

PARANOIATM

TROUBLES **BY THE** **BOXLOAD**

ALPHA COMPLEX | MISSION DOSSIER 02

NOT FOR TROUBLESHOOTER USE

PARANOIA

TROUBLES BY THE BOXLOAD

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THIS WAY UP





HANDLE
WITH CARE



FRAGILE

THIS WAY UP
 

 
THIS WAY UP



TROUBLES BY THE BOXLOAD

P A R A N O I A

Salutations, Prospective GM!

(If you are not the GM-to-be of this mission, you have already incriminated yourself by making eyeball-to-word contact with it. Your best option is to run the adventure and pretend you always intended to. In which case, Salutations, Prospective GM!)

Contained within this document you will find a Very Interesting Mission for a group of RED clearance Troubleshooters. In this adventure, the Troubleshooters will deliver some stuff to a warehouse and Everything Will Be Fine. There might be some minor hiccups along the way, but Troubleshooters used to defending Alpha Complex from the Traitorous Hordes will surely have no problem putting a few boxes on a shelf, right?



Apart from the possibility of being aggressively maintained by a deranged repairbot, conference-called into oblivion or terminated for tardiness, this mission is nothing more (or less) than an in-depth exploration of box-delivery in Alpha Complex, and thus perfectly safe for all participants.

MISSION BACKGROUND

Troubleshooter Barracks 4XAF ('Standing for Safety and Security!') had a little, err, trouble recently. The nature of this trouble is classified, but according to highly treasonous rumour there was some laser fire, a few explosions and maybe a little poison gas, all of traitoristic origin. So now barracks 4XAF needs refurbishment, reassignment of personnel and a certain amount of building work.

But all was not lost! A valiant team of INFRARED pick-stuff-uppers and a repurposed repairbot went through the wreckage and salvaged everything that could be, well, salvaged. Mostly office supplies, it turned out, but every paperclip saved from destruction is a victory denied the enemies of Alpha Complex. Not a BIG victory, but a victory all the same.

So now all the salvage from barracks 4XAF is ready to go into storage, to be broken out again when the triumphant reopening of the barracks takes place. Of course, the salvage actually has to get to the storage area....

It might be worth noting at this point that the salvage has been designated a Relic of Heroic Action – every single piece of it – and is of greater significance than the usual box of paperclips. And Internal Security has decided it constitutes evidence that can be used to identify and apprehend traitors. That might cause the odd complication. There is also the matter of the repurposed repairbot, which was unable to fulfil its function of fixing everything and has suffered something of an existential crisis. Its sole mission is now to locate the missing debris from barracks 4XAF and put it all back where it came from, rebuilding the barracks around it if necessary.

This is one very determined robot, and it has help in the form of a handful of smallbots co-opted to help pick up the more fiddly bits of debris. The repairbot has not relinquished its control over the smallbots since its mission is unfinished. We will be meeting those soon.

First, the Troubleshooters have some work to do.

THE CURIOUS AFFAIR OF THE BRIEFING ROOM FULL OF BOXES

Read the following to the players:

You know it's been a slow day-cycle when five Troubleshooter teams respond simultaneously to a report of a Slightly Shifty INFRARED in Possession of a Non-Regulation Mop. Just the one gunfight today. Well, two. One resulting from simultaneous Troubleshooter arrival, and one over who got the blame for the first gunfight. You decide to designate them Gunfight 1A (Not Our Fault) and 1B (Also Not Our Fault) as you head for the debriefing room.

But then you got here and... boxes. Boxes and boxes. Boxes of boxes. Boxes of boxes and boxes of boxes – (Boxes) + (Boxes) + [(Boxes) x (Boxes)] + {(Boxes)² + (Boxes)²} = 3(Boxes)² + 2(Boxes), for the mathematically inclined... give or take some random stuff spilled on the floor. So yeah, boxes. The briefing room is full of assorted boxes, all of them in varying states of wear. Some are open, and you try to avoid seeing what's inside in case it's something treasonable, or treason-inducing, or just plain yucky. You can't help get the odd glimpse though, and it looks like someone had a clear-out in a disused clone barracks.

So what's in there? Well.... Fasteners, boots, bowls, spoons, I Love The Computer badges, cups, screws, light bulbs, mop heads, information leaflets, insulating tiles, half a screwdriver set, brushes, part of a funbot, cable ties, garbage bags, squirtyfood dispenser nozzles...

(You may wish to go on in this vein for a week or two until the players get the idea.)

There is no briefing, no debriefing, just a very bored YELLOW clearance clerk with a Checklist of Immense Proportions.

“

'This lot,' he says, waving the checklist at the colossal pile of stuff, 'needs to be in Warehouse 749921 about an hour ago. Right now will do, or very soon at a pinch. Slow day, you're Surplus to Requirements. You got lucky, it was this or food vat duty. Here's your chit. Get moving.'

”



The orders are legit and the checklist is truly immense. It is also accurate, down to the condition of each individual screw and fastener. This may be unheard-of in the history of Alpha Complex. If the Troubleshooters want to spend a fortnight verifying everything, they are welcome. But there is a queue of autotrucks parked nearby waiting for the boxes to be loaded. We all know who gets to do the loading.

Each Troubleshooter is required to take responsibility for a portion of the boxes, and each Troubleshooter's consignment is to go on a separate truck. There is of course no way to evenly distribute the cargo – boxes are different sizes and the number of boxes is not divisible by the number of Troubleshooters. Also, some boxes are more busted up than others, and some are overloaded. There is a real possibility that some of the contents might be spilled or fall out. That would be unfortunate, wouldn't it?

The Troubleshooters themselves are on the list, sort of. They have to be delivered to the warehouse as well. Mainly because the staff there do not want to spend their day-cycle unloading boxes from trucks. It's not like Troubleshooters have anything better to do.

The box-carrying autotrucks do not have anywhere for a Troubleshooter to stand, sit or cling. Not with any reasonable certainty of staying attached to the vehicle anyway. But that's okay. There is a personnel transport waiting at the end of the queue. The Troubleshooters may be concerned about being separated from their cargo, but soon they will have other things to worry about.

A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO WAREHOUSE 749921

Actually, no. Transporting boxes of stuff is not hilarious. Loading the trucks takes a while, and some of the boxes have a distressing tendency to pop open or spill a trail of paperclips. Do the Troubleshooters notice that? Do they maybe help someone else's box come open? Do they swipe a few bits from someone else's consignment?

Be quite surprising if they didn't, really.

But soon enough the trucks are loaded. Just as the Troubleshooters are about to set off, a BLUE clearance Internal Security Evidence Auditor approaches, escorted by a mob of heavily armed goons and an auditbot. It looks a lot like a standard maintenance bot, but has been retrofitted with a rapid-fire clipboard dispenser.

The BLUE clearance clone is Senior Auditor Levinn-B-GON; ambitious, ruthless and extremely audit-happy. He holds out an imperious hand and the auditbot fires a clipboard from its dispenser. It snaps right into Levinn-B's hand. Some of the impressive looking forms clipped to it smoulder slightly.

“

'Hang on a clock cycle, Troubleshooters!' the IntSec Evidence Auditor snarls. 'What you have there is several autotruck-loads of critical evidence! That's all that remains of Troubleshooter Barracks 4XAF. I'm going to have to confiscate it. And the trucks. And you. You'll deliver the evidence to the Evidence Delivery Chute at Internal Security Site Bravo Nineteen, then report for questioning about your involvement in a possible plot to conceal critical evidence. And also the total destruction of barracks 4XAF.'

”

Internal Security wants to examine every paperclip, fastener and squirtyfood nozzle for evidence of whatever treason overcame the brave Troubleshooters of Barracks 4XAF. Sooner or later. Maybe. Or perhaps they just want to have it all in storage in case they are ever asked why they did not investigate the debris from Troubleshooter Barracks 4XAF. In fact, who knows why IntSec does anything?



The orders to deliver the, er, evidence to Bravo Nineteen are legit. But so are the orders to take it to Warehouse 749921. The Troubleshooters cannot do both and besides, this questioning thing sounds hazardous. But what to do? Well, that's up to the Troubleshooters.

Shooting it out with Internal Security over a few truckloads of office supplies has a certain simplicity, but also a certain finality. The Troubleshooters may be able to blag, weasel or bribe their way out of this situation – begging will not work; begging never works. The GM should let them try for a while. Then something interesting happens; interesting in the sense of adding a new way to get executed for failing to complete the mission.

The Troubleshooters' iBall communications protocols flash a priority call from one Goanna-B-GAD. The data push indicates that Goanna is the warehouse manager at 749921. Not taking a call from a senior to whom you have been ordered to deliver truckloads of stuff is treason. So is ignoring the senior who has all the paperwork to take possession of that stuff and is waving it under your nose. Interesting, no?

Goanna-B demands to know why the Troubleshooters are not already en route to warehouse 749921. Levinn-B demands to know why the Troubleshooters are not already en route to Bravo Nineteen and why they are ignoring him. Realising they are in communication with someone else, Levinn-B uses his Internal Security powers to force the conversation into Conference Mode.

CONFERENCE MODE ENGAGED!

Conference Mode is fun. Everyone gets a split-screen display (on their iBalls) drawn from the ubiquitous security cameras and other clones' iBalls, showing the faces of everyone in the conference call. This overlays normal vision, allowing any given clone only fragmentary observation of what is going on around him. This is entirely (well... almost... entirely) enough to avoid walking into furniture when conferencing, but not enough to, say, conduct a gunfight with Traitorous Enemies of the Computer. Which may be unfortunate...

The result is that each person involved in the conference call can see only a little of what is in front of him, plus the faces of everyone else and odd bits of what is behind them. Remember that, friend GM; it will be important.

Levinn-B has been a little overzealous in his use of the forced-conference facility. He has included his entire squad of bodyguards (they don't say much), a nearby scrubot (it doesn't say anything) and some INFRAREDS

working in an adjoining food vat chamber (they say a lot, most of it mumbled loyal slogans which the GM can drop into the conversation at suitably baffling junctures.) It's all a bit confusing.

Goanna-B and Levinn-B begin arguing. Levinn-B wants the Troubleshooters' cargo because it might be useful evidence to uncover a traitorous plot. Goanna-B needs it because it has collectively been designated a Relic of Heroic Action and is to be stored until it can be presented to Troubleshooter barracks whose denizens have zealously proven their worth. Any interjection the Troubleshooters make will probably just complicate matters further.

After a moment, the auditor's bodyguards go next door to execute the INFRAREDS in case they heard something classified during the chat. The bodyguards struggle a bit with this, since they cannot clearly see what they are doing, and after a few misplaced shots they resort to grenades. This goes about as well as expected.

At this point, one of the bodyguards is hit. Nobody can see where the shot came from, but there is clearly a fight going on next door.

“

'GET IN THERE AND HELP!' yells Levinn-B and goes back to arguing with Goanna-B.

”

It is worth noting at this point that Goanna-B has more control over the conference call than lowly Troubleshooters, and has cut out all of the irrelevant participants (the Troubleshooters, the INFRAREDS and the scrubot). He refuses to terminate the call however, and until both he and Levinn-B do, the Troubleshooters are stuck in Conference Mode. At least they will be able to see one another yelling in terror.

Goanna-B cannot afford to lose this argument. He does not run a particularly honest warehouse, and losing a Relic of Heroic Action will bring down intense scrutiny upon him, followed by intense termination. He needs those relicified office supplies and he needs them right now. So the argument continues and with it the forced conference call.

Problem, that. But not Goanna-B's problem.

The Troubleshooters must obey the order to go help the IntSec team despite the fact they cannot see what is going on. If they do not, they will be terminated for disobedience and lack of zeal. Their next clones will arrive at the scene to find Levinn-B dead and the autotrucks gone, as per Levinn-B is Dead and the Autotrucks are Gone on page 13.

If the Troubleshooters obey the order, they may spot a couple of smallbots scurrying about the floor picking up small items that fell out of the boxes, and popping them neatly on the trucks. How very helpful! The Troubleshooters may also spot (remember, they can't see what is going on very well) the scrubot's whirly brushes send a paperclip pinging down the corridor towards them. They might try to catch it (they must deliver *all* the cargo!), in which case they will find out how hard it is to do anything whilst in Conference Mode.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL: CONFERENCE MODE

The Troubleshooters might need several attempts just to get through the doors into the next chamber. Clever clones might try to watch what they are doing on someone else's video feed. It doesn't help but it's clever. Once they're in the chamber, the Troubleshooters' nostrils are assaulted by the rancid stench of food vat contents. Their ears are already being assaulted by the frightened shrieks of INFRAREDS, courtesy of Conference Mode, but they are now accompanied by a groovy beat of grenade detonations. The Troubleshooters soon find themselves assaulted by gunfire and explosions. Lots of assaulting going on in here.

The situation is this: both the IntSec team and the Troubleshooters have been ordered to terminate all INFRAREDS in this area in case they saw something treason-inducing. The IntSec team began to comply but had difficulty due to Conference Mode, and soon came under fire from an unknown source. The Troubleshooters were sent to assist them, and have entered a maelstrom of grenades and laser fire. There are, of course, no hostiles. It was just a stray shot. But now the IntSec team are convinced there is a traitor behind every squirtyfood dispenser and are determined to blast their way to victory.

The IntSec troopers cannot be sure that the new arrivals in the combat zone are their backup or the enemy they are fighting, so they engage all targets. This might not be immediately apparent, since Conference Mode makes it difficult to shoot in the right direction, let alone actually hit someone. It will become apparent after a while that the IntSec team intend to wipe out everything that isn't them and figure it out later.

The GM should make the most of the confusion and general mayhem. Grenades going off in a food vat, hurling semi-toxic Food Ingredient Paste all over the place. Terrified INFRAREDS squealing their innocence and loyalty. Except the one who's actually an infiltrator intent on sabotage. Believing she has been exposed (as opposed to targeted for termination more or less at random), she deploys concealed weapons and joins in the fighting. She's in Conference Mode as well so everyone sees her pick up a weapon and start shooting, but can they figure out where she is from the backdrop display? Is she behind one of the Troubleshooters? Better spray laser fire everywhere just in case!

The IntSec team have taken a simple route through the chaos: kill everything that moves. If the Troubleshooters want to survive, they will need to take out the IntSec team or convince them to stop shooting. They will also have to deal with the INFRARED problem. The simplest way is to kill them too, but if the Troubleshooters want to help some of them get away (why???) they will have to do so without incriminating themselves on everyone's iBalls.

Conference Mode is abruptly terminated during the fight. So are some clones, but in a different manner. The shooting continues however, unless the Troubleshooters can somehow convince the IntSec team to cease fire. When the dust and the toxic cloud of vapourised Food Ingredient Paste clears, the INFRAREDS are all dead or gone. The unmasked traitor is probably among the abruptly terminated.

At this point the Computer asks for a mission update:

“ LOYAL TROUBLESHOOTERS! IT IS TIME TO REPORT YOUR SUCCESS! SPEAK UP, PROVIDE INFORMATION, AND REPORT IN! IT IS YOUR PLEASURE AND YOUR DUTY! HAVE YOU COMPLETED YOUR MISSION? ”

The Troubleshooters have some explaining to do. Mainly why they are in a wrecked food preparation area after a gunfight with the IntSec team they were ordered to support, a random traitor and some unarmed INFRAREDS. They will have to provide an explanation for what happened and why. Something heroic and non-treasonistic.

Good luck with that.



LEVINN-B IS DEAD AND THE AUTOTRUCKS ARE GONE

Whilst the Troubleshooters are squirming their way through an explanation of how their part in the recent food vat debacle was actually quite heroic and troubleshootery, they will become aware that the conference call was not completely terminated after all. All of the Troubleshooters are still receiving a feed from one participant – the scrubot.

The scrubot is not saying anything of course, just quietly trundling down the corridor with its whirly scrub-brushes whirling away. Behind the scrubot, a single paperclip can be seen lying forgotten on the floor. The scrubot turns around and trundles determinedly towards it. What if it pings the clip off with its whirling brushes and it can't be found? The Troubleshooters could get into real trouble if they lose any of the cargo.

And why is the scrubot leaving a trail of dark fluid behind it? Where is Levinn-B? Where are the autotrucks?

Rushing back into the corridor the Troubleshooters see the scrubot headed for the lone paperclip. It must be saved! Also, Levinn-B's corpse is stuffed in the scrubot's Big Messy Things Holder, on its back. The trucks are gone.

Saving the paperclip means stopping the scrubot. Not hard, but if it is stopped in a non-smashy way then it might provide information to someone who knows how to view the internal logs of a scrubot. Or the Troubleshooters could just ask the Computer to show them the security camera feed from the corridor over the past few minutes. They might be a bit reluctant to do that, since it will bring to the Computer's attention the fact that they have lost the items they were supposed to deliver. That might in turn raise the question 'what were you doing at the time the autotrucks went missing?' which might then bring about some intense scrutiny of the food vat debacle, and we all know where that leads....

So what did happen here? Well, Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed), on its self-imposed mission to return all the bits of barracks 4XAF, sent its smallbots to pick up any dropped items and approached the trucks whilst Levinn-B was arguing with Goanna-B. Upon hearing Levinn-B yell at Goanna-B that he was taking the items to his evidence holding facility, Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed) decided that Levinn-B was a threat to the mission and performed unscheduled maintenance on him. His corpse is riddled with injuries; he has been drilled, hammered and sawed into unserviceability.

Goanna-B decided Levinn-B was being rude and had cut the call, terminating it at his end. This dropped everyone else out except the scrubot because its comms protocols were different. The scrubot tidied up the mess as Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed) led the autotrucks away. The Internal Security auditbot followed, dutifully noting that a paperclip had been dropped from the rear truck.

So now the Troubleshooters are standing in a corridor with a scrubot, the corpse of a senior Internal Security operative and a paperclip.

Naturally, Goanna-B calls them at this moment and wants to know why they are not at the warehouse. If the Troubleshooters try to blag their way through this conversation, Goanna-B counters with a question:

“

'If that's so, why are my autotrucks headed along Transfer Conduit B578?'

”

Smart Troubleshooters will realise this is Useful Information. However, they need to explain why the autotrucks are not travelling towards the warehouse and not responding to navigational overrides. Assuming the Troubleshooters can come up with something that does not get them immediately arrested and shot, they may be able to pursue the autotrucks and complete their mission.

TRANSPORTATION REQUIRED... YOU'LL DO!

The Troubleshooters now know roughly where the autotrucks are headed. If they take the time to call up a map on their iBalls, they will be able to deduce several possible destinations. All are blanked out, of course, since the Troubleshooters are not of high enough clearance to know what these installations are. But one stands out – Troubleshooter Barracks 4XAF. Recently destroyed under mysterious circumstances.

Transfer Conduit B578 passes quite close to it.

The autotrucks have quite a head start, and the Troubleshooters will need transportation to pursue them. They cannot request it from the Computer – they have already been assigned transport for this mission,

have they not? Is it somehow inadequate? Please explain why you think the transportation assigned to you by the Computer is inadequate. What are your Transportation Adequacy Assessment credentials?

So, there are two options. One is to improvise something, steal a vehicle or generally come up with a clever solution to the problem. The other is to hotwire the scrubot. It would be possible to rig up a rather basic set of manual controls and to overload the 'bot's drive system to enable high speeds whilst a team of Troubleshooters clung on to it. Not a good idea, but possible.

However they do it, the Troubleshooters will need to get to Barracks 4XAF as quickly as possible. That presents a variety of potential problems. The Troubleshooters are not authorised to deviate from their mission to deliver the cargo to Warehouse 749921, and that certainly does not mean they have permission to charge off halfway across the sector. The GM should let them worry about that for a while, then turn it around on them.

As they are seeking a way to catch up to the autotrucks, the Troubleshooters receive a call from an Internal Security checkpoint.

“

'Troubleshooters! You got some explaining to do! We've just stopped a bunch of autotrucks full of office supplies. What they're not full of is you. Says on the manifest that there's a Troubleshooter team as escort and there ain't. You wanna explain why I'm talking to you this way and not slapping an answer out of you in person?'

”

Pointing out that if the Troubleshooters were present an answer to the question raised by their absence would not need to be slapped out of anyone will not be appreciated. The checkpoint guards want to know why the Troubleshooters are not with the trucks, and they want to know now. They also want to know why there is an IntSec auditbot with them and an unauthorised repair bot which appears to have been repurposed.

There is no safe answer to any of these questions. The Troubleshooters were assigned to be with the trucks; losing them is treason. The autotrucks are in the wrong place, which makes the autotrucks guilty of treason and therefore, by association, the Troubleshooters. The fact that the Troubleshooters are not with the trucks and are not responsible for them

being in the wrong place is of no consequence to the checkpoint guards. The autotrucks are the Troubleshooters' responsibility and if they are in the wrong place, then that's a problem. IntSec doesn't like problems.

Attempts to warn the checkpoint guards about, well, anything really will be ignored or lost in a barrage of questions. The Troubleshooters will be hard put to explain the situation but might be able to come up with something that doesn't get anybody shot. Or at least, not anybody the Troubleshooters don't want shot.

The GM should let the Troubleshooters weasel for a while, record incriminating statements, then suddenly cut the comm channel. There is no response from the checkpoint if the Troubleshooters try to reinitiate contact... but then they probably will not want to.

OVERHEATED PURSUIT

The pursuit of the autotrucks is not a simple matter. It should be, but this is Alpha Complex. The Troubleshooters are not authorised to repurpose scrubots, nor to ride them at Unwise Speeds around the corridors. They cannot simply drive through secured doorways or Internal Security Mop Inspection Points. So they will have to take the back roads, so to speak.

Now, Alpha Complex has no back roads. What it does have are maintenance corridors, garbage chutes and Semi-Forgotten Tunnels With A Funny Smell. These are places where an intrepid band of Troubleshooters can ride a repurposed scrubot or other conveyance at Unwise Speeds without official interference. Of course, these are also places where traitors can skulk about and those who hunt traitors can unskulk them. The possibilities for a misunderstanding are... delicious.

Oh look, here's one now.

During their journey, the Troubleshooters catch sight of another group of clones behaving in a skulky manner. In fact, they are readying an ambush! The victims are some other skulky types. The Troubleshooters have just seconds to decide what to do as their conveyance hurtles towards the ambush zone. Warn the ambushes? Demand to know if the ambushers are of traitorous intent or loyal Troubleshooters? Open fire at random? So many options, none of them good.

Spotting a mob of clones bearing down on them aboard a repurposed scrubot, the ambushes do the natural thing and open fire. The ambushers do the same, some at their intended targets and some at the newcomers. Pretty soon everyone is firing at one another.

There is no need for the Troubleshooters to stop and get involved here. Their best option might be to speed through and escape, leaving the confusion behind. Interestingly, if a Troubleshooter gets hit they are miraculously unharmed, and their own targets seem unduly surprised that laser bolts actually hurt. Some psychopath announces his intent to Cut, Cut, CUT! But there is nobody in sight with a cutty thing.

If the Troubleshooters do stay and fight it out, they find that both sides lack real grit and troubleshootery determination. They just scatter and flee once a few of them are shot. It's like they weren't really looking for a fight at all.

Very confusing and a bit upsetting.



But soon the Troubleshooters are past and almost to their destination. Driving recklessly down maintenance corridors, through a food hall and into the middle of a Mandatory Fun break, the Troubleshooters gain on their quarry. Their conveyance begins to overheat and handle erratically. More erratically than before, that is. Yes, *that* erratically. Eventually the swerves and lurches become too much to handle and the conveyance spins out of control through a doorway and onto a main transit tube.

The Troubleshooters are deposited in a heap right in front of an Internal Security checkpoint. A strangely unmanned and slightly laser-charred checkpoint.

Hmm. Interesting....

THE CHECKPOINT GUARDS ARE DEAD AND THE AUTOTRUCKS ARE GONE

Just what it says, really. The checkpoint guards are dead and the autotrucks are gone. There are signs of a fight; laser scoring on the walls, floor and ceiling. Clones dead with drill, saw and hammer wounds in front and laser burns on their backs. A skilled investigator who was willing to tell the truth would quickly conclude that the IntSec guards were attacked by someone or something armed with improvised hand weapons and fought back, using their lasers with more enthusiasm than skill.

There are no signs of the autotrucks, but if the Troubleshooters think to look they will be able to find a single paperclip, fallen and forgotten from whatever box it was stored in. Hang on... wasn't there a complete inventory of every clip and fastener? And it was *correct*? Well, that means that somebody's consignment is now wrong. That could be interesting.

But first the boxes and the autotrucks must be reclaimed. And soon, because in the distance the Troubleshooters can hear the sounds of IntSec and Troubleshooter teams responding to the attack at the checkpoint. Screeching tyres, screeching INFRAREDs being run over by those tyres, random weapon discharges... this is soon going to be a place where it's not healthy to be seen holding an unauthorised paperclip.

The Troubleshooters need to make themselves scarce. That's not hard. There are numerous exits from the transit tube, enabling the Troubleshooters to make their way towards Barracks 4XAF on foot. Another conveyance could be obtained, improvised or hijacked, but any way they do it the Troubleshooters need to get a move on.

Naturally, there is a complication. Not far from the site of the checkpoint, just around the transit tube's next bend, one of the autotrucks has given out. Hit by several laser blasts ('only IntSec troopers are so random') it was unable to keep up with the others and ground to a stop against the tube wall. Not completely though; the poor thing's tiny bot brain keeps it trying to move even though its tyres are shot out and drive train is on fire. Not very *much* on fire, but on fire nonetheless.

Aboard the truck is someone's consignment of the delivery. What happens if it is burned or taken to an evidence lockup as, well, evidence? What if it falls into the hands of traitorously intentioned clones and is used to clip treasonous documents together? What if the clone whose consignment has not been delivered cannot pin the blame on someone else? Hmm.

The Troubleshooters have Not Long to either get the autotruck moving or abandon it. The GM will recall these vehicles have nowhere for clones to sit, stand or cling with any degree of safety. This one is damaged and somewhat on fire. Encourage the Troubleshooters to be inventive in coming up with a solution or way to blame one of their number for the loss of the consignment.

IntSec is on their way. Some of their own are down, killed with lasers. The Troubleshooters have lasers. The obvious conclusion will be drawn. Lasers will be drawn. We know what happens after that.

The best way to avoid that is to already have left the scene when IntSec arrives.

ALL THE COMPUTER'S BOTS AND ALL THE COMPUTER'S CLONES COULDN'T PUT BARRACKS 4XAF TOGETHER AGAIN

Finally, the Troubleshooters reach Barracks 4XAF. Outside stands a row of autotrucks and a personnel transport. All are empty. An industrial quantity of tape bearing messages like 'Danger Do Not Enter', 'Off-Limits to Unauthorised Personnel' and 'You Met Your Quota; Rejoice!' has been wrapped around the building, but something has forced its way through.

From inside the barracks comes the sound of hammering and sawing. Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed) is hard at work repairing the facility. Well, shoving piles of rubble around into an approximation of their original location. Smallbots scamper about picking stuff up and putting it down again at random. An Internal Security auditbot stands sad and alone nearby, its clipboard dispenser idle.

The Troubleshooters have found their hijacked cargo! There it is, standing around in boxes ready to be loaded back into the autotrucks. Or put back on the shelves that Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed) will get finished building in a decade or two. So what are they waiting for?

Before the Troubleshooters can do whatever it is they decide to do, their iBalls receive a priority communication from a very irate Goanna-B.

“

*'Where are you? You know what, I don't care.
Where are my autotrucks? You know what, I know.
Where is the cargo you were assigned to deliver to my storage
facility? Yes, that's what I want to know! Where is it?
And why is it not here in my warehouse?'*

”

Goanna-B goes on like this for a while, interrupting any attempt to explain the situation, weasel out of the blame or generally get off the hook. He also uses an iBall-distorting level of volume just to make the point, making it impossible for the Troubleshooters to act coherently while his message is blaring in their collective cortex.

The feed from Goanna-B's iBall communications system shows a large number of IntSec guards entering his storage facility, pulling things off shelves and poking into every corner. Goanna-B looks frantic.

“

'Get me that cargo, get it here now, you hear? It's a Relic of Heroic Action and I need it here to make my inventory complete. If it's not here by the time Internal Security finish their audit of my facility, I'm in big trouble. Which means YOU are in BIGGER trouble! You get that? No, I don't have a Form SK-1704B. Why would I have one of those?'

”

Goanna-B realises he has left the channel open and cuts comms at this point, returning to arguing with an IntSec auditor.

So the Troubleshooters need to get their cargo and get underway. Simple enough, right?

Of course, Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed) will resist with all of its improvised weaponry, directing a mob of smallbots to swarm at the Troubleshooters and drag them down to be gently pricked by Fine Object Pick-Up Tools and Small Thing Holders. Smallbots are not fearsome.

This is likely to be a short and rather one-sided fight. Nice for the Troubleshooters to be on the right side of one for once.



JUST IN TIME DELIVERY

With Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed) dealt with, the Troubleshooters can round up their cargo and be on their way. The smallbots are released from control when Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed) expires, as is the auditbot.

Troubleshooters who think of it will discover that the auditbot dispenses form-festooned clipboards at any opportunity. Holding out an imperious hand will result in a smouldering but more or less intact clipboard arriving in it, complete with many forms. These include a fully signed and entirely legit order for the Troubleshooters' cargo to be taken into IntSec custody, which could be used to 'prove' that the cargo was in fact the responsibility of Internal Security and not the Troubleshooters' (or Goanna-B's) when it was hijacked.

There is also an SK-1704B. This largely incomprehensible 92-page document is so vague and all-encompassing that it can be interpreted to mean almost anything. If Goanna-B had one, he'd be off the hook with Internal Security. Hmm....

The Troubleshooters have autotrucks, they have their cargo. They have... won?

Well, there's a little problem. One of the trucks is pretty busted up, and the Troubleshooters may have abandoned it along with its cargo. If so, they are an entire consignment short. Whose? They'll have to sort that one out among themselves, one way or another.

Finally, *finally*, the Troubleshooters roll up at Warehouse 749921. Goanna-B is surrounded by IntSec goons and is frantically trying to explain why a Relic of Heroic Action is not present in his warehouse when the inventory clearly states it is. There might be a degree of creativity about that assertion; perhaps IntSec is trying to cover up the fact that *it* is supposed to have the remnants of Barracks 4XAF?

And did the Troubleshooters just roll up with the contentious item? Why yes, they did indeed!



IntSec wants the cargo. Goanna-B wants the cargo and a form SK-1704B. And his autotrucks. Why is one missing or all scorched up with laser blasts and generally quite dinged?

The Troubleshooters are detained at gunpoint for An Uncomfortably Long Time With No Bathroom Breaks. During this time, cocky IntSec troopers wave their weapons around and occasionally shoot out a light, mostly by accident. But only mostly. Goanna-B and the auditor go through the consignments checking they are correct.

Of course, they aren't. Unless someone thought to drop a recovered paperclip into theirs to make it right. One or two were recovered during the mission, so at least two Troubleshooters are off the hook. The others... not so much.

After an Additional Uncomfortable Period the Troubleshooters are suddenly presented with a debriefing order. Grinning IntSec troopers escort them to a nearby chamber where they are ordered to sit down on a bench that isn't big enough, and left to stew for a while. The Troubleshooters are not disarmed; IntSec hopes they will sort out a few problems by turning on one another.

MISSION COMPLETE...ISH!

The debriefing is conducted by an Automated Troubleshooter Interaction System (ATIS); essentially a simple programme designed to ask questions and evaluate the answers.

A selection of questions follow. They are generally vague, giving the Troubleshooters a chance to incriminate themselves. Not all of the 'questions' are questions as such; some are statements or meaningless noise. The Troubleshooters are expected to respond anyway.

- **IS THE MISSION COMPLETE, FRIEND TROUBLESHOOTERS?**
- **WAS THE MISSION A SUCCESS, FRIEND TROUBLESHOOTERS?**
- **DON'T GIVE ME ANY MORE OF YOUR LIES!!!**
- **DID YOU INTERACT WITH ANY OTHER SERVICE GROUPS?**
- **HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH INTERNAL SECURITY?**
- **FOGIHAEHJ'I GJKRGW' 7793408 GRLRGWKL**
- **DID YOU FIRE YOUR WEAPON? WHAT AT?**
- **DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THE MASSACRE OF MOTIVATIONAL VID PRODUCTION CREW BBD-4?**
- **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR WEAPON-DISCHARGE EXPERIENCE?**

- SEVEN.
- HOW MANY TRAITORS WERE ELIMINATED IN THE COURSE OF THIS MISSION?
- WHAT LESSONS WERE LEARNED?
- SEVEN?
- WHICH TEAM MEMBER CONTRIBUTED THE MOST TO MISSION SUCCESS?
- WHICH OF YOUR TEAM-MATES IS A TRAITOR TO OUR WAY OF LIFE?
- BVGJ[GRJA[VQJ= TY[]J-U 9-U]

After the last 'question' there is A Long Silence. It goes on until the Troubleshooters feel compelled to say something. Just sit and look at them for, well, ages. Make them uncomfortable. Make them say something.

And then, the cheery voice of Friend Computer replaces the almost identical voice of the ATIS algorithm.

“ CONGRATULATIONS, LOYAL TROUBLESHOOTERS! YOU HAVE BEEN REASSIGNED! BOARD THE VEHICLE OUTSIDE IMMEDIATELY. ”

There is no indication of an outcome to the debriefing, and the vehicle's personnel space is a sealed unit, from which there will be no escape. If the Troubleshooters board, they will endure a bouncy and highly unpleasant journey which abruptly ends at a pile of Restricted Area tape which has been cut away. Ahead lies a strangely familiar wrecked barracks.

“ CONGRATULATIONS, LOYAL TROUBLESHOOTERS! YOU HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO RESTAFF BARRACKS 4XAF! ALL YOUR REQUIREMENTS ARE ALREADY WAITING FOR YOU. BE AWARE! YOU HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED A RELIC OF HEROIC ACTION! ENSHRINE IT! GUARD IT! PRAISE IT! USE IT WITH LOYALTY AND DEVOTION! ”

Entering the barracks, the Troubleshooters find it more or less as they left it; wrecked, with debris all over the floor. Nowhere to sleep and nothing to eat. The remains of Repair Bot 8428DJD53789 (Repurposed) are still there. The auditbot has gone.

And in the middle of the room, neatly stacked, is their Relic of Heroic Action.

Well, at least they have all the office supplies they can eat....

ACHIEVEMENTS

Venerate a relic of Heroic Action. Venerate it!!!
(50XP)

Show Zeal! Display Determination!
Be a model Troubleshooter!
(50XP)

Make sure nobody in the team is carrying
anything treasonous in their boxes...
and if someone is, make sure it's not you
(50XP)

Motivate and inspire those
of lesser clearance than you
(50XP)

Win today's 'termination with poetic
justice' award by dealing with a traitor in a
manner that fits the nature of their treason.
(100XP)

Have the right paperwork and authorisations
(100XP)