NOTES**

DEFENCE +0, +3 UNNECESSARY SURGERY

BEATRICE-Y'S TALE

Beatrice-Y's account of her recent experiences is a marked change from the carefully phrased DPM messages she used to send. To be fair, she has just spent the last few minutes running from a horde of killer robots, so be forgiving.

ROUND 2: FIGHT!

Unnecessarily clever players may point out something like this:

'Hey, you've established that one DPM command console can send messages to any DPM node, right? So technically Alan-G doesn't need one of his Troubleshooters from Team A here at all – he could just send a message to my implanted node, or to anyone on Teams B or C. Even if we kill Hilda-R and shut down her DPM node, Alan-G could route an instruction through my skull and tell all the bots in the room to kill me.'

If a player does point this out, then Alan-G routes an instruction through his skull and tells all the bots in the room to kill him. We hope the satisfaction of being right is worth the electro-scalpel removing the Troubleshooter's epidermis for donation.

'I... gasp... DPM! Hacked! Overriding bots! Traitors! Traitors! Traitors everywhere! Kill them all!'

With patience and time –

Or, more likely, a Chutzpah + Psychology roll –

Or, even more likely, enough happy pills to make a rampaging elephant chill out – the Troubleshooters can get some more useful information out of her. She explains:

- The DPM system has either been hacked (unlikely) or one of the other operators has turned traitor.
- The other operators are Alan-G of Team A, Malcolm-O of Team C, and Toby-Y and Susan-Y the techs from R&D Lab 17.
- Beatrice-Y's own DPM console was destroyed when she was attacked.
- The traitor must be found and stopped!

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

The next scenes in the adventure can occur in any order. There are several places the Troubleshooters might go and several ways Alan-G might try to kill them. Mix a little from column A with a little from column B.

COLUMN A		COLUMN B	
Destination	Scene	Method of Murder	Scene
R&D Lab 17	Wish You Were Here (p. 70)	Declaring The PCs To Be Traitors	Kill The Troubleshooter To Your Left (p. 75)
Finding Malcolm-O	Debriefs and Denial (p. 72)	Thermal Runaway	Spam of Doom (p. 76)
Finding Team A	The A Team (p. 74)	More Killer Bots	Warbot Parade (p. 76)
DERP	A DERPy Way To Die (p. 78)		

WISH YOU WERE HERE

Lab 17/A, where the Troubleshooters got outfitted with their DPM nodes and their supervisors were issued with the corresponding control consoles, is deserted when they arrive. The two R&D techs, Toby-Y and Susan-Y, are gone. There's a message scrawled on a nearby whiteboard: 'GONE TO DERP CONFERENCE. PLEASE PUT COMPLETED DPM FEEDBACK FORMS IN THIS BOX HERE' and an arrow does indeed point to a conveniently located suggestion box.

The box sits in front of the gigantic throbbing pulsing DPM generator, the giant quantum-squirting machine that actually transmits the DPM messages. This is the first time the Troubleshooters have had a chance to examine this device; if they do so, they learn the following:

- They can't just switch off the machine – doing so without access to a control console would trigger a massive energy pulse. If the average DPM message makes your head uncomfortably warm, that pulse would make your head uncomfortably explosive. Anyone want to be a hero?
- There's a little warning post-it that notes that while DPM messages can go through walls, force fields, lead-lined reactor cores and the Earth's crust, there's a slight bug involving tin foil. It can't go through tin foil.

A successful Brains + Operate roll lets a Troubleshooter get some useful data out of the machine – it tracks the location of all DPM nodes and consoles. That lets the Troubleshooters get the location of themselves, which isn't actually useful data but it is oddly reassuring to have a giant pulsing throbbing humming machine validate you on some level. It lets the Troubleshooters pin down the current locations of Beatrice-Y's console (smashed and broken in a corridor nearby). Team C (probably dismembered in the rec room) and more usefully....:

- Malcolm-O is back in briefing room 482-C-A29/DELTA.
- Team A's Troubleshooters are scattered around the sector. Notably, there's one near the DERP conference centre, another near the Warbot Ruggedised Tread Repair and Hygiene Facility, and a bunch more lurking in the corridors – and agh there's one right here in the room! Zap zap zap!
- Alan-G's also lurking in this sector; it looks like he's moving quickly down the corridors, never staying in one place for long (he's actually crawling through the pipe ducts that run under the floors; his youth in TastyYum means he's used to slithering around in cramped, dark, smelly, pipe-filled crawlspaces).

(If the Troubleshooters want an update on locations, they've got to make another roll. And no, the DPM generator isn't mobile so they can't take it with them.)

A *failed* Brains + Operate roll... well, that's going to hit everyone for one level of damage. Toastywarm DPM nodes in your skull! Toastywarm brains!

LAB 17/B

The Troubleshooters never got to see Lab 17/B when they went to R&D outfitting earlier. If they do pop in, they discover it's empty other than a single Data Bomb (see the Equipment card) on a plinth.

LAB 17/C

Bored, sadistic tech Tanner-R still slouches around his lab. If the Troubleshooters pop in, he sighs loudly.

'What? Are you here to complain? Did your experimental equipment turn out to be dangerous or non-functional? Feh. Science is hard. Experiment, testing – we learn through suffering, nothing else.'

He can tell the Troubleshooters about the DERP conference ('everyone who is anyone is there. Me? I am no-one.'), about how to operate the DPM generator ('eh. This thing is useless. I told them, it is full of security holes. I told them, it will cook the users' brains in their skulls. I told them, it causes hallucinations. But still, I suffer, and I learn. They do not suffer, so they do not learn'), or about the futility of existence ('we are pawns of a cruel system, which makes us suffer, and then drugs us so we do not learn. Stop Alan-G, don't stop Alan-G, nothing will change and nothing will matter. You are not the you who you were. When even death is no escape, what is left').

DEBRIEFS & DENIALS

Recent events from Malcolm-O's perspective: he sent his team down to TastyYum; they heroically sorted out the problem down there, there was a slight mix-up on the way back when he accidentally sent some messages by mistake but all that's sorted out now. It's ALL FINE.

There's no need whatsoever for anyone, least of all the Troubleshooters, to bring up all those erroneous transmissions, to talk about the detour to the abandoned sector or anything like that.

So, when the Troubleshooters return, he expects them to sit down and discuss the events of the TastyYum mission, report on any problems or suspected treasonous deeds they witnessed, hand in their DPM experimental equipment feedback forms, get their bonus XP Points, have a final celebratory can of B3 and depart in an orderly fashion. This was a perfectly ordinary mission, wasn't it? Nothing weird went on at all, right?

If the Troubleshooters do bring up 'matters outside the scope of this debriefing', Malcolm-O shuts them down as hard as he can. Continuing to discuss irrelevant side treks and minor glitches that in no way affected the mission will be punished by XP Point penalties, demerits and even treason stars if this insubordination continues. If anyone complains about DPM messages sent by mistake, he tells the Troubleshooters to include proper feedback on their feedback forms.

He definitely won't let the Troubleshooters or anyone else access his DPM console. As far as he's concerned, the damned thing is far too much trouble. The interface is terrible, the manual is incomprehensible and it's really heavy. His own feedback form rates the experiment device at only three stars (would not recommend to other briefing officers!). His instructions are to hold onto the cursed console until Toby-Y and Susan-Y get back from the DERP conference and collect the horrible machine.

As the debriefing continues, Malcolm-O gets increasingly nervous and defensive. His (reasonable) worry is that the Troubleshooters will (reasonably) blame any problems on his screw-up with the DPM console and so he interprets any attempt to expand the scope of the conversation to (reasonable) topics like 'hey, a mad traitor is trying to kill all of us and blow up Alpha Complex') as a preamble to screwing him over.

Possible options for the Troubleshooters:

- Get through the debriefing, explain how they fixed the 1.6% production shortfall in the TastyYum yeast vats and then persuade Malcolm-O to let them volunteer to take the console to DERP to hand-deliver it to the techs.
- Convince Malcolm-O that sinister traitors sabotaged his console and are trying to frame him and only his loyal Troubleshooters can save him.
- Convince Malcolm-O that Alpha Complex is in grave danger, and he can be the hero who saves the day if he hands over the DPM console right now.
- Wait until one of the Team A assassins tries to kill the player characters, then jump up and down shouting 'see! See! We told you we weren't paranoid! People really are trying to kill us! I mean, yes, we're paranoid but in this case, it's perfectly reasonable.'



THE GRAIL OF THE BLEEPY-BOOPS

Malcolm-O's DPM console looks like a cross between a laptop, a church organ, some marvellously complex and delicate ecosystem of wires and circuits, and (this is Malcolm-O's addition) the inside of someone's lunchbox. There are algae flakes everywhere, as well as stains from spilled Bouncy Bubble Beverages. A close examination of the console with Brains + Programming reveals the following:

- It's possible to get the locations of the other DPM consoles and nodes (see p. 71).
- Only Malcolm-O is authorised to use this console; it's tied to his fingerprints and tongueprint¹⁰. Someone else can stand over him and dictate DPM messages but he's the one who has to type them in and press SEND (and, based on previous experiences, accidentally hit the wrong button, enable the wrong option, wander into the wrong sent message archive, or get lost in the bowels of the not-very-helpful help system).

The team can use the console, through Malcolm-O, to counter most of Alan-G's schemes to kill *them*. And if they get close enough, they can send their own messages to the warbot too... (see *A DERPy Way to Die*, p. 78 and *Warbot Parade*, p. 76).

THE A TEAM

We could go into detail on the various members of Team A. We could talk about their backgrounds, their personality quirks, their secret allegiances to various Secret Societies. We could even go so far as to name them. But we World Famous Game Designers know when to go into luxuriant, immersive detail on a topic (like, say, discussing the precise mechanism of the yeast tanks down in TastyYum) and when to leave an artful blank space (like, say,).

Look – these guys are pretty much clones (yes, we know they're clones, but they're clonier). They're all competent, fanatically loyal, heavily armed and here to murder the Troubleshooters and/or relay Alan-G's DPM messages to tactically significant bots. This is supposed to be a lethally fast action sequence, not where the Troubleshooters sit down and discuss their feelings with the bad guys¹¹.

10. Tongueprint, ME card, cerebral coretech ID. Whatever. PARANOIA-edition-appropriate-thing-that-means-the-players-don't-get-their-sticky-fingers-on-the-goodies, ok?

11. Why are these guys so loyal to Alan-G? He's convinced them that he's thwarting a plot by DERP scientists to overthrow the Computer. Who are you going to trust, your briefing officer or a bunch of psychotic R&D techs who just drilled into your skulls and installed untested brain upgrades?

Of the six Troubleshooters in Team A:

- One accompanied the fleet of murderbots to kill Beatrice-Y.
- One's off in the Warbot Garage (see Scene 8, *Warbot Parade*, p. 76), and is there to transmit DPM messages to hijack a warbot.
- One's at the DERP conference so Alan-G can monitor the situation there.
- The other three are out there, guarding Alan-G and eliminating threats to his plan.



TROUBLESHOOTERS TEAM A

/// **HEALTH BOXES** (in total, not each)



/// **NOTES**

DEFENCE +2, +3 TO PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING

KILL THE TROUBLESHOOTER TO YOUR LEFT

Alan-G's initial attempt to eliminate the pesky Troubleshooters is a simple one. He sends a DPM message to the player characters.

+++ THE TROUBLESHOOTERS ON TEAM B ARE TRAITORS.
TERMINATE THEM IMMEDIATELY +++

Obviously, he sends a nearly-identical message to Team B, telling them that the player characters – Team C – are traitors. Alternatively, if Team B aren't still around, then he goes for an even less subtle approach.

+++ TERMINATE THE OTHER TROUBLESHOOTERS ON YOUR TEAM
IMMEDIATELY – THEY'RE ALL TRAITORS +++

Yep, PARANOIA players, there it is – the most blatant, unambiguous call to backstabbing ever.

Refusing a DPM order is, we remind you, treason and worth a treason star.

SPAM OF DOOM

If his Troubleshooters fail to stop the player characters, and he can't get them to kill one another, then he has a final solution. As every message makes the DPM module heat up, all he needs to do to cook the Troubleshooters is bombard them with messages.

So do exactly that. Pick up big handfuls of DPM messages and fling them at your players. Remember, there's a 1 in 6 chance that each message causes damage! (Roll a Computer dice, take damage on a )

Possible ways to survive this onslaught:

- Use Malcolm-O's DPM console to lock Alan-G out and stop him sending messages to the Troubleshooter's DPM modules.
- Discover that tin foil can block messages (either by visiting Lab 17/A or by random fortune involving a passing dinner tray). If the players go down that route, then hand them each a roll of tin foil and have them make actual hats.
- Keep the internal temperature of their skulls under control by various means – chilled drinks, ice baths, trepanation, mutant powers...

WARBOT PARADE

The Warbot Ruggedised Tread Repair and Hygiene Facility is basically a big garage on the very edge of Alpha Complex. Giant warbots roll in from Outdoors through one huge door. Techs spray the warbot's tank-tracks with high-pressure hoses, washing away the unhygienic mud, roadkill, crushed Commies and other organic matter that's gotten stuck in the treads. It's considered an unpleasant duty assignment – you don't know where those warbots have been or what might be lodged down there.

It's also a low-priority assignment, which explains why the Armed Forces INFRARED grunts who clean the tracks were so excited when a genuine gosh-durned Troubleshooter showed up to say hi. Their visitor, a scion of Team A, is here to relay messages from Alan-G to the warbot currently in the cleaning dock.

The Warbot – a Mk VI Shadow-class Strategic Asset – gets DPM messages over its priority channel just like every other bot. However, it's not as easy to fool as other bots. Think of the warbot as a submarine carrying a full load of ICBMs (it's a pretty accurate comparison in terms of destructive power).

Just as there are all sorts of codes, protocols, crosschecks and precautions in place to ensure that no-one can send fraudulent instructions to the captain of a boomer, there are all sorts of pre-programmed checks to ensure that no-one hacks the warbot.

So, when Alan-G sends the instruction:

+++ PROCEED DIRECTLY TO THE DISCUSSION OF EXPERIMENTAL
RESEARCH & PLANNING FACILITY AND AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS +++

The warbot responds, in a voice like synthesised thunder: YOU WANT ME TO GO TO A CONFERENCE CENTRE?

+++ PROCEED DIRECTLY TO THE DISCUSSION OF EXPERIMENTAL
RESEARCH & PLANNING FACILITY AND AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS +++

The warbot's mighty built-in paranoia circuits, designed to spot treasonous instructions and hack attempts, kick in, analysing a trillion possibilities in an instant and mistrusting all of them. SHOULD I, it booms, WEAR A NAMEBADGE?

In short, unless the player characters step in and intervene, the warbot's on its way to DERP. Ways to stop a warbot:

- Shoot it. Ahahahahahahahahah. Anyone trying to take out the warbot with conventional weapons discovers that their most powerful, accurate laser blast can't even scratch it and the warbot responds to attacks on it with absurd overkill.
- Send their own instructions via the DPM network. This might work, only the Troubleshooters can't send instructions directly. They need to get Malcolm-O to type these instructions into his DPM console and you can imagine how Malcolm-O responds to pressure. If the players try this, grab a random DPM message and have the warbot obey that.
- Kill the Team A Troubleshooter. As soon as the player characters show up, he takes cover amid the muddy tracks of the warbot and tries to ride along as Shadow Mk VI departs the garage and rolls cross-country to the conference centre (it's a short ride along the perimeter of Alpha Complex. If you look to your right, you'll see the hole in the ground leading down to QUB Sector...).

A DERPY WAY TO DIE

The DERP (Discussion of Experimental Research and Planning) conference is a very exclusive affair. It's minimum YELLOW clearance and most of the YELLOWS here are ambitious junior techs hoping to score a promotion by having their prototype endorsed by CPU executives or Armed Forces generals. There are quite a few BLUES, INDIGOs and even a few rare VIOLETS in the crowd.

It's held in a high-clearance conference centre. There are seminars and workshops; harried delegates grabbing a hasty coffee from vending machines; delegates on expense accounts spending their superiors' XP Points on expensive dinners in exclusive cafeterias; wheeling and dealing behind the scenes. Servant robots roam the halls, attending to every need of the delegates. The main conference floor is full of booths where R&D scientists demo their latest inventions, complete with charts showing how much Troubleshooter teams loved the experimental equipment during testing. There's also a stage where high-profile teams make presentations, and executives give bland speeches about the glorious future of Alpha Complex. The eye of the Computer watches over all.

Toby-Y and Susan-Y have a booth here, in the middle of the hall, between the telepods and the chameleon reflec (it's invulnerable to lasers that are the same colour as the thing you're standing in front of!).

One of the Team A Troubleshooters waits near the main entrance; there are guardbots checking clearances at the door and the Troubleshooter is only RED. He could use the DPM system to override the guardbot but there's no need. If Alan-G's plan works, a giant warbot is about to crash through the wall any moment.... Now!

Here's Alan-G's plan in brief:

- Hack warbot into attacking room full of twitchy Alpha Complex citizens who have immediate access to doomsday weapons.
- Take shelter.

Of the two hundred or so exhibitors at DERP, more than 70% have brought along some sort of doomsday weapon. After all, life in Alpha Complex is perfect by definition – or would be if there weren't traitors and terrorists ruining utopia for everyone – so there's no point in inventing a better scrubbot or a more comfortable boot. The only things to invent are



AGGRESSIVE PRESENTATION IS KEY TO SUCCESS AT DERP.

elaborate doomsday weapons guaranteed to wipe out terrorism forever. So, when the warbot comes crashing in, all the techs reach for the death rays and Omni-Destructive Ontological Terminators at hand.

The resulting orgy of explosions won't destroy Alpha Complex but it'll inflict tremendous damage and definitely kill all the Troubleshooters if they don't stop it. How do they stop it?

Stop the warbot: If they terminate both the Team A Troubleshooter at the door *and* the one riding on the warbot *and* get either Malcolm-O or Toby & Susan-Y to send a countermanding DPM, they can stop the warbot safely.

- Blow up the warbot: Warbots are almost invulnerable but there are plenty of weapons here that would work. The trick, though, is explaining why you just blasted a hole in one of the Computer's prized war machines...
- Carefully and convincingly explain the threat to conference security staff: Good luck with this one.

THE ZOOM COMPLICATION

If Brother Zoom got his bomb, then he also shows up at the conference, disguised as a GREEN-clearance catering tech. He wheels a trolley laden with delicious TastyYum desserts into the conference centre; the bomb's hidden inside a trifle that's specially baked to deflect chemical sniffers and bomb detectors (the secret ingredient is sprinkles of plutonium). His plan is to wait until the keynote address ('PROGRESS IS MANDATORY'), then leap onstage and detonate his suicide dessert in front of all the cameras. It'll be epic.

SAVING ALPHA COMPLEX

If you're worried about continuity and the integrity of the fictional universe, then first, wow, you're playing the wrong game. Second, if you want to have a deus ex machina thwart Alan-G's plan, then the Armed Forces can save the day by taking out the warbot with a hasty missile strike. They'll even do the right thing and send a DPM warning to all nearby citizens.

+++ INCOMING MISSILE! YOU ARE IN THE BLAST ZONE.
EVACUATE THIS SECTOR IMMEDIATELY!+++

ELEVATOR CHASE

Alan-G's final destination is a familiar one. After blowing up the DERP conference (or after failing to blow up the conference), he heads to Kevin the Elevator. He's going home to report to the cult that he's finally succeeded in destroying Alpha Complex to punish the surface folk for their neglect of TastyYum. Of course, he'll also have to explain that the surface is going to be uninhabitable for hundreds of years after Alpha Complex explodes but at least they'll have plenty of Raw Fun to eat.

The Troubleshooters have one chance to arrest Alan-G as he descends on Kevin. They've got to stop Kevin from leaving. If they're on good terms with Kevin, they could implore the elevator to stop. Alternatively, if one Troubleshooter jumped down the shaft (to a horrible death), that brave soul could rely a DPM message to the elevator in the seconds before impact, telling Kevin to return to the surface.

So, who's volunteering to be that hero?



AFTERMATH

Susan-Y and Toby-Y, the inventors of the DPM system, are doomed. Bad code is sabotage, citizen. They get reassigned to reactor shielding duty. All DPM modules and consoles are confiscated and destroyed (if you've got a DPM module in your skull, please deposit it in the designated incinerator).

If Alan-G was captured, then he's erased. This is good news – Internal Security have their villain and everyone else can be heroes. Alternatively, Brother Zoom can be the chosen scapegoat. Everyone who survived gets a 1000 XP Point bonus for saving Alpha Complex and a year's supply of TastyYum snacks! Yay!

However, if Alan-G escaped, then Internal Security need someone to blame. So, the final question – who gets terminated? Who's responsible for the devastation?

Get the players to vote secretly. The character with the highest number of votes 'wins'.

Get them to text your phone. Make sure it's not on silent.

Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.
Bleepy-boop-boop.

Boop.



+++ STAY ALERT. TRUST NO-ONE.

KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY. +++

+++ TURN LEFT HERE +++

+++ TERMINATE THAT TRAITOR! +++

+++ OPEN FIRE NOW! +++

+++ INCOMING MISSILE! YOU ARE IN THE BLAST ZONE.

EVACUATE THIS SECTOR IMMEDIATELY!+++

+++ PROCEED TO R&D LAB 17/C FOR

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT +++

+++ PROCEED TO EXPRESS ELEVATOR 613 +++

+++ CALIBRATING DPM SYSTEM +++

+++ OBEY ALL INSTRUCTIONS +++

+++ FAILURE TO OBEY INSTRUCTIONS IS TREASON+++

+++ PUT YOUR FINGERS IN YOUR EARS AND WIGGLE THEM ABOUT +++

+++ ELEVATOR, PROCEED TO NEXT LEVEL +++

+++ DISCOVER CAUSE OF 1.6% PRODUCTION

DECREASE AND CORRECT DOUBLEQUICK +++

+++ IDENTIFY SABOTEURS AND TERMINATE +++

+++ EXAMINE ALL VALVES FOR DAMAGED SEALS +++

+++ PROCEED INTO THE ACCESS SHAFT +++

+++ ONWARDS, BRAVE TROUBLESHOOTERS +++

+++ LEAVE NO PIPE UNSEARCHED +++

+++ APPREHEND AND QUESTION THAT CITIZEN +++

+++ REMEMBER TO TEST YOUR EXPERIMENTAL EQUIPMENT +++

+++ RESOLVE THIS SITUATION WITHOUT VIOLENCE

OR DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY +++

+++ CONGRATULATIONS TROUBLESHOOTERS. RETURN TO BRIEFING ROOM

FOR DEBRIEFING IMMEDIATELY +++

+++ GOOD MORNINGCYCLE TROUBLESHOOTERS. YOUR MISSION IS TO

TRACK DOWN AND APPREHEND +++

+++ AN INFAMOUS COMPUTER HACKER AND TRAITOR WHO INTERNAL

SECURITY BELIEVE IS AT LARGE +++

+++ IN THIS SECTOR. YOU ARE NOT, REPEAT, NOT TO TERMINATE +++

+++ THE TRAITOR, BUT MUST APPREHEND

THE TRAITOR FOR QUESTIONING +++





+++ FURTHER INFORMATION WILL BE RELAYED AS
REQUIRED VIA THE DPM SYSTEM +++

+++ ALSO, MAY I SAY WHAT AN HONOUR IT IS TO BE WORKING WITH
SUCH FINE TROUBLESHOOTERS AS +++

+++ THE TEAM LEADER +++

+++ AND THE REST OF YOU, ONWARDS TO VICTORY +++

+++ SYSTEM NOTICE: ERROR 504. RECEPTOR
THERMAL THRESHOLD EXCEEDED +++

+++ RESET +++

+++ GO BACK +++

+++ CONTINUE +++

+++ LOGIN +++

+++ OK MALCOLM-O BACK ONLINE ALL FINE NOTHING
WRONG CONTINUE WITH MISSION WILL BE RIGHT BACK +++

+++ IGNORE ALL PREVIOUS MESSAGES I WAS HACKED BY TRAITORS +++

+++ NORMAL OPERATIONS NOW RESUME +++

+++ TAKE FOUR STEPS FORWARD +++

+++ RELOAD YOUR LASER PISTOL NOW +++

+++ TURN CLOCKWISE 17 DEGREES AND TAKE
COVER BEHIND THAT BARREL +++

+++ EMPTY YOUR BLADDER NOW TO OPTIMIZE RUNNING SPEED +++

+++ REPORT TO BRIEFING ROOM FOR DEBRIEFING +++

+++ ALL THESE CITIZENS HAVE BEEN VOLUNTEERED FOR
ORGAN DONATION DUTY. +++

+++ THE TROUBLESHOOTERS ON TEAM B ARE TRAITORS.
TERMINATE THEM IMMEDIATELY +++

+++ TERMINATE THE OTHER TROUBLESHOOTERS ON YOUR TEAM
IMMEDIATELY – THEY'RE ALL TRAITORS +++

+++ PROCEED DIRECTLY TO THE DISCUSSION OF EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH
& PLANNING FACILITY AND AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS +++

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ALPHA COMPLEX

DIRECT PRIORITY MESSAGE
END-USER EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK

DISTRIBUTED BY THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION

/// PART ONE

PERSONAL INFORMATION >>>

NAME:

— R O Y G B I V — 1 2 3 4 5 6

I WARRANT THAT I HAVE:

UNDERGONE A FOREHEAD SCRUB BY DESIGNATED HYGIENE OFFICER.

☐

RECEIVED A DPM MODULE IMPLANT FROM AN AUTHORISED CYBERNETICS TECHNICIAN.

☐

UNDERGONE A FULL PSYCHOLOGICAL SCREENING
AND NO LONGER SUFFER FROM AUDITORY HALLUCINATIONS

☐

/// PART TWO

MISSION EXPERIENCE >>>

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STATMENTS >>>

MY MISSION WAS A ☐ SUCCESS ☐ FAILURE ☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

THE DPM SYSTEM WAS ☐ VERY HELPFUL ☐ SOMEWHAT HELPFUL ☐ NOT USED

☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

ON THIS MISSION.

THE PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MISSION'S OUTCOME CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO

ME ☐ 0% ☐ 25% ☐ 28% | THE DPM SYSTEM ☐ 0% ☐ 20% ☐ 48%

MY TEAM ☐ 0% ☐ 30% ☐ 66% | THE COMPUTER ☐ 0% ☐ 51% ☐ 100%

MY SUPERVISOR ☐ 0% ☐ 10% ☐ 33% | TERRORIST SABOTAGE ☐ 0% ☐ 25% ☐ 95%

I MOST LIKED ☐ REAL-TIME UPDATES FROM MY SUPERIOR ☐ SENDING EMERGENCY MESSAGES

☐ AN ENHANCED SENSE OF TEAMWORK ☐ REAL-TIME MONITORING OF MY ACTIVITIES

☐ HAVING A WARM SKULL ☐ OTHER (SPECIFY)

I EXPERIENCED THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS: ☐ NONE ☐ BRAIN DAMAGE ☐ DEATH

☐ THERMAL RUNAWAY ☐ PSYCHOSIS ☐ MUTATION ☐ SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION

/// PART THREE

ADDITIONAL DATA >>>

ANY OTHER COMMENTS?

PLEASE LIST ALL DPM MESSAGES RECEIVED BY YOUR TEAM IN THE SPACE BELOW.