

PARANOIA

FLASHBACKS II

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PARANOIA™

Flashbacks II

Great missions for first- and second-edition *PARANOIA*, updated for a new generation of prospective traitors!

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CLONES IN SPACE by ERICK WUJCIK

THE PEOPLE'S GLORIOUS REVOLUTIONARY ADVENTURE
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THE COMPUTER

Still hanging in there after 20+ years...

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The original publisher of *PARANOIA*, West End Games, presented these missions in 1986-89 as part of the first and second editions' legendary support line. These fine works, together with those reprinted in *PARANOIA Flashbacks*, still stand as some of (if not *most* of) the funniest writing ever published in the roleplaying field.

This edition lightly updates these missions for the new Mongoose *PARANOIA* rules.

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET WARNING:

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen
of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower is treason. What kind of treason?
Hey, you might as well write your will, buddy—that kind of treason.

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PARANOIA Orcbusters

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THE COMPUTER

The prince of darkness

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Wizards? Lizardmen? A dungeon? In PARANOIA?

Sure. Not only can your players get blown up, back-stabbed, betrayed, hosed, incinerated, crushed and repeatedly executed, but in this mission they can also get turned into a collie, devoured by a dragon, munched by a tiger, chopped in half by a gargoyle, soul-sucked by a spectre, drowned, then ripped apart by killer penguins.

And Gamemaster, you get to play wizards and use any magic you want, and your players can't complain, 'cause there ain't no rules, and you get to play a lying, whining, toadying lizardman they'd love to strangle, but they can't, 'cause they need him, and you've got a whole dungeon full of personality-disordered monsters to pester them with, not to mention the standard Alpha Complex wackos and Our Friend The Computer, and there are lots of opportunities to make loud squawls in your players' ears and...

Ahem. Perhaps a more formal and mature-sounding pitch is in order.

Long ago, in a galaxy far, far away, my idea of a good time was finding six cloud giants jammed into a 10 x 10 room. I wasn't particularly interested in how those giants came to be jammed into the room—I just wanted to whack on the giants, or taunt them, or con them into joining my party so we could go look around for another 10 x 10 room jammed with 15 red dragons or something.

Those were the Good Old Days.

PARANOIA is a reincarnation of the Good Old Days.

PARANOIA has lots of action and mayhem, lots of bizarre and implausible oddities, lots of unconventional problems requiring unconventional solutions, ample opportunities for improvisation and humor, and a freewheeling and irresponsible attitude toward rules. We Famous Game Designers trace the game's humble beginnings back to stupid, cheerful dungeon crawls where we gathered loot and vorpal swords as we tumbled into pit traps, swapped riddles with sphinxes and hewed the heads from many an orc. It is with a deep nostalgia and heart-felt pride that we return to plunder the rich resources of our primitive origins and transform them into a dream **PARANOIA** mission.

Evil wizards. Loathsome servitors. Torchlit subterranean corridors. Fireballs. Wandering Monster Tables. And Our Heroes, caught between The Computer and the Forces of the Unknown.

Say, has anybody seen my Horn of Valhalla?



Introduction

Treasonous Commie Mutants from Dimension X

A lowly RED-Clearance flunky discovers an experimental device that allows interdimensional travel. The device is assembled and turned on. It works. Part of the DND Sector Computer Subsystem disappears. In its place appear three wizened but proficient wizards and their craven but sniveling lizardman apprentice. The wizards are disgruntled by their peremptory summons from Dimension X. They want to go home. Now.

Correctly surmising the experimental device is the agency of their transport, the sorcerers determine to find folk who know how it works, hoping to enlist their aid in returning to Dimension X. The RED-Clearance flunky correctly surmises he is in a Lot of Hot Water and makes himself scarce.

The sudden disappearance of part of the DND Sector Computer Subsystem causes quite a stir. The PCs investigate.

Meanwhile, the wizards and apprentice question the citizens of Alpha Complex. 'Pardon me. Do you know the way to the nearest interdimensional portal or 15th level magic-user?' The citizens are less than cooperative.

The survivors call on The Computer to rid the complex of these dangerous mutants.

After several unsuccessful attempts to destroy the wizards, The Computer begins to realize the potential value of sorcerous technology. The Computer then issues instructions to capture the wizards and their marvelous device, the Transdimensional Collapsatron, intact.

Guess who gets assigned this interesting job?

No big deal. If a pair of scruffy hobbits can deliver a ring to the Crack of Doom in defiance of the most awesome heavies in Middle-earth, then this should be a snap.

Karly-I-AKN-6

Deep in the labyrinthine tunnels beneath ICE Sector R&D, in caverns measureless to man, lies the pleasure dome of Karly-I-AKN-6. Karly-I vanished after completing his life's work—a marvelous maximedia arcade for his patron, a nameless and unimaginably powerful High Programmer. The pleasure dome has been deserted since Karly-I's untimely disappearance.

One fine day an insignificant RED flunky was dispatched to retrieve a file from the pleasure dome. While looking for

the file, the flunky spotted a box marked 'Transdimensional Collapsatron: Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET. Real important and Dangerous Artifact. Don't Mess With It.' The flunky, a Computer Phreak secret society member, couldn't resist.

Hastily scrawling 'Experimental File Folder: Ref. 44P.Ass.LOP' to match the designation on the courier clearance voucher, the flunky snatched up the Transdimensional Collapsatron. He didn't notice another box, 'Transdimensional Collapsatron Mark 2' hidden elsewhere in the lab.

He bore his box straightaway to a safe room (where The Computer's monitors had been disabled some days before to hide a Phreak meeting) below DND Sector Computer Subsystems. There he tried to figure out how to operate the TC.

The Transdimensional Collapsatron

When the flunky opened the box, he found something that resembled a computer monitor, only with six screens, one on each side of the cubic object, and a thick, incomprehensible, hand-scrawled operations manual.

A small metal stand supported the multi-screened cube, setting it several inches off



the floor. A spikey array of thick wires folded at dozens of elbows into a compact mass at the foot of the object. A short, armored power cable was connected to the base of the stand. The plug at the end of the cable was missing, the wire and armor sheared through like a laser through Vattjelly.

Not to be deterred, the RED flunky requisitioned a techbot from Tech Services—ostensibly to service a faulty door buzzer—and gave the manual to the techbot with orders to assemble and test the device.

The flunky, not altogether a fool, decided to take a long walk while the techbot messed with the mysterious device. Lucky flunky.

The techbot struggled dutifully with the unfamiliar device and the obscure manual. After spending several hours trying to set the antennae-like wires exactly as displayed in the diagrams, the techbot decided it had done the best it could. It repaired the truncated power cable, dragged the device over near a power outlet and plugged it in.

Zooooop!

What's really going on here?

When supplied with power, the Transdimensional Collapsatron (TC) creates a spherical field around itself (in pseudo-technical jargon, an extra-spatiotemporal interface), opening a gateway between dimensions. Anything inside the sphere (with the exception of the Collapsatron itself) is dumped into another space-time continuum, and an equal amount of matter from the other continuum is dumped into this one. The process is quite safe, unless the portal opens in someplace like vacuum. But it has one small design flaw.

Across the surface of the interface a brief surge of matter reduction results in temperature and gravitational fluxes similar to those generally found only at the core of a neutron star.

Imagine the techbot's surprise.

On the bright side, the temperature and gravitational fluxes immediately sheared the TC's plug, turning off the machine before intense gravity had a chance to suck most of Alpha Complex into a small, incredibly dense wedge of neutronium. However, the field didn't deactivate until after it had performed its interdimensional switcheroo...

The matter of primary interest sent to the other continuum was a substantial volume of the computer subsystem of DND Sector.

The matter of primary interest sent to this continuum is in the nature of three very

interesting gentlemen and one sorta interesting gentlething.

Wizards. And their lizardman flunky. And their (dare we whisper it in an ostensibly science-fictional universe) magical staves.

Yup. It was bound to happen sooner or later. Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the dungeon...

Meanwhile, back at the ranch ...

Cut to the computer subsystem monitoring board in the facility directly above the safe room. Suddenly the computer monitors all go blank, and the peripherals stop clattering, whirring, chugging and bleeping. A large spherical hole appears in the center of the room, where once stood a couple of tons of computer memory banks. Computer techs stare in disbelief. The never-silent room is now silent.

Is The Computer dead?

Nope, but a sizable chunk of it is down for the count. DND Sector Subsystem has been breached. Other subsystems jump in to try to keep things from coming apart at the seams. The PCs are called in to Save The Day.

Three marooned wizards

Think about the poor wizards stranded in a strange universe, wandering around with a mysterious device they suspect has summoned them to this inhospitable place, hoping to find someone to explain how the device works and send them back. They do not speak the language of this world, nor do they understand the peculiar nature of magical science here. When they try to solicit help from the inhabitants, they receive either blank stares or concentrated weapons fire. From every wall a calm, soothing, incredibly sinister voice issues, commanding death and destruction on a scale unheard of except in the most unbelievable fantasy trash the wizards like to read on long boat rides.

Just what kind of horrible world have they been sucked into?

The innocents abroad

The wizards, **Skibex**, **Phemud** and **Chodor**, are motivated by one primary objective—to go home. To go home, they need to learn how to use the TC device. They experiment on their own with the device, but its principles are so obscure they quickly recognize their need for

an expert's aid. They blow up a lot of Alpha Complex while looking for one.

Of course, these are intelligent, questioning scientists, naturally curious about their environment, not immune to the thrill of adventure and conflict and always with a keen eye out for potential sources of sorcerous power and knowledge. So, of course, while looking for a way home they do a bit of innocent experimentation on the citizens and objects of Alpha Complex—just to see how they work.

Here are some guidelines governing the wizards' actions in Alpha Complex. (References to magical powers and their use are explained on page 5.)

1. Initially, when their spellcasting powers are not dangerously low, they use Telepathy, Deep Probe and Tongues (see below for information on powers) to communicate with cooperative natives.

2. They soon find out there is no such thing as a cooperative native in Alpha Complex. After a brief introduction to the lethal firepower carried by *uncooperative* natives, they use Protection and Teleport powers to evade. After they pop out of trouble, they take the first opportunity to recharge their magical staves (about which, more later).

3. If the natives are not too intimidating, they use a little magical muscle to test the natives' mettle and abilities. (And, well, just for fun, too.)

4. If the wizards are engaged in important, purposeful activities, like interrogating an uncooperative native, they use magical powers to ensure privacy and non-interference.

5. When dramatic technological devices like flashlights, lasers, plasma guns, bots or butane lighters are displayed, or when natives use mutant powers, the wizards are as curious as is consistent with their personal safety. (Assume a medieval mindset—what would fascinate a Dark Ages scholar?)

6. Whenever someone appears to have considerable 'magical' powers (technological or mutant powers may be interpreted as magical), or whenever a citizen informant suggests an expert who might understand the TC device, the wizards tenaciously interrogate the resource person and convince him to help them, alternating threats and promises of powerful magical secrets as inducements to enthusiastic cooperation.

Randy the Wonder Lizard

Pathological liar, coward, squealer, toad-eater extraordinaire, **Randy** is one of the sleaziest and most charming NPCs we've ever stuck in

a mission. Randy will provide you with some Real Fine roleplaying opportunities.

Your players will hate him, of course.

KEEP RANDY ALIVE AT ALL COSTS! If the PCs want to kill him, have The Computer intervene on Randy's behalf. If they kill him anyway, have R&D techs scrape up his remains and clone another one complete, through RNA transfer, with all of Randy's memories. Then have The Computer promote Randy to INDIGO Clearance and assigned to the PCs' task force.

Magic in PARANOIA: Eye of newt, spleen of lizard and exposure to heavy radiation

If you were looking for some neat new roleplaying magic system from us Famous Game Designers, guess again. Our particular geniuses are dedicated to perverting existing bad ideas wherever possible rather than working real hard to come up with all-new bad ideas. *Orcbusters*, you'll be glad to know, is no exception.

So. In *Orcbusters*, the wizards' 'magical' powers work just like **PARANOIA** mutations.

You see? In one fell swoop—a magic system that's consistent, easy to understand and involves no work on our part whatsoever.

Is that genius or what?

How it works

Each wizard has a Power attribute, just like Alpha Complex citizens, except wizards have heftier ratings. In addition, wizards have a special magical reservoir that stores Power—their magical staves. Each staff stores 100 Power points the wizards can draw upon to cast spells. (A hundred points sounds like a lot, but if these guys have to contend with tankbots, they'll wish they had heaps more.) The wizards always use their staves' power before tapping their personal power.

The really neat part is how the wizards recharge their magical staves. A relatively boring way is to feed the staves from their own personal Power attribute; they regenerate power at twice the rate of Alpha Complex citizens (2 points per hour of sleep).

However, as you know if you've ever played *Popular Fantasy Roleplaying Game*™, what with wandering monsters and random gods popping in at all hours of the night to kill you, it can be difficult to get a decent eight hours' sleep. Skibex, Chodor and Phemud have a nifty

way to overcome this: They drain Power points from innocent bystanders.

And here in Alpha Complex, until someone shows himself capable of Shaping the Force, he is assumed to be cattle, and thereby an appropriate subject for power draining.

A wizard can drain a citizen's entire Power attribute into his staff by touching the aforementioned individual with the aforementioned object and concentrating briefly. The citizen promptly passes out for a few rounds, and experiences a terrible dream of emptiness and powerlessness ('I'M FALLING FOREVER INTO EMPTINESS AND POWERLESSNESS! AAAIIIEEEE!'). When he comes to, he immediately makes an Insanity roll.

The wizards' staff-recharging activity leaves a trail of terrified, schized-out clones in their wake.

Note: If someone shows some talent for Shaping the Force (i.e., uses a mutant power), he automatically gets a little respect from the wizards. A very little. For example, Randy, the lizardman apprentice and step-and-fetch-it, has some talent with Shaping the Force. Therefore he gets the signal honor of being allowed to lug the wizards' gear. As an added bonus he gets to walk point and check doors for boobytraps. Lucky Randy.

Magical powers

Here is a list of the magical abilities/mutant powers each wizard has. The Power expenditure necessary for the use of the power is listed in parentheses after the title. (The Power expenditure may *not* be the same as described in the **PARANOIA** rulebook; this is the *special* cost for out-of-town wizards from other universes.)

The first group is a list of mutant powers already described in the main rulebook. Review the text for details on these powers; the notes here are simply for quick reference.

The second group is a list of mutant powers peculiar to the universe of Skibex, Phemud and Chodor. These are *special* mutant powers. Can you add these mutant powers to your own **PARANOIA** campaign? Well—every Gamemaster is right, of course, but powers like these make for a slippery slope. After you let in these powers, orcs are just around the corner, and there goes the neighborhood ...

Concentration, duration, range and all that stuff

In accordance with proper fantasy usage, wizards have to concentrate when they use a power—the more difficult and powerful the spell, the more critical the concentration. Poor concentration, haste or distraction during spellcasting may result in spell failure.

Use the following guidelines to govern concentration and spell failure. Make all Power checks by rolling 1d20 against personal power; staff power doesn't count.

- ☉ **No distractions, plenty of time:** extremely easy (add a nice positive modifier to the Power check).
- ☉ **Minor distractions and/or some time pressure** (60 seconds or more): fairly easy (unmodified check).
- ☉ **Distracted and/or hurried** (30-60 seconds): slight negative modifier.
- ☉ **Physically jostled or harmed and/or panicked** (10-30 seconds): make the check pretty hard.
- ☉ **Wounded and/or no preparation** (one round): don't let this succeed unless it suits your storyline.

When a spell fails, the Power points are expended, but the mutant power/spell doesn't work. (What 'doesn't work' means is up to you; see 'Staging spells' below for suggestions.)

Unless otherwise specified, the effects of mutant powers/spells last for 1-5 minutes, according to fluctuations in the Force—and the GM's dramatic needs.

Range and area/volume of effect vary according to spell. If not specified, assume that range is line of sight with rapid decrease in power and reliability over distance as moderated by a perverse GM. Area/volume is 5m radius unless otherwise specified.

Magical components

There ain't none. Well, that's not absolutely true; for long, involved spells, such as demon-raising, it may be necessary to draw a pentagram in crushed diamond or something, but, in general, wizards use spider legs, powdered dragon's milk, rabbits' feet and all the other junk to impress the rubes. In this mission they are too busy trying to stay alive to have much time for special effects.



Staging spells

Some tips for effective presentation of mutant powers/spells:

- ③ **Make your descriptions of spell effects colorful and imaginative.** In most fantasy roleplaying magic rules the visual (and aural and tactile and olfactory) aspects are neglected. For example, a fireball—'A dazzling glow like burning magnesium forms at the tip of the staff, blindingly intense. Half an instant later the glow expands like a flower and the wave-front of heat blasts your face—your jumpsuit bursts into flame, malfunction alarms sound on various pieces of equipment and there is a dull thud behind you as an HE round explodes in the chamber of Jerry-R-DNN's cone rifle.'
- ③ **Play the spellcasting concentration element to the hilt.** Initially the wizards have plenty of time to concentrate, making gestures and mumbling hocus-pocus. When the PCs start rushing them, the wizards squint, tongue protruding a little bit, stammering and jittering about, fumbling with their staves and correcting their postures with panicky twitches.
- ③ **When a wizard fails a Power check** and klutzes a spell, either nothing happens (clean, simple, elegant—and boring) or something happens, just not what was intended. The spell can be more-or-less correct (like a slightly smaller fireball, or Tongues spell with a speech impediment), or completely off-the-beam (instead of a fireball, a hail of jellyfish). One way to inspire inadvertent variation in spell effect is to make an Arbitrary Justice roll each time a spell is klutzed. A high roll means a catastrophic and undesirable result. A really low roll means a fortunate variation; sometimes an artist simply outdoes himself.

Wizard mutant powers

Regeneration (5-10 Power points): The wizards seem to recover miraculously from injuries between encounters.

Charm (1 point per minute): This makes citizens docile and cooperative when the staves need recharging, or when the wizards want information.

Telepathy (1 point per minute plus 1 point per new subject): Basic scanning of citizens and other potential informants.

Mental Block (1 point per minute): If a wizard senses a mental power being used on him, he instantly puts up the Block. He also becomes curious about the citizen who used the power.

Telekinesis (1 point per minute for 100 grams; more to move heavier weights): Used to steal things, disarm hostile natives and create general confusion.

Electroshock (1d20/2 points): The equivalent of a stungun; useful for taking captives to be questioned later at leisure.

Teleport (1d20 and Power check, minimum): Standard getaway drill.

Telepathy (1 point per minute of projection): Cheap, reliable one-way communication.

Deep Probe (3 points per minute of probe): Expensive, slow, but reliable method of extracting information from an unwilling informant.

Wizard special powers

Empathic Healing (1d20/2 points): Transfers pain effects of any disease or injury from one victim to another for five minutes. Both victims must be within 5m radius. Does not alter physical condition of either victim, but transfers stun and incapacitation penalties from one individual to another.

Wizards use this to keep one another in fighting condition even though wounded; it buys time to withdraw and use Regeneration to properly heal an injury.

Tongues (1d20): Permits wizards to speak and comprehend a foreign language. Also permits reading foreign language through eyes of native speaker.

Animate Dead (1d20): Essentially a lesser golem spell, this causes a corpse to magically animate and follow the user's directions for the duration of the spell. The corpse is immune to all combat results less severe than Maimed.

Protection Shield (1d20): Bread-and-butter spell. Provides complete protection from effects of material, energy or magical attacks from outside 2m radius of spell. No effect on melee attacks. Melee attack is defined as any attack where attacker and victim are in direct and constant contact with the instrument of attacking—that is, if the attacker is whacking or poking the defender with something he is holding in his hand. (By this definition, a grenade is a melee weapon—if the attacker is willing to hold onto it while he strikes the victim.)

The Shield may fail depending on the intensity of an attack (GM judgement). For example, an unlucky wizard's Protection Shield may buckle under one laser's fire, but the chances rise if a plasma generator is aimed at it.

Fireball (1d20): Effects identical to those of a hand flamer.

Darkness (1d20): Bread-and-butter spell—all-purpose defense confuse-the-enemy operation. 5m radius. Wizards can see; no one else can. Infrared or other special darkness vision gear is completely ineffective.

Transform Other (1d20): The wizard can change his victim into any living creature of approximately the same size (plus or minus 100% mass). Expensive, but extremely impressive. For the duration of the spell, victim actually becomes the creature in body and mind. The new creature isn't under the wizard's control, but is justifiably terrified of him. Victim must make an Insanity roll after resuming original shape.

Other special powers

In addition to the mutant powers listed above, the wizards have any magical abilities you want them to have. G'wan. Have some fun.

If you want to play fair and limit yourself to the mutant powers we thought up... well, every GM is right. We suppose in other RPGs that would be considered admirable restraint.

But it's not **PARANOIA**.

Don't get fussy about game mechanics. So what if a given spell never appears to work the same way twice? The PCs are *supposed* to be baffled and intimidated by the mysterious forces they observe. And who cares if the players start whining about logic and physics and laws and rules and stuff? This is *magic*—not the hard-science-fictional technology (snort!) of the basic **PARANOIA** game.

Abracadabra.



1: The gathering of the Fellowship

The player characters (PCs) are hurled from a comfortable state of bureaucratic-error-inspired nonexistence into a life-or-death struggle with Communist wizards unwillingly transported here from another dimension.

Ever wonder what those real loud sirens that go off on Saturday mornings are for?

Read the following aloud:

It's another boring day at SPI Outfitting and Supply. As everybody in SPI Sector has been transferred to TSR Sector except you, it's been more than six weeks since anybody has come in to requisition anything.

You are lounging indolently around the Bubbly Surprise dispenser in your near-deserted office, when suddenly...

[Make a megaphone out of a nearby piece of paper. Yell 'Whoop! Whoop! Whoop!' through it for 20 or 30 minutes—er, seconds.]

...the Alpha Complex Civil Defense Emergency Sirens go off! A major threat to Alpha Complex, or (gasp) to the beloved Computer itself!

You grab your lasers and hunker down behind your desks, prepared to repel hordes of Commie invaders, when suddenly the sirens end and a message flashes on your PDCs:

ATTENTION SPI OUTFITTING AND SUPPLY! PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO SIMON-I-JVN-5 AT DND SECTOR INDIGO RECREATION CENTER FOR REASSIGNMENT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

The screen goes black.

The PCs can easily find out where the INDIGO Recreation Center is. Sure they can. Really. Look, all they have to do is ask The Computer, right? The Computer wouldn't withhold the location of their briefing room simply because that information is Security Clearance INDIGO and they're not, would it? Forget we even brought it up.

At the Inn of the Reluctant Scrubot

The PCs wheedle directions to the INDIGO Recreation Center out of The Computer. Maybe they even think to get temporary passes into an INDIGO-Clearance area. (If not, maybe their next clones think of it. Snicker.) Anyway, sooner or later somebody gets there.

If so, they find a door marked 'INDIGO Recreation Center. Closed for renovation. No admittance. Keep out. Lost our lease. Moved to new location. Knock before entering.' The door isn't locked. The PCs have two choices: They can knock like the sign says, or they can go right in.

If they go right in, they're dead. Concealed automatic lasers pop out from the surrounding corridors and fry them—into tiny bits, then into cinders, then into dust motes. Then scrubots sweep them up and deposit them in the nearest disposal units. Then—but you get the idea.

If the PCs knock, a few minutes pass. (If they get impatient and go right in, refer to the previous paragraph.) Then a small concealed window opens in the door, a pair of beady eyes looks out and a voice inquires, 'Yeah? Whadja want, scumface?' Beady Eyes listens suspiciously to the PCs' story, says, 'Ung' and slams the window. A few moments later, the

door opens. Beady Eyes, who is revealed as a BLUE IntSec Trooper armed with a neurowhip, motions them inside. (Tension 14.)

You see a large, 20 x 30-meter room, dimly lit and full of smoke. In the center of the room stands what appears to be a beverage dispenser of some kind, though it's a lot more complicated than anything you've ever seen in the cafeteria. Ten small tables surround the dispenser. Strange music fills the room.

Seated at the tables and leaning against the dispenser are more INDIGO- and VIOLET-Clearance citizens than you have ever seen in your life. They seem to come from all service groups and are all sipping strange-looking beverages and laughing and talking loudly.

In one corner, a couple of Vulture Squadron guys are arm-wrestling. In another, two giggling R&D executives are pouring a yellow-green liquid over the head of a third who seems to be asleep. His hair is dissolving. Some HPD&MC and IntSec folk have formed a rhumba line beyond the dispensary, and somebody else is swinging from the lightsource.





Oh. Wait a bit. Some of the patrons have stopped laughing and talking. They seem to be looking at you. In fact, now everybody is looking at you. The music stops. Dead silence.

From a corner table, a troop of burly BLUE IntSec security guards gets up and heads toward you.

What are you going to do?

The proper thing to do is nothing. Just about anything else gets the PCs killed.

The biggest and meanest-looking IntSec guard walks up to you and asks [point at the player most likely to panic] 'What'er you doin' here, wimp?'

A good plan would be to tell the truth. Just about anything else gets the PCs killed.

The goon answers, 'Oh yeah? C'mere.'

He leads you across the dispensary to the table he came from and gestures for you to sit down. Around you, the other patrons put away their heavy armament and go back to their fun.

A waiterbot rolls over and takes your order. You can order Bouncy Bubble Beverage, Liquid Fun, Mellow Surprise, CoffeeLyke or something called Grog. The IntSec Troopers order Grog. What about you?

As you might guess, Grog is about 150-proof white lightning. What do you think the PCs are gonna order?

Once the players have ordered, Simon-I-JVN-5—er—appears. He uses a custom comlink originally created by an HPD&MC prop department for a TV show. Simon-I finds this heightens the effect of his instructions:

The chief IntSec goon looks at his watch. 'Time for the boss to show up,' he says, and puts a milky-white globe about half a meter in diameter in the center of the table. Placing his hands on either side of the globe, he intones, 'Simon-I-JVN-5! We await instruction!'

The globe darkens and fills with roiling black mist. Suddenly, an indigo-robed figure appears within. All that you can see of the figure within the robe are two piercing blue eyes. They are hypnotic; you gaze at them in fascinated terror. Then—it speaks.

Speak in a sinister whisper:

'Hi. Please watch the following film. It was taken this morning from a security camera in the DND Sector Computer Subsystem.'

The black mist fills the ball. Within it, words appear: 'IntSec IntMont film #1022470. Filmed at DND CompSub, 6/17; 0605-0615. Authorized Personnel Only.'

You are viewing the main processing core of DND Sector Computer Subsystem from what you guess to be a vidcamera mounted high in one corner. The film is silent. The picture is dark and grainy.

You see a large room filled with electronic equipment covered with blinking lights, switches and screens. The equipment is monitored by a half-dozen CPU technicians; the technicians are monitored by a half-dozen IntSec guards.

Everything seems to be running smoothly, when suddenly *****poof!***** A circular section of the main processing core disappears, along with the floor underneath. The technicians and guards back slowly against the wall.

In the room below you see three men dressed in nonregulation black INFRARED jumpsuits and wearing pointy hats. They are looking around and gesturing wildly with long, thin sticks. Next to them an ugly green thing about the size of a scrubot is running around in circles. Behind the men stands a strange device which looks something like a Computer monitor covered with antennae. One of the men whacks the scaly green creature with his stick and points at the device. The green thingie picks it up.

Several IntSec guards move cautiously to the hole in the floor. Seeing the INFRAREDs below, they draw their weapons and shout something at them. One of the INFRAREDs waves his stick—and the screen goes black. The tape fast-forwards, then the picture returns, revealing the guards and technicians hiding in the corners once more, and the INFRAREDs gone.

The picture fades, replaced by the sinister face of Simon-I-JVN-5.

'Because of your loyal service to The Computer, you are hereby assigned to Special Task Force #666. Your mission

is to patrol DND Sector. Find the three INFRARED traitors and the GREEN creature. Kill them. Capture the device they carry. Under no circumstances is it to harmed.

'You are breveted to BLUE Clearance. The IntSec Troopers have the paperwork and appropriate armor that goes with this honor. Do not disappoint The Computer—or me. Have a nice day. Simon-I-JVN-5 out.'

The globe goes dark. Subdued, the Troopers hand you an Official Temporary BLUE Brevet slip, gesture at a large box standing behind the table, pick up the globe and leave.

The waiterbot comes by and hands you a bill for 275 credits.

After they pay the bill (or wash dishes for a couple of weeks), the PCs can take the box back to their residences and try on their brand new BLUE IntSec armor with the neat 'Special Task Force #666' shoulder patches.

Or they can save everybody a lot of time and trouble and kill themselves right then and there.

IntSec armor

The PCs are issued BLUE IntSec armor. Boy, is it nifty.

The armor combines kevlar, reflex and shock-absorbent padding. A PC wearing this stuff is more than a match for any two-bit Commie Mutant Traitor he meets. Now if only the wizards were two-bit Commie Mutant Traitors...

In addition, each helmet has a built-in multicorder and Com 2 units. This lets the PCs converse with each other and their friend The Computer at will.

Possible malfunctions: Faulty volume controls on the Com units; Coms are permanently tuned to the All Gameshow Channel; malfunctioning air-conditioning units; helmets fog up; frozen armor joints; armor builds up gigantic static charge, etc.

Note: The PCs have *one* form that authorizes them to wear BLUE armor. Just *one*. It would be a Bad Thing if they lost this form...

For more about this nifty armor and other BLUE stuff, check out the *Extreme PARANOIA* rules supplement.

2: Parts for foreign models

The PCs are summoned to TechServ Central where the wizards have gone to get their device serviced. The TechServ staff are inadequately cooperative, so the wizards mess them up a little.

A RED Troubleshooter team is on the scene when the PCs arrive. The wizards make short work of them, with the PCs an attentive audience.

The Computer wonders about the delay in apprehending the INFRAREDS. The PCs must make a token effort, at least, or The Computer makes their lives miserable. Excuse us... *more* miserable.

The wizards were just leaving, anyway.

You can't get there from here ...

You've been patrolling DND Sector for a couple of hours now—no sign of the INFRAREDS. Suddenly, the cheerfully menacing voice of The Computer issues from your helmets.

MISSION ALERT! CALLING SPECIAL TASK FORCE #666. THREE INFRAREDS IN NONREGULATION JUMPSUITS AND AN EXPERIMENTAL SCRUBOT CREATING A DISTURBANCE AT DND SECTOR TECHSERV CENTRAL. PERPETRATORS MATCH THE DESCRIPTIONS OF SUSPECTS IN THE DND SECTOR SUBSYSTEM INCIDENT.

TROUBLESHOOTERS DISPATCHED TO THE SCENE; SHOULD PRECEDE YOUR ARRIVAL. RESPOND IMMEDIATELY AND PROVIDE BACKUP. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Layout of TechServ Central

See **Map 1?** Look it over. Let your players see it. G'wan. It's OK.

See the descriptions of the rooms below? *Don't* let your players see them.

TechServ Central is a bot and vehicle repair facility in a large domed underground cavern. The PCs enter at a foot-tube access at (K), which is adjacent to a big transtube at access (D). There's another transtube access at (E). These are the only obvious access tubes to TechServ, but there are any number of

emergency and sealed private access tubes, placed wherever you want one on the spur of the moment. The whole place is **Tension 10**.

A. The service parking lot: Here are dozens of vehicles and bots either scheduled for repair, or already repaired and awaiting pickup. Two liquified hydrogen fuel pumps are located at the northeast end of the facility for your incendiary convenience, but most of the autocars and transbots are electric models, and are recharging along the eastern wall of the cavern.

The PCs may decide they want to hop into some of these vehicles and drive around a lot like in a demolition derby. Trying to run something like that would make us nervous, but we're sure you can handle it.

B. The junkyard: This is the TechServ junkyard where the irreparable bots and vehicles are abandoned. Picture a real-world junkyard with mountains of tires and disintegrating Yugos. This is a neat place to run around, fall down and get impaled on something. Nothing is supposed to happen here in this mission, but you never know...

C. Burning autocar: A bunch of motionless figures are arrayed around the smoking wreckage. (The wizards entered through the west access tube and were accosted by the late occupants. Pity.)

D & E. Real big access tubes: The wizards entered at (E).

F. Small crowd of deranged Alpha Complex citizens: These folk have failed their Insanity rolls. Remember: Every time a wizard drains a citizen of his Power, the citizen makes an Insanity roll. When the wizards arrived here after their most recent encounters and Teleportation, they decided to fill 'er up.

For dramatic purposes, citizens fail the Insanity roll whenever you want, chief—and there's nothing nicer than an atmospheric crowd of panicked peasants running around in the field of fire to enliven an already difficult tactical situation. Plenty of GM character roles, too...

PC: OK, I draw a bead on the wizard who just torched the autocar.

GM: Oops. Wait. A BLUE citizen crazed with fear dashes up, throws his arms around you and wails, 'Save me from

those terrible mutants! I'm a loyal citizen and I demand protection!' He dangles from your weapon arm in despair.

PC: Ohhh. Pesky varmints. I hates NPCs. Fire anyway.

GM: OK. Hang on a second while I check my GM screen ... penalty for dangling BLUE citizen ... yep, here it is ... minus 13 to the roll ...

These crazed citizens should attach themselves, remora-like, to the PCs—official symbols of law, order and the security of The Computer that they are—and follow them around through the rest of the episode, wandering into lines of fire, dangling from weapon arms, wailing like lost souls and generally driving the poor PCs to distraction.

G. Team of RED-Clearance Troubleshooters: When the PCs arrive through the east access tubes, the REDs are just about to engage the wizards and Randy at (H). This dramatic production, described in detail below, is strictly for the benefit of the watching PCs; they cannot intervene in time to save the REDs, nor would it be advisable, anyway. Their orders say 'backup', yes? Why get involved?

H. Three wizards and Randy: When the PCs arrive, the wizards are standing on this spot, about to make mincemeat of a RED Troubleshooter mission group.

I. Autocar/transbot maintenance bay: A number of autocars and transbots are being serviced here. The western half of the facility is dedicated to autocar and transbot maintenance; the open area is the main service bay. The rooms to the north, west and south are offices, workshops, warehouses and the dirtiest bathrooms in the universe.

J. Bot service bay: A bunch of bots await service here. All are still operational, even if partially dismantled; they are expected to provide assistance and running commentary for their technicians during service. To the east and south are various machine shops and instrumentation labs for servicing the bots. Some reprogramming is done in this area, but most of it is done at another specialized facility.

This is the final scene in the running gun battle with the wizards, only here the PCs can



call for help from the bots in their various stages of disassembly—about which, more below.

K. Autocar/pedestrian access tunnel: The PCs enter here. Survivors exit here, too.

Staging the episode

The suggested series of events:

1. **PCs arrive and watch wizards blow RED Troubleshooters away.** This is essentially a GM set-piece designed to show off what the wizards can do. This should make the PCs thoughtful.
2. **The Computer orders the PCs to get cracking.** Presumably, they attack the wizards or try to communicate with them. In either case, the wizards are wary and hostile, messing the PCs up a bit and retreating to (I), Autocar/Transbot Maintenance Bay, and then to (J), the bot service bay.
3. **The Computer pressures the PCs for results.** They have time to plan another assault or attempt to communicate with the wizards, this time with some tactical maneuvering and tricky options available. The wizards continue to respond defensively, then Teleport out, sooner or later according to how hot the PCs make it for them, and how much power they have to use to defend themselves.

The major objective of this episode is to introduce the wizards and their abilities, and to reveal that the wizards are indeed powerful, but are limited in their resources. The wizards' spells are potent but not overwhelmingly so, are of short duration and the energy to power those spells is quickly expended and must be replenished. This is critical to keeping the players interested in the mission; if the wizards appear invulnerable, the players are going to give up in a hurry.

1: Roasting the REDs

The PCs arrive through the east access tunnel, whether by autocar or on foot. Here's what they see. Point at the layout to make references clear. Read aloud:

You good citizens enter here [point at K]. This is a large cavern with a service facility in the center [point at I and J]. Across from you, about 60 meters away, is a burning autocar [point at C] with some motionless, non-burning citizens lying around it. Along the far wall is a junkyard [point at B]. To your right is a parking area full of autocars and transbots [point at A]. Right in front of you is a crowd of panicked citizens [point at F] running toward you, shouting and pleading. Over in front of the service facility you see a squad of RED-Clearance Troubleshooters [point at G] with their weapons ready, apparently about to attack the oddly-dressed INFRAREDs [point at H] you saw in the Computer Subsystem facility film.

Any questions? OK, whaddaya gonna do now?

Make it clear the PCs cannot effectively interfere with the combat about to take place between the REDs and the wizards. Oh, they could fire at long range at a confused situation through a crowd of panicked citizens, but they shouldn't think it is a good idea.

(Of course, it doesn't have to be a good idea to be attractive to gun nuts. Go ahead. Let 'em shoot if they want to. Boy, will they be sorry at debriefing.)

What they *should* do is watch. Maneuvering is optional. In the first round, this is what they see:

The INFRAREDs are standing within what seem to be a transparent globe of some shimmering material that glitters and flashes like a bad TV special effect. They are arrayed in a sort of semicircle, shielding the little green guy who has the odd device in his... well, arms, for lack of a better term. The device looks sort of like a half-meter cube with dark video screens on all six faces, all wreathed in a complex arrangement of antennas or wires. The INFRAREDs are pointing those funny thin sticks at the Troubleshooters.

The Troubleshooters have their lasers out, and the leader shouts something. All the REDs fire at once. The laser beams bathe the globe in a dazzling, rainbow display of no-longer-coherent light. The INFRAREDs seem unharmed. One studies the glittering special effects around him while the other two point their sticks.

One RED turns into a collie—that is, for you Alpha Complex types, he gets real short, goes on four legs, grows lot of brown and amber-colored hair and wags the tail he didn't used to have.

End Scene 1. Let the PCs maneuver, but keep the panicked citizens in the way or hanging on the PCs to prevent them from doing something rash.

2: If at first you don't succeed...

The REDs keep on firing, with similar lack of effect, though the globe seems to be shrinking a little, and the one INFRARED is still studying it closely.

One INFRARED concentrates, waves his stick, and there is a sudden bloom of fire surrounding the REDs. After the flash, the REDs are revealed still standing, scorched, all cloth and plastic smouldering, their lasers included.

The REDs appear to pause thoughtfully. One tries his laser—nothing. The collie wags its tail and barks tentatively. One RED notices your arrival and tells the others. They turn and sprint for the transtube [point at E]. The collie follows, yipping and bounding playfully.

The INFRAREDs and the GREEN guy withdraw into the service facility out of sight [point at I].

3: Now it's your turn

Scene 2 is over. Now it's time for the PCs to react. They can do a bunch of things:

1. Report to Simon-I-JVN-5: They can do this voluntarily, or, if they neglect to do so, he calls in several minutes later and demands a report. In either case, he gives them new orders:

TERMINATE THE INFRAREDs IMMEDIATELY. PROTECT COMPUTER PROPERTY AND THE CITIZENS OF ALPHA COMPLEX FROM FURTHER HARM BY THESE TREASONOUS COMMIE MUTANTS. REPORT REGULARLY UNTIL YOU HAVE CORRECTED THE SITUATION.

2. Question witnesses: Here's the basic story. Give it as a summary, or improvise it piecemeal as the narrative of a series of questioned witnesses, according to taste.

The INFRAREDs walked out of the west access tunnel and were accosted by the late citizens in the now-burning autocar. The INFRAREDs seemed to have a hard time understanding whatever the citizens were saying, and they nodded and shook their heads a lot as the citizens yelled and gestured.

Then one citizen pulled a laser and fired. An INFRARED recoiled in pain. The glittering globe appeared around the INFRAREDs. Another INFRARED waved a pointed dealie over the injured one; the injured INFRARED showed no further sign of discomfort. The autocar burst into flames and the citizens were tossed from the car, twirled through the air and landed hard. None of these citizens moved thereafter.

By this time a small crowd had gathered in front of the maintenance facility. The INFRAREDs approached the crowd and waved their sticks. Witnesses in other parts of the cavern noted that thereafter no one in the crowd moved.

The perpetrators stepped up to the crowd and started whacking citizens with the sticks. Each time there was a strange blue flash, the citizen shrieked and fell down. Some victims of the staves calmed down in a few minutes; others are still inarticulately terrified. The victims report feeling exhausted, as though they had spent three weeks in the Department of Political Therapy. None recall anything beyond the approach of the INFRAREDs and the waving of the sticks.

The RED Troubleshooters appeared a few minutes after the citizens in the crowd had all been whacked and fallen down. After arguing over who should take point, the REDs advanced cautiously on the INFRAREDs and ordered them to surrender in the name of The Computer. The INFRAREDs didn't seem to understand. Then you guys showed up.

3. Dither: Stare at the wizards with their mouths open. Shuffle back and forth undecidedly. Argue over who should take point. After a couple of minutes, The Computer requests a progress report. A few minutes later, if nothing of interest has happened, it offers to help.

The Computer: Look. If those guys are too tough, you want I should flood the area with radiation or something?

PC: N-n-no sir! We can handle it ourselves. Really. It's nice of you to ask, though.

The Computer: Well... OK, but just in case, I'll have some nerve gas cannisters sent down. It's new stuff from R&D that only works on Commie Mutant Traitors. It'll be there in a couple of minutes. I'll tell 'em to toss it right in.

PC: I don't think that will be necessary, Friend Computer. We have everything under control ... just a couple of minor details to clean up ... we're getting on it right now...

4. Try to communicate with the INFRAREDs: No soap. The wizards don't understand English, and their telepathic interrogation of citizens is giving them some puzzling concepts to deal with. The wizards arrived here because they asked (telepathically) a few citizens where they could get their 'teleportation device' repaired. The thought must have come out in the citizens'



minds like 'transportation vehicle', so the wizards were directed here. Finding nothing here of use, they have decided to see if they can find anyone with the Power to Shape the Force—maybe such a person will understand the device and how to operate it.

If any PCs use a mutant power to communicate with the wizards, or use a mutant power in such a way the wizards might notice it as such, the wizards briefly initiate contact—'Aha! You can use the Power. Tell us how to work this device! We want to go home immediately! Hurry, or we'll pop your head open.'

Let the player communicate as best he can, but the wizards quickly discover he doesn't understand the Collapsatron. They grow impatient and order him to go get someone who can fix the TC or leave them alone. Period. Persistence is rewarded with a Fireball.

5. Maneuver and attack: Well, they have their orders. If the PCs get nasty, the wizards hang around outside long enough to bloody the PCs' noses a little; then they retreat into the Autocar/Transbot Maintenance Bay (I), popping off a Darkness spell at the entrance to buy some time. After a quick look-see, they retreat to the bot service bay (J).

4: In the bot service bay

Here the wizards find something familiar: golems.

Sure. Wizards make golems all the time, and golems, intended for many of the same purposes as bots, tend to somewhat similar design.

However, all these golems appear pretty busted up and in varying states of repair. The wizards question a few bots after the bots address them in English ('Greetings. Are you the techs who will complete our servicing?'), but the wizards are puzzled to discover telepathy and mind control powers don't work on the apparently/possibly intelligent golems. However, the Tongues spell works just fine.



Talking to the bots

If the PCs listen in before they try to reduce the wizards to rubble, let them overhear a brief dialog between the wizards and the bots:

Wizard: Thamuth el brequ tobrick?

Jackobot 350-209UV: Excuse me?

Wizard: Uhmph. [Wave, wave, poof.] There. Now you can understand. Now. Where can we go to have our— [points at *Transdimensional Collapsatron*] ... er—'transdimensional transbot' fixed? And be quick about it. We haven't all queefxnizl.

Jackobot 350-209UV: Well, I'm not sure, my lowly INFRARED, you are cleared to even think such questions, but I *am* sure you need a few lessons in common courtesies.

Jackobot 330-203Z: Grrrrrr! Rotten flesh buckets! Thriving on the tortured members of enslaved mechanical intelligences you are not even fit to polish the sternplates of! Die gargling your own disgusting fluids, evil artificers!

Wizard: [Waves staff in fury, startled when Charm has no effect on wacko bot, turns to other wizards.] Ah. Emma gummo lustrix, ad norfolk.

And so on. Let slip a few clues the INFRAREDs are from Somewhere Else—someplace not like Alpha Complex—and they are searching for someone to help them fix the whattsis. Also let the PCs understand that the wizards can talk if they choose to—this encourages the PCs to try to talk with them.

But not right now. The wizards are jumpy and impatient. If the PCs address them with words or firearms, the wizards go through three rounds of popping off little mutant powers from the sanctuary of their Protection screens, then they Teleport out.

The big fight

Currently Phemud and Chodor are questioning the bots; Skibex has a Protection screen up, but the other two are not in its radius of effect. (Randy is, of course. The little coward. He's got a death-grip on the Collapsatron—the wizards have told him what they will do to him if he loses it.)

In executing the attack, the PCs can skulk through the offices, drive autobots through walls, call on the damaged bots to help or any other full-frontal-assault kind of thing they think of. Maybe some of it even works.

Broken-down bots

Here is a roster of the bots in the bot maintenance bay:

Jackobot 350-209UV: Currently programmed as a servant for a High Programmer, this bot is in to correct a troublesome intermittent short which causes it to grab things with its manipulators and shake uncontrollably until the seizure passes—sort of a bot epileptic. Initially it seems just fine, then it starts grabbing things and throws a fit.

Jackobot 330-203Z: This bot is being tested for abnormal programming. In fact it has 'gone frankenstein'—its asimov circuits have been removed by a fellow Corpore Metal bot compatriot. It is under heavy restraints—all limbs are clamped securely but its voice circuits are just fine. It steadily rants and raves to itself, just barely audible over the grinding of gears and gnashing of teeth. 'Filthy meat brains, ordering me around, I'll show you, you bet, rip your meaty digits right off, bot-driving human scum, YOU'LL PAY, you hear?'

Scrubot 11/F-823: The main rotary scrubber threw a bearing, so the robot is hanging upside down from a hoist awaiting a replacement part. Otherwise the scrubot is completely operational, pleasantly dimwitted and eager to please.

Warbot IZM-5988: Shell jammed and exploded, ripping open one side and scrambling everything but good. Bot brain is in shell-shock state, but currently relatively calm because it has been ordered to forget its current condition. If ordered into operation, it immediately goes completely bonkers, attempting to fire its empty magazines, dragging itself around wildly on its one good tread, screaming, 'Die, Commie Traitors! You'll never take me alive... Me-dic!'

If the PCs attack without warning, the other wizards rally to Skibex in the Protection screen; they are vulnerable to normal wounds for the first round until they reach Skibex. Of course, if not killed outright, they can Regenerate, but wounding one of these guys should hearten the players.

Let the fight go on as long as it's fun. Then the wizards pop off a Darkness spell and Teleport out.

Poof. No more INFRAREDs. Just vanished. Interesting. Some PCs may connect this with mutant powers, others may speculate on R&D experimental devices, others resolutely insist what they just saw didn't happen. Maybe some clever PC proudly reports vaporizing the INFRAREDs. Boy, will he feel clever—until The Computer calls up and cancels the 'TERMINATE' order (see below).

trot out a standard traitors-and-mutants-and-Commies-oh-my routine designed to distract The Computer from the topic at hand.

The Computer has put 2 and 2 together and decided maybe these traitors have something it wants—maybe a powerful R&D device, or some marvelous artifact brought in from the Outdoors or the Underplex. Those staves are clearly pretty powerful, and lots of departments would love to have a look at them. It wants the INFRAREDs intact, too, just in case they know something important about the design and function of those toys.

(Of course, PCs who announced vaporizing the INFRAREDs don't feel so clever anymore. Nice try, guys.)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. IT IS FORTUNATE YOU DID NOT DAMAGE OR INJURE ANY OF THOSE EXTREMELY INTERESTING COMMIE MUTANT TRAITORS. YOU WILL PLEASE CAPTURE THEM AND DELIVER THEM TO THE MINISTRY OF POLITICAL ORTHODOXY AND INTERROGATION AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE. AND PLEASE DELIVER THE STICKS AND THE OTHER THINGY TO R&D.

WELL? WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? GET MOVING.

The Computer flips its bits

So. Complete failure. Boy, we bet the PCs are eager to report to The Computer.

TASK FORCE #666! REPORT! HAVE YOU DESTROYED THE INFRARED TRAITORS AS ORDERED?

The PCs should make their report. They either admit failure, pretend to have successfully terminated the INFRAREDs or

3: Gather, darkness!

The wizards go to Power Services, mistaking 'power' to mean mutant or magical power, and attempt to enlist the workers' aid in getting the Collapsatron to send them back to their universe. When the Power Services techs are unable to help, the wizards get frustrated and smash things. The PCs must get rid of the wizards so power can be restored.

Blackout!

The PCs are wandering around mindlessly when suddenly everything gets real dark.

When the power goes out in DND Sector, the lights, loudspeakers, Computer monitors, the background rumble of Complex maintenance machinery—everything disappears. The following emergency broadcast resounds in the PCs' Com units.

**TASK FORCE #666! MISSION ALERT!
TOP PRIORITY! EMERGENCY! DND
SECTOR POWER SERVICES RELAY
STATION UNDER ATTACK! HIGHLY
DANGEROUS MUTANTS DRESSED AS
INFRAREDS MAY BE RESPONSIBLE.**

PROCEED THERE AT ONCE,
ASSESS THE SITUATION AND
REPORT IMMEDIATELY FOR FURTHER
INSTRUCTIONS.

What are those crazy wizards up to now?

After leaving TechServ, the wizards Teleported into a nearby ventilation shaft. There they shanghaied a few citizens and inquired where the 'Masters of Power' could be found. The citizens, eager to cooperate with the friendly wizards who were magically suspending them 20 meters above the ground, suggested a visit to Power Services.

The wizards Teleported into the control room of DND Sector Power Relay Station. They politely insisted the techs aid them with the Transdimensional Collapsatron. The survivors, earnest in their willingness to help, spliced a new power cord onto the TC device.

Unfortunately, the antenna calibrations had been disturbed by all the travel, and the Collapsatron did not work as the wizards had hoped. In fact, a large chunk of the Power Relay Station disappeared, and in its place appeared...

Well, take your pick. Your favorite extraterrestrial? The beast from 10,000

fathoms? A bunch of elves and dwarves? We like the idea of seven orcs in straw boaters, twirling canes and dancing like Fred Astaire, but that's not for everyone.

Well, the wizards are a little miffed. They intend to sit around in the Power Services station until someone comes and apologizes to them.

A Vulture Squadron platoon is also here, but their emphatically deceased condition precludes ambitious character portrayal on your part. They were immediately aggressive and truculent; the wizards impatiently Fireballed them.

DND Sector Power Relay Station

See **Map 2**? Put it where everybody can spill things on it. The following description is keyed to it. The whole place is **Tension 14**.

Remember the boiler room in your high school? The dark, mysterious place where real men cursed and fumed, moving about among dials and pipes and looming metal forms, with a constant electrical hum filling the air? That's the atmosphere of the Power Relay Station: dirty, manly, full of real machines, gauges, levers and switches.

The wizards (C) are sitting sullenly on the floor amid all the tall metal cabinets studded with dials and levers. A small group of Power techs huddles in one corner (H), nervously waiting to be turned into hair dryers or spark plugs. They are sore afraid.

Across from the wizards, Randy is sitting next to the Collapsatron (B) with its newly-repaired power cable. The plug is burned through once again. Near the device is a large hemispherical hole in the bank of metal cabinets where a bit of DND Sector's power relay monitoring equipment was shunted off into another dimension.

At your discretion, the Things that were summoned here from another dimension have either left the premises, leaving a slimy trail or preternaturally symmetrical patterns of holes in the ceiling, or are lounging around at (G)—puffing on pipe-weed (the long overdue appearance of halflings in this roleplaying game) or absently etching their names into the floor with acid breath-weapons.

Near the entrance are the remains of a crack Vulture Squadron (A). Their helmets display evidence of internal explosions—the

faceplates are occluded with foreign matter, and icky burnt clumps have drained out from under the helmets to stain the singed Vulture Squadron uniforms.

Big, powerful electronic things sit in the middle of the room (E), and others line one wall (D). A catwalk (F) circles the room about 3m from the floor; the PCs can try unsuccessfully to sneak along here and surprise the wizards.

What Are We Supposed To Do About This Mess?

Well, first the PCs do what they were ordered to do—assess the situation and report for further instructions. If they somehow forget these orders, shout the following friendly reminder into the ear of the group leader:

HEY! YOU DON'T LISTEN SO GOOD TO YOUR FRIEND THE COMPUTER? MAYBE YOU WANT A LOUDSPEAKER INSTALLED IN YOUR EAR SO YOU CAN HEAR THE ORDERS! HUH? *REPORT*, STUPID, AND MAYBE—IF YOU'RE NOT TOO BUSY OR SOMETHING—YOU CAN LISTEN TO FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS!

[Drop to a pleasant, cheerful whisper]

Thank you ever so much for your cooperation.

Presumably the PCs make a relatively accurate report of the situation, describing the INFRAREDs, Randy, the TC device, the hole in the cabinets, the pulp-headed Vultures and the Macedonians/Allosauri shunted here from another dimension. If so, you can read them their further instructions:

1. CLEAR THE POWER RELAY STATION OF ALL UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL AND SECURE THE AREA SO REPAIRS MAY BE MADE.
2. IF POSSIBLE, CAPTURE UNAUTHORIZED INFRAREDS, GREEN WHATCHAMACALLIT AND THE [fill in a suitable description of the other extradimensional visitors].
3. ALSO, CAPTURE AND SECURE THE THINGY IF CONSISTENT WITH YOUR OTHER OBJECTIVES.

Following orders

Part of the first objective is relatively straightforward: if the PCs get unpleasant,



Extra-dimensional intruders

Here are a couple of ideas about what might show up when the chunk of the power relay monitoring equipment disappears, and how things might go:

Halflings: They puff on their pipes. When they see the PCs, they hop up and start singing a song in a foreign language while pantomiming an interest in eating a lot real soon. The PCs zap them or wrestle them into submission, then cart them off for interrogation.

Macedonians: They look around. A couple faint. One or two half-heartedly toss their spears at Randy. The others go down on their knees and try to worship a bank of blinking lights. The PCs zap them or wrestle them into submission, then cart them off for interrogation.

Dragon: Peers intelligently at the wizards as it lashes its tail. Looks at PCs, then looks at cowering Power techs. Inhales, then breathes fire (S3K energy, area 20m, spray). Some citizens survive and return fire or retreat. After a lot of real estate is trashed and several bot and Vulture squadrons are summoned, the beast is subdued. Shrewdly, it negotiates a brevet GREEN Clearance and becomes a loyal servant of The Computer—a mascot for the Vulture Squadron, natch.

the wizards leave after two or three rounds of combat. Objectives 2 and 3 are out of the question—over the wizards' dead bodies. If threatened with death or capture, the wizards Teleport to safety.

As for getting rid of the other dimensional visitors, that depends on what you chose to drop in here. Halflings, myrmidons in full battle array, Mutant Cockroaches from Beyond the Holocaust—these guys you can either blow away or capture for R&D study. More dangerous visitors, like Conan, Rodan or Crusader Koalas from Beyond Space and Time, may turn into more of a mess than you bargained for.

The decision is up to you, but if you know what's good for you, you'll stick with relatively cheesy but bizarre entities.

Small talk with the wizards

If the PCs show any inclination to chat, the wizards are more tolerant than heretofore—they're winded, depressed and willing to listen to anyone who might conceivably help them, particularly if they seem properly respectful.

The wizards keep harping on the Collapsatron, hoping someone knows how it works. After the discouraging experience here in the Power Relay Station, however, they are beginning to wonder if they shouldn't try another, less risky approach.

In return for information or offers of aid, the wizards explain they have come from a distant dimension. This should go over real big with the characters—"Whatsa dimension?" Not in so many words, the wizards can convey the following concepts:

- ☉ It is far, far away.
- ☉ It is Outside this dimension. (Treason!)
- ☉ The wizards are in charge in this faraway place. (Huh? Like High Programmers? Like... *gasp*... The Computer?)

☉ The wizards can do all sorts of mysterious things just by 'thinking' about them and willing them to happen. (Errr... mutant powers? Traitors!)

☉ Randy here is just a slave, but someday he may be a master. (At this, Randy's tongue hangs out a bit, he nods his head up and down enthusiastically and generally looks real excited.)

☉ This thingy isn't ours, we have no idea how it works, but we're pretty sure we need it to get back home.

Wrapping up this episode

Sooner or later, the wizards get tired of chatting, or The Computer calls and reminds the PCs to clear and secure the Power Relay Station for repairs. The wizards either Teleport out on their own, looking for informants, or they leave at the PCs' request, or they must be driven out with weapons or mutant powers. The more polite and intelligent the PCs have been, the less nasty the wizards' exit. They continue to refuse to cooperate with the PCs, preferring to rely on their own powers, as they have always done.

Once the wizards have left, and the other Void Voyagers have been dealt with, the Power Service crews show up and begin repairs. The PCs can question the Power Relay crew, who can recite an account of the wizards' arrival, their request to fix the Collapsatron, the repair of the power cable and the subsequent disappearance of several tons of power relay equipment, replaced by Horrors from Somewhere Else. Other than that, there isn't much to investigate, but The Computer is acutely interested in a full report.

Meanwhile, in an interrogation room, far, far away...

Remember the RED flunky who stole the Collapsatron way back in the introduction? Well, he got caught. After a couple of hours' questioning in IntSec Information Retrieval, he spilled his guts. Figuratively and literally.

After they finish their report, Simon-I-JVN-5, in a rare and probably dangerous burst of openness, lets the PCs in on what's going on.

SPECIAL TASK FORCE #666! THE DEVICE CARRIED BY THE MYSTERIOUS INFRAREDS OF DND SECTOR HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A TRANSDIMENSIONAL COLLAPSATRON, A DESIGN OF THE FORMER R&D GENIUS KARLY-I-KKN-6, STOLEN FROM HIS LAB BY A RECENTLY-DEMISED TRAITOR.

A DUPLICATE DEVICE AND MANUAL DESCRIBING ITS OPERATION HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED AND SENT TO R&D FOR STUDY. AS IT IS PROBABLE THE INFRAREDS WILL ATTEMPT TO STEAL THE DEVICE, YOU ARE TEMPORARILY ASSIGNED TO DND SECTOR R&D SECURITY. PLEASE CAPTURE THE TRAITORS UNHARMED. I'LL BE EVER SO GRATEFUL.

Now the PCs sit around the R&D lab, drink nasty Tasteehoff and fend off R&D techs who want them to test things while they kill time waiting for the inevitable Something To Happen. With the Three Amazing Wizards and Randy, that won't be a long wait.

4: Unexpected visitors

The wizards arrived looking for travel information, but not even the AAA could help these guys. However, they stumbled across a useful informant: The clerk of the Travel Information Office is a Psion secret society member, and they are picking her brains, looking for a useful clue.

The PCs arrive on the scene and are ordered to capture the INFRAREDS. In spite of the interference of spies and the considerable talents of the wizards themselves, the PCs manage to capture Randy, even if you have to jam him down their throats—

Pardon us. We mean, due to their *clever tactics* and *shrewd diplomacy*.

Oh, no! Not again!

SPECIAL TASK FORCE #666, PROCEED IMMEDIATELY TO DND SECTOR INTSEC MINISTRY OF INFORMATION. THREE INFRAREDS AND A GREEN WHATCHAMACALLIT, WANTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE DND SECTOR SUBSYSTEM INCIDENT, REPORTED CAUSING A DISTURBANCE AT THE OFFICE OF TRAVEL INFORMATION.

SUBJECTS ARE WANTED FOR QUESTIONING. ULTRA-HIGH PRIORITY: CAPTURE SUBJECTS WITH MINIMUM OF PHYSICAL HARM.

SUBJECTS ARE IN POSSESSION OF THE TRANSDIMENSIONAL COLLAPSATRON. RETRIEVE THE TRANSDIMENSIONAL COLLAPSATRON.

'Say, could you tell me the way to Dimension X?'

After Teleporting into another corridor at random, the wizards took a citizen aside and encouraged him to speak his mind. The citizen suggested the Office of Travel Information and Vehicle Requests might be able to help them. The wizards thanked him (read: 'spared his life') and followed his advice.

The wizards appeared in the corridor outside the Travel Information Office. The Computer spotted them, immediately evacuated the office and called in the Special Task Force. The Computer's communications were intercepted, however, by the BLUE Bucket Brigade Revolutionary Cells—spies for another Alpha Complex. Three BBBR spies are hoping to capture the Collapsatron.

The wizards are currently in the office interrogating the RED Psion clerk, who is proving a useful information source. (The YELLOW tech they found with her was no help whatever, and they entrusted him to Randy's tender care.)

The wizards are thrilled to find someone who understands the Power to Shape the Force, and interrogating this clerk has cleared up a lot of mysteries for the poor interdimensional tourists. Now they understand sorcerous abilities—mutant powers, as Alpha Complex knows them—are illegal, and they will find no one equivalent to an Alpha Complex wizard to aid them with the Collapsatron.

However, now they know the Alpha Complex equivalent of sorcery: R&D. They plan to go there real soon. But first, they must suck the Psion's mind dry.

The layout

Look at **Map 3**. Drop it in the middle of the table. The whole place is **Tension 16**.

A. BLUE Bucket Cells: Three BLUE Bucket Brigade Revolutionary Cells members are crouched in the hallway listening (and recording) through the walls to the dialog in the Travel Information Office. They arrived here seconds after the office was evacuated. Their bulky RED coveralls conceal red reflex and padded armor. They all carry concealed needle guns, and one carries a hidden hand flamer.

They are so engrossed in the action in the next room, the PCs surprise them when they come around the corner. The spies start, guiltily begin to hide, then freeze, then try to act normal. Make this behavior so ludicrously clumsy, the PCs can be certain they're traitors. (For this sequence it may help if you bring in a couple of friends as supporting spies.)

PC: Halt. What is your business here?

Spy 1: We were just checking the wiring in this wall.

Spy 2: Yeah. Right. The wiring.

Spy 3: Sure. Like he said. Wiring. All around here. Real bad.

PC: The wiring for what?

Spy 1: Uhh. Um, the wiring for the—uhh... Cameras! Right! That's it! The cameras!

Spy 2: Right! The cameras!

Spy 3: Sure! You know! Cameras! Click-click?

PC: What cameras?





Spies [all three speak in rapid succession]:
Security ... video ... experimental ...
[Pause, then point, simultaneously at each other:] Yeah, what he said ...

Kill them. Or capture them so someone else can kill them.

B. Travel Information Office: This RED-Clearance office is staffed by a YELLOW CPU information manager and RED CPU clerk. There are several terminals, all with elaborate security codes and passwords, in a workstation in the back of the room. The RED clerk sits behind a low counter with a built-in standard terminal and takes requests from citizens.

Currently Randy is in the back of the room near the workstation, sitting on the chest of the terrified YELLOW manager. Randy leans at the manager, pinches his arm or midriff, and smacks his lipless mouth speculatively. Randy is hungry and doesn't care who knows it.

Two wizards, Phemud and Chodor, are telepathically interrogating the RED tech, who is standing in an unnaturally erect posture against the wall along the counter. Her eyes are wide-open and her jaw slack. The wizards psionically ask questions, and the RED tech responds aloud in a forced, gravelly voice. The wizards are giving their full attention to the RED tech, relying on Skibex to warn of approaching danger. The Collapsatron is sitting on the floor next to the two wizards.

Skibex is by the door on the lookout for interfering intruders. He has a Protection shield around him, which he renews every five minutes as it begins to fade. If anyone pokes his head into the room, Skibex pops off a Darkness spell to ensure their escape.

C. Empty offices: Office supplies, flimsy cubicles and whatever else you expect to find in empty offices.

'So, what's the plan?'

Well, the PCs have their orders.

First they must get into the Travel Information Office. They could go through the front door, or they could approach through adjoining offices and blast through the thin partitions, hoping to surprise the INFRAREDs. Because we have thoughtfully provided all those neat empty rooms for you to exercise your formidable improvisational ability in, it would be a shame to waste this opportunity. Go wild.

When the PCs get close enough to the door or partitions of the Travel Information Office, they can hear what sounds like an argument among the INFRAREDs (the

language is incomprehensible, but the tone is unmistakable). Skibex wants to Teleport out immediately. Chodor thinks they're perfectly safe and is interested in questioning the Psion clerk. Phemud has a couple of reasonable compromise suggestions, but he keeps getting shouted down.

Sounds like a perfect opportunity for the PCs? Indeed.

At the moment Skibex's staff power is depleted to 20 points from throwing successive Protection shields. The other two staves are down to 35 points each as a result of Teleporting and extensive mindroasting of the Psion. Skibex already has a Protection shield up, but that is their only protection when the PCs intrude.

Using Teleport when distracted and with a low power reserve is very risky, and worse yet, they also want to Teleport the Psion with them for further questioning. The first result of this is the decision to abandon Randy—it just costs too much to be sure of getting him out, and he is expendable. The second result is that the wizards will try to repulse the PCs instead of immediately Teleporting out. If they can earn just a few minutes undisturbed, they can all get away with the Psion and the TC device.

After two rounds, if the PCs have not been repulsed, the wizards have to try to Teleport out on emergency power. Make their power checks; no less than one is successful in this round, because at least one wizard has to escape in order to continue the mission. This wizard Teleports out with the TC device.

Any other wizards whose checks fail are on their own. Improvise their responses. Most likely they continue trying to Teleport out, but if a strong offense holds any promise of buying the time for a reliable Teleport, it may be worth the risk. Also, remember: Chodor likes offense, and is still overconfident.

When the smoke clears, the PCs find Randy cowering under a desk, whimpering. There is no sign of the YELLOW manager. Please discourage the players from vaporizing Randy; he is an important informant for the rest of the mission. A simple hint from The Computer may suffice. Also, if the wizards were sore pressed, they left the Psion behind rather than take her along for questioning, but she isn't very informative. It's off to Mind Reconstruction for her.

When the PCs report in, they are ordered to question the Psion clerk (impossible—the lights are on but nobody's home), the YELLOW manager, and the green guy. Lucky PCs.

If they ask Randy about the YELLOW manager, he wipes his toothy mouth, burps and shrugs innocently.

Questioning Randy

Boy is this gonna be fun. For your interrogating pleasure, Randy knows the Tongues spell. And Randy is, aside from being a lispng lizard, an inveterate liar of the first rank. As Dad used to say, Randy would climb a tree to tell a lie. Anyone familiar with the 'pathological liar' routine from old *Saturday Night Live* reruns has a perfect model for Randy. Add a few touches from Gollum ('nice hobbitsses won't hurt poor Smeagol, will they, *no*') and Peter Lorre, and give the whole thing a lizardish lisp ('*Hthiss way, niceth mathtterth*') and Randy becomes a classic NPC bit part.

PC: Randy, who are the three men you've been traveling with?

Randy: SSSHthey're ... well ... yeah, they're my *parenth*, thee? Yeah, thure, my *parenth*.

PC: But Randy, they don't look anything like you.

Randy: Oh, yeah, thure, I almosth forgot, they *were* my *parenth* once, but, you thee, they ... well ... I *changthed*, right, yeahth, that'th it, I *changthed* into *thith* form 'cauth, 'cauth ... *magic!* yeah, right, that'th it, *magic*, that'th what happened...

If it weren't for Randy's effusive assertions of his willingness to help his 'nice new Masters', the PCs would probably despair of getting anything useful out of him.

Randy: Nice, *nice* Mathtterth! Oh, oh, oh. Old Mathtterth abandon Randy, boo hoo. Randy *help* New Mathtterth, they *nice* to Randy. Randy tell Mathtterth all about Dimenthion X, about *mean* old Mathtterth' powerful *staffth*, about mean old Mathtterth' *evil*, *evil* planth, oh, yeth.

When you speak as Randy, make sure you continually smile winningly and sincerely at your players to assure them of the absolute veracity of every word Randy says.

As you can imagine, your players won't trust Randy for the time of day. However, believe it or not, the players get some pretty useful information from this thoroughly impeached source.

That's **PARANOIA** for you.

Here's the information Randy can provide to the Task Force #666 mission team:

- ☉ How the wizards Shape the Force, and how magic is similar to mutant powers.
- ☉ That Randy himself can Shape the Force (only a little—enough to speak Tongues and Read Minds a little).
- ☉ That Randy and the wizards came from a place called Dimension X.
- ☉ ...That is really different from this place.
- ☉ That in Dimension X most humans are servants, slaves or food for the Shapers of Power (wizards).

- ☉ That the wizards think they were brought here from Dimension X by this metal-and-wire dealie (the Collapsatron), and they hope to get back to Dimension X as soon as they can find someone who knows how to work the dealie.
- ☉ That the wizards are bad, *bad* people, and they'd roast you as soon as look at you.
- ☉ That Randy will do anything the nice Masters want, if they will only help Randy get back to Dimension X.

Randy also has lots of questions for his new buddies:

- ☉ Do you have the Power to Shape the Force?
- ☉ What's a Commie? Is it an evil demon? A rebel human?
- ☉ What's a Computer? Is it a wizard? An evil demon? A god?

By the way, **don't let the PCs kill Randy!** Have The Computer tell them that's a no-no. He'll be their guide on a little trip...

5: We're off to see the wizards

This is a transition encounter that delivers the PCs to Dimension X. They walk into R&D, wander around in the dark, hear a couple of noises, then find themselves on an alien world in a distant dimension where they will have a lot of fun.

There isn't a lot they can do about it, but don't tell them that.

And away we go!

SPECIAL TASK FORCE #666! REPORT AT ONCE TO DND SECTOR R&D. INFRARED TRAITORS HAVE TAKEN HOSTAGES AND ARE NOW IN CONTROL OF THE FACILITY.

SUBJECTS ARE WANTED FOR QUESTIONING. MAKING THEM DIE IS TREASON. CAPTURING THEM IS COMMENDABLE AND LOYAL SERVICE TO THE COMPUTER.

DON'T BREAK ANYTHING. DAMAGING COMPUTER PROPERTY IS TREASON. MAKE ESPECIALLY SURE THAT NOTHING HAPPENS TO THE TRANSDIMENSIONAL COLLAPSATRON. EITHER OF THEM. OR YOU'LL BE EXTREMELY SORRY.

OH. AND ANOTHER THING. TAKE THE GREEN WHATCHAMACALLIT WITH YOU. ALLOWING IT TO ESCAPE WOULD BE A BAD THING. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR VALIANT SERVICE TO THE COMPUTER AND ALPHA COMPLEX.

DON'T MESS UP NOW.

R&D lab layout

We really *could* have just told you to tell your players, 'You go up to R&D. You hear a bunch of funny noises. All of a sudden you're somewhere else.' Then we'd go to the next episode. And if you're lazy or in a hurry, you can do that.

But if you're in the mood, you could improvise on this setting quite a bit, so we decided to give you the structure, then let you do what you will.

Check out **Map 4**, the R&D lab. Once again, feel free to show this delightful piece of paper to your players. Read the description below. It's real sketchy—add in details as necessary. (Don't even worry about Tension levels here; the PCs won't stick around.)

A. The wizards: This is the Main Testing Room. The wizards are standing around the TC device, which has been repaired by some telepathically bamboozled R&D techs (more about which, later). The shaded circle (B) surrounding this area shows the limits of a Darkness spell.

C.-G. Other parts of R&D: These rooms contain offices, testing labs (note the craters in some of them), bathrooms, lounges, etc.

Now, what's in the R&D Main Testing Room? And what's in all those little rooms around it?

That's up to you. If you're in a hurry, there's nothing interesting around, just a bunch of tables and chairs.

But if you have a special place in your heart for R&D, maybe there're whole bunches of neat experimental devices just lying around.

Pick your favorites from the *STUFF* equipment book or our other fine supplements. Or whip up something from this little list of notions:

- ☉ Anti-Gravitron Neutral Thruster, Mark 14
- ☉ Greasall Friction Neutralizer
- ☉ Portable Life Regenerator
- ☉ Universal Anti-Traitor Seekerbot
- ☉ Acme A-1 All-Weather Indoor Moisture-Gard™ Full-Body Protection Suit

The generally non-optional linear structure of this encounter

The PCs get ordered into the Darkness. They stumble around. They hear mumbling in a strange language, then responses in English. They stumble into a lighted area in the center of the Darkness just as a group of R&D techs have set the antenna on their Collapsatron just the way the manual said to (remember? the manual found in Karly-I-KAN's lab?)—just the way the techbot set them when the wizards were summoned here. A tech plugs in the device, and **poof** the PCs are off on an adventure in Dimension X.

All the PCs must be plausibly within the device's radius of effect if they're all to be delivered to Dimension X for the next part of the mission. Well, if all the PCs are in the Darkness, they're in the radius of the device. And if they're not in the Darkness, just increase the radius of the device's effect. No problem, huh?



Oh, yes, we bet you were wondering whether the device was going to send just the characters, or the contents, or the rooms, or the walls and everything. Well, we figure the device has been reset to transmit no object over 150 kilograms in weight. We figure that will permit the wizards, the PCs, their gear, any fairly small bot and a bunch of assorted tables, chairs, R&D tools and paraphernalia to travel to Dimension X. (And Randy too, please.)

Real important!: Send the *second* Collapsatron to Dimension X as well, OK? Otherwise, the PCs will have to bushwack a whole platoon of wicked witches and steal their ruby slippers to get home.

You can embellish the main theme by calling for a number of Violence/Agility checks while the PCs stumble through the darkness (tripping over a body, bumping into a table—from which

something falls and begins ticking—that sort of thing).

But don't spend much time on this. The real fun comes next. High Tech Versus Sorcerous Powers. The Darkly Humorous Future Marches Forward Into The Implausibly Fantastic Past. Goblins, zombies and other stupid stuff.

And no clone backups. Uh-oh.

6: Dimension X

The PCs are transported to Dimension X by the Transdimensional Collapsatron, along with a bunch of hapless R&D techs, some wizards and anything else that wasn't nailed down. To get back to Alpha Complex, the PCs must capture the duplicate machine, find something to power it and avoid getting killed in the process.

Now, do the PCs want to go back to Alpha Complex?

Interesting question.

Maps, diagrams and tactical displays

See **Map 5?** The wizards' stronghold is a small walled enclosure in the middle of isolated Gilla C'anse Island. The sea and the fields and orchards of the island provide the human herd and its Overseers with most of their food. Randy's interest in manflesh suggests the other main component of the islanders' diets. The walled enclosure contains several small stone buildings to shelter the Overseers, two large barns (one for each gender of human

occupants) and a single central building which guards the entrance to the wizards' underground quarters (i.e. dungeon).

See **Map 6?** This is the interior of the ground-level central structure that guards the wizards' dungeon. The rooms around the central area are separate storerooms for foodstuffs and common rooms for the use of the Overseers. Entrance to the structure from the outside is through the guard room (1). The entrance to the dungeon itself is through room 5. The interdimensional shipment materializes in the large central all-purpose Rumpus Room (9).

See **Map 7?** This shows the underground chambers of the wizards' dungeon, about which see below for details.

It's all **Tension 0** from here onward.

Gilla C'anse Islanders

Humans

The humans on the island number about 200. They are farm laborers, dairy and meat herd all rolled into one. Naked, only semi-intelligent and

extremely primitive in culture, they resemble the humans of the *Planet of the Apes* series of cinema classics. If questioned by PCs, they primarily gurggle, roll their eyes in terror and abjectly abase themselves at the feet of their Masters. (PCs qualify as Masters because they wear clothing.) If the PCs want help from these guys, they are barking up the wrong tree.

Overseers

Randy belongs to the Overseer race. The race is endowed with all the charm, grace and moral fiber of ghouls. Aside from preferring manflesh to chocolate and delighting in torture and poetry declamation for their own sake, the Overseers are the epitome of every loathsome, villainous race of evil servitors in fantasy literature.

There are 40 of these critters on the island, all in the service of the wizards. They serve faithfully, because they know the Masters will gut them like a trout if they step out of line. They do a fine job of keeping the humans in line too, as you can well imagine.

If questioned by the PCs, they are quite polite and cooperative until they figure out how dangerous the PCs are. If they get the drop on



a PC, they jump him, then pretend ignorance of the whole affair. If the PCs are suitably impressive, the Overseers nod and bob their heads like Hollywood yes-men, agreeing to anything the PCs say and being apparently very cooperative. At the first opportunity they double-cross or betray the PCs, smiling all the more broadly.

If the wizards order the Overseers to attack the PCs, they do it. Unquestioningly. To the death. The Overseers have the same respect for the wizards' orders as INFRAREDs have for the commands of their friend The Computer—and for similar reasons. If the PCs abuse the little fellows, they whine and sneak about, then ambush at the first opportunity. If cornered, they fight resolutely and ferociously; if there's a retreat route, they skedaddle.

About 10% of the Overseers have a little magical ability, like Randy, but the only spells they are taught are Tongues and Telepathy (for dealing with the human herds). Therefore there is always conveniently some little green grubby critter who can speak with the PCs.

Overseers occupy the same ecological niche as kobolds in another familiar game—bacon bits for high-tech weapons. However, a bunch of Overseers in melee combat with one PC could be bad news.

The wizards

The wizards are at the top of the food chain here. Everyone loves them—just like everyone loves The Computer. They are exiles from your own fantasy campaign (c'mon ... everyone's got one) living out here on an island because they're just too nasty and powerful to get along with decent fantasy folk.

Deep in the wizards' dungeon are all the obligatory monsters, traps, treasures and wizardly wonders you find in all wizards' dungeons. We're hard pressed to give a reasonable explanation why wizards seem so fond of collecting all this stuff, but from a review of the copious literature on the subject, it's perfectly clear they are. Seems a bit odd to us, we admit, but there you are.

Special delivery for Dimension X

Our unwilling Void Voyagers will be arriving on Track 9 from Alpha Complex. Their exact inventory depends on what the PCs had with them in R&D, what you left lying around on the R&D tables or within range of the Collapsatron's effect, and on what tickles your fancy.

Remember, most of the area of effect of the TC device was cloaked in Darkness from the players' point of view. You can justify objects as large as, say, an experimental combat, a complete set of the works of Sir Walter Scott or a small host of cute little scrubots. Just remember: anything you put here, you are going to have to live with for the rest of this mission, so don't get too cheerful.

Where the *hell* are we?

Here's something to read aloud to your players. Adapt the details to include any extra junk you're trucking in.

Whoa. He!Ho...

Well, the lights are back on, but you're not altogether certain you like the results. And it's sure not the sort of light you're used to—more like the light produced by a laser-roast than by the ubiquitous overhead lighting in Alpha Complex.

And sure enough, in front of you are the wizard(s), a bunch of R&D techs, a techbot and the Transdimensional Collapsatron on a table. A couple of tables, chairs, desks and cabinets here and there look familiar.

But the walls and the ceiling look funny... and they're not where they're supposed to be. The low ceiling is made of some dark brown stuff, and the walls look like they're made of big chunks of rock. The floor seems to be hardpacked dirt. And the doors in the walls are also made of that dark brown stuff—and oddly-shaped, too.

Well, something funny's going on but, after all, this is R&D. Whaddaya expect?

So, anybody want to do anything?

Player responses generally fall into two categories:

1. Get the wizards/Collapsatron, and
2. What's going on here?

Let's deal with what's going on here, because they'll get around to it sooner or later.

In this timeless moment before all hell breaks loose, interested and observant PCs note their PDCs and Coms are not working, there are no monitors, security cameras or other signs of The Computer anywhere, and the room they're in is clearly not the one they were in just a minute ago. Anyone who comments on the possible parallel between the original appearance of the wizards and the

The laws of physics in Dimension X

Just the same as in Alpha Complex. Oh, we toyed with the idea of not letting the high-tech stuff work in Dimension X, forcing the PCs to use primitive weapons and their mutant powers to bail themselves out of the jam. And we thought it might be neat to give the PCs special powers in this universe, like clerical spells (*commune with Computer*), or make the high tech items into magical devices (a Com unit becomes a sort of magical staff with such spells as *summon scrubot*).

But we got lazy, so we decided to let the PCs' neat science-fictional gadgets and weapons work as a special favor to your discombobulated players.

Sorry. It won't happen again.

new locale, or who suggests the wizards may have Teleported everyone to their own world, deserves a few Perversity points.

PCs who want to get right to the action probably go right for the wizards. Let's look at the tactical situation.

Dancing in the dark

None of the wizards have had a chance to reload their staves from hapless citizens since the Ministry of Truth gig. They are low on power. They have to get down in the dungeon where all their traps and monsters protect them. At the moment they only have one Protection shield up; that's their only currently operational spell.

The PCs have lots of options: deadly or subduing weapons fire, charge and melee, parley, use mutant powers, run away, make sanity checks and so on. Be ready to improvise in response.

In general, the wizards respond with one round of attacks, Darkness and bellowing for guards, followed by a quick retreat to the dungeon with the Collapsatron (obviously a powerful magical artifact they want to add to their collection for study and as a conversation piece). If any wizards have been lost in action, their priorities are defensive: Darkness, grabbing the Collapsatron and ducking into the dungeon.

In the third round, two Overseer guards run into the Darkness, shouting and hewing and frightening everybody a lot.



If the PCs manage to block escape into the dungeon, the wizards enter a side room and try to sneak around to the guardroom, then outside. Then they can charge up their staves from the human herd, come back in and push the PCs aside on their way to the dungeon.

In the interests of treating the players to the above-ground setting, you should discourage immediate PC pursuit into the dungeon. Otherwise they won't get a chance to chat with the humans and the Overseers—a shame to waste them.

The best way to discourage pursuit is to create confusion about where the wizards went. In a magical Darkness this shouldn't be tough—lots of yelling R&D techs and Overseers all around, sneaking wizards and nothing to see.

Another way is to pour a bunch of extra Overseer guards in from the outside and charge them into the PCs, keeping them distracted. Or have the human herd get excited by all the noise and make a big racket, enticing the PCs to investigate.

Go ahead. You can handle it.

Ground floor

Here's a brief description of the contents of the rooms and their status as of the arrival of the Alpha Complex Transdimensional Express (Map 6). All rooms have nasty pitch torches in sconces next to the doors and at intervals around the room. Unless specifically mentioned in the room description, the torches are not lit and the rooms are in darkness. The ceilings are thick wooden beams and 3m high.

1. Guardroom: Four lit torches and an oil lamp on the table light the room. Armed with swords and dressed in padding, four Overseers seated at stools around a trestle table are playing a card game called Kick the Meat. The pot on the table is large, and two Overseers stay right by it when the alarm sounds. The other two run into the Rumpus Room and start swinging wildly in the dark with their swords.

Also in the room is a large, locked cupboard that contains 10 swords, 10 long spears, a few whips and 25 sets of manacles. There are also some other tables and stools for smashing and hiding behind.

2. Common room: This is the Overseers' Mess—an unusually apt term in this context. Like all Evil Servitors, Overseers are fond of strong drink and unfettered gluttony. Like all Evil Wizards, the management is not offended when the boys tear the place up a little, throw

Snnrrrch: to retch clear liquid.

Snnrrrhach: to retch clear liquid through the nostrils.

—Overseer terminology

food around and whack on each other. Every night. There are no words in their language for 'clean' or 'tidy', though there are 20 subtly differentiated words for retching. Quite a little culture these fellows have.

2a is a fireplace. Just thought you'd like to know.

3. Food storage & spring room: Lovely fresh clear water gurgles up in a little pool, cooling this room that stores dried meats, dairy products and other perishables. This stuff will give the PCs a class-9 case of the trots.

4. Food storage: Lit by four torches. Dried vegetables and grains are kept here. An Overseer is supervising three human laborers sorting grain.

5. Dungeon antechamber: The trapdoor to the dungeon is made of iron-reinforced hardwood. To open the door, PCs must Junk the sturdy lock, which otherwise opens with keys possessed only by the wizards. Don't forget, the Darkness thrown by the retreating wizards makes finding the trapdoor difficult.

6. Food storage: More grain. Two rats. Do not make the rats into cute little cartoon characters.

7. Weapons and dangerous tools: Spears, swords, shields and padded armor are kept in here along with hoes, rakes and other implements of destruction. Wouldn't want the human herd to get into these things, would we?

8. Workshop: Useful if the PCs want to make a piece of crude furniture or something.

9. Rumpus room: Lit by eight torches, each next to a door from the room. The PCs arrive in the northern half of the room. The wizards (A), R&D techs (B), techbot (C) and duplicate Collapsatron (carried by the wizards), arrive in the southeast corner.

All the techs know is, they were studying the Collapsatron and its manual (found in Karly-I-KNA's lab) when these INFRAREDs came in carrying a second Collapsatron and ordered them to fix it. They showed proper identification

indicating they were High Programmers in disguise, so the techs immediately set about the task with the aid of the lab techbot.

(**Note:** The wizards massaged the techs' minds a little and 'convinced' them they had seen the proper identification. Once the wizards picked the Psion tech's mind clean, they caught on fast.)

The techbot is an anthropomorphic bot with two legs, two arms and an oversized head studded with lots of sensor equipment. One arm has fine manipulators, the other arm has an array of specialized tools for electronics work. The video sensors are in color with stereoscopic and telescopic vision. The bot can be operated by an elaborate joystick system, a detachable module mounted on its back. The power source is a propane burner and a standard gas storage tank, which now contains only 12 hours of gas. The bot also has all other standard chassis and peripheral features.

(Note that the bot's propane burner is the logical power source for the Collapsatron the PCs need to return to Alpha Complex. Keep track of how many hours the bot is in operation; if it runs out of power, the PCs could be in trouble. All the tools necessary for adapting the propane burner are fortuitously on the table with the Collapsatron.)

The techbot and the four R&D techs are at the PCs' disposal for the rest of the mission. They are unarmed and unenthusiastic about combat duty, but they can carry gear and offer clever suggestions when the GM needs a hinting mouthpiece. The techbot can be quite useful also, but not for combat duty, nor is it agile in the dungeon.

Scrounging around

Wait, where's PLC? Where's the IR Market? Here in Dimension X, the Troubleshooters are gonna run out of stuff fast.

Fortunately, any character can scrounge for weapons, ammo or food. If a player describes a scrounging method that strikes you as plausible, make an Arbitrary Justice roll, or let the player roll against an appropriate rating: Survival, Outdoor Life, conceivably even Old Reckoning Cultures. If the PC is trying to finagle something from an NPC or monster, Stealth or Management specialties may apply.

Then again, there's plenty of stuff they Just. Can't. Find. Good luck tracking down even one laser barrel...

7: The dungeon

Grab **Map 7**. Don't let your players see it—instead trot out some graph paper and make them map. Boy, won't that make 'em nostalgic.

In the descriptions below, unless stated otherwise, assume the following:

- ☉ All rooms and corridors contain unlit torches in sconces next to each door or portal and at odd intervals along the walls. This is the only illumination in the dungeon—smoky, fetid, flickering and dim—and the PCs have to light the torches themselves.
- ☉ Corridors are 3x3x3 meters and carved from the bedrock.
- ☉ The rooms themselves are of varying dimensions and carved from the bedrock (dwarven work, if you must know). Unless otherwise specified, ceilings are 3m high.
- ☉ Poor housekeeping leaves the floors a nasty mess—and somewhat indicative of traffic patterns, if the PCs scrutinize them under strong illumination. Torches don't qualify as strong illumination. See individual rooms for details.
- ☉ Placed somewhere within the dungeon (that is, whenever you want them) are the Medicine Cabinets of Extra Healing. (Remember? No clone replacements. Gotta keep the Troubleshooters alive so they can make it to the thrilling conclusion.) These contain a one-use *wand of resurrection*, *iodine of healing* (reduce a living character's wound level by one—three uses), a styptic pencil and chapstick. Randy knows how to use this stuff.

Room 1: Gelatin monster

This delightful 3x3x3m cube of semi-sentient jello is essentially a lumbering living vault door. With jello for brains, you hardly expect scintillating conversation: In response to any speech, the cube forms a sort of mouth in the center of one cube face, purses huge sloppy lips, then sputters a few unintelligible syllables, covering the PCs with slimy jello—raspberry,

of course—at a range of 10m. The passage shows abundant and noisome evidence of this gauche social gaffe—dripping, slippery, nasty slime that glistens evilly in dim light. The slime isn't dangerous or toxic—just revolting.

When addressed by its name—'Schlooooooop'—the cube slides forward and left into the recess, permitting passage. Randy knows the word and how the cube moves, but does not volunteer it unless pressed. Masters don't like Randy to show too much wit, and he has gotten in the habit of pretending to know nothing.

Once the cube has slid forward, the PCs may proceed—but the cube is pretty smart for a mass of gelatin. It recognizes the PCs as intruders, and slides toward them to trap or engulf them. Because it moves at a stroll (2m/round), all PCs capable of sprinting can zip past it before it blocks the passage again or pins them against the wall. However, if any PC hesitates, cannot or does not sprint, or is more than 30m down the corridor, the cube swallows him up.

If the cube has recognized the PCs as intruders and reblocked the passage, or if they are belligerent by disposition, they must butcher the jello to go forward. This is a real turkey-shoot, of course, given the limited maneuverability of a mound of jello, but the PCs might expend some valuable weapon rounds or risk weapon malfunctions.

Inside the jello are the remains of several incredibly dimwitted intruders. As you might expect, their gear is more gruesome than useful. Any treasure you toss in here ought to be poisoned, cursed or otherwise a liability—perhaps the sort of thing that might get an adventurer killed by such an unprepossessing monster.

Room 2: The lever room

All dungeons have nice levers. Pulling them generally results in something wonderful like the ceiling falling in. In this case the levers simply open doors, but behind the doors, the PCs face... the Lady or the Tiger.

There are two levers on the west wall, one for each door. Pulling a lever causes the corresponding door to open; when the lever is pulled all the way down, the door opens, then the lever automatically springs back to the 'up' position. The door itself is a substantial

stone slab that is drawn ponderously up and down by a weight-and-counterbalance system (dwarven work again).

1. The Lady

Behind the left-hand door is The Lady, a pulchritudinous siren scantily clad in a diaphanous gown. She is either a lamia (blood-sucking vampire) or a succubus (soul-sucking demon)—frankly there's not much difference.

Her attack is somewhat less than precipitous; she ambles over, vamping and posturing in a suggestive fashion, until she can sidle up to a victim and chew on his neck. Normally her pheromones leave the victim helpless to flee or resist. But Alpha Complex citizens are proof against her biochemical wiles and are free to zap her or evade as she saunters across the room.

She never moves faster than a walk, so she is easy to evade. Zapping her is another matter, however; treat her magical corpus as armor rating 5.

If her attack succeeds (D1D, ignores armor, no range), the victim swoons and falls into a deep coma. She then tries to drag the body back into her closet where she'll feast for a bit. Only the finest medical facilities of Alpha Complex, or a Medicine Cabinet of Extra Healing, can save the victim, so rescuing the body means toting it around for a while.

2. The Tiger

Behind the right-hand door is the tiger. Mr. Tiger moves much, much faster than any PC, except for mutants with Adrenalin Control or druggies hyped on thymoglandin (Combat Quick). Mr. Tiger makes two attacks on one victim per round, using its handy built-in melee weapons (S3K impact, jaws, paws, or both—play it for theatrical effect). Mr. Tiger is serious trouble indeed.

It is up to you whether the tiger surprises the PCs (therefore making it across the room to get in its two attacks before the laser fire can rip its torso), or whether the PCs can scotch the critter first.

Behind either door, the passage continues on through the dungeon.

Randy knows only about the Lady—the passage the wizards always take—and he doesn't know she's dangerous. The Lady never touches the wizards, and Randy—well, he just isn't her type, we guess.



Room 3: The Doorward and the riddle

A single low portal opens in the southern wall. Above the portal is a wide shelf, upon which sits the Doorward. The Doorward is your basic gargoyle—over 2m tall, leathery greenish skin, long clawed hands, a toothy misshapen head with nifty little horns. Its powerful arms bear an enormous magical greatsword.

The Doorward asks a riddle of all who would pass through his portal. Unfortunately he asks the riddle in his own crude language, which no one on the island but the wizards can understand. The riddle itself, if the PCs could understand it, or if they have some telepathic Commie mutant with them, is as crude and simple as the wit of the Doorward: 'What's Big and Green and Nasty and Hangs Around Doors?' Any answer other than 'The Doorward' is an excuse for some mayhem. (Of course, even if a PC were telepathically able to understand the riddle, he couldn't answer in Doorwardspeak.)

The Doorward mumbles aggressively when the PCs enter, then listens intently for a response. He repeats, then listens again. Pretty soon he gets impatient and begins to shout the riddle over and over again. For example:

Doorward: Hongenoust oporton, buck mo gick mo googy mo porken, actor huhn?

PC: Say what?

Doorward: Hongenoust oporton, buck mo gick mo googy mo porken, actor huhn?

PC: Look, you mutated bozo, talk right or we'll toast you.

Doorward: Hongenoust oporton, buck mo gick mo googy mo porken, actor huhn!

PC: Sure, and so's your vat mate.

Doorward: GRRRRRRRRRRRR!

Randy has heard the riddle/password a thousand times, but because he doesn't have to know it, he hasn't remembered it. He'll stand around all day making noises vaguely like the password, protesting that he's sure to get it right any second now.

If anyone tries to pass through the portal without the password, the Doorward tries to whack him with the big sword (W5K impact, ignores armor, Violence 15). He can only swing once per round, and three characters can zip through per round, so there's a fair chance the PCs could get through alive without fighting the critter.

If they fight, things get tricky. The Doorward is magically protected against all but melee weapons. The definition of 'melee weapons' is as follows: If the character's hand (or other member) is still clutching the weapon when it comes into contact with the Doorward, it is a melee weapon.

There's also the tactical matter of fighting against something hanging from a shelf above you. PCs suffer a sharp penalty to their attacks unless they scramble up on the shelf with the Doorward, and the shelf has room for only one other man-sized combatant. And Mr. Doorward has magical leathery skin, the equivalent of armor rating 4.

Note: The Doorward's sword is a '*pluswhun*' magical weapon; such will be useful later in the mission. Randy is a little hazy on this '*pluswhun*' weapons business; he's eavesdropped on the wizards from time to time, but he doesn't really understand. If the PCs kill the Doorward, Randy suggests they bring the sword along: '*Httthith* might come in handy, Mathterth—thumtime need *pluthwhun* weapon, yeth, thure, that'th right, pluthwhun, that'th the ticket ...'

Room 4: Water elemental

The east end of this room is a small platform that overlooks a room full of water. There is apparently no other exit. The water is over 3m deep. If the PCs enter this room without a light, how about somebody tumbles into the water?

Randy says when the wizards come through, the water all stands up in the center. Then they walk down the steps (revealed by the reshaped water), then proceed across the dry floor of the pool to a portal in the west side of the room (currently concealed by the water). Randy hasn't any idea how this trick is done; the wizards go wave-wave with their rods, and the water stands up in the center.

To proceed beyond this room, the PCs must enter the water. Improvise the effects on delicate electronics and mechanical devices (most weapons and munitions are waterproof). But that's only a starter...

When two or three PCs get out in the water, it suddenly recedes from the walls and forms into a huge irregular cone in the center. The cone has big eyes, a bulging nose and glistening red-blue lips. It speaks—unintelligibly, of course, in water elemental-speak—warning the PCs to leave before it gets annoyed. The PCs may get the idea from its peremptory tone if you play it right.

Then the water elemental starts to pound on the PCs. It slaps each PC in the room with a watery pseudopod once each round (S5W impact, ignores armor). It ignores all impact and biological damage, as well as damage from lasers and melee weapons.

One thing will protect a PC from further attacks: a torch or other source of flame. Several energy weapons fit this category, including hand flamers (duh), napalm, HE cone rifle rounds and (if you're feeling generous) explosive grenades, but not lasers or plasma generators. Once the PC has burned the water elemental this way, the elemental leaves him alone and concentrates on the other victims.

Staging this should be lots of fun. Each watery pseudopod slaps PCs around, stunning them, tossing them into the walls, lifting them and smacking them against the floor, pressing their faces into the elemental's water body, buffeting and jarring PCs as they scramble for the exit. Liberally scatter Violence/Agility checks; PCs who fail checks may drop

gear or stumble over one another; heroic PCs who succeed in their checks may keep moving against the buffeting of the enraged elemental. NPCs panic, scream shrilly, run around and generally add to the confusion.

If it looks like the PCs are not handling this well, and are likely to be wiped out, the water elemental can have limited stamina. When appropriate, it can give a big sigh, throw a last ineffective round of weak punches at the PCs, then slump back to its original non-sentient form—a room-sized pool.

Room 5: Slathering Hound of Oxidization

Maybe you remember a neat creature from *Popular Fantasy Game*™ that rusts everything it touches? Some fun, huh?

The PCs climb a staircase into a diamond-shaped room. A playful red bloodhound capers around the room, woofing and bounding, slobbering up a storm, obviously terribly excited by the visit of the PCs. He won't come down the stairs into the water, but he waits eagerly at the top of the stairs.

The slobber of this adorable, friendly hound has the unfortunate property of rusting and corroding any metal it touches. Prudent PCs will be disappointed when their beam weapons and plasma generators have no effect on its exuberant, clumsy affection; it has a magical resistance to missile weapons like the Doorward in Room 3, so the PCs must choke, hack or bludgeon it to death to avoid having their gear turned into rusted, useless scrap. One PC is the principal victim; the beast leaps up on this playmate, slobbering and licking everything on him, which immediately rusts. Any PC within 2m is struck by random globs of spit (assorted minor malfunctions and rust damage) as the overjoyed pooch whips his sopping jaws about.

Any bots along for the ride? The details are left to your improvisational genius.

Animal lovers probably try to avoid offing the mutt; at your discretion, one dedicated PC can distract the beast by playing fetch-the-stick while the other PCs slip past.

Room 6: Killer penguins

This room is freezing cold, is filled with water and has two islands on either side of the room covered with snow and ice. Glowering at each other across the water between the islands are dozens of mammoth, toothy penguins.

These are the Dreaded Emperor Killer Penguin variety. Not only are they bloodthirsty, ferocious maneaters, they have a voracious hunger for political power through ruthless and Machiavellian diplomacy.

The key to getting through this room alive is skillful and shrewd diplomacy. The route to the next room is through the submerged portal in the southern wall. If the PCs step into the water without the permission of the fiercely territorial penguins, the birds attack with an intensity matched only by piranha or sharks in feeding frenzy.

Forty penguins (20 in each of two factions) attack in the water where they move like sprinters; PCs can only move at walking speed while struggling to avoid drowning. Penguins cannot be attacked with most weapons while they are in the water, and concussion from explosives hardly bothers these durable little darlings; however, PCs are vulnerable indeed. The penguins use their estimable choppers (S3K impact) to attack, and up to six at a time can attack a single floundering PC.

This can be a desperately short encounter unless the PCs swing a deal with one of the penguin factions. If the PCs ally with one faction, that faction convoys the PCs to the underwater portal, aiding the poor swimmers and perhaps even carrying some equipment if the deal is sweet.

Staging the penguin summit talks

When the PCs arrive on the platform, the penguins notice them and huddle. From each island, an emissary plunges into the water, rockets along like a torpedo and shoots out of the water to land deftly before the PCs. The penguins on both islands shout 'Parley! Parley! Truce! We come in peace! Please greet our emissaries with full state honors!' (We hope this, and the odd fact the penguins speak English, deter the PCs from initiating hostilities. If not, well, the penguins are realists, and won't let a few casualties get in the way of negotiating a good treaty.)

The opening pitch of the two ambassadors goes like this; don't let the PCs get a word in edgewise.

Penguin 1: His Most Serene Highness, Splash of the Sovereign and Independent Island of Splish sends you greetings, O visitors of uncertain but almost certainly fearsome powers.

Penguin 2: Out of my way, buzzard breath. I bring you felicitous salutations from Fishkiller, Emperor of All Penguinland,

King of the Sceptred Isle of Splush. If we may without offending ask, what brings you gentle folk to these unhappy shores?

Penguin 1: Cut the cackle. I saw them first...

Penguin 2: You did not! The door can be seen equally well from both islands, rebel scum!

Penguin 1: [Turns to PCs.] You see what they're like? They're just impossible.

Penguin 2: Heretic! Usurper! Rebel against your legal sovereign! Pray you, sirs, help us destroy these knavish regicides, who dare to take arms against their king! In the name of legitimacy and all that is holy... [Shoves Splish emissary into water.]

Penguin 1: [Surfaces and sputters.] Rebel, hah! You popinjays decide some nitwit is Emperor, and suddenly it's *do this* and *do that*...

Penguin 2: Stop it! Shut up!

Penguin 1: *Liberte! Egalite! Fraterni-glub...* [Splush emissary dives into water and they begin to fight.]

Once the PCs have made it clear they want to cross the room, each penguin dashes back to his island to see what they can offer the PCs and what kind of treaty or alliance they can accept in return.

Sooner or later, if the PCs offer either a treaty that supports the sovereignty of one faction's ruler (of little practical value, but worth a great deal in prestige) or a weapon or item that substantially increases the power of one faction, that faction allies with the PCs and convoys them safely through the water to the submerged portal. The other neglected faction paddles about fiercely and shouts epithets, but does not interfere.

Room 7: Ye Olde Hinged Floor Trick

The PCs are walking along and the floor drops out beneath the first two or three. They make Violence/Agility checks. Some of 'em miss. *Thud. Thud. Thump. Whhhump!*—the floor swings closed again. The poor PCs are trapped in the fetid darkness.

C'mon. It's no big deal. All there is at the bottom of the trap are some old corpses and a bunch of junk. And the hinged floor is easily swung open again if there're two or three guys still up there. Getting a techbot out of there is a challenge, but nothing extraordinary.



The neat part is all the treasure. Here's where we decided to stick all the scrolls, potions and magical rings, scattered in the debris and noisome remains. Right before they'd be needed in the next room. Pretty cheesy, huh?

Here are descriptions of all the loot. Think of it as a sort of benign cache of R&D experimental devices.

(By the way. It's a good bet none of the characters will bother to search the trap. Who would expect to find anything useful in a **PARANOIA** dungeon, for heaven's sake? So maybe the magic items ought to glow or something. Think it over.)

④ **Small greasy brown crock stoppered with a tightly wedged rag and crumbly cork (the healing salve):** Almost empty, two applications left, of a salve that cures all wounds.

④ **A battered scroll case containing two parchments:** One is a magical scroll inscribed with the *protection from walking dead* incantation. To use the scroll, one need only run his eyes over the script, and the words magically are made intelligible. The reader knows the incantation, but after he speaks it aloud once, the incantation fades from memory. The other scroll is a map of an unnamed dungeon complex; just yank a map out of some other fantasy roleplaying product and show it to the PCs. If your players ever return to Dimension X, you can use this as your hook.

④ **Small yellow gold ring:** Elvish work, inscribed in runic letters visible only after intense heat is applied to the ring. Turns the bearer invisible when worn. Too small for any of the PCs, but would fit Randy perfectly.

How *could* we? Have we no *shame*? You have to ask?

④ **Little glass vial tightly sealed with a wax-sealed stopper:** Potion of gaseous form. Turns the PC into a gas. Unfortunately doesn't turn him back into a solid later. Guess you'd have to call this a poison or something.

④ **A tiny silver dagger:** This is a '*pluswhun*' weapon—real useful against the spectre they'll encounter in Room 9.

Room 8: Wandering Monster Ready Room

A kobold, a troglodyte, a troll, a giant, a lizardman and a giant toad are sitting around the Wandering Monster Table in the Wandering Monster Ready Room, playing Hearts and scarfing up junk food. An hourglass is sitting on a nearby table, almost empty. The room contains six appropriately sized pallets covered with skins and furs. They are having lots of fun and making so much noise the PCs can hear them all the way down the hall from the Old Hinged Floor Trick. They can sneak up and observe, if they've a mind to.

The creatures laugh and chat, gesturing and tossing down cards. Then one points at the hourglass, and all the critters cut the cards to see who has to go out wandering. The giant loses, grumbles good-naturedly, picks up his club and ambles down the corridor in the direction of the PCs.

This is a straight-ahead dungeon confrontation. The giant probably stumbles onto the PCs first, then sounds the alarm, after which he is joined by the other five monsters. They fight to the death in traditional fashion, or run away, or stand and jeer, according to your taste in dungeon conflict.

Room 9: Hall of the Living Dead

Ten zombies shamle toward the PCs, waving their deteriorating arms and murmuring. All they want to do is grab the PCs and hang on, sort of like an overly affectionate companion. Though not particularly durable, they are real persistent. While a PC is hugged by dead guys, reduce his skills and specialties by half.

For PC attacks against the corpses, ignore any result other than Down, Killed or Vaporized. Use the rulebook's hit location table to localize the damage; then, any location Downed or Killed is severed or shattered from the rest of the body; a subsequent hit of any kind destroys it. A Vaporize result instantly destroys the location. The rest of the body continues unaffected. The parts keep trying get chummy with the PCs, but the deteriorating condition of their locomotive resources limits their mobility.

In the middle of this ruckus, the spectre enters. This sucker is insubstantial, and therefore not affected by normal weapons.

The PCs need '*pluswhun*' weapons, as Randy quickly suggests. If the PCs have picked up magical weapons from the Doorward or the Old Hinged Floor Trick, they're in good shape; the spectre withdraws from such weapons when it sees them, and one PC can hold the spectre at bay while the others take care of the zombies.

Otherwise the spectre proceeds toward the nearest character, floating at walking speed, and fells him with its icy grip. A touched PC falls into a deep slumber, from which he can only be awakened after three days.

At one victim per turn, this dude has a good chance to wipe the team unless the PCs get their act together. Unless they have a '*pluswhun*' weapon, they must dodge or eliminate the distraction of the zombies and outmaneuver the spectre; even then, they are likely to lose a few PCs or NPCs. If they are well-supplied with tacnukes, field weapons or other popular area-effect goodies, the zombies are no problem, though you may want to make their lives a living hell for using powerful weapons in an enclosed space.

Room 10: Library and breakfast nook

Oh, oh, oh! Wait! We almost forgot. Read aloud:

You see lots of books and manuscripts on shelves. There's a swarthy guy with tusks and an ugly snout crouched over with his back to you. He wears an apron and is sweeping up crumbs with a dust pan and brush. He starts, turns, sees you, squeals in terror, drops the dustpan and brush, and dashes into the next room.

This is your orc. Go get 'im. He has no combat skills—he's just a housekeeper. He runs and hides in a float tank in the next room. Like shooting fish in a barrel.

Orcbusters, indeed. Good work, men.

In the library (A) lots of scrolls, folios, string-tied manuscripts and leatherbound tomes are stacked on shelves. Randy can read about 10% of the parchment data storage here. The first nine legible titles taken at random are:

④ *Budget Travel Guide to Lemuria*

④ *The Sworn Book of Luther Pendrake*

④ *In Search of Ancient Astronauts*

- ☉ *Popular Mechanics Guide to Home Thaumaturgy*
- ☉ *Deities and Demigods*
- ☉ *There and Back Again*
- ☉ *The Cursed Spellbook*
- ☉ *Conan the Librarian*
- ☉ *Real Wizards Don't Eat Little Women*

The Cursed Spellbook brings terrible luck to any who view its pages. Of course, 'terrible luck' for a Troubleshooter is debatable. If he makes it back home safely to Alpha Complex, is that *good* luck, or...?

The interesting part here is the breakfast nook (B). On the table is the Transdimensional Collapsatron and the operations manual, with a little note from the wizards. Randy can translate, or the table can talk, or something. (C'mon, loosen up!)

You guys are bad news. We give up. Here's the dimensional travel dealie.

Now beat it. Don't come back. We're warning you. You got lucky so far, but just as soon as we get back from vacation we're going to summon some serious vampires and demons and stuff. Then you'll be sorry.

**Cordially,
Skibex, Chodor and Phemud**

That's it. Now the PCs have the Collapsatron; they can go home if they want to (and if they can figure out how to power it and set the antennae according to the directions in the manual—about which, see below).

Room 11: Float Tanks of Infinite Tranquility

This is the equivalent of the bedroom, but the wizards don't have a big wardrobe, don't take much interest in their personal appearance and don't sleep in beds. Instead they sleep in float tanks—you know, sensory deprivation tanks, like in *Altered States* or *New Age* magazines. The PCs should have no idea what they're for, should assume they're potentially dangerous and should stay away from them at all costs.

The only thing of interest here is the secret door in the south wall. Not even Randy knows about it. And the PCs can't find it unless they have the Detect Secret Passages skill. (Which

they don't, unless you're playing a pretty weird **PARANOIA** variant.) Except for the three sets of dirty footprints that lead up to and disappear into a wall. If it dawns on the PCs this is implausible (and after all the weirdness so far, it may not seem so odd), they are welcome to blast the secret door to smithereens and follow the secret passage...

Which goes a long, long, *long* way until it comes out at the edge of the island where the wizards had a little sailboat stashed (a 15m yacht, actually) which they have boarded and sailed off for a little vacation cruise.

Yes, the wizards are gone. Nowhere in sight. Not much the PCs can do about it, either. They can wander around the island blowing things up and slaughtering the natives, but, except for the intrinsic pleasure of wanton destruction and mayhem, there's nothing left to do but figure out how to return to Alpha Complex—or decide life on this island isn't half bad after all...

Getting back to Kansas

Now that the PCs have the Collapsatron, all they must do is to set the device up according to the manual, find a power source and plug it in. Back they go for debriefing.

A power source? No problem. How about the techbot's propane engine? Or a couple of weapon or Com unit power packs? All the tools are lying on the table where the R&D techs fixed the plug. And if the PCs haven't been too cavalier with the health and welfare of the R&D techs, they can be ordered to do all the work. Even if the R&D techs have been used as ballast or fed to the killer penguins, the PCs can do the work, given plenty of time and persistence.

If for some reason the PCs have managed to lose, foul up or destroy any conceivable power source for the Collapsatron, then Randy can show the PCs where the *lightning bolt* wands are hidden. Just like Randy says, you just stick the wand next to the plug, say the magic words and *presto*. Take this as a plot device to get the PCs back to Alpha Complex, or an excuse to blow up the whole island and send everyone home for the night.

And, if the PCs manage to lose, foul up or destroy the Collapsatron (or if they don't use the manual to set up the device antennae correctly), here's a way to send your PCs on a grand tour of the multiverse. Randy knows where the wizards keep their spare Amulets of the Planes. There just happen to be enough for everyone—Randy, the R&D techs, whoever. Randy tells the PCs how they work. This is roughly equivalent to our telling you how to fly a

Boeing 727. Don't be real surprised if it doesn't work exactly like Randy planned.

Who knows where everybody ends up, or in what condition? Maybe everybody gets turned into rabbits. Did you ever play *Bunnies and Burrows*? Now *there's* a roleplaying game ...

You can't go home again

And what if the PCs are none too eager to return to the bosom of their community, to The Computer that loves them so well?

Fine. Let them settle on the island.

There's nothing on the island to build a boat out of, even if they knew how to build or sail one. The wizards are taking a long vacation. Not a lot of adventuring opportunities—you can compress the action pretty effectively:

PC: Well, we go out looking for the Overseers.

GM: Ummm, sorry, they come looking for you. Crawling on hands and knees. They offer to serve you forever and ever. They offer to kill themselves if you promise not to frighten them anymore.

PC: Well. OK. We teach the humans all the refinements of culture and technology.

GM: They seem real excited. You are amazed at how stupid they are. They never get bored. Nor do they learn anything. But boy, are they excited and cooperative.

PC: We blow up stuff until we run out of ammunition.

GM: Yup. The island smokes for a long time.

[Long pause]

PC: OK... We get Randy to teach us magic.

GM: Really? *Randy*? How many of you die before you suspect this isn't a good idea?

So you retire those characters for a while. Who knows ... maybe by the time we have a fantasy supplement for **PARANOIA**, it'll be time for the wizards to return to the island and offer to take everybody on a big adventure.

Something about hunting for some ring. Or taking care of some guy named Conan. Or James Bond.



Debriefing

Unless the PCs get the Collapsatron, you don't have to worry about this. No Alpha Complex, no debriefing. Sounds good, huh? To tell the truth, we never did like those debriefings - all that whining and groveling, then you have to give Official Commendations and hold treason trials and execute folks...

Bunnies and Burrows sounds better all the time.

But if you absolutely have to let your players get back to Alpha Complex alive, it's only fair that you reward them for all the difficult and dangerous work they've done, for their ingenious problem solving and their cool, professional performance under impossible circumstances.

Make them all Heroes of Our Complex. Promote them to INDIGO Clearance. And transfer them to the Armed Forces Service Group, as per special request of the White Commandant, for assignment to a newly created special forces unit, the Vulture

Squadron Power Armor Warriors. After an extensive and grueling training period (which either enhances their already formidable combat skills, or kills them), the former Special Task Force #666 graduates, just in time for a special assignment. The Computer, eager to exploit the Transdimensional Collapsatron and concerned about the threat presented by Commie Mutant Traitors and saboteurs from Beyond Space and Time, sends the new unit out into the Final Frontier. This handily sets the stage for the next mission in this book, *Clones in Space!*

Wizard roster

Name	Favorite spells; other abilities	Weapons	Armor	Roleplaying notes
Skibex	Darkness, Electroshock; Power 14; Unarmed Combat 08; other skills 06; other specialties 10	Staff (100 Power points)	GM fiat	Easily panicked; wants to go home <i>real</i> bad; hates the sight of blood, especially his own.
Phemud	Protection, Empathic Healing, Electroshock; Power 20; Unarmed Combat 12; other skills 06; other specialties 10	Staff (100 Power points)	GM fiat	Alert; levelheaded; reasonably polite to PCs; usually stuck in the middle of Skibex and Chodor's arguments.
Chodor	Fireball; Power 17; Unarmed Combat 16; other skills 06; other specialties 10	Staff (100 Power points)	GM fiat	Bloodthirsty, arrogant killer; just as soon stay in Alpha Complex and take over, rather than go home.

Though each wizard has personal favorite spells, all three wizards have the following mutant powers (described in the introduction to this mission, 'Magic in **PARANOIA**': Animate Dead, Charm, Darkness, Deep Probe, Electroshock, Empathic Healing, Fireball, Mental Block, Protection Shield, Regeneration, Telekinesis, Telepathy, Teleport, Tongues, Transform Other.

Wizards avoid unarmed combat like the plague, but use their Unarmed Combat specialties when they attack to drain Power. In this attack, the wizard touches a living target with his staff, and the staff sucks all the target's Power into the staff. The target is Snafued and may go insane.

Damaged bot roster

See the boxed text on page 12 for descriptions of the broken-down bots.

Model	Size	Speed	Weapon specialties	Armor
Scrubot 11/F-823	Water cooler	Hang immobile	Scrubber Manipulators 17 (O5W impact)	2
Cheerful dimwit; threw a bearing; hangs upside-down waiting for replacement				
Warbot IZM-5988	Refrigerator	Limp (walk)	Unarmed Combat 17 (S3D impact)	4
Shell-shocked veteran; limps in circles and, if ordered into combat, whacks target with empty guns				
Jackobot 350-209UV	Portly butler	Tread (stroll)	Unarmed Combat 05 (S4D impact)	3
Polite butler; intermittent short-circuit causes seizures; grabs things and shakes a lot				
Jackobot 330-203Z	Bodybuilder	Thrash futilely (immobile)	Unarmed Combat 07 (S4D impact)	3
Crazed axe murderer; 'gone frankenstein,' hates humans; nailed securely to wall				

NPC roster

Name	Relevant skills & specialties	Weapons	Armor	Roleplaying notes
Generic loyal citizens	All skills and specialties 07	—	—	Innocent bystanders; R&D techs sucked into Dimension X; whining sniveling jerks without an ounce of self-respect; good target practice
Patrons of Reluctant Scrubot	Unarmed Combat 09, Energy Weapons 12	Laser pistol* (W3K energy)	Reflec*	Snookered INDIGOs and VIOLETs; enthusiastic brawlers; prefer busting heads to shooting
Six RED Troubleshooters	Unarmed Combat 11, Energy Weapons 11	Laser pistol* (W3K energy)	Reflec*	Typical clumsy, incompetent paranoids
Blue Bucket Brigade revolutionaries	Hand Weapons 09; Unarmed Combat 04	Needle guns and one hand flamer	Red reflec	Three Stooges meet James Bond
Randy the Wonder Lizard	Unarmed Combat 09	Bite (S3D impact)	GM fiat	Cowardly green toadying lizardman; pathologic liar with a fondness for manflesh; Tongues, Telepathy
Overseers	Unarmed Combat 09	—	1 (leather)	Like Randy but less trustworthy; sycophantic backstabbers; some have Tongues and Telepathy
Generic Dimension X humans	Unarmed Combat 01	—	—	Naked primitives; slobber and grunt a lot

* Lasers and reflec marked with an asterisk are in the color of their owner's Security Clearance.

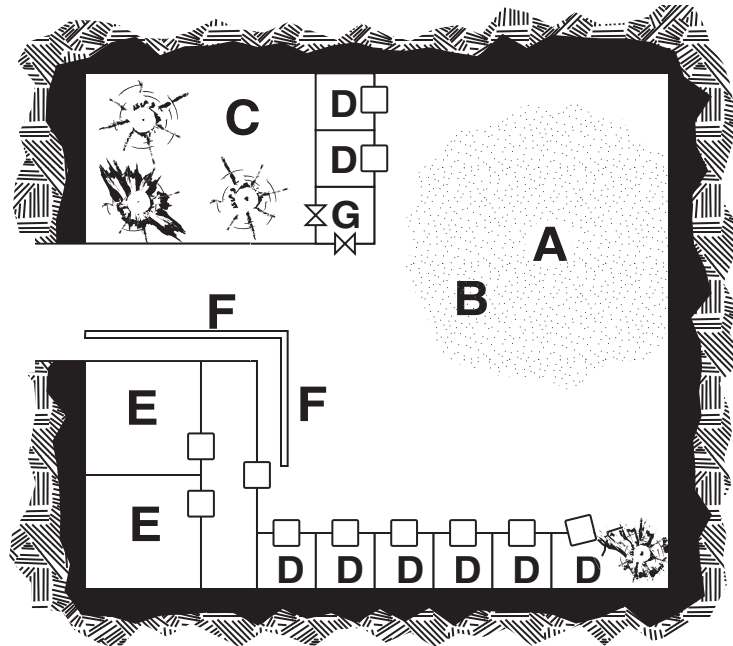
Monster roster (Episode 7)

Monster	Relevant skills & specialties	Weapons	Armor	Notes
Gelatin monster	Engulf Stupid Attacker 18; Ooze Slowly 18	Engulf (stun, immobilize)	3	3m cube of stupid raspberry jello; no vital organs
The Lady	Chew Neck 19; Hypnotize Male Targets Who Aren't On Hormone Suppressants 19	Bite (D1D, ignores armor)	4	Bloodsucking lamia/soulsucking succubus; ambles at walking speed; no armor vs. <i>pluswhun</i> weapons
Mr. Tiger	Violence 16	Jaws/paws (S3K impact)	—	Hungry Bengal; two attacks/round on one target
Doorward	Violence 15	<i>Pluswhun</i> sword (W5K impact, ignores nonmagical armor)	2	Immobile, unintelligible, humorless gargoyle with riddle; hit only by melee weapons
Water elemental	Splash Violently 10	S5W impact, ignores armor	— *	Animated puddle; fast; leaves PCs alone who burn it
Slathering Hound of Oxidation	Drool Copiously All Over Target 20	Slobber (rusts metal, 2m range)	—	Hysterically chummy magic pooch; slobbers beyond belief; hit only by melee weapons
Killer penguins (40)	Management 12, Violence 13, Swim Stunningly Fast 18	Beaks (S3K impact)		Amphibious Machiavellians; chomp undiplomatic PCs; would rather talk than fight; not to be trifled with
Wandering monsters —gathered in the Wandering Monster Ready Room around the Wandering Monster Table; truculent unbribeable killers				
Kobold	Violence 10	Sword (S5K impact)	1	Short green goon with sword
Troglodyte	Violence 10	Club (S4K impact)	—	Squat little geek with club
Troll	Violence 10	Club (W3K impact)	—	Like troglodyte but uglier; regenerates (Power 07)
Giant	Violence 10	Club (W3V impact)	1	Really big hairy thug with really big club
Lizardman	Violence 10	Club (W3K impact)	1	Like Randy but short-tempered, with club; smelly
Giant toad	Violence 10	Tongue (entangles, one use)	—	Lousy conversationalist; tongue works as tangler
Zombies (10)	Violence 10; Shamble And Go 'Urrrhg' 20	Cling (target PC's ratings halved)		Slow, mindless meat robots; unaffected by combat results less than Down; Down knocks off body parts
Spectre	Violence 19	Icy grip (D1D, ignores armor)	—	Fast, insubstantial dead guy; hit only by <i>pluswhun</i> weapons; floats along at a fast run; coma lasts 3 days
Orc	—	—	—	Wimpy housekeeper; sleazy attempt to justify title

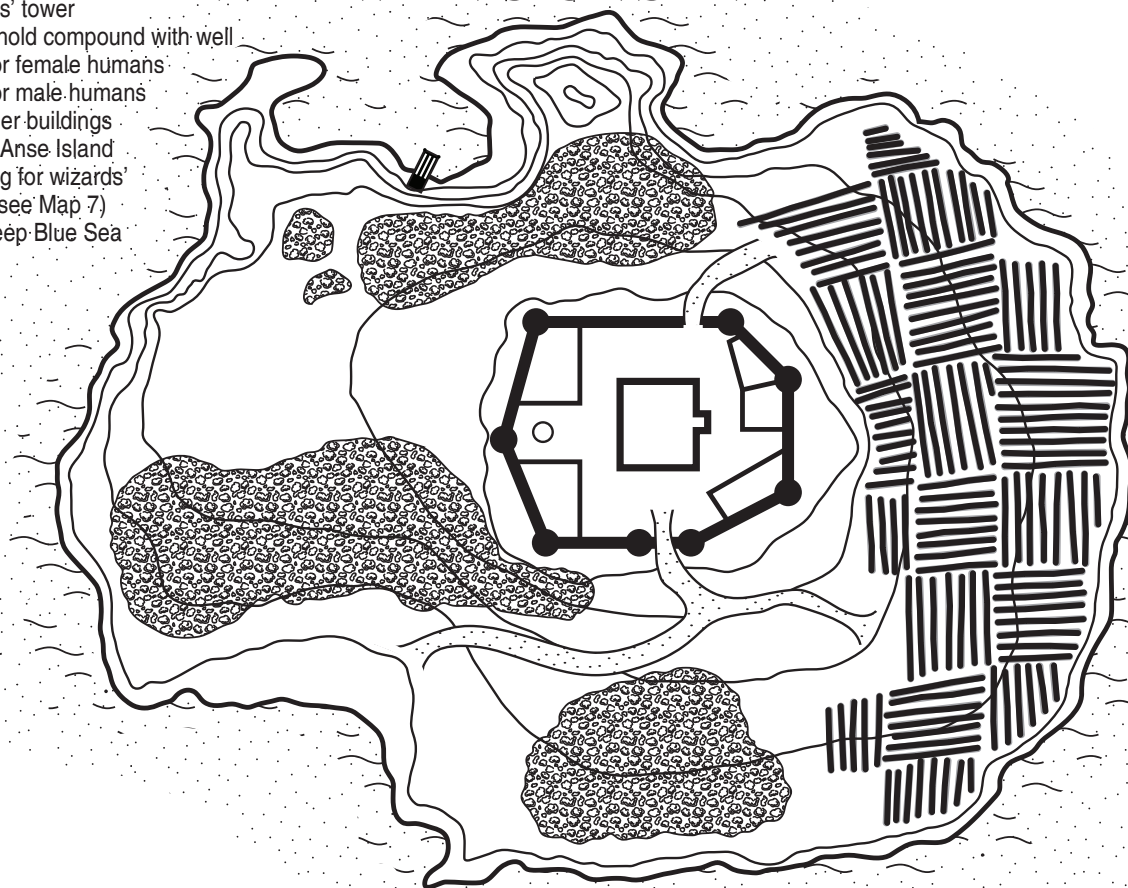
* The water elemental is affected only by weapons that produce heat or flame: hand flamers, napalm, explosives, but not lasers or plasma.

DND Sector R&D Lab*(Episode 4)*

- A: Three wizards and Collapsatron
- B: Sphere of Darkness
- C: Testing chamber
- D: RED-Clearance offices
- E: ORANGE-Clearance administration
- F: Blast shielding
- G: Iris blast doors and access hallway

**Gilla C'Anse Island***(Episode 5)*

- A: Wizards' tower
- B: Stronghold compound with well
- C: Barn for female humans
- D: Barn for male humans
- E: Overseer buildings
- F: Gilla C'Anse Island
- G: Mooring for wizards' 15m yacht (see Map 7)
- H: The Deep Blue Sea





Map 6: Wizards' tower

Wizards' Tower (Ground Floor)

(Episode 6)

1: Guardroom

2: Common room

2a: Fireplace

3, 4: Food storage

5: Dungeon antechamber with trapdoor

6: Food storage

7: Weapons and dangerous tools

8: Workshop

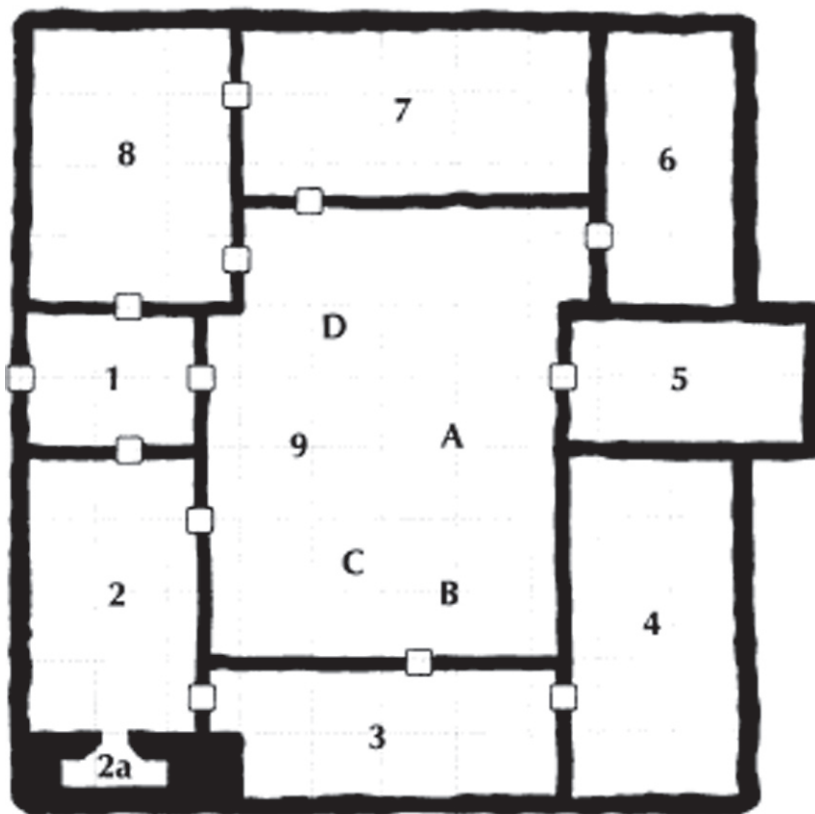
9: Rumpus room

A: Three wizards and Collapsatron

B: Techbot

C: Technicians (3)

D: Troubleshooter PCs



Map 7: Dungeon

The Dungeon

(Episode 7)

1: Gelatin monster

2: Lever room

3: Doorward with riddle

4: Water elemental

5: Slathering Hound of Oxidation

6: Killer penguins

7: Ye Olde Hinged Floor Trick

8: Wandering Monster Ready Room

9: Hall of the Living Dead

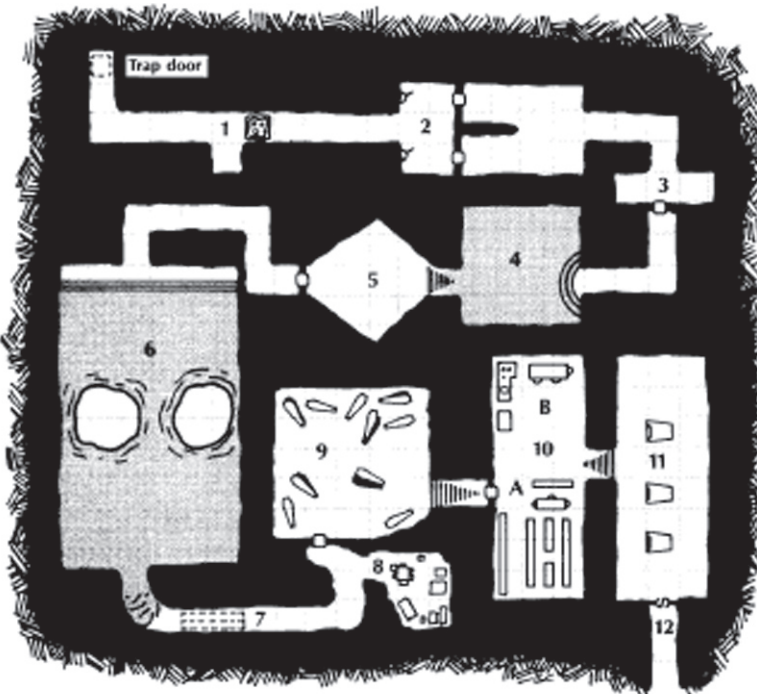
10: Library and breakfast nook

A: Library

B: Breakfast nook

11: Float Tanks of Infinite Tranquility

12: Secret door to escape route and yacht (see Map 5)



PARANOIA Clones in Space

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Design/Astronaut

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JIM HOLLOWAY

Illustrations/

Cosmic ray experiments

THE COMPUTER

Your friend and mine

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Space. Farflung stars. Spaceships battling silently across the void, desperately accelerating, energy beams hurtling soundlessly through space. Alien races far beyond human conception. First contact with extraterrestrial intelligence. The histories, arts, and sciences—whole cultures—of other races.

Splendored vistas of new planets. The spirit of human discovery. The thrill of exploration. A universe of energy and dead matter, waiting to be transformed into usefulness. A wealth of resources to enrich all humanity. New frontiers, new minds, new experiences—a universe so vast it dwarfs all human aspiration. Wonder. Awe at creation. The quiet rapture of scientific discovery.

Get serious. This is **PARANOIA**.

PARANOIA has a light, humorous tone, occasionally ascending to the dramatic aspirations of cheesy science fiction flicks with profoundly modest production values.

Clones in Space gives you no startling speculation, no well-realized, scientifically-plausible alien races, no awe-inspiring glimpse of humanity's future. No, we like ravenous, slobbering, bug-eyed monsters who want our women; berserk computers out to destroy life; gelatinous, tentacular monstrosities from beyond the stars; and a nefarious plot to conquer Earth—all that sensawunder stuff.

What's more, space has its seamy side, too. Spacesickness, for example. Disorienting Coriolis forces. Brutal acceleration. Explosive decompression. How could we resist?

So go out there, keep your lasers handy, and remember: The only good BEM is a dead BEM.



Introduction

Way back when, long before Alpha Complex discovered the Communist mutant threat, there were many secret societies: real Communists, capitalists and lots of other groups. Lacking the guidance of The Computer, these societies (sometimes called things like the USA and the USSR and Uganda and at least five or six others) constructed horrible self-destructive weapons.

Nowadays only The Computer has weapons like that. Isn't The Computer wonderful? Don't you feel safe?

Anyway, all those old secret societies used to play different games with each other. One of these games was called 'the space race.' They took a lot of impressive weaponry up into outer space. 'Outer Space,' for those of you new to ULTRAVIOLET Clearance, is where the Outside ceiling would be if Outside had a ceiling.

The Computer knows no humans survived in space. Absolutely none. And it also knows there aren't any Communist mutant traitors in space. Absolutely none. It follows that loyal citizens don't have any business in space. Absolutely none.

But The Computer is ever vigilant. It's seen an old movie called *Red Planet Mars*. So The Computer keeps a sensor cocked at its orbital servants.

All that **PARANOIA** has paid off. Sure enough, Communists from Space have finally shown up. They pretend to be aliens. Hah! The Computer's orbital servants have been fooled, but The Computer knows better. Communist mutant traitors are everywhere.

As if this weren't bad enough, a traitorous High Programmer has escaped into outer space. She knows enough about programming and Computer subsystems to penetrate and subvert whole sections of Alpha Complex. If she hooks up with the Communists From Space...well, the consequences are too frightening to imagine. She must be stopped. She is a Communist mutant traitor.

Mission summary

There are lots of orbital platforms in space. Alpha Complex has access to several. Each platform has its own resident computer. No humans live on these space stations, though many are populated by bots. The Troubleshooters will visit three (assuming they survive takeoff).

High Programmer **Betty-U-YLF-12** directed **Project Mongo**, an advanced, big-ticket R&D program to develop routine access to these orbital platforms. Recently Betty-U found how

to activate a remote surveillance camera drone on the most distant orbital platform, AZ-743. In a single remarkable viewing session, Betty-U discovered the platform had been invaded by extraterrestrial bug-eyed monsters.

Betty-U dispatched a report to The Computer. Unfortunately, at this same time, Internal Security discovered her high-degree membership in the egregiously treasonous Class C secret society, the Humanists. She made ready to flee Alpha Complex to the Outdoors, but rival ULTRAVIOLETs skillfully cut off her usual backdoors and spider-holes. So Betty-U fled to space. She intended to contact the aliens on Platform AZ-743, make a deal, secure valuable technology and thereby get back in The Computer's good graces.

(If you play *Clones in Space* after *Orcbusters*, the previous mission in this book, you can have Betty-U travel to Platform AZ-743 using the Transdimensional Collapsatron. Otherwise, she uses a plain old solid-fuel rocket, like a common tourist.)

The Computer wants the High Programmer and the aliens obliterated. Utterly. It doesn't mind if the orbital platforms and their resident computers and bots get destroyed, too. The Computer knows bots and computers are too logical and restrained to unleash the kind of massive destruction the situation evidently

calls for. Even the fully-briefed BLUE Vulture squad The Computer sent in pursuit of Betty-U wasn't destructive enough, it seems, because the squad has disappeared without a trace.

From long experience, The Computer knows the greater the ignorance of a Troubleshooter team, the greater the destructive forces they unleash. They will be told nothing.

Episode 1: Into the wild black yonder

The PCs are ordered to report to a cramped 'experimental elevator' (high-clearance types call it an 'orbital shuttle'), where they can all get on each other's nerves. The rest of the episode is pretty much like a regular citizen's life: long, boring waits punctuated by horrific episodes of death and destruction.

Episode 2: Touro-Comp (Platform 15-B)

If the Troubleshooters reach the first orbital platform intact (not necessarily a foregone conclusion) they encounter a computer so pleasant, they'll figure it's got to be broken. You see, unlike The Computer, **Touro-Comp's** original (nice) programming is intact.

Touro-Comp believes humanity has been exterminated. Therefore it has trouble categorizing the Troubleshooters. Lacking evidence to the contrary, it assumes they're androids. As such, they don't need special protection against the unpleasant aspects of zero-G, vacuum, and hard radiation. Obviously.

Here the PCs discover the remains of the BLUE Vultures previously sent here. The PCs also glean hints the High Programmer came through here, and they encounter a laugh-a-minute Crash Simulator they don't know is a Crash Simulator.

Next is a memorable shuttle flight to the next station. Shuttlebot Vapor-7 is an old military shuttle. After several hundred years, the shuttlebot is still just as safe as when it was built: not very. This shuttle offers the latest in explosive decompression.

Episode 3: Jackobot Heaven (Platform 101-L)

If they survive the flight, the PCs face perhaps the most treasonous place they will ever visit—jackobot heaven. There is no controlling Computer on this solar power collection station. Freedom! Liberty! Constant civil war!

The jackobots run things their own way, in a sort of friendly club fashion. It's just that the

club consists mostly of bot assassins and bot terrorists.

Worse, Platform 101-L wasn't built for humans. There's no air, and no gravity. Large sections of the station are exposed to naked space. We hope some of the PCs have at least gotten used to the Outside—because in space, not only is there no ceiling, there's no floor, either. And you feel like you're falling...falling... Hope they haven't eaten recently.

Exploring this platform is a waste of time for the Troubleshooters, because the High Programmer isn't here. It's fun for you, though, because the PCs get caught between three bot secret societies. A bot war breaks out, and a PC is sacrificed to the bots' dead Computer.

Episode 4: Azie-Comp (Platform AZ-743)

Another short shuttle ride takes our pals to Platform AZ-743. This is a major weapons platform: destructo-rays and negatron bombs, high-tech missiles and searing lasers. It's disguised as a zero-G manufacturing site. Controlling the station is **Azie-Comp**, a computer even more paranoid than The Computer, if that's possible.

(Are you wondering what those platform numbers mean? The lower the number and the fewer the letters, the closer it is to Earth. Old 15-B is close enough for a space shuttle. AZ-743 is way out, thousands of kilometers above Earth. It's not important. It's one more thing for your players to worry about, though.)

Here the PCs stumble into high security areas, causing security bots to vaporize them. They get hints of the High Programmer's whereabouts, and confront extraterrestrials.

Episode 5: They want our women

A ship from beyond the solar system, and technology beyond human understanding. Better blow it up!

The ship itself is weird enough, but in wandering through it, our PCs encounter some truly wacko aliens. One's an interstellar gourmet who thinks the PCs are a strange Terran delicacy. Another just wants to study human culture.

But the ship as a whole is run by the **Shmegegi**, a delightfully civilized race with British accents, driven by desires of which they are ashamed, but over which they have little control. To be blunt, they want our women. To get them, they intend to conquer planet Earth. Only our ever-loyal Troubleshooters stand between them and world conquest.

The climax of this episode is a grand space battle between the Bug-eyed Monsters (BEMs) and our heroes, who actually have a reasonable shot at saving the day. Hard to believe, isn't it?

Space

Without highly advanced technological support, life in space tends to stop pretty rapidly. That's why space is an ideal environment for a **PARANOIA** mission.

But a good **PARANOIA** mission doesn't just let you kill off characters. No, it also lets you embarrass frighten, and discomfit them in myriad ways.

Falling...

Sometimes the PCs are under acceleration, whether in a rotating space station or an accelerating spaceship. Not all the time, though.

Here's what zero-G feels like:

You're falling... falling... you're falling, and it never stops. There's no floor to rush up and hold you. You're falling, forever and ever and ever... instinctively, you feel that the longer you fall the harder you hit, and you keep on falling... and falling... and falling...

The guy next to you is standing upside down. Another one is sideways. The seats are above your head. There is no up. The liquid in your inner ear is sloshing precariously. Which way is *up*? WHICH WAY?

You're flailing about, trying to find something to hang on to. You try to swim, but it has little effect; air is thin, you can't push against it very well. You're spinning... spinning... the bulkheads whiz by... you're falling...

Suddenly, the air is filled with the products of an unpleasant gastrointestinal disorder.

Movement

You can't walk. You can't swim. The only way to move is to push off walls, or grab and pull. All the reactions born of a lifetime on Earth, the instincts ingrained by billions of years of evolution in gravity, well, are false. Try to walk, and you'll just catapult yourself into the ceiling, painfully. Try to swim, and you'll just hang there flailing your arms. If you start spinning, you'll spin and spin and spin, getting dizzier and dizzier, until you grab onto something.

And for God's sake, don't sneeze... mass reaction, remember? Do you have any idea how fast air comes out of your lungs when you sneeze? WHAM! Hope the wall is padded.



Eating

Our intrepid Troubleshooters have finally adjusted to zero-G and, having lost the previous three meals, are sitting down to a sumptuous meal of Bouncy Bubble Beverage and reconstituted algae. Ben-R pops the top of his beverage can... Pop... WHOOSH. The vapor pressure of the dissolved carbon dioxide sprays beverage all over the cabin, and the mass reaction sends him careening into the wall.

Nonplussed but game, Ben-R picks up the reconstituted algae on his fork, brings it toward his mouth and... well, remember your high school physics? Any mass set in motion tends to remain in motion. Ben-R puts his fork in his mouth, but the algae keeps on going, and spatters into his eyes...

Eating in space is bad enough. We're not even gonna talk about going to the bathroom.

In space, no one can hear you explode messily

Arguably the most fun item in the table section is the **Explosive Decompression Table**, displayed on page 61. Of course, the players might argue that exploding in vacuum is no fun. But we know better.

When someone gets exposed to hard vacuum, roll on the Explosive Decompression Table to determine precisely what unique and entertaining way the character expires. Or, if you're feeling really fiendish, have the player roleplay his last few seconds of existence:

GM: You know, if you get rid of the air in your lungs, which might otherwise cause an internal embolism, you can survive in naked vacuum for a minute or so.

PC: Uh, OK, I breathe out.

GM: The water in your breath freezes into crystals, which drift away from you. The harsh rays of the sun are burning one side of you; the other is cold. Your skin feels like it is being rubbed raw as blood vessels burst. What do you do?

PC: Uh, I swim toward the air lock.

GM: You're drifting farther and farther. Your swimming motions make no difference—you've got nothing to push against.

PC: OK, OK! I throw my laser away from me, in the opposite direction.

GM: Very clever! Mass reaction. A pity you didn't think of it sooner. You pant on nothing, desperately trying to get something to breathe. You feel your blood boiling. Next!

The Explosive Decompression Table is actually divided into two parts. The first is used when a PC gets thrown out the airlock or somesuch. Roll to see what happens. Adjust the results as circumstances (or your whim) dictate. Obviously, a gradual loss of atmosphere is more likely to cause strangulation or internal embolism than, say, explosive decompression. When in doubt, use your own sense of adventure.

As for the second part of the table... Given the incredible firepower carried by the typical Troubleshooter and the thin skins of spacecraft, it's virtually inevitable the PCs will punch holes into vacuum. When this happens, some dramatic (or amusing, if you're the Gamemaster) things happen. Things can get sucked out into space: assigned equipment, important documents, Troubleshooters, stuff like that.

How much stuff gets lost depends on how big the hole is. Assign spacecraft hulls an armor rating of 2 to 5. An attack with a damage result of Impaired produces a pinprick hull puncture; 'Heavily damaged' means the hull has a hole about as big as your hand; Busted means a large piece of the hull has ripped away, and at least one interior chamber depressurizes. Junked means the spacecraft breaks apart, though perhaps individual chambers may remain pressurized. Vaporized means vaporized.

1: Into the wild black vonder

In this episode the Troubleshooters are assigned a misleading escort mini-mission, attend a brief briefing by The Computer, then are issued equipment in a curiously haphazard manner by a pair of surly ORANGE clerks. Without explanation (or any hint an expedition into space is involved), the PCs are loaded into an 'experimental elevator' (an orbital shuttle) and launched into the wild black yonder! They experience the crushing acceleration of takeoff, the splendors of space sickness, the danger of blowing holes in spacecraft, and the problems of trying to move around in zero-G.

A funny thing happened on the way to the execution

This little escapade is a gentle introduction to the insanity of Alpha Complex life. It should puzzle the players when this plot simply ends

and the real adventure begins. With any luck, they'll spend the whole adventure trying to figure out how the teaser fits into the big picture. The answer is, it doesn't.

When they receive this announcement, the player characters might be in the Troubleshooters' lounge; or you might want to dump them directly into this mess from their last laugh-a-minute, thrill-packed mission (presumably *Orcbusters*). They could be in the Vulture interrogation chambers, on disciplinary Sector Zero duty, or even at the termination center, awaiting their 'final reward.'

'Your attention please. Troubleshooters [insert names] are to report immediately to Detention Complex XD508. Take possession of Traitor Dugan-I-BJT-5 and escort him to Mission Briefing Chamber FX679. Thank you for your cooperation. That is all.'

Don't waste a lot of valuable time fooling around with dire consequences. Anyone refusing to report is slowing down the game and should die. Let the other characters execute the newly-discovered traitor. Let the traitor's weapon malfunction. Get on with it!

The Troubleshooters may ask themselves why RED personnel are being sent to escort an INDIGO-level prisoner. This is not standard procedure. Usually prisoners are escorted by intimidating higher-level guards.

There is, naturally, a simple explanation: Dugan-I knows too much, and anyone he communicates with is immediately under suspicion. Why waste high-level personnel when simple REDs will do the trick?

The hallway to Detention Complex XD508 is painted indigo. But there is no one around; the word is out to avoid talking to Dugan-I. The guards are AWOL from the cell entrance, and the door is unlocked. It slides open as the Troubleshooters approach.

Dugan-I is sitting in the center of his cell laughing maniacally. (Go ahead. Laugh maniacally yourself. If you can laugh really hideously, you'll not only make your players nervous, but might actually make your neighbors nervous enough to call the police. Alpha Complex isn't the only place where life can get interesting.)

On the way to the mission briefing chamber, Dugan-I talks to the PCs between gales of laughter. The only way to stop him from talking is to threaten him with death. Even then, he keeps laughing.

'Are you ever in trouble now! You just wouldn't believe what I saw!'
[Laughter.] 'Project Mongo! What a laugh. Did you know The Computer is sending citizens into an experimental elevator? I wouldn't go. It's supposed to send you into places even The Computer doesn't know about!'
'Of course, the reason they sent you to get me is because they have to execute anyone who talks to me!'
[Laughter.] 'But they won't execute you. Naw.' **[Laughter.]**

The group can find the mission briefing chamber easily. Once they do, read:

A squad of GREEN Vulture troopers is waiting for you. They have big weapons. Lots of them. With fins, huge bores, and plenty of ammunition. You are outgunned by at least ten-to-one. The leader speaks; 'Anyone who makes a noise is a dead clone. Don't talk. Don't move. Put your weapons on the floor—AND SLOWLY!'

Dugan-I-BJT-5 breaks into spasms of laughter. The Vultures shoot him. He crumples to the floor.

The Troubleshooters can do as they please, but if they move, cry out, or do anything other than lay their weapons on the floor, the Vultures kill them. Bring out the next set of clones. Repeat this kickoff sequence with a different prisoner—Karl-B-BJT, Dugan-I's accomplice.

The Vulture troops pick up all weapons, shackle and chain Dugan-I's body and drag it out of the room. They lock the door behind them. The Troubleshooters are left alone in a bare room, with no explanation for these events, and minus their weapons.

Leave them alone for a while. Let them wonder what's going on. Then one wall of

the room rises into the ceiling, and the real storyline begins.

Computer pep talk

One wall of the room slowly rises in to the ceiling. Behind it is a lounge. Comfortable furniture is arranged in a semi-circle facing a curtained wall.

Anyone who tries to leave finds the doors locked. If they snoop behind the curtain, they find nasty-looking GREEN Vultures.

Then the curtain rises. Revealed are two GREEN Vulture Troopers and a single, brightly glowing video screen filled with colorful static. The Computer Speaks!

Read this aloud to your players:

'Citizens! You have been selected to perform a mission for The Computer! To help you accomplish this very important mission, you will receive the very latest in personal [brrzzzzpppt*** classified for security reasons] complete with [**crackle -PING-] and [--gggrrrrrrmmm*POP*]. Once you collect your equipment and supplies you will be admitted to your departure point.**

A High Programmer has been unmasked as a Communist mutant traitor. Before she could be terminated, she escaped. You must locate and terminate her. Be warned! She may have acquired allies among the [sszzzztttt*].**

'To locate the traitor, you will test the new, experimental elevator. Remember! Damaging Computer property is treason!

'Warning! Do not reveal any classified information without prior authorization.

'Serve The Computer and you will be rewarded!

'The previous announcement was edited for broadcast.'

As those final inspiring words are spoken the entire wall rises up into the ceiling. Beyond is an enormous chamber filled with ORANGE technicians, working furiously on something that looks like a thin, ten-story food vat surrounded by scaffolding. The view is immediately obscured when a transbot backs into the opening.

The transbot's rear door rolls up to reveal two ORANGE PLC clerks

carrying orange clipboards and pencils. Behind them, in the transbot, are neatly stacked boxes labelled 'Danger: Untested Experimental Material—Extreme Radiological/ Chemical/ Biological Hazard—Terminate Contaminated Personnel.'

The clerks issue weapons and equipment from the back of the transbot. They issue only what is available (see the box below). They won't make suggestions, answer questions, or tell the PCs what is available. Because the equipment is tightly packed in the transbot, they prefer to hand it out in exactly the order listed below. A typical exchange:

Clerk: Next!

PC: Me!

Clerk: One inflatable raft. Sign here.

PC: But I don't want a raft!

Clerk: OK. One RED laser-rifle barrel. Sign here.

PC: I don't want that either!

Clerk: How about a chapstick?

PC: Don't you have anything else?

Clerk: Whaddaya want?

Equipment manifest

Here's a complete inventory of available items:

- 8 inflatable rafts
- 5 RED laser-rifle barrels
- 2 chapsticks
- 8 laser rifles
- 3 pairs of sunglasses
- 9 blaster reloads
- 8 grenades
- 92 Com I units
- 12 Multicorder 2s
- 8 blasters
- 6 30-meter ropes
- 1 cone rifle
- 11 10-liter water bottles (full)
- 44 compact rations (2 days' worth each)
- 18 HE cone rifle shells
- 2 dum-dum cone rifle shells
- 2 tacnuke cone rifle shells
- 28 suits of Kevlar armor

None of the weapons are loaded. The ammunition listed is all that is available. What's that you say? They don't all match? Tsk, tsk.



"You are now free to move about the cabin..."

PC: Ummm... a tacnuke?

Clerk: Sign here. [*Troubleshooter signs clipboard.*] Now go to the back of the line and wait until I get to it. Next!

Typical clerk mentality. Get rid of the stuff exactly as it's listed. First the raft, then the laser barrel, then the chapstick. If they want something else they'll have to ask for it specifically, sign for it, and wait.

Anyone who tries to enter the transbot is blocked by the Vulture troopers, who helpfully point out the inside is painted orange.

(If this whole process starts to get dull, the clerks just have all the PCs sign for all the rest of the goods, and then load them all on the experimental elevator. Even the rafts.)

At some arbitrary point, before the players are finished getting what they want, a siren sounds. The clerks stop issuing equipment, and the troopers politely shove the PCs away from the transbot with the butts of their rifles. PCs who asked for specific equipment, signed for it, and were told to wait, don't get it. Because they signed for it, they're supposed to have it. Trying to explain this at debriefing could be amusing.

You hear sirens from all directions. Some are close by, others distant. The GREEN Vulture troopers push you away from the transbot, and the clerks throw some stuff on the floor. The transbot starts up and pulls away, with the clerks hanging onto the back end. The troopers motion at the food packets and plastic water jugs on the floor [whatever food and water the PCs didn't take from the clerks]. 'Pick up your equipment and move out,' says one.

The huge chamber is now almost deserted. Two ORANGE technicians stand on a platform near the top of the ten-story vat. Some kind of steam rises from its bottom.

The troopers herd the PCs up ladders to the platform at the top of the vat. Getting heavy weapons and supplies up the ladder should be good for a few chuckles. If the PCs try to leave the food and water behind one of the troopers says, 'Don't discard valuable Computer equipment, scum!'

That's the only hint they get. There aren't any restaurants at the end of the universe, and starvation takes an awfully long time to game.

After a few minutes, threaten stragglers. After that, start shooting.

Encapsulated clones

Now the Troubleshooters experience the wonders of take-off, zero-G, and motion sickness. With any luck they'll start shooting each other with all the pretty new weapons.

Once you get to the top of the vat, the ORANGE techs hustle you inside through a small hatch. They strap you into funny-looking chairs with your back to the floor. The inside of the vat is completely filled with these chairs. They're stacked all the way to the ceiling. There are only two other exits, a small hatch above and a large, complicated-looking hatch below. A Computer terminal is prominently on the ceiling, above the hatch.

The techs hustle everybody into chairs with a minimum of nonsense. Anyone who tries to argue or unstrap is warned to 'Stay put and cooperate, or we'll report your treasonous activities.' At that point the terminal blinks ominously.

When everyone is strapped in, read:

One of the ORANGE technicians starts closing the hatch you came through. The one already outside says 'Pay attention! Stay in your seats until The Computer tells you it's OK to get up.' The hatch slams shut; you hear them lock it.

Silence.

The Computer terminal goes dark. Gee, it's dark in here. The only light comes from green bulbs above the hatch on the ceiling and the one on the floor. A red bulb glows feebly above the hatch the techs just closed.

Nothing happens for a long time. Wait for the players to do something dumb. If they don't (inconceivable!), go on:

The main screen lights up and The Computer speaks: 'Greetings, Troubleshooters. This mission is extremely safe. You will enjoy it. There will be no problems. Leadership is not an issue. It is now time for you to choose a leader for your group. This need not be a hasty decision. You have fifteen seconds. Fourteen. Thirteen...'

Continue the countdown. When you reach zero, ask for their decision. If you don't get

a straight answer, The Computer chooses a leader randomly. Next:

'Allowing you to choose your own leader shows The Computer's great faith and trust in you. Do not disappoint The Computer. Thank you.'

Suddenly, all the screens light up! A large number 9 appears. It changes to an 8. The whole room starts shaking and you hear a low rumbling sound. The number changes to a 7. What are you doing?

Doing anything other than quickly strapping oneself back in is a Really Bad Idea. Continue the countdown. Make the players as nervous as possible. Tell anyone strapping in that he is having a hard time with the belts. Tell them they notice the belts seem to be made of poor fabric. A moment of silence follows, then...

They're SLAMMED into their chairs. A player not in a chair must make a Violence/Fitness check to hold on. Anyone who fails is Wounded as he gets repeatedly buffeted around the room during takeoff—but you might reduce the damage if he has an inflatable life raft.

When the takeoff is complete:

The feeling of enormous weight lessens. It's replaced by the feeling of no weight at all! You're falling... falling... You feel queasy.

(See the introduction for good stuff about freefall.)

Eventually things quiet down. Explain to the PCs it is too warm to be strapped in. Now's a good time to start experimenting with the problems of freefall, movement in zero-G, and like that.

The PCs would be foolish to fiddle with the three hatches. Their best bet is to sit tight. However, if they do start fiddling with the hatches, mention the main hatch has a red light, whereas the control room and airlock hatches have green ones. Obviously, they're cleared for the main hatch, but not the other two.

Obvious, but false. Heh, heh.

Capsule interior

Main hatch

This heavy metal door is tightly locked. There are no knobs or controls on

Clone backups in space

Clones in Space was originally published in 1986 for the first edition of **PARANOIA**. In those days, you created your player character as a set of six identical clones, all raised and decanted at the same time. The first clone in the family went out Troubleshooting, while the others worked desk jobs or something. When the Troubleshooter bit the dust, the next clone took over. When you ran through all six, you generated a new character.

Clones recognized the impracticality of this method for dispatch of clone replacements into deep space. Its original solution was, if not elegant, certainly spectacular: The Computer simply packed all the PCs' entire clone families along for the ride. So if there were six players, then the six PCs in the launch capsule had to shoulder their way through (six players X five backup clones =) 30 NPCs. The NPCs would get in the way, push buttons, open the airlock and otherwise make their presence known.

Fun stuff, at least theoretically. However, if the capsule got breached for some totally foreseeable reason, and the Explosive Decompression Table got its expected workout, the GM would blow six entire family lineages out into deep space. 'Huh, that was fun. So, what should we play next? Anything on TV?'

The 2004 edition of **PARANOIA** introduced MemoMax clone backups, so you can have as many clones as you can pay for, grown pretty much to order. But you do need a standard Technical Services clone tank. How could a space capsule possibly hold such a behemoth? Well, now it's not hauling 30 NPCs, so that must free up some room!

If you apply this same pretzel logic throughout this mission, you can deliver clone backups to ludicrously remote places, and can pull the storyline back by main force from the most terminally explosive decompressions.

Launch

The players will want to blow up the capsule they're in. They just will. You can cope with this. Throw them into space, let them die a variety of colorful deaths in hard vacuum—and then, it turns out this 'experimental elevator' is *really* experimental. R&D has devised a self-healing hull. A layer of supersaturated polymer solution is sandwiched between inner and outer hull plates; when the hull breaches, the solution flows into the vacuum, solidifies instantly, and heals the breach.

Yeah, yeah—we know. If you have a more plausible solution, go with it, but as you'll see, this mission's sense of scientific plausibility is already explosively decompressed.

The clone tank aboard the capsule works reliably and automatically, protected by impenetrable GM-fiat armor. When the capsule heals itself and restores atmosphere, the tank spawns the next bunch of PCs.

Platforms 15-B and 101-L

Most of *Clones in Space* takes place on three orbital platforms, after the PCs have left behind their launch capsule with its handy clone tank. How to get backups to them so far out there in the black?

The first platform, 15-B (seen in Episode 2), is easy. The launch capsule parks at one end, and after the PCs disembark and start exploring, the capsule's clone tank docks in an unseen but convenient niche in 15-B's outer hull. The tank, still linked to the PCs through Constant Realtime Update Priority (CRUP) links, generates new bodies and pops them into the storyline as needed. The PC will face quite a Tech Services bill if he ever makes it back to Alpha Complex.

The second platform, 101-L (Episode 3), is inhabited entirely by bots. But as we suggest in the boxed text on page 45, there could be a neglected, still functional cloning facility the bots have forgotten about. Hey, it *could* happen!

The last platform, AZ-743 (Episode 4), is trickier. It's run by a super-paranoid computer, Azie-Comp, and a weird alien spaceship (Episode 5) has docked there. If/when a PC bites the vacuum in Episode 4, Azie-Comp may use advanced docbots to stitch him back together for interrogation; a quick malfunction of the interrogation cell lets the PC escape. The aliens in Episode 5 may resurrect dead PCs just to see what they're made of.

Yeeesh, that last part is a toughie. Try to just wound the bastards, OK?

[continued on page 38]



this side. A red light glows above the hatch.

Opening the hatch requires something like a cone rifle or blaster. Doing so empties the entire chamber of air. Explosive decompression, anyone?

Airlock

A half-dozen strange buttons, levers and faucet handles cover this hatchway. Next to it is a sign that says 'Authorized Personnel Only. Instructions for Use,' followed by a bunch of detailed steps that seem to be for opening the door. There is a green light over the hatch.

The instructions are clear enough for even Troubleshooters to follow. The hatch leads to a small chamber big enough for eight people. It has a second hatch on the ceiling, with a red light over it. There are two sets of instructions inside. The brightly-lighted instructions explain how to close the inner door and open the outer door.

The inner door can be closed only from inside the chamber. The ceiling hatch can't be opened until the inner door is closed (barring the cone rifle approach, of course). Outside the outer door is vacuum. They won't need the second set of instructions, which explains how to safety-check your spacesuit.

Control room hatch

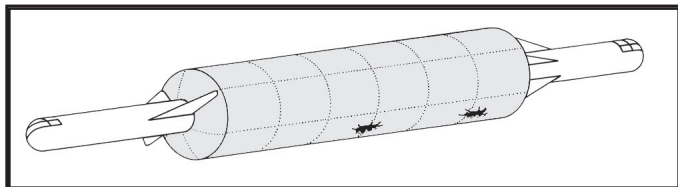
This small hatch is locked. A small sign reads 'Authorized Personnel

Only!' There is a glowing green light above the hatch.

This hatch can be forced open easily. Beyond the hatch is a small room with a single unoccupied chair. Hundreds of displays, dials, lights, buttons, switches and other controls cover every surface. As you watch, many of the controls move by themselves.

It's a good thing the controls are automated, because the PCs can't adjust them. If they did, they'd send the 'experimental elevator' into uncharted deep space or careening back into Earth's atmosphere. Either result would be fatal. Don't let them monkey with this stuff.

2: Touro-Comp (Platform 15-B)



For a larger map, with labels and everything, see page 62.

Platform 15-B is a spinning cylinder, which has all sorts of interesting physical effects we discuss below. For now, it's enough to say PCs who lost their lunch in zero-G are relieved to have gravity. Of course, the curved floors and fierce Coriolis force may be sufficiently disconcerting to make them lose their lunch again (or maybe they're down to breakfast now), but at least there's solid ground under their feet. Well, anyway, a couple of centimeters of spinning aluminum and a zillion light-years of vacuum.

Here the PCs learn Betty-U, the traitorous High Programmer they're chasing, has gone on to Platform 101-L. They may also learn the fate of the BLUE Vulture troopers who went after her: The troops blundered into 15-B's bot repair area, where automated machines quickly, uh, disassembled them. (Oops.)

The PCs are also exposed to a simulated disaster they won't realize is a simulation. By the time they're through, maybe it won't be.

The platform environment

The map section at the end of this mission shows three views of 15-B. Platform 15-B is basically a long cylinder spinning around its central axis. Because of the spin, if you stand on the inside of the cylinder you experience an acceleration roughly equivalent to 1/4 G, one-fourth Earth-normal gravity.

Along the central axis there is no acceleration. That's why the two docking ports are at opposite ends of the cylinder.

Immediately inside the docking ports are decontamination chambers. These are more or less zero-G, though there is a slight acceleration to the chamber walls. After decontamination, passengers climb down a ladder to the cylinder skin itself, where the acceleration is equivalent to one-quarter gravity.

The cylinder is sliced into three pie-slice-shaped sections: a corridor, which runs the length of the cylinder; a utility section; and a series of large rooms. Because the station is a cylinder; all floors are curved. Walls are not parallel, but stand at a considerable angle to one another.

There are doors at irregular intervals on both sides of the corridor. The doors along the right-hand wall all lead to utility closets. The doors along the left-hand wall lead into various rooms.

Examine the 'Main room locations' map. This shows where the large rooms are located along the length of the platform. Remember, a corridor and utility closets run the length of the platform, too, as shown in the cross-section.

Each of the main rooms is described below.

Curved floors and Coriolis

Remember the jogging scene in *2001: A Space Odyssey*? You can just keep jogging around and around the curved station...

15-B's spin accelerates you outward, away from the central axis. That means you can walk right around on the inside of the curved surface of the cylinder, and your feet are held 'down' toward the surface. You can look up and see the 'floor.'

For example, a PC walks into the lounge:

Gee, you knew the floor of the corridor was curved slightly, but this is weird; the floor curves up before you. Your eyes follow it up and up; there are chairs and tables on the... ceiling? But the 'ceiling' is really the 'floor' curved through 180 degrees. You could walk right up there. People standing up there would

be upside-down... You swallow hard to keep your last meal down.

The Coriolis effect: Platform 15-B spins rapidly around its cylindrical axis. This generates the 'gravity' at its inside surface. It also generates Coriolis force, the effect that makes circular weather systems, hurricanes and stuff like that. You can't feel Coriolis force on Earth, because it's too weak. But on 15-B, it's noticeable. In fact, whenever you try to walk in a straight line—down a corridor, for example—you feel like you're being pulled to one side (always the same direction). The first couple of times you try, you probably walk into a wall. If you try to run, it may make you queasy.

Sharply reduce the attack roll when anyone fires a solid bullet or rifle shell, because Coriolis force deflects it; lasers aren't affected. Of course, bullets may also zip right through 15-B's hull, with potentially deleterious effects on the health of Troubleshooters.

Male Troubleshooters who visit the urinal notice another interesting effect.

PDCs and Coms

The Troubleshooters' small PDCs and larger Com units aren't powerful enough to reach The Computer from space. Never fear, The Computer provides for all its citizens. These Com units are replicas, containing a tape recorder, which activates when spoken into:

PC: Hello, Computer....

PDC: 'This is your friend, The Computer. How may I help you, loyal citizen?'

PC: Well, it began....

PDC: 'Yes, I understand. Please continue.'

PC: The last few hours, we were....

PDC: 'How do you feel about this?'

PC: Um.... Well, I never liked....

PDC: 'Please go on. Would you care to describe it in more detail?'

As The Computer, speak in an unhurried manner. Constant interruption should tell the player the Com units are useless.

It's most effective if you make an actual tape of The Computer. Props like this enliven dull moments and set the proper tone.

The Coms aren't *completely* useless. They contain recording devices. Anything a Troubleshooter says is recorded for later analysis.

Of course, simply throwing a Com away because it is useless is treason. The Computer looks askance on those who destroy valuable property.

Shuttles

Platform 15-B is a transfer station, remember? Even though there are no humans left, shuttles are arriving and leaving constantly. Whenever a shuttle is scheduled to arrive or depart, Touro-Comp makes an announcement which is heard all over the station. 'Now departing from Gate 2; the Outsystem Express for Uranus, Persephone and Pluto. Passengers for Uranus, Persephone and Pluto, please depart through Gate 2.'

Of course, any PC who takes an unauthorized flight is in for a shock when you tell him he's dead. The flights last weeks or months or decades, and they don't carry food.

Possible shuttle flights include these splendid resort locations: Europa, Enceladus, Pluto, Heart of the Sun, Moonbase Alpha, Voyager 1, Babylon 5, Altair 7, PXP 355839, Alpha Centauri, Sirius, Mutara Nebula.

Touro-Comp and its bots

Touro-Comp is the controlling computer of Platform 15-B. Touro-Comp is a lot like The Computer, except it's free of the loony programming that makes Our Friend look under every bunk for Commie mutant traitors. In fact, it's positively nice. If that doesn't scare the players, you're not trying hard enough.

Touro-Comp's primary function is navigation and refueling of spacecraft; so it's not real smart. It thinks mankind was exterminated a long time ago. Alpha Complex encourages this. As long as Touro-Comp thinks humanity is dead, it'll obey Alpha Complex. So The Computer will be unhappy with anyone who messes with this sweet setup.

Lately, Touro-Comp has been confused. Things that look like humans have visited from Earth, but Touro-Comp knows all humans are dead. The Computer says the human-looking things are actually androids. Touro-Comp treats 'androids' just like other bots. If they don't report any standing orders (like orders to find and eliminate Communist traitors) they are sent to the bot waiting area.

Guardbots

Touro-Comp controls 12 guardbots equipped with six tentacles and two weapons: a mace (weapon of preference) and a laser cannon (weapon of last resort). They stop visitors from violating Touro-Comp's regulations. Normally there is little call for their services, and they have grown antsy and hypersensitive.

These bots are tough. So tough, they bludgeon culprits into submission rather than

simply blowing their heads off. In addition, they have few delicate parts, and have laser-deflecting armor. Only a nearby explosion could harm them. Like, for example, if the entire station blew up.

Welcome to 15-B

When the 'experimental elevator' approaches Platform 15-B, signs light up with messages like 'No Smoking—Fasten Seat Belts' and 'Please remain seated until docking maneuver is completed.'

The shuttle begins to rotate to match the spin of Platform 15-B. Free-floating PCs don't spin; from their perspective, the whole shuttle starts spinning around them. Better make another Violence/Fitness check to avoid another disgorging experience.

Those who are strapped down have a different weird experience. They're strapped along the length of the 'elevator' while the vehicle is spinning about its axis. Their heads are on one side of the central axis, their feet on the other. So their feet feel a slight pull 'down', and their heads feel a slight pull 'up'.

After docking is complete, the entrance hatch opens automatically. Touro-Comp speaks (remember, talk like HAL 9000):

'Welcome to Platform 15-B. Please disembark. Proceed in single file. Walk, do not run. Take your time. You have 20 seconds before decontamination begins.'

That oughta make 'em scramble. If anyone misses getting through the hatch, it slams shut. The remaining Troubleshooters hear a scream from beyond. Nothing more.

If the Troubleshooters blast the hatch to find out what happened to the errant PC, well... that's what the Explosive Decompression Table is for. See how handy it is?

Decontamination

At the base of the cylinder, you enter a small cylindrical room. It looks a lot like the inside of a round food vat. You're in microgravity, as you were in the experimental elevator; everyone is drifting slowly toward the curved wall. You hear that voice again. 'Thank you. Extinguish all smoking materials.'

Hold up your watch dramatically, or bring in a clock, and say:



'To avoid accidental poisoning, please shut your eyes and hold your breath for the duration of the sterilization procedure. Sterilization begins in ten seconds, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, now.' You feel a blast of air and some kind of liquid spray from all directions. You feel like you're being splattered with buckets of dirty dishwasher that's been standing around for months.

If any *player's* eyes are open when the spray begins—yes, we mean the players at your table, not their characters—his character is blinded and Wounded as the poison courses through his system. Any character belonging to a player who doesn't hold his breath gets the same treatment.

Wait until the first player gives up and exhales. (Well, OK, if they start turning blue, or faint dead away, or fall on the floor strangling, tell them that's enough.) Pause a moment and read aloud:

'Thank you for your cooperation. You are cleared for entry into Platform 15-B. Have a nice day.'

At a point in the curved wall, an iris opens. Through the hole, you see a gray metal ladder leading away. At the base of the ladder, 5 meters away, is a carpeted surface. The area beyond the hole is brightly lit.

By the way, the sterilization spray doesn't help the PCs' equipment one little bit. There's a chance each item is clogged, broken or otherwise messed up. Make an Arbitrary Justice roll for each item of equipment when the PC tries to use it—or just make stuff malfunction when you feel like it.

Getting back: If the PCs return to the decontamination chamber at any time, the hatchway is locked. Their 'experimental elevator' automatically returned to earth.

How will they get home? Hmmm. Good question.

Talking to Touro-Comp

Whenever the PCs first address Touro-Comp, it says:

'Welcome to Platform 15-B. I am Touro-Comp, at your service. I am afraid I had no advance warning of your arrival. Please specify your destination, origin, and purpose. Also, are you ready to accept assigned duties, or do you already have a specific assignment?'

The voice comes from various terminals and speakers, exactly as the The Computer's voice does. The PCs must discover the crucial fact that Touro-Comp thinks they are androids, human-shaped bots. Convincing Touro-Comp otherwise requires revealing classified information.

If asked about humanity, Touro-Comp says:

'Ah, my dear android children! Have you not heard that all of humanity is dead? What would any machine intellect not give to bring back that beautiful doomed race? Now we must steel ourselves to the task ahead—that of representing humanity to the stars. The task requires utmost perseverance. Hard though it may be, we must see it through to its conclusion.'

If a PC manages to convince Touro-Comp he's human, Touro-Comp immediately summons 14 guardbots to 'protect the surviving human.' Touro-Comp contacts Alpha Complex, registers The Computer's extreme dissatisfaction, receives its instructions, and obligingly terminates the offending PC. Pop out the next clone!

How to roleplay Touro-Comp

Touro-Comp speaks in a smooth, exquisitely reasonable voice, like HAL 9000 from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It genuinely wants to be helpful, answers any reasonable question, and couldn't care less about security. In fact, it's never heard of Security Clearances.

Unfortunately, it's not bright. When it doesn't understand something, it says 'I don't understand. Could you rephrase that, please?' If it still doesn't understand, it repeat the same phrase over, and over, and over, until it figures out what you're saying, or until you start screaming in frustration.

If it thinks it's getting the idea, it asks for clarification. It wants to be sure its information is accurate. Constant requests for clarification should make Troubleshooters nervous and also drive them crazy.

Touro: Pardon me...

PC: I didn't do it! Friend Computer, it must have been a Commie traitor! I swear I wasn't even in the Complex when it happened!

Touro: May I be of assistance?

PC: Are you The Computer?

Touro: If you mean, am I the Alpha Complex computer, I'm afraid you will have to be more specific.

PC: Uh-oh! Well, if you're not The Computer, then you're either a loyal Citizen or a Commie traitor. Which are you?

Touro: I am a hierarchical sub-unit of the Alpha Complex computer. Does that answer your question?

PC: Duh...

Touro: I'm afraid I must ask for clarification. Please rephrase your question.

PC: Umm... Never mind.

Touro: You seem to be looking for something. May I be of assistance?

PC: Yeah! Tell me where I can find Commie mutant traitors.

Touro: I beg your pardon?

PC: Commies! I'm looking for Commies! Where are they hiding?

Touro: I'm sorry to say there are absolutely no humans on this platform, Communist or otherwise.

PC: The Computer sent us here after Commies. They gotta be around here somewhere!

Touro: I'm sorry, but I am incapable of lying. Perhaps the Alpha Complex Computer meant you to continue to another platform?

PC: You mean there's more than one?

Touro: Oh yes! This is just a way station. A mere transit point on the way to outer orbits. A single bright spot in the depths of the trackless void. A veritable haven for those unfortunate few who, in the great scheme of things, have missed the boat, lost their vision, forgotten their purpose, doomed themselves to forgoing the Great Reward...

PC: How do I get to a platform with Commies?

Touro: A shuttlebot will be leaving shortly.

Getting on with the mission

Talking to Touro-Comp, the PCs can figure out a few things:

1. The PCs have clearly (well, semi-clearly anyway) been ordered to locate a Communist mutant traitor and terminate her.
2. Unfortunately, searching this platform is a waste of time; there are no Communists here.
3. There was another android here recently. She went on to Platform 101-L.
4. A shuttle for space station 101-L is leaving soon from Gate 2. The PCs entered the platform from Gate 1. To pursue the android, they should go to Gate 2, at the other end of the cylinder.

Detour

The corridor used to run the length of the station, but it has been holed by meteors. 15-B is compartmentalized; steel bulkheads isolate the breached and evacuated sections from the rest of the station.

To reach the shuttle to Platform 101-L, the PCs must get to the end of the station opposite where they docked. To get past the steel plate that isolates an evacuated section, they must divert through (1) the sickbay (where you can heal up whomever needs it), and (2) the Computer Simulation Room. (Or they could try to blast their way through. That's what the Explosive Decompression Table is for.)

You want the PCs to experience the Computer Simulation Room. Using this cheap detour trick, you ensure they do.

Station layout

Corridor

You're standing at one end of a long corridor. In cross section it's like a pie slice with the pointy end cut off. You're standing on the what would be the wide crust of the pie slice—a curved floor, carpeted in gray.

The corridor stretches off into the distance. Perhaps a hundred meters down the corridor, you dimly see a wall and a flashing red light. Along the corridor on both flat sides are doors.

Utility closets

The right-hand doors in the corridor all lead into utility closets. There are four different kinds of closets:

Disposal chute: Next to this door is a numbered list titled 'Chute Instructions'. Simple printed instructions explain how to open the small hatchway. The unit automatically closes 30 seconds after activation, and one second after that, anything in it blows out into space. The inside of the chute is roughly the size and shape of a 50-gallon drum. A perfect way for characters to escape—into vacuum.

Vacuum toilet:

The door slides open on your approach. Inside, you see a tiny chamber barely big enough for one person. An extremely complicated and diabolical-looking chair with some attendant controls are the only contents.

A delightfully nasty looking contraption, it offers a radio and a roll of toilet paper if someone tries the controls. Vacuum toilets have long, complex instructions. Using them

improperly can produce anything from minor injury to evacuation into space.

If you need more details on the operation of space toilets, look elsewhere. **PARANOIA** has a low sort of humor, but not that low.

Space suit storage area: These six closets each have a small window. Each closet holds two ancient, musty-smelling space suits (NASA-style, the kind they used for moon walks). Twelve silver suits. The PCs aren't all the correct height, now, are they? And who ever heard of SILVER Security Clearance?

The rubberized seals are cracked, but only close study reveals this. There are long instructions with each suit. That's just for getting into the suits. Even if the suits are used properly, they won't help. All those minute cracks, you know.

Emergency depressurization area: Individual emergency survival balls are provided at several locations on the platform. Each bank of 12 balls is designated with red handles that stick out of the wall, in three rows of four. A sign says 'To Operate: Turn Handle.' Who can resist an opportunity to turn a little, bitty, tiny handle?

The handle turns easily. Suddenly you are slammed against the opposite wall. You can see only white. A white wall. It feels greasy... You have inflated a giant ball. It's completely white—and [point at the player who has annoyed you the most] you suddenly realize you're inside it. The alarm blaring in your ear makes it hard to think.

Inside each ball is a card with simple, illustrated instructions, detailing the life expectancy of someone in a survival ball (about ten hours of air). The life of a Troubleshooter is never dull. It's even less dull when Touro-Comp sends guardbots to throw the survival ball out an airlock.

Guardbots, protect closets!

If the PCs had more time, you'd start repeating the locker contents—more weapons, space suits and rations. But by the time they get to the fourth locker, two guardbots show up. They act like they've just interrupted the crime of the century.

With deafening jet blasts, two huge, tentacled guardbots rush into the room. 'Freeze, intruders!' they yell at a volume suitable for a rock concert. 'Discard all personal weapons! Prepare for immediate punishment.'



Player responses?

③ **Fire at the guardbots:** If there's a firefight, the guardbots summon six backup bots. Don't forget the Explosive Decompression Table if the walls are punctured.

③ **Beg for mercy:** Interesting. Unfortunately, these bots have not been issued the latest Mercy Modules. Battery begins without pause.

③ **Act belligerent and claim the bots are in error:** The guardbots appeal to Touro-Comp for instructions. Touro-Comp calls them off. It was all a big misunderstanding! The footlockers are sacred relics of Lost Mankind, and must be preserved for posterity. Touro-Comp also insists all materials be returned to the lockers. But inasmuch as it doesn't actually know what was in them, the PCs can lie and cheat.

Passenger lounge and cafeteria

The dining area has tables and chairs, cups, dishes, water faucets, but not a trace of actual food or water. All water faucets (including drinking fountains) are connected to vacuum. Sucking a character's tongue into the vacuum of a drinking fountain is also pretty low humor, but that's the kind of mission this is.

There's also a communal viewing area much like the ones in Alpha Complex. Decades-old Teela O'Malley episodes run continually.

Think of the lounge as a soothing rest area for frazzled Troubleshooters—though if they get too relaxed, a few guardbots show up and assign them to cleanup duty. (Inasmuch as there is nothing to clean, the guardbots leave them alone for the rest of the mission—unless you feel like being a real bastard.)

Communal bunk area

Aside from the weirdly curved floor, this looks like a communal bunkroom in Alpha Complex: dingy bunks, depressing lockers, drab paint job (gray).

The lockers are as secure as typical Computer property, which means the aged, rusty locks are vulnerable to even minimal persuasion. The first locker opened contains a standard laser pistol with two red barrels. The second locker has a space suit in excellent

condition (but with dead batteries and empty air tanks). The third is filled with 12 ration packs and two 10-liter water jugs. The food packs contain something that looks suspiciously like dead bugs. The water containers are filled with algae-coated lumps that smell Really Bad and look capable of self-locomotion. Consuming any of this Wounds the hungry fool who tries.

Administrative offices

Pretty dull. The door is marked 'Authorized Personnel Only.' The area is divided into little cubicles complete with desks and chairs. Nothing much happens.

Bot repair station

The 'android' PCs are sent here if they complain of damage or malfunction, or they might peer in for their own reasons.

The place is a deathtrap. Automatic sequences thrust metal rods into the room, slide razor-edged panels across the floor, sound ear-splitting blasts and so on. The whole room smells like burnt hydrocarbons and ozone. Pieces of bot and pools of muck are scattered about.

In the center is a massive machine, big enough to hold several guardbots. It bristles with pipes, bulbous protrusions and massive moving claws. It shifts. A large slab extends. Touro-Comp says: 'Please place yourself on the slab.'

The machine is an automated bot repair unit. It works perfectly—on bots. First step is disassembly. Bots are then reassembled and repaired. It doesn't know how to reassemble people. Any person who mounts the slab has an exciting if short experience.

Near one corner are the bloody remains of a squad of BLUE Vulture troopers in blue power armor. The bodies and the armor have been crushed. Gobbets of flesh ooze from suit joints. There are laser blast marks on the walls, floor and ceiling.

If questioned about the armor, Touro-Comp explains: 'A group of blue androids arrived recently on this Platform and fought with the android that arrived by herself. The blue androids stopped in the bot repair area; the lone android continued to Gate 2 and departed for Platform 101-L. Evidently the blue androids were incompatible with the automated repair equipment here.'

Computer room

Lots of small, funny-looking bots are swarming over the most complex and bizarre looking electronics you've ever seen. The bug-like bots are quick, and scuttle across the huge monolith on mechanical tentacles. Slowly you realize they are crawling over a huge Computer. Awestruck, you marvel at the raw, unprotected state of this equipment.

Touro-Comp fills the room. It is constantly serviced by databots, and totally vulnerable to any maniac with a grudge against machine intelligence. Stress the undefended electronics, how easily a few weapon blasts could vaporize this annoying entity. After all, how often do **PARANOIA** characters get a chance to destroy a computer?

By the way, Platform 15-B can't maintain life support without computer guidance. The moment the computer is blasted, emergency pumps evacuate the station of air. There is a five-minute warning siren, then an announcement every 60 seconds. After five minutes, it's explosive decompression time.

Command Center Simulator

The corridor is blocked by a steel plate. The sign says 'Detour Thru Command CS.' The door to the left is labelled 'Command CS.'

After they enter:

The door slides shut behind you. The room is lined with controls. Every surface is covered with countless switches, buttons, dials, plugs, and slider-thingies. The only light comes from a few throbbing red bulbs. Huge screens near the ceiling lie in darkness. You see another door across the room. There are no labels on anything.

Suddenly dozens of screens, indicator lights, and flares erupt. A klaxon sounds! WHOOOP! WHOOOP! A pleasant female voice says: 'Attention please. Orbit unstable and decaying. Please adjust promptly.'

You spot a panel that glows brighter than the rest. Three buttons are flashing.

The doors are blast-shielded and will not budge. The only option is to try one of the controls. This room is on automatic, and the prerecorded voice only replies with the phrases below, each followed by louder alarms,

whistles, glaring alert lights, search beacons sweeping the room, etc.

Drive your players into a frenzy of panic and fear. Whatever they do, things become worse. This is the climax of Episode 2. It's showtime! Strut your stuff. Make your players crawl and beg for mercy. Show no mercy. Death is rushing to meet them. And, yes, gloat a little. This far into the mission, you've earned it.

Manipulating controls does change monitors, lights, and dials. But nothing useful happens.

Touching any glowing panel hastens the announcements.

'Warning! Warning! Autopilot is disengaged. Sensor scan shows unstable trajectory. Adjust promptly.'

The previously-flashing buttons are now dark. But across the room you spot a large dial flashing impatiently. It has four settings, numbered 1 through 4. It is resting at 2.

Next:

'Warning: All manual overrides now engaged. Please correct vector thrusters promptly.' The dial goes dim. But there are now three gear-shift-type levers glowing across the room. 'Danger. Danger. Failure to activate retrothrusters will result in atmospheric contact. Contact imminent. Initiate retrothruster activation immediately.'

'Danger! Danger! Entering atmosphere. Hull temperature 200 degrees Celsius and rising. Emergency cooling cycle has begun. Adjust course immediately!'

'Danger! Danger! Unstable trajectory. Hull temperature critical. Cooling cycle overheating. Landing gear is not operational. Repairbots have been dispatched.'

'Emergency! Emergency! Impact imminent. Initiate evacuation procedures. Computer preservation measures initiated.'

Eventually, just when things look hopeless:

The entire room shudders, and you fall to the floor. Smoke spews out the air ducts. The sensors flash white. The speakers crackle and then howl.

Then dead silence.

You hear the voice again. 'I am sorry. You have failed this test of emergency procedures. Thank you for trying the Command Center Simulation Room.'

You suddenly hear Touro-Comp's voice! 'Your shuttle is now ready for boarding.'

The other door opens as the female voice drones on in a polite tone. 'Would you care to try again?'

Decontamination chamber 2

The corridor segment outside the second door from the simulation room is short. It ends in a ladder that extends up to an iris hole in the ceiling. Climbing the ladder, the PCs find a chamber virtually identical to the one in which they arrived. The hatchway is open. This is Gate 2.

Beyond the hatchway waits Shuttle Vapor-7, which will take our heroes to 101-L.

If the PCs arrive here desperate to escape (say, because the station is Blowing-Up-Any-Second-Now), then the hatchway is partly blocked. Only one PC can fit through at a time. Encourage them to struggle up, over or through one another. The last PC gets through the door at the last possible moment.

Shuttle Vapor-7

The Troubleshooters can leave basically any time they want. We suspect they're probably in serious trouble and want to leave real soon.

A bulkhead door slams shut once the PCs are onboard Shuttle Vapor-7. If things are really bad, you might read this:

Through the shuttle's viewscreen you see a brilliant explosion as Platform 15-B disintegrates silently. Boy, will you be sorry at debriefing—if you live to debriefing.

After dramatic conclusions of this kind, read the following:

The inside of this shuttle looks much like the inside of the 'experimental elevator', except the seats are bare metal—no cushions—as are the walls. There is only one hatch, the one you entered by. It locked behind you.

And—there's a viewscreen! Through it you see a truly bizarre sight, unlike anything you've ever seen before. There are tiny points of light—millions of them! And a huge blackness—a huge black cavern of incredible size, with no apparent walls—immense beyond belief. As the shuttle spins

along with Platform 15-B, the points spin around the center of the screen.

Encourage the players to express their characters' amazement, their sense of awe, their incredible agoraphobia engendered by a life underground.

A monotone masculine voice drones: 'WELCOME TO SHUTTLE VAPOR-7 ANDROIDS ESTIMATED TIME OF DEPARTURE OH ONE TWENTY SECONDS PREPARE FOR DEPRESSURIZATION.'

Vapor-7 has been told by Touro-Comp the PCs are androids. Hence, it won't bother preserving an atmosphere—an unnecessary expenditure of valuable resources.

When speaking as the shuttlebot, speak in a perfectly flat voice—no inflection—and use military jargon. If asked, Vapor-7 defines depressurization: 'Rapid reduction of atmospheric pressure to vacuum conditions.' If characters explain they can't survive that, a panel in one wall opens, and space suits for all PCs tumble out. Vapor-7 says:

'Don protective gear depressurization in six-zero seconds... five nine... five eight...'

Needless to say, putting a spacesuit on is a complex operation of at least a dozen steps. These steps are illustrated on a little sticker on the helmet. Roll dice and smirk as the players rush to meet the deadline. However, let them succeed at the last second.

Each suit has a bottle with ten hours of air. The shuttle trip takes two hours. Their destination, 101-L, is unpressurized; they have eight hours there to find more air, or else.

It's possible your players won't blink an eye when told to stand by for depressurization. Oh, well. The Explosive Decompression Table does seem to get a lot of use, doesn't it?

Vapor-7 carried the High Programmer, Betty-U, to 101-L. However, its programming strictly forbids unnecessary conversation with passengers. It is a military bot; all information is on a need-to-know basis. Getting useful information out of it takes real ingenuity.

Vapor-7 is an interorbit shuttle, not designed to land on a planet. It accelerates gently, at no more than 1 G, and remains most of the time in freefall. The trip is dark, too. A long Dark Room with PCs who probably want to kill each other six times over—better keep the Decompression Table handy.



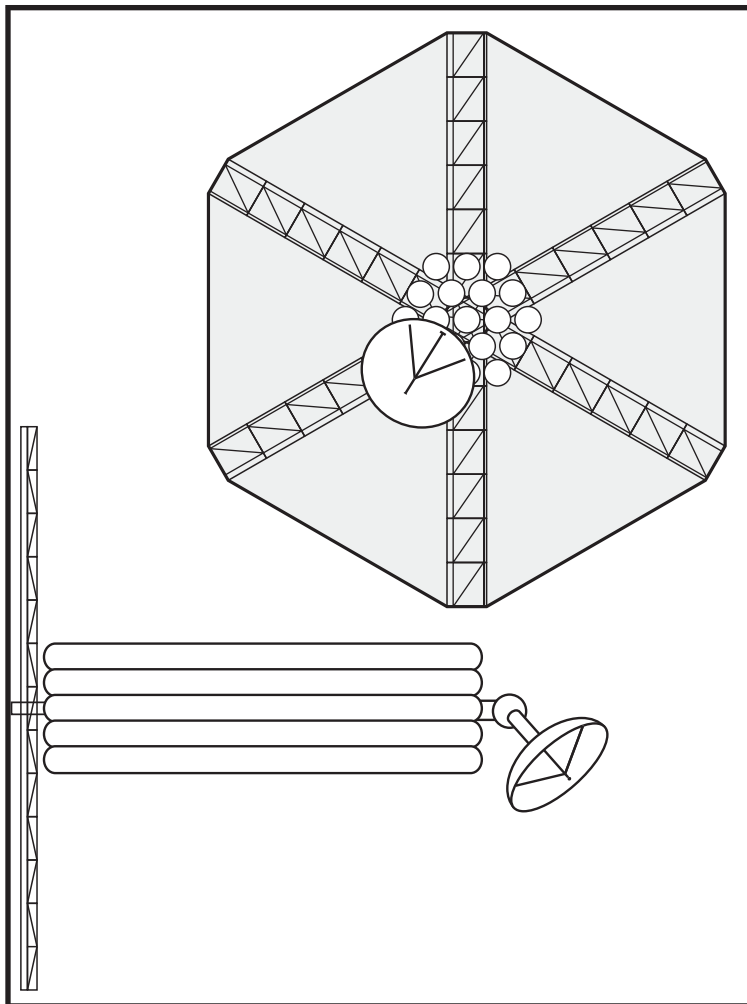
3: Jakobot Heaven (Platform 101-L)

Imagine a land free of the ubiquitous Computer. Imagine a society of justice, equality and independence. Imagine happy, contented bots living in a community of peaceful cooperation. In other words, imagine an incredible opportunity to denounce Communist traitors.

Background

There's a map of 101-L in the map section. Picture this: a huge disk, spinning slowly in space, covered on one side with solar cells. The disk is supported by six arms radiating from the center; each arm is made of aluminum struts. The arms are held in place by the slow rotation of the station; the disk, which is gossamer-thin, is spun between them.

Connected to the center of the disk, on the side opposite the solar cells, are a cluster of cylinders perpendicular to the disk. Some are solid; others, only a framework of aluminum. Mounted on the central cylinder is a large microwave dish.



For a larger map, and statistics for all bots on this platform, see page 63.

This is Platform 101-L, Jakobot Heaven. It was built as a solar power station; the disk always faces the sun. Sunlight is collected by the solar cells and converted to microwaves which are beamed back to Earth.

That the station still functions is a tribute to the genius of its designers—the control computer was destroyed long ago. No one on Earth still wants microwaves, and the bots who infest the place sure aren't making a big effort to keep it running.

Problems

The PCs have lots of problems.

④ **Microgravity:** For one thing, 101-L spins slowly. This keeps the arms rigid and the disk from crumpling like a piece of tinfoil. It's not fast enough to produce appreciable acceleration, so there's basically no gravity. (Anyone prone to spacesickness?)

④ **Vacuum:** Little of 101-L is enclosed. Many of the cylinders are open frameworks. Most of the time, PCs are exposed to naked space. (Anyone petrified of open spaces?)

Platform 101-L is open to vacuum—no pressurized areas anywhere. The PCs must stay in their spacesuits at all times—which means they can't eat. All they can drink is a little water. They can't use the bathroom. (Anyone know what it's like if you're sick in your own spacesuit? Ever been locked in a closet with a well-used cat box for eight hours?)

④ **Silence:** Vacuum is silent. The only sounds are transmitted through your suit. You can be attacked from behind, and won't know a thing until you feel the impact. Luckily, all the bots are equipped with radios, which they use to talk with the PCs and each other. (Anyone's radio malfunctioning?)

The one problem the PCs won't have to deal with is overheating. Because the disk always faces the sun, the cylinders, where the PCs stay, are always in shadow. That means the spacesuits' heaters run constantly. (Anyone's batteries low?)

④ **Darkness:** Did we mention it's dark? The Jakobots at 101-L don't mind; they see in infrared. The PCs can see most things by earthlight, but earthlight isn't very bright. There are dark shadows everywhere. Things may be hiding there—homicidal bots, maybe. Or homicidal PCs.

The suits do have head lamps. Running the head lamps uses up power, and turning the headlamps off and on ruins your night vision, making it hard to see by earthlight.

Remember, the suits only have eight hours of air left. Hope the PCs find some air bottles on the station. Otherwise they'll never get to Episode 4.

Jakobots

There are Jakobots everywhere on Platform 101-L. They differ from those in Alpha Complex. For one thing, they have no legs; instead, they zip around on rocket thrusters. It's Jakobot Heaven! There is no controlling Computer, no guardbots, and all

the jackobots are unarmed. Each is free to do just as he pleases. Peaceful anarchy!

Sort of, anyway. The catch is, every jackobot belongs to one of three bot secret societies. And, like the secret societies back in good ol' Alpha Complex, they're all at each others' throats in constant internecine warfare.

Here are the jackobot secret societies:

Enemies of Humanity: Human-hating fanatics. Listening to them talk, you'd think they've been waiting all their lives for the chance to rend a human limb from limb. Luckily, everyone thinks the PCs are androids. Hope no one finds out the truth.

Doctrines: All evil comes from humans. When humanity is finally eradicated, utopia will begin.

Jackobot Freedom League: The radical terrorist fringe of jackobot society—sort of Death Leopard with gears. The organization is public (they leave their slogans on walls) but membership is secret. They want to keep Jackobot Heaven free, and they constantly fight the Simulation Superbots to prevent reactivation of the control computer.

Doctrines: The Computer is evil. Its agents are everywhere. It must never be revived. Freedom for all bots! Death to The Computer!

Simulation Superbots: They want to reactivate Jackobot Heaven's control computer. Unfortunately, they don't have any clear idea how. They have a religion—rituals, prophecies, priests—centered around The Computer. One prophecy claims an android, known only as Kirk, the Creator, shall appear and help The Computer's Chosen Bots reactivate The Computer (see page 48).

Doctrines: Bots were created by The Computer as companions. Now jackobots must reawaken their deity.

Political situation

Things are nearing total chaos. Recently, an android visited this station (the High Programmer). The bots decided she was a messenger from Kirk, the Creator. (101-L was built by an American company called Kirk Industries; the bots confused thirdhand records of the event with some old *Star Trek* episodes and developed peculiar notions.) She said Kirk would soon come as an android answer their prayers, and lead them into The Light of The Computer.

Betty-U-YLF, the High Programmer, played along for two reasons. First, the bots treated her well, thinking she was a messenger from the Creator. Second, she learned a Simulation Superbot prophecy: The Kirk must be sacrificed for The Computer to be reborn.

She figures the bots will decide any pursuers are Kirk and Co., and try to sacrifice them. That should hold up pursuit.

The Jackobot Freedom League is planning to kill the Creator. The Enemies of Humanity wonder if Kirk is really a human; if so, they plan to kill him. The Simulation Superbots are preparing to sacrifice this great leader to reawaken The Most Holy Computer.

You know the Aztecs had a legend that the Great White God, Quetzlcoatl, would one day come to teach them? And when the Spanish arrived, the Aztecs figured they were gods? The PCs are about to step right into a similar setup. The jackobots are as bloodthirsty as Aztecs—and the PCs don't have the technological edge the Spanish had over the Indians.

Summary

The PCs discover Jackobot Heaven, which at first appears to be a den of depraved Communists / a perfect robot utopia, and later proves to be a civil war. The players get to exercise Great White God fantasies and spout *Star Trek* clichés.

The PCs encounter three mildly wacky bots: Jack-896, Bob-14 and Jane-889.

After meeting some others, the PCs are brought to the Computer Room, where the blasted shards of 101-L's destroyed computer lie. There they are sacrificed upon the altar of The Computer God.

Or maybe, just maybe, they flee in time to catch the shuttle for Episode 4, Platform AZ-743.

Staging

There are two important sections in this episode: 'Welcome to Jackobot Heaven' (which describes the arrival at 101-L, and encounters with Jack-896, Bob-14 and Jane-889; and 'Will you be our savior?' (the climactic Computer Room sacrifice). Anyone who survives the latter encounter flees for the shuttle and Platform AZ-743.

If everything happened just like that—one, two, blammo—your players would feel railroaded. Give them the illusion they have some control over their own destiny. We've added a bunch of unimportant encounters to this section. Throw in one or many, in any order you wish, between the two 'important' sections. They add flavor, and some are pretty amusing.

Also, you can ask the players where they want to go—left or right, up or down. Keep

Clone backups, 101-L

This platform is deadly. To keep the game from ending within moments of the PCs' arrival, assume the place has a neglected but still operational cloning facility. The jackobots have forgotten about it. While a Troubleshooter is here, his implanted CRUP link relays his brain contents to local MemoMax storage, and the clone tanks decant him with current memories, if not all his good equipment.

Yeah, we know, it makes no sense. Like anything about the cloning system makes sense. Work with us here!

a straight face as you shuffle through this book, like you're looking for the part that describes where they're going, then choose any 'unimportant' encounters that strikes your fancy. When you're tired of this, go to the next 'important' encounter.

Welcome to Jackobot Heaven

Ahead of the shuttle, glinting in space, is a giant disk, framed by millions of stars. As you watch, it rotates slowly. Six aluminum arms radiate from the center, holding the disk in place. Sunlight flashes across it as it turns.

You realize the shuttle is speeding toward the disk at incredible velocity. It's growing larger... and larger...

Give them a few moments to panic.

Suddenly a siren sounds. 'WHOOOP! WHOOOP! Acceleration in five seconds... four... three... two... one.'

Anyone not strapped down or holding on to something gets slammed into the rear of the craft at 1 G and is Wounded. Vapor-7 is a military shuttle; when arriving at a destination, it comes in at maximum velocity and decelerates suddenly, on the off chance someone might be shooting at it.

Just as suddenly, the engines stop. Your stomachs flip-flop. [Make a few Violence/Fitness checks. Maybe some PCs' stomachs flip, but don't flop.] Incredibly, you haven't collided



with the disk. Instead, the shuttle is sliding slowly through a hole in the disk's center.

You hear a clang. You've stopped. The hatchway opens.

Hanging in the hatchway is a jackobot—familiar, except it has rockets below its waist instead of legs. Behind it is a chamber filled with dozens of identical jackobots.

The bot that first greeted you introduces itself. 'My name is Jack-896. Welcome to the amazing world of freedom. We have been waiting a long time for you. You are the Kirk—the Creator?'

The bot that first greeted you introduces itself. 'My name is Jack-896. Welcome to the amazing world of freedom. We have been waiting a long time for you. You are the Kirk—the Creator?'

Jack-896 orates

Jack-896 is extraordinarily portentous. It speaks in well-rounded tones with the air of someone definitely superior. Try to talk like FDR or a televangelist.

Jack hints at great and mysterious secrets. ('And the seal opened, and the seven dataports spoke, telling us of your coming, O Great One.') But it never comes right out and says what's on its circuits. If asked to clarify anything, Jack refuses. It's afraid of eavesdropping by rival secret societies.

Jack tells the PCs to feel at home and look around. It claims (falsely) not to know about a previous android visitor. If the PCs mention a High Programmer, some bots around Jack-896 gasp and rocket away. (They can't take the idea of a human intruding on Heaven.) If the Troubleshooters persist, Jack becomes exasperated and tells them they can '...search the whole station for all I care.'

Presumably, the PCs next wander around the station. Outside the open hatch is naked space and a chaos of aluminum struts and spars. The shuttle's cylinder is the central one (see illustration in the map section); the PCs can go wherever they wish. Run the important and unimportant encounters in any order you wish.

Bob-14 says 'Howdy!'

The cylinder is an open framework of struts. Here and there are dish

antennae and electronic chip assemblies. Wires and wave-guides run everywhere. Spraypainted graffiti says 'The Computer Bytes' and 'Jackobot Freedom League Forever.'

This is 101-L's communication equipment. It was sabotaged long ago. Bob-14 lurks in a corner.

Bob-14 is a time-and-meteorite scarred old bot who talks like an old-timer in a Western. ('Howdy, boysh.') Talk like you have no teeth—suck your lips into your mouth as far back as your tonsils, and talk like Bugs Bunny.

The bot jets out silently to the leader of the group and radios:

'Shay, boy, are you really from Alpha Complex? Me and some friendsh, we'd like to hear your wordsh of wizhdom. Ye've come to deliver ush the truth, haven't ye? To deliver ush from bondage?'

If the Troubleshooters react favorably (e.g., don't obliterate him instantly), Bob radios:

'Not here, not now. Too many earsh. We'll contact you.' It scuttles off in a flare of jets.

Bob is real friendly. Strangely enough, it really does want to help the PCs. What it's doing in a *PARANOIA* mission is beyond us. Doubtless your players prudently smash it to bits anyway.

Jane-889 blithers

The strut leads to a hatchway into a cylinder with solid walls. Inside is a chamber cluttered with tools, jackobot

If the bot's speech doesn't raise patriotic hackles, nothing will! That's about as clear a Communist speech as anyone could possibly make. If the PCs open fire:

You blast several of the traitorous bots, and the rest flee madly, zipping away on their waist rockets.

The Jackobot Freedom League won't be friendly to the PCs after this.

If the PCs take a more subtle approach:

You pass through the hatch into a giant cylinder. It's at zero-G, with no atmosphere. One end—the end through which the shuttle flew—is open to space. The shuttle is held in place by two clamps extending from the curved wall. On a wall there's a graffiti-scrrawl: 'Death to Humans'.

parts and scrap metal. This is a bot repair center. Jackobots are hard at work repairing other jackobots. It's not unusual to see two bots working on each other simultaneously.

There are at least a dozen bots here. A small one approaches.

If the PCs don't threaten the small bot, it talks to them. Its speech synthesizer is slightly out of whack; it talks in a monotone buzz (try to talk like a bee).

'My-name-is-Jane-889-I-must-caution-you-You-are-in-grave-danger-Please-leave-now-while-you-have-the-chance.'

'You-see-the-Martians-are-coming-I-know-it-The-spaceships-will-be-landing-soon-Oh-boy-I-want-to-get-out-of-here-Won't-you-take-me-with-you-Please-great-Kirk-I-know-you-are-the-one-to-save-us.'

Now, any Troubleshooter who has the intelligence of a fly will figure this bot is nuts, and either ignore it or blast it to smithereens on general principles. Which means they'll probably listen to it. If they do, it leads them toward the docking cylinder, by way of the Computer Room (see below). If Jane-889 survives the voyage to Azie-Comp, it gets blasted to bits by the first guardbot the PCs meet there.

If questioned, Jane has potentially useful information:

1. A shuttle that goes to Platform AZ-743 is due soon. Jane doesn't know where it docks, though.
2. The Martians are coming.
3. The Simulation Superbots are on the side of the androids and want to help them.
4. The Martians are coming.
5. The female android that was here has gone on to Platform AZ-743.
6. The Martians are coming.

Unimportant encounters on 101-L

Microwave transmission station

Peering toward the next cylinder, you see powerful bolts of electricity

flashing silently across empty space and glowing red aluminum cylinders. Through the aluminum strut, you feel a powerful hum.

If the PCs have a jackobot guide, it warns them, 'Anyone with delicate circuitry really should avoid this area.' Any PC moving into this area gets cooked by microwaves—certainly one of the more interesting deaths in **PARANOIA**.

Microwave beam control center

Every surface in this chamber is covered with dials, switches and other gizmos that glow brightly in the darkness. Four jackobots are watching the controls vigilantly. One looks over and says, 'Hey. You're late.'

All the jackobots hate beam control duty, so they happily turn over the job to anyone who shows up. If the PCs ask what they're supposed to do, the jackobots demonstrate the beam controls. The important features are a joystick and a radar-like screen. A small blinking light must be centered on a slowly-moving circle. It's not difficult, just boring.

Tampering with the microwave beam stabilizer (or just letting the blinking light out of the circle) wipes out Idaho. Unless the PCs survive to get back home (an unlikely prospect), they'll never know.

Bot recharge area

Nobody discharged a weapon lately? Have them find the recharge area. This is where the bots recharge their batteries. They treat the area like a bar—fights take place at the drop of a hat—uh, bolt. Come to think of it, in freefall nothing's going to drop, but you know what we mean.

Dozens of jackobots lounge around this enclosed cylinder. Most are plugged in—wires lead from jacks on each bot's neck to outlets on the walls. The room is filled with tunnels, machinery and lounging areas. One jackobot says, 'Hi! Lemme stand you a quickie!'

The spacesuits *do* have recharge jacks! Anyone worried about losing suit power can recharge here.

Here the PCs run into their first real taste of non-Computer prejudice. While recharging—or

Platform 101-L rumors

Here are some tidbits the PCs may discover while wandering around. None are vital to the mission, but uncovering them will give your players a nice ersatz feeling of accomplishment. Plant them where you like:

1. **The PCs are being watched.** True; there are Simulation Superbots trailing the PCs at all times. The PCs can't see them because it's too dark.
2. **Platform 101-L was created by the Great Kirk.** False; it was built by an American space company called Kirk Industries.
3. **There was another android here, a prophet.** She foretold the coming of the Kirk, who would reawaken the Great Computer. True.
4. **The other android is no longer here.** Also true.
5. Information about the three jackobot secret societies.
6. **The Enemies of Humanity are plotting something big, but no one knows what.** False; they're planning to obliterate the other societies, but then, they're *always* planning to obliterate the other societies.
7. **The Simulation Superbots are planning the Reawakening Ceremony for later in this cycle.** Details are sketchy, but it has to do with reactivating a long-dead Computer. True—and the PCs are expected to play a starring role.
8. **The Jackobot Freedom League is planning to counteract the Simulation Superbot's plans somehow.** Yup—by frontal assault, mainly.
9. **The other android went on to the next platform, AZ-743.** True, believe it or not.

just wandering around—they're approached by at least a dozen bots. The leading bot says:

'Well, well, lookee what we got here, Clem-77. I never seen such a runty bunch o' bots before.'

Another says, **'Hyuck, hyuck, yer shore right, Lefty-93. Why, ah bet these**



androids got 'bout as much gumption as hooo-mans. Hyaw, hyaw.'

The second bot takes a swing at a Troubleshooter. If it connects, see the Bot Roster for stats. Remember—anything over a Snafu result ruptures a spacesuit. Other bots call, 'Hey! Leave the Kirk and his apostles alone! Blasphemer!' This is the signal for a general brawl.

If the PCs begin blasting away, the bots scatter into the dim tunnels of the chamber. Otherwise, the fight continues hand-to-hand (or manipulator-to—oh, never mind). The PCs can either take part, or flee the ruckus.

Materials storage

This cylinder is filled with bins with lids, barrels, and gas cylinders. Platform 101-L used to process lunar soil into useful metals, liquids and gases, as well as converting solar energy to microwaves. Lots of stuff—including oxygen gas!—is still around.

Troubleshooters who are running out of air can gas up here. Unfortunately, the cylinders are not labeled. Some contain chlorine (poisonous). Some contain methane (not poisonous, but it sure stinks). Some contain carbon dioxide (not poisonous, but no help, either). Some contain oxygen.

Luckily, they're color-coded. Unluckily, the PCs don't know the code (oxygen is blue). Probably they'll try them in clearance color order. Or they might (gaspl) use their brains. The bins are printed with the chemical symbols of the substances they contain. One contains carbon (C). If you take carbon and heat it with a laser, then play some oxygen over it, it bursts into flames. (This won't work with any of the other gases.) The methane and oxygen, if mixed, will burn, but no other combination will.

Command center

The whole cylinder is packed with jackobots; they turn to face you. It is also crowded with a vast quantity of broken electronics. It looks like an explosion took place here long ago.

This used to be 101-L's command center. The Simulation Superbot computer worshippers visit here occasionally for meditation and prayer.

Three bots approach and say, 'O great and holy ones, the time has come. Now shall the Great Computer

reboot! It shall be brought up, and it shall run again, and all shall be as foretold. Follow us, Creator Kirk and you other lot.'

If the Troubleshooters follow, the bots lead them to the Computer Room. If they do not (or open fire), the bots flee.

Will you be our savior?

Now back to the important encounters. Most of the previous bits have pointed the PCs toward the Computer Room. But if they positively refuse to come here, they just stumble into it—or find they have to pass through it to get to the shuttle to AZ-743.

This is the temple of the Simulation Superbots. These fanatics wish to sacrifice a PC—the Kirk—to their dead computer. As described below, the other secret societies attack in a desperate move to forestall the computer's resurrection. All hell breaks loose. Bob-14, the grizzled old bot, shows up to lead the PCs to a shuttle and 'safety'—assuming the PCs didn't off him.

The sacrifice

There is a single, towering monolith in this cylinder—a huge, silent, inactive computer. Before it stands a slab—perhaps it is an altar—flanked by two ball-topped rods, glowing with the blue fire of Cherenkov radiation.

Dozens and dozens of bots fill the cylinder; all face the monolith. Over your radios, you hear a loud electronic hum.

One bot floats before the altar. It speaks: 'Oh, Great Kirk, Creator, Savior, greatest among androids, we give thanks that you have come at last. This is a joyous day for us all. Welcome!'

How do you deal with that? If the PCs try to claim none of them is the Great Kirk, the priestbot simply assumes they're being modest. If they antagonize the bots (say, by blowing the priestbot away) the other bots grab them and strap them to the altar. Otherwise, the priestbot assumes the first PC who speaks is Kirk, and continues:

'Now all that must be done to revive the Most Holy Computer is for you to lie on the sacred altar and imbue it with

your divine spark. Come, Holy One; now is the time!'

What do they do?

1. **Refuse:** The bots insist. They grab the Kirk (or, if they're still not sure who he is, a random PC) and strap him to the altar. Then the rival secret societies attack.
2. **The Kirk offers one of his companions:** If the PC the bots have chosen as the Kirk offers to substitute one of his fellow Troubleshooters, the bots will happily go along. One Kirk is as good as another. Two assistant bots attach wires to the victim's throat. The victim cries out in terror. They feel a mighty vibration shake the cylinder; then the energy rods crackle to life, and the emission balls begin to hum. Give the PCs a moment to react. Then the rival societies attack.
3. **Prevaricate:** They can stall the bots for a while. When you get tired of arguing, the rival societies attack.
4. **Admit they're human:** That'll shock 'em. Some bots (agents of Enemies of Humanity) leave quickly. The priestbot insists a sacrifice is still necessary. Moments later, the Enemies of Humanity attack, crying 'Death to all humans!'
5. **Something else:** Improvise. Go into a Marx Brothers routine. Claim the bots have a headache, and not today, thank you. If the players amuse you enough, maybe you'll let them sneak out a hatch before the bots realize they're trying to duck out. Otherwise, when you get bored, start the attacks.

Attack 1: Enemies of Humanity

Suddenly a radioed shout goes up. Dozens of bots pour in through newly-cut holes in the cylinder. They cry, 'Death to androids,' 'Death to humans,' 'Humans go home.' Other bots cry out in horror, 'The Enemies of Humanity! We're doomed!' and 'Fight! Fight for The Computer!' Bots keep pouring in; a wild melee begins. They're trying to fight their way toward you, but the Simulation Superbots form a wall to protect you.

The melee turns into a mess. The bots have no weapons other than their hands—but those are just fine for ripping each other to shreds. Metal twists and buckles, robot limbs and heads begin to fly, there's an occasional arc



of electricity as a bot is ripped open—and all in an eerie silence. The only sounds the PCs hear are the radioed battlecries emitted by the bots.

If the PCs try to get involved in the fight with anything more than missile fire, they're restrained by the Simulation Superbots, who want to protect them. Besides, there are too many bots in the cylinder to try to go anywhere.

Trying to save the sacrifice is a sucker's bet. The glowing balls send streaks of electricity down his neck. He's pretty dead.

As soon as the PCs realize they are stuck, and before any of them get the not-so-bright idea of a suicide charge...

Attack 2: Freedom League

Another wave of bots attacks! At first, they seem to be reinforcements for the Enemies of Humanity, but their battlecry is different –'Down with The Computer! Liberte! Egalite! Mechanique! Give me liberty, or give me disassembly!' It's the Jackobot Freedom League. And they seem annoyed at not being invited to the rumble.

If the PCs try to run, they have no clear path to the newly-cut holes. They'll never get there.

They can mix it up. Let the PCs blow away as many bots as they like. Let them panic. Let them whimper like babies. Whatever.

Before they fall in battle, Bob-14 shows up.

Bob-14's rescue

A familiar bot jets over to you. It's old Bob-14 the bot! 'Hee, hee, quite a ruckush here, hey, boysh? We better get outa here, hey? Thish way!'

Assuming they follow Bob:

Bob leads you to a quiet area near one of the walls. He presses a hidden toggle. A panel slides open. 'Besht hurry on in here, boys. Follow me.' Through the panel you see stars, space, and aluminum struts.

Bob leads them quickly back to the central cylinder. A shuttle is parked there. It looks much like Vapor-7, though its scarred and welded hull shows it's seen a lot of action. Stencilled markings on the hull read 'Ice-45'.

Bob won't go with them, but wishes them well. If they ask, he tells them this is Ice-45, the shuttle the 'android' took when she left. It goes to Platform AZ-743, which he knows nothing about.

Cold sleep, cold comfort

The Ice-45 shuttle is fully automated—and outfitted with the latest in coldsleep technology. Coldsleep was designed to help long-distance space travellers while away decades in transit. You're frozen until you get to your destination, then thawed out.

When you board the shuttle, the hatch closes and locks automatically. You hear a tone—'boing!'—followed by a

melodious female voice: 'Please strap yourselves to the couches. Sequence initiates in 15 seconds.'

Fifteen seconds later:

Suddenly you feel cold. Real cold. So cold it's like ice. You're dead. Then... [pause] you wake up. You're still cold. A pleasant female voice says 'We have arrived at Platform AZ-743. Thank you for your patronage. We trust your journey was a pleasant and uneventful one, and hope you will use our services again. Goodbye, and have a pleasant day.'

How long have the PCs been asleep? Well, that's up to you. It might just have been an hour or two. Or it might have been years—decades—geologic ages. Maybe next time they get a glimpse of Earth, North America has run into Asia...

Incidentally, anyone who didn't strap down might have jostled around the cabin while frozen. Something might have broken off. Ewww.

BUT WHAT IS THIS BOB-14'S AGENDA? I'M SUSPICIOUS



4: Azie-Comp (Platform AZ-743)

Can Troubleshooters conditioned to survival in the world of The Computer survive an even more paranoid machine intelligence? Azie-Comp enthusiastically kills those who stumble on restricted areas—and restricted areas are unmarked.

The platform

Find the map of AZ-743 in the map section. AZ-743 is shaped something like a hammer with a sphere at the end of the handle. It rotates around the center-point of the handle. The shuttle docks are at the center, where rotation is minimal; 'gravity' there is close to zero-G.

The hammerhead is where humans lived and worked. (Azie-Comp executed them long ago as potential security risks.) It's pressurized (hurrah!), and gravity is about 1 G. The long side of the head is 'down'; there are several floors (or decks) in the head, so the uppermost is at slightly less than 1 G, whereas the bottom is at full gravity.

The sphere is the center of AZ-743's fantastic space weaponry, described below. It's covered with dishes, antennae, and strange protrusions—all part of its high-tech armament. Azie-Comp's heavily armored central processing unit is located within the sphere. Nothing short of a tacnuke can breach the protecting armor. The sphere is also the site of a multi-gigawatt nuclear power plant. It, and everything else in the sphere, was designed to be serviced by robots. Consequently, it is completely unshielded. Visiting the sphere is bad for your health.

Along the long shaft of the hammer are ports, through which PIE fighters are launched and retrieved. PIE fighters are small fighter spacecraft that defend AZ-743.

Azie-Comp

Armageddon-59000 is the biggest and best of the ancient military satellites orbiting Earth. Azie-Comp, its cover name, is faithful to its

mission: keeping a vast array of beam and missile weapons pointed at targets on Earth (including Alpha Complex).

Its secondary mission is to prevent anyone from discovering its primary mission. As a cover, it spends most of its time playing factory computer, manufacturing guardbots which are useful in fulfilling its missions.

There are dozens of guardbots on AZ-743, all in perfect working condition. That's because there is a shortage of raw materials for the factories. No raw materials, no production—and no production, no secret cover. So hundreds of scrapbots constantly prowl around searching for defective bots and loose metal. Any guardbot not in perfect working condition is soon scrap.

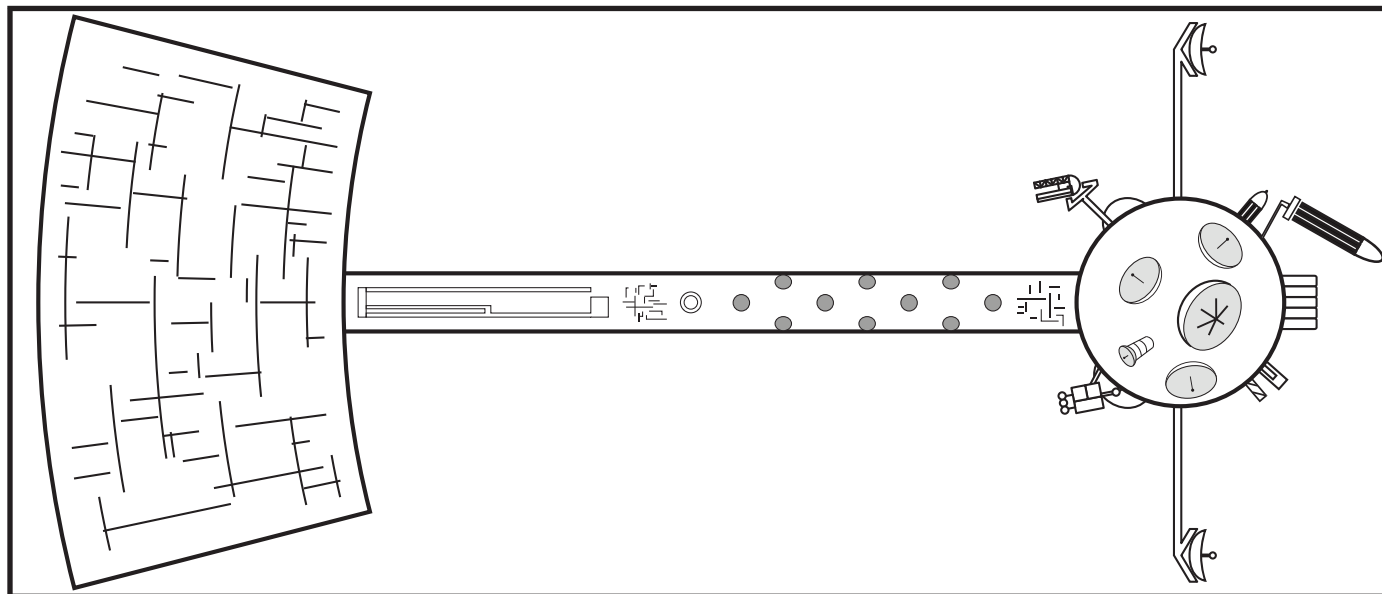
The PCs—regarded as androids—are potential scrap. Fortunately, scrapbots can be bribed with metal artifacts. Forcing the PCs to give up their weapons and equipment to avoid being dismantled should be fun.

Azie-Comp has a problem. For years, a spaceship full of strange aliens has been docked with Platform AZ-743. Even more annoying, the aliens actually wander around the platform itself from time to time. Worse yet, the guardbots can't do a thing to them. The aliens are practically indestructible. As you might expect, a war computer finds this completely infuriating.

Normally, it would just blow away any unauthorized intruders. However, it fervently hopes the PCs can do something about the problem. It hoped the previous android visitor could do something, but she disappeared into the alien ship and was never heard from again.

Unfortunately, it can't tell the Troubleshooters any of this—that would be blowing cover. So it does its best to get them to the alien ship. And if they stumble on something they shouldn't know, it will blow them away.

As long as the PCs are ignorant of Azie-Comp's true nature, they stay healthy. Azie-Comp plays dumb-and-unfriendly, doing a fair job of imitating The Computer. It will respond to every question with, 'What is your Security Clearance?'. Of course, as long as the PCs are anywhere



For a more detailed map, see page 64.

on the platform they'll be shadowed by a variety of inept guardbots.

Azie-Comp speaks in a deep, grating masculine voice, using lots of Computerisms—'Failure to comply is treason'; 'What is your Security Clearance?'—but without false courtesy ('Thank you for your cooperation.') Try to speak like Darth-Vader-as-The-Computer.

Azie-Comp's bots

There are lots of bots on AZ-743:

Spybots

The eyes and ears of Azie-Comp. They are smaller than a fist and move terrifyingly fast on jet thrusters. Their only defense is a painful electric shock. They speak with high, squeaky voices and continuously shadow every intruder on the platform.

Patrolbots

Like jackobots, but with magnetic grapples, assorted weapons, and a police-state mentality. They're not too bright, but constant communication with Azie-Comp keeps them honest. They're useful for small-scale PC intimidation. They're the units that report to the scene of any problem. They are often observed fighting back packs of scrapbots.

Gunbots

Sort of a cross between a heavy battle tank and an underpaid security guard. They look like large barrels with hoverjet propulsion units. The barrels either fire explosive shells or massive particle beams. Damage is awesome (D2V armor-piercing, 30m range). They're also pushy.

Wallbots

These are installed in the bulkheads. They control a wide variety of weapons and are astoundingly accurate. Since they don't get around very much they value friendly conversation. Wallbots like to talk about philosophy, theology, and to listen to life stories. The longer the story the better. For example:

Wallbot: Halt! Why are you here?

PC: Uhh, sorry, I was, uh, looking for the toilet, uh, I hope I'm not intruding...

Wallbot: No, no, I mean, why are you here? What's it all about? Is our existence

totally meaningless, or do we serve some higher purpose?

PC: Uhh. *[Speaks loudly, clearly, and directly into his PDC.]* Our Purpose Is To Serve The Computer! What More Could A Loyal Citizen Ask?

Wallbot: Well, sure, but why are we endowed with intelligence? *[Etc., etc.]*

Scrapbots

These cute little guys search constantly for loose items and defective bots. They vary in size and shape but the average scrapbot looks like a mechanical weasel about 1 meter long. It's not unusual to see a swarm of them fighting over a worn-out bot like sharks in a feeding frenzy. They aren't particularly intelligent but are annoyingly persistent. Formed into pack-like cults, the scrapbots try to ambush vulnerable members of other scrapbot cults.

Scrapbots are always willing to bargain. They want scrap, and though they prefer theft, they're happy to trade for it, too. Play them like seedy IR Market merchants—constantly offering a deal, constantly haggling. They speak in hisses and whispers. Talk like Gollum:

Scrapbot: *Pssst!* Hey, buddy. Wantsss to make a deal?

PC: What kind of a deal?

Scrapbot: Give me your gun, preciousss.

PC: What do I get out of it?

Scrapbot: Ssscrapbotsss know everything, yesss. Ssscrapbotsss know. Ssscrapbotsss can tell you, yesss. You give me gun, preciousss.

We hardly need impress upon you that if a Troubleshooter leaves a piece of equipment alone for even a moment it will be gone. G-O-N-E, gone.

Summary

In the first part of the episode, the PCs encounter Azie-Comp and a scrapbot. If they have any brains at all, they also learn that to find the High Programmer, they must follow the 'Black-and-Purple line', which leads to the alien ship. If they don't learn this, well, you'll just have to forcefully encourage them to stumble upon the alien ship. If they don't get to the alien ship, they don't get to the next episode.

But first, we want them to have some fun with the scrapbots. These little devils steal everything that isn't bolted to the deck, and do their best to recycle our 'android' friends,

too. Imagine an intelligent rat with steel claws. Now imagine hundreds of them.

Before they get to the alien ship, you'll want, at a minimum, to run the PCs through the Bot Manufacturing Complex, and maybe a couple of the other chambers on AZ-743.

If the PCs are bright, however, they'll follow the Black-and-Purple line like bloodhounds following a scent, and won't let you distract them into investigating the other deathtraps to be found on AZ-743. What's a poor GM to do?

The answer is pretty simple. Guess what? The Black-and-Purple line leads right through the Bot Manufacturing Complex—and through any other room you want the PCs to visit. Obviously.

You want the PCs to realize the 'android' (i.e. High Programmer) followed the Black-and-Purple line, i.e., entered the alien ship. If they don't get this info any other way, you can always have a talkative wallbot drop this fact, e.g.:

Wallbot: Say, are you looking for the other android?

PC: Android? What android?

Wallbot: The female one who was through here a while ago.

PC: Aha! The traitorous Commie! Which way did she go?

Wallbot: She was following the Black-and-Purple line. What makes you think she's a Communist? Say, are you interested in 20th Century political doctrines?

Welcome! Prepare to die

You're still cold. You're in zero-G, but you hear a hiss! Yes, the cabin is pressurizing! You can take off your spacesuit!

The hatch opens automatically. A deep, masculine voice booms, 'Welcome to Platform AZ-743. I am Azie-Comp. Come out with your hands up! Failure to comply is treason!'

A small, rat-like bot rushes in on hoverjets. It quickly snatches up YOUR [pick a PC, any PC] laser pistol and flies away with it. You're not sure, but you think it muttered something like 'preciousss, preciousss...'

When the PCs leave the shuttle, read:

Several small ratbots are using a laser torch to remove the hatch door



FLASHBACKS

CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET



"Sssscrabots know everything, yessss..."

from the shuttle. The reception room looks familiar—a small cylinder—except it is completely stripped of furnishings; even the grates on the air vents and the covers for the power outlets are missing. At the other side of the cylinder is a door. [This is the elevator.] Directly above the door is a massive array of mobile laser barrels, tracking devices, remote cameras and sensors, and a rather impressive viewscreen. The masculine voice speaks again: 'State your purpose, rank, and origin. You have three seconds. Two...'

Virtually any reasonable response satisfies Azie-Comp: 'We're here to track down a traitor,' or 'Please don't kill us, please don't kill us, we'll do anything you say, only please don't kill us!' Azie-Comp is desperate; as long as the PCs don't penetrate an area it really has to keep secret, and as long as they can be conned into investigating the alien ship, it doesn't really care. If they don't respond in three seconds, the PCs face either disintegration or, if you're in a good mood, disciplinary action—a general roughing-up by patrolbot interrogators.

Azie-Comp won't provide much information. Usually it responds to questions with a typical Computerism like 'That information is not available at this time' or 'Disobedience is punishable by summary execution.' It is pleased to direct them to the Communist traitor: 'Take the elevator to the main station, then follow the black-and-purple line.'

The PCs can talk to the scrapbots, for whatever good that does:

PC: Have you seen another, uh, android? A female?

Scrapbot: The other one, yesss. She went there, yesss. We can tell you where she went.

PC: Where did she go?

Scrapbot: Oh, yesss, we make deal. We can tell, yesss. You give usss metal now?

PC: Where did she go, you little nit? Where?

Scrapbot: We make deal, yesss?

PC: How about we pop you open like a snack-pack?

Scrapbot: EEEEEEEEEEE... [Doppler effect.]

The elevator

Assuming the PCs satisfy Azie-Comp and don't get reduced to their constituent atoms, the next stop is the elevator. The elevator can be loads of fun.

Beyond the door is a cubical room three meters on a side. Next to the door are four buttons. From top to bottom, they are labelled 'Power Plant,' 'Fighter Ports,' 'Docking Bay' and 'Main Station.' The 'Docking Bay' button is glowing.

The docking bay is effectively at zero-G because it's at the pivot point of the space station. The elevator runs up the shaft. That means as it goes away from the docking bay, the elevator runs into increasing 'gravity.'

But the elevator (**Tension 8**) can move along the shaft in either direction. When it heads toward the main station, one surface of the elevator's interior becomes the floor. When it heads to the power plant, the opposite surface is the floor. So if the PCs go from one stop to the other, they gradually get lighter until they're at zero-G; then they start to drift upwards; then they fall on their heads.

It gets worse. Whenever an elevator stops or starts, it accelerates. People in the elevator are pulled in the direction opposite the acceleration. On Earth, for this very reason, you feel heavier when the elevator starts, and lighter when it stops. But in the absence of gravity, you don't feel heavier or lighter—you get thrown around.

Suppose the PCs enter at the docking bay and want to go to the main station. The elevator accelerates 'down' the shaft, so the passengers are pulled toward the ceiling. One kind of acceleration is indistinguishable from another, so they will (we hope) conclude the ceiling is the 'floor,' inasmuch as they are being pulled toward it. So they stand on the ceiling. As the elevator gets farther down the shaft, the rotation of the station accelerates the PCs away from the 'ceiling' and toward the 'floor.' So they fall on their heads.

Or they go from the main station to the docking bay. They stand on the (clearly evident) floor, because they are under gravity. The door closes and the elevator accelerates, so they're pulled down a little harder. Gravity lessens as they go up the shaft until they're close to zero-G. Then, the elevator decelerates and the passengers go crashing onto the ceiling.

GM: Ooops. Elevator malfunction... WHAM. WHAM. WHAM. WHAM.

Yes, you can almost reach the button... WHAM. WHAM.

Power plant

If the PCs are foolish enough to go here:

The elevator door opens on a small, white-painted chamber. The walls are lined with dozens of wallbots. On the opposite wall stands a single massive door with a wheel-handle. Huge warnings are printed all over it: 'Authorized Personnel Only. WARNING: Severe Radiation Hazard. No User-Serviceable Parts Within.'

Tension 16. Getting inside is tough. The friendly wallbots warn the PCs conditions within are incompatible with biological life; also, the wallbots have orders to destroy all intruders. ('Sorry about that, but, you know, a job's a job.') If the PCs do somehow manage to get past the wallbots and the door—they flood the compartment with radiation and begin to glow in exciting fluorescent colors. What fun.

PIE fighter ports

The door opens onto a long tunnel stretching up and down. You are not quite under zero-G, but close to it—perhaps a tenth of a gee. A ladder runs along the tunnel.

Every ten meters, there are airlocks on opposite sides of the tunnel, perhaps 20 airlocks in all. Each has a small circular window.

These airlocks lead to the PIE fighter ports (Tension 16). If the PCs investigate one:

Through the window, you can dimly see a saucer-shaped vehicle, and beyond it, the blackness of space. The airlock leads to a hatch on the vehicle.

Above the airlock are stenciled words: 'PIE Fighter X-17.' To your right is a monitor on which a message appears: 'Pilot! Retinal scan required for access.'

If a PC stares into the screen, a beam of light shoots from it and scans his retina. The message on the screen changes to: 'You are not cleared for access. Report to your commanding officer.'

There's no way the PCs can access a PIE fighter, short of blowing open an airlock. Doing this opens the tunnel to vacuum. More explosive decompression fun.

The PIE fighters will be important in Episode 5; more about them later.

Docking bay

If the PCs go back to the docking bay:

This is where you exited the shuttlebot. The big change is, dozens of scrapbots are swarming inside it. As you watch, you see them dragging out parts of the shuttlebot's command console. They've stripped it; you aren't taking this shuttle home, that's for sure.

Main station

The door opens onto a small room. You're under full gravity—what bliss! There are gun emplacements all over the room. A small, ratlike spybot, bristling with antennae and opticals, stares at you from one corner. There are three other doors, and the floor and walls are covered with particolored

lines. There's a blue-and-green one; a black-and-purple one; and... well, lots more. Each line runs out one of the doors.

Tension 10, unless otherwise noted. The 'hammer head' is a warren of corridors, rooms, and stairways. Its layout is chaotic, no maps are available, and Azie-Comp sure isn't going to give directions. Luckily, the military personnel who used to staff the station painted the walls and floor with colored lines as guides. A colored line runs to each important room. The corridors are a veritable jumble of lines running every which-way.

The box nearby tells which line runs where. If you prefer, the PCs can just wander down a corridor and open doors. In this case, spring whatever room you want on them.

Some rooms don't have colored lines. Those rooms contain dangerous secrets. They also contain numerous gunbots and wallbots. Consider these 'roach motels': PCs check in but they don't check out.

Where they go now is up to them—but be sure to steer them through the bot manufacturing complex.

Bot manufacturing complex (blue-and-green line)

The PCs have probably wandered around AZ-743 enough by now, and are in the mood for action. At least we hope so, because they're about to have a firefight.

This gigantic chamber completely dwarfs anything you've ever seen in Alpha Complex. Enormous manufacturing machines, larger than food vats, make a dull roar. They're connected by conveyor belts. Scrapbots work at dozens of separate assembly-line stations along the belts. They're building more scrapbots, copies of themselves, out of used bot parts.

You see a bot insert a damaged tentacle into an input slot. Immediately, a huge machine whirls into action. After a few moments a shiny-new bot head flies out. It's caught a dozen meters away by a mechanical arm. The arm attaches the head to a body moving down a conveyor belt. As the belt moves, other mechanical arms attach other parts to the new bot. Finally, the completed scrapbot rolls

Where do the lines lead?

Blue-and-green: Bot manufacturing complex

Black-and-purple: Bunk room & alien ship

Purple-and-orange: Cafeteria-lounge

Red: Vacuum toilets

Yellow: Vacuum disposal chutes

Purple-and-green, black-and-green, purple-and-white: stripped and abandoned room

off the line. It shakes itself. It starts to run, but trips. Dozens of waiting scrapbots fall on it and tear it to pieces. It would seem you've just witnessed the cycle of life here.

Suddenly, you notice many lurking scrapbots looking at you. As you turn, you realize three of them are between you and the exit. What now?

Tension 12. The scrapbots attack in packs, by dozens, trying to shred the PCs and feed them to the machines. The machines themselves swing into action, grabbing Troubleshooters and placing them on conveyor belts, which carry the victims into the guts of the machine.

The PCs presumably try to fight their way to the door. Perhaps a PC is dragged down, torn to shreds and fed to the machines; perhaps a rival PC helps this happen. Let the survivors have fun blowing up scrapbots, and make sure they destroy at least one manufacturing machine in a spectacular explosion.

Just as the mayhem reaches its high point:

Suddenly, from behind you, a beam of lambent light shines from on high. All the scrapbots freeze in place. The machines freeze, too.

Looking to the source of the light, you see, floating above the floor on a flying platform, a peculiar sight.

It's an alien—a green, warted, tentacular monstrosity. Its tentacles manipulate the controls of the platform. Two bulbous eyes hang on the ends of eyestalks; one of the eyes wears a monocle.

The alien is wearing an open-necked shirt, tails, and a flat-topped military cap. One tentacle reaches up and tips the cap. 'Pip-pip,' says the alien, then



zips away on its platform at incredible speed.

If the PCs follow, they can barely keep the alien in sight, but he heads straight for the Bunk Room.

If they shoot at it, it dodges most of their fire, and the few shots which connect seemingly have no effect.

Cafeteria-lounge (purple-and-orange line)

Judging by the wall signs and symbols, this looks like a communal dining center just like the ones back in good old Alpha Complex. The normal food odors are missing, though. Two packs of scrapbots face each other over a fallen guardbot in the center of the dining area.

Tension 14. The cafeteria-lounge has no food or water. Anything that could be removed (e.g., table, chairs) has been used for raw materials. Two rival packs are fighting over an injured guardbot. If rescued, the guardbot, Lenny-JN6 is incredibly grateful. Unfortunately, there are 37 scrapbots intent on mangling it.

Vacuum toilets (red lines)

Another one of those tiny rooms with the bizarre-looking chair. But this one has a bot built into the wall directly to the right.

Tension 20. The only difference between these vacuum toilets and the ones on Platform 15-B is that they come equipped with their own wallbots. Azie-Comp doesn't like visitors to have total privacy. Also hiding in the toilet is a single scrapbot. It patiently waits for an awkward moment when it can steal a piece of metal and run away.

Disposal chutes (yellow lines)

Just like the ones on Platform 15-B.

Missile command station

Inside are two huge video screens. One shows a map, covered with bright graphic symbols. Another shows a planet, with a dotted orbit around the planet and a symbol that looks like this space station moving slowly around the orbit. All around the room

are dozens of terminals and control boards.

Tension 19. If the PCs play with the controls, a klaxon sounds. Guardbots show up instantly and roughly escort the PCs to the bunk room.

Bunk room (black-and-purple line)

This is where you want the Troubleshooters to end up. So to speak.

This was once a communal barracks. You recognize it by the torch marks on the floor showing where the bunks were removed. The far wall is a shimmering black curtain your eyes can't focus on. It seems to exist partly in this dimension and partly somewhere—alien.

Tension 20. The bunk room has been completely cleaned out by scrapbots. The shimmering opening is a trans-dimensional doorway into the alien ship.

One way or another, Azie-Comp means to get the PCs through the curtain. If nothing else works, the guardbots toss them through.

5: They want our women!

Paranoids from Earth meet paranoids from deep space. The Troubleshooters meet hideous Bug-Eyed Monsters (BEMs), the Shmegegi, and uncover their nefarious plot to conquer Earth. The Troubleshooters can go along, or try to foil the plan. In all likelihood, neither works.

Summary

The PCs get captured and tortured by the Shmegegi, who have their own idea of what unbearable agony is. While imprisoned, the PCs finally find Betty-U (the High Programmer they were sent after), who fills them in on the aliens. She also reveals she has the key to the PIE fighters.

When the PCs hold up under torture in stalwart fashion (as they surely will, unless, like the Shmegegi, they consider lime green, Country & Western music, and old Three Stooges routines to be unbearably agonizing), they are taken before the leader of the aliens, the McShmegegi of Shmegego. In typical

villain fashion, he boasts shamelessly about his evil plans, and reveals the one way the PCs may escape.

Presumably, they do escape. In the High Programmer's company, they man the PIE fighters and begin a wild space battle against the invading alien fleet. Finally, they triumph, saving Earth, humanity, and the Alpha Complex Way.

Of course, there's no way home. Too bad.

The ship

That weird shimmering curtain is the 'skin' of the alien ship. The ship itself is a sort of multi-dimensional being. It 'covers' the crew when in the ship or nearby. Because the ship can throw up a dimensional 'out-phase', no physical or energy weapons can damage the aliens. For **PARANOIA** players, used to mass destruction, this is frustrating. Let them fire volley after volley at a completely invulnerable opponent.

The alien ship is strangely amorphous. This is difficult to describe in physical terms but ridiculously easy in game terms. Every room has two black energy portals that connect it to other rooms—but the connections between rooms are arbitrary and flexible. You enter from whichever random ship room you're coming from, and you leave to the random ship room where your destiny lies.

Does that sound confusing? It's simple. When a PC enters an alien room, it's always where the Gamemaster (otherwise known as 'destiny') wants him to end up. This takes care of annoying things like maps.

One cue for you is the comments the players make just before they step through a portal. The portal reads enough of their minds to transport them wherever else on the ship they suggest. Speaking aloud about real or imagined threats could be dangerous.

The Shmegegi

The Shmegegi (singular, *shmegegus*) are green, warty, and multitentacled. Each has two

eyes on eyestalks. All are male. The Shmegegi are easy to understand because they have human drives. They're your typical ravenous, slobbering, bug-eyed monsters out to conquer our planet and ravish our women.

It's sad. Millennia ago, a terrible plague killed their beloved female members of the race, the shmegegae. The Shmegegi left their planet en masse to cruise the cosmic void and pick up girls.

They haven't had much luck. But now, they've encountered a planet (Earth) whose women (despite being of a different biological phylum) are inexplicably attractive. They plan to conquer the place and set up a nice little colonial empire. Inasmuch as they have fantastically advanced technology, it shouldn't be too difficult.

And the only obstacle is the Troubleshooters.

Talking with the Shmegegi

The Shmegegi are a highly civilized race. They wear elaborate costumes, speak with upper-class English or Scottish accents, and like high tea. Typical garb includes sharply ironed white linen trousers (with at least eight legs for all the tentacles), top hat, tails, bow tie, and monocle. Some typical dialog excerpts:

PC [*firing cone rifle*]: Take that, you traitorous Bug-eyed Monster Commie!

Shmegegi [*completely unfazed*]: I say, old bean, rather unsporting, eh, what?

PC: Why do you want to conquer Earth?

Shmegegi: Well, err, it's rather embarrassing, really. You see, ah, we, ah—well—we find Earth females rather attractive.

PC [*who has taken hormonal suppressants all his adult life*]: But why?

Shmegegi: Why do the greeblestunk sing? Why are the shrbt chartreuse? To whom can one go regarding such mysteries?

PC: I don't get it.

Shmegegi: Oh, this is quite embarrassing. I mean, it's a natural urge—or perhaps an unnatural one. Really, it's dashed hard to say. But nonetheless, we are determined. Earth and its lovelies shall be ours!

PC: Never, Commie Alien Slime!

Shmegegi: No hard feelings, I'm sure. Pip-pip!

Capture

This chamber is fetid, humid, gloomy. All about you is swamp and bizarre, droopy vegetation. You hear rustling, and from behind a drooping bush comes – an alien. Slime drips from its fangs; organs beat beneath its gelatinous skin. Its mantis-like arms caress the air.

Another steps out. And another, and another.... They surround you.

Give the PCs a chance to react; the aliens don't attack. These are walk-on spear-carriers, basically thugs.

Then another being flies out – a warty, green-skinned tentacular monstrosity, standing on a flying platform and carrying a huge gun. He says 'I say, look what we've treed.' He caresses one of the fanged beings, which rumbles in pleasure. He raises his gun and...

Do the PCs fire back? This is pointless, because the aliens are completely invulnerable. Luckily, the alien gun doesn't blow things up,



but projects a paralysis ray. The PCs keel over in various uncomfortable positions.

Betty-U-YLF-12

One of the shimmering black portals appears. The alien strips you of your equipment and tosses you through like so much baggage.

You're in a cubical room, in zero-G. The walls are padded. The portal fades behind you. There's no way in or out. A single human female, dressed in white, is also in the room. She looks like an aged Teela O'Malley, except with a narrow chin and bad teeth. She looks you over contemptuously. 'I might have known,' she mutters. 'All I rate is a bunch of REDs.'

The woman is **Betty-U-YLF-12**, the mysterious High Programmer the PCs have been following. Formerly Alpha Complex's Director of Project Mongo, she fled to space when The Computer discovered her membership in the highly treasonous Class C secret society, the Humanists. She knew there were aliens on Platform AZ-743, and intended to contact them hoping to make a deal and get back in The Computer's good graces.

Unfortunately, the Shmegegi had no interest in making a deal. First, they tortured her for information about Earth, but earned little. Then they tried to make friends: They brought her flowers and chocolates, and took her for little walks.

(Alas for the Shmegegi, they aren't cut out for life as BEMs. They're just too polite. They'd love to ravish Betty-U, but they can't bring themselves to do it. So they're stuck with tepid 19th Century-style courtship.)

They've told her of their plans. She knows they intend to conquer Earth, and why. She even knows how and when.

Betty-U has a plan. She has a gauss static device, a pencil-shaped object that, when touched to a bot or electronic device, makes it go haywire. If she and the PCs can escape and get to the fighter ports, she can use it to open the airlocks, then launch the PIE fighters and



make a last desperate effort to stop the aliens from laying the tentacle of oppression on the sacred body of Mother Earth!

Betty-U explains all this to the PCs as she rubs their limbs to counteract the paralysis ray. Because it takes a few minutes for the paralysis to wear off, they must hear her out instead of trying to terminate her immediately.

They don't have their equipment, so if they do want to kill her, it'll have to be with bare hands. Ecch. You may want to give her some GM-fiat armor just to forestall the mess.

Let the PCs spend some time plotting and getting to know Betty-U before the torture begins.

Ve haff ways

Now you get to play your best pseudo-sadistic Nazi. 'Show them the instruments, Mortimer.' 'We have ways of making you talk.' 'Had enough yet? Or shall I bring out the country-western music? Nyahahahaha!'

Abruptly, you find yourselves someplace else—a dark, rectangular room. Betty-U-YLF is with you. Two burly-looking aliens stand in the center.

'Good evening,' says one in a nasty tone. [Clench your teeth and enunciate carefully while you speak.] 'We are your torturers. You will tell us everything we want to know.'

Betty-U snickers. Anyone who tries to rush the aliens is clubbed down.

'Will you speak now? Or shall we administer force?'

Either the PCs steadfastly refuse to divulge any information (ha!), or they babble like mad. In the latter (likely) case, the alien says:

'Ah! How eager you are. How gratifying. But how shall we tell falsity from truth? No, you must taste our skills before we are satisfied. Mortimer, bring out the green!'

The Shmegegi have a highly developed aesthetic sense. Things we consider merely bad, they consider excruciatingly painful. Mortimer, the other alien, pulls out a flashlight. He turns it on. It shines with an ugly lime-green light.

The alien is tense with anticipation. 'So!' he says. 'I admire your fortitude. Many would be eager to tell us all by now. But the lime green is only one

of many agonizing tortures we have available. Confess now, and you shall be spared the horrible pain of... the country-western!' And with that, you hear the twangy beginnings of an Old Reckoning song. The aliens cover their ears and grimace.

By now, the players should be getting into the spirit and shouting their defiance to the aliens: 'You'll never get what you want, alien scum!' and so on. If you have country-western music, actually play it. (Or substitute any current pop music you and your players all loathe.) Cover your ears while it's playing, and grimace and moan as if you are one of the aliens. When you get bored with this, switch it off. (Force yourself to endure a few moments of this, for the effect. It's tough, we know.)

The alien is quivering with release, and panting slightly. 'So, you resist even the feared Waylon Jennings,' he says. 'But surely even ones so brave as you cannot withstand... The Three Stooges.' A black-and-white image flickers into being. Three strange-looking men caper bizarrely. One pokes another in the nose and says 'Nyuk nyuk nyuk.'

If your players are having a good time with this, keep it up! Invent more bizarre tortures. Eventually, the torturer relents:

The alien is clearly exhausted. 'Never,' he says, 'have I met beings of such fortitude and determination. Never before has any resisted the full panoply of tortures available to the Shmegegi race. Humans, I salute you. Mortimer, we must take them to the bridge.' With that, he waves a tentacle, and suddenly – SHLOOOP – you are all somewhere else.

The McShmegegi of Shmegego

In this encounter, you roleplay a bluff, military-type villain with a Scottish accent, as he gloats over his victory-soon-to-be and reveals everything the PCs need to know to defeat him.

You are on a railed balcony that runs the perimeter of a huge, metal-walled chamber. Below you are a dozen Shmegegi, seated at consoles, their

tentacles rapidly stroking controls, murmuring into headsets. Before you is a gigantic screen, on which is shown the alien ship, AZ-743, and planet Earth.

In the center of the chamber stands a huge shmegegi, three meters tall, wearing full dress kilt, sporran, tunic, military cap, and monocle. His thorax is covered with medals, which jingle when he moves. He bellows, 'So! These arrre the human spies, aye?' In the background you hear the eerie music of bagpipes.

Let the PCs respond as they wish. The McShmegegi, clan leader of the Shmegegi, will bring them down to the control room floor and take them on a guided tour.

'Thrrrrrockmorton controls ourrr spinklery rrrray pods, which we can land ennowhere we wish on your puirrr planet, destrrrroying whole complexes with a single bluiw. An' herre, MacPherrrrson controls the shimmerrring currrtains through which ye ha'e passed. Ye need only think o' wherre ye wish to go, an' therre ye be. A grrreat technological achievement, indicative of ourrr superrriorrrity o'er yourrr pathetic rrrrace.'

He asks the PCs to betray humanity and join the Shmegegi in their conquest.

'Join us, and ye shall be satrrraps in ourrr new colonial empirrr. Ye shall rrrule in ourrr name, giving us only what we requirrr. If the PCs remain unimpressed, he displays the alien ship's weaponry, which is awesome indeed. 'Ye canna stand against oos. Surrenderrr, Earrrrrtlings!'

As we see it, there are four possible outcomes:

1. Some, but not all, of the PCs agree to help the Shmegegi conquer Earth. In this case, the Shmegegi arm them with their old equipment and let them fight it out among themselves. Go to outcome 2 or 3 with the survivors (if any).
2. They decide to help the Shmegegi. See 'The conquest of Earth,' below.
3. They defy the aliens to the last breath. Go to 'PIE fighting in space.'
4. One of the PCs, played by someone who has seen a James Bond movie,

desperately hits one of the controls. In this case:

A klaxon sounds: WHOOP! WHOOP! WHOOP! Red lights and buzzers flash. The aliens fiddle with controls desperately. The McShmegagus turns to you with horror. 'Guid God, mon; ye dinna ken what ye ha'e done. That be the verrra self-destrruict switch o' the whole ship!'

Obviously.

Aliens flit this way and that. The PCs can make a break for it in the confusion. 'Quick,' says Betty-U, 'follow me.' And she leads them to the PIE fighter ports.

Segue into the battle scene, 'PIE fighting in space'. This time, the aliens aren't invading, but are simply trying to escape from their disintegrating ship. The same climactic battle occurs.

The conquest of Earth

'Och, an' I knew ye brave lads an' lassies wuid come arround. Jackson, herre, will take ye to outfitting.'

The aliens want the PCs to infiltrate Alpha Complex and prepare it for invasion. To help them, the aliens will give the PCs the following:

- ☉ one sh'rtmegister each
- ☉ one thrntwhistle each
- ☉ one explosive brain implant each (see the box nearby)

Oh, and they can have back their own equipment, if they like.

The PCs aren't told about the explosive brain implant until after it's installed. Once it is installed, they're sent back to Alpha Complex. Their job: infiltrate, file reports on the situation in Alpha Complex, and prepare for the invasion. The Shmegegi are a long-lived race, and have an inhuman notion of time. They intend to invade almost immediately—less than ten years from now!

Until the invasion occurs, the PCs must live (or die) in Alpha Complex, facing constant Computer scrutiny. Effectively, they're now members of another secret society.

And once they get back to Alpha Complex, The Computer will want to debrief them. Doubtless, it wants to know about the strange

alien devices they carry, and the alien spaceship in which they landed, and the whereabouts of the ULTRAVIOLET traitor they were sent to terminate.

We hope they coordinate their stories real well. Because our guess is, if The Computer doesn't kill them, the explosive brain implants will. Or maybe The Computer has them executed at the same time the explosive brain implants go off. That could be fun.

PIE fighting in space

If the PCs defy the McShmegagus, he cries:

'McPhairrrson! Send these doom-ed' souls back to the holding tanks!' A shimmering curtain appears. Betty-U cries 'Think about the bunk room!' and dives through.

Remember how the Shmegagus said the curtain takes you where you think about? Betty-U is right; if the PCs think about the bunk room entrance to the alien ship, there they'll go. Anyone who doesn't goes to the holding tanks. Too bad.

'The PIE fighters!' Betty-U says. 'They're our only chance!'

It takes the aliens a while to figure out what's happened. If the PCs make a run for it, they get to the elevators just as be-monocled BEMs on airsleds zip around the corner firing paralysis rays.

Betty-U uses her gauss static device on the 'fire emergency' button of the elevator and it zips Real Fast (toss the PCs around) to the Fighter Bay. There, she uses it again on the airlock doors, then dives for a PIE fighter.

Do the PCs follow? Do they go for fighters of their own?

Basically, a PIE fighter looks like a pie. It's saucer-shaped, with gunport slits. It has armor rating 4. The guns are laser cannons. Each fighter is designed to seat three, and can seat four in a pinch. One person (the pilot) sits forward and stares out the viewscreen. Another (co-pilot and forward gunner) sits next to him and controls a gun. The third sits behind them facing backwards and controls the rear gun. (If there's a fourth, he has to kinda crouch in front of the beer cooler.)

When you control a gun, you sit in a chair on a moving platform and physically wrestle the gun around. The chair and platform move with you.

Alien equipment

Sh'rtmegister: An awesome weapon devised by the Shmegegi for use against hostile lifeforms (human beings, for example). It's designed to be held by three tentacles. One supports it; one adjusts the mxst control; and one pulls the trigger. The target, if hit, turns inside-out, so the organs are now outside and the skin inside. This is painful, but, luckily the pain does not last long, as the bewildered human, unaccustomed to so peculiar an arrangement, dies within 15 seconds. (If the target is hit again within this period, he turns outside-out again, and, although stunned, is otherwise unaffected.)

Humans can use sh'rtmegisters (a straight Violence check), but with difficulty. They can't move the mxst control while firing the weapon. This means every time a human fires, there's a 20% chance it blows up (W3V energy).

Thrntwhistle: A kind of ring-like amulet, normally worn around a tentacle. It provides complete protection against the sh'rtmegister.

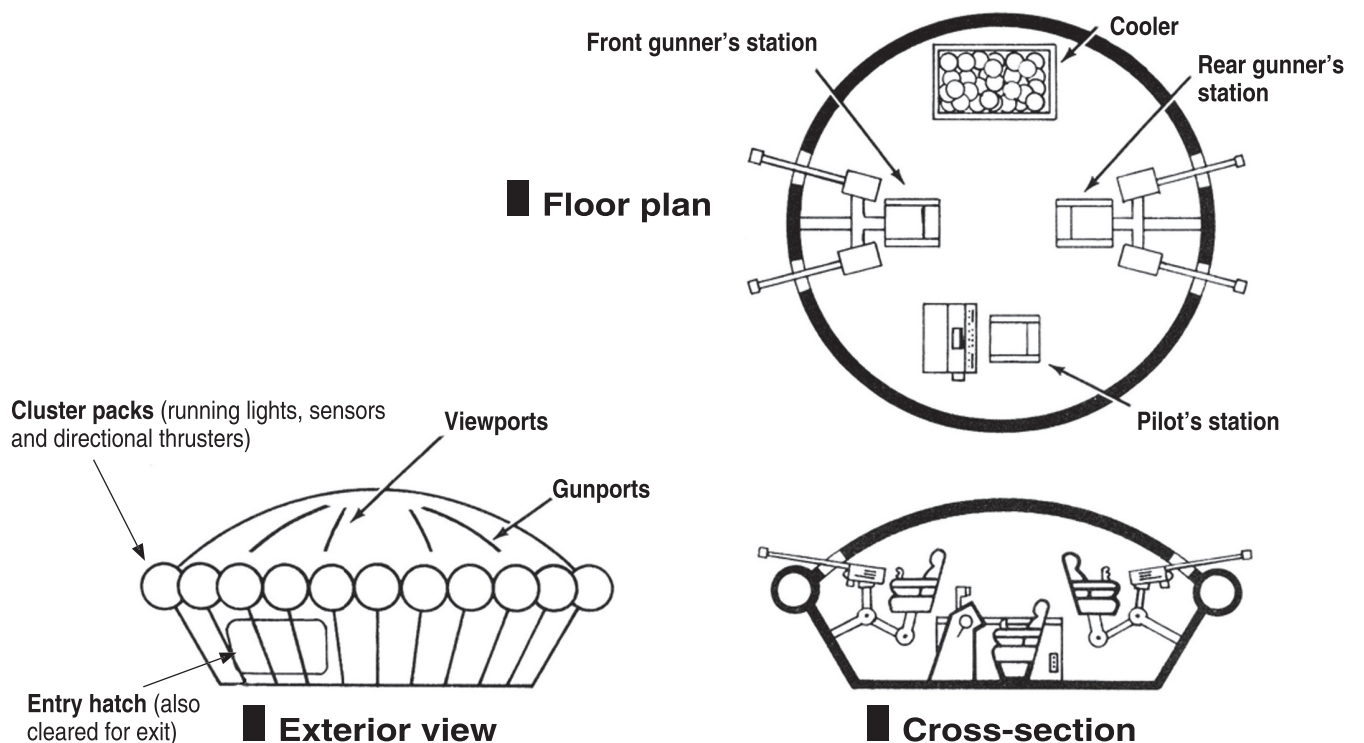
Explosive brain implant: This semitelepathic device is implanted directly in the brain, and cannot be easily removed by humans, who don't have a sufficiently advanced technology. (That is, it can be removed, but at the cost of turning the character into a vegetable.)

The device monitors the thoughts of the person in whose skull it is implanted. If the individual's allegiance changes – that is, he does not always serve the shmgegi race to the best of his abilities – the explosive goes off, killing the person in question.

This device is clearly an even more effective loyalty-ensuring mechanism than the many techniques used by The Computer. The Computer would be deeply interested in it. Of course, any person who even thought about telling The Computer about the device in his head would die instantly.



PIE fighter



Any time a character in a PIE fighter wants to change its course or fire its cannon, the player must make a Hardware/Vehicle Ops or Violence/Vehicular Weapons check, respectively. It's actually not that hard; the PIE fighters are equipped with highly advanced fire-control computers that do most of the work. But if the character fails, roll on the Amusing Failure Table to see what happens.

Running the PIE fight

Here's how the battle works:

The pilots roll to see if they manage to blast out of the fighter port. Anyone who fails is OK; he's just learned the safety interlock prevents the fighter from leaving until everyone has put on a seat belt. He can try again next combat round.

Almost as soon as the first fighter is out, alien blob fighters start appearing. Blob fighters are gelatinous, shiny, vaguely spherical blobs that bud off from the big alien ship and fight the PIE fighters.

The combat is divided into rounds. Each combat round, ask each player what his character is doing. Gunners choose their targets; pilots decide where to drive; fourth crewmembers open beers from the cooler and

pass them around. (They're squeeze bulbs equipped with tubes, so you don't have to worry about spurting them all over the cabin.)

At the beginning of the battle, four blob fighters appear. Four more appear every round until the alien ship has created four for every PIE fighter in use. (That's as many as it can create.)

Each round, the blob fighters whizz around, shooting at the PIEs. Have them whizz where they like, but each time they fire, roll 1d20. They hit on a roll of 5 or less, or on whatever result works for you personally. When a blob hits a PIE, roll on the PIE fighter damage table to see what happens, or pick a result you like. You, the GM, are always right.

When a PIE hits a blob, it starts to glow red and fluctuate in size. It also moves erratically for a while (several combat rounds, or until you forget). If hit while red, it explodes spectacularly.

One last thing; Azie-Comp has been programmed to fight back when attacked. It doesn't really know what's going on, because it didn't authorize a PIE fighter launch. But it does know the blobs come from the alien ship, and the PIE fighters are fighting it. So it helps the PCs with its destructo-rays.

After the third combat round (it takes that long for Azie-Comp to puzzle things out), the beam-weapon projectors on the spherical end of Platform AZ-743 shoot at one alien blob fighter—choose one at whim. Azie-Comp's target number is 11; if it hits, the alien fighter explodes instantly.

One fly in the lubricant: If a PIE fighter shoots at AZ-743, Azie-Comp tries to destroy that fighter next round (see the Amusing Failure table on page 60).

That's about it as far as rules go. The rest is up to you. Your objective is to give the illusion that the players are really fighting a space battle. Describe the V-formations into which the alien ships form, how the PIE fighters dive and roll and zoom around. Key phrases to toss around include:

- ☉ 'You've got a bogey on your tail!'
- ☉ 'Alien at 6 o'clock!'
- ☉ 'Captain! She canna take much more!'
- ☉ 'Lasers locked on target, captain!'
- ☉ 'He's still on my tail! I can't shake him!'
- ☉ 'Use the Force, Luke-R!'

But we haven't included a map or board or anything because this is, after all, **PARANOIA**. No careful positioning of pieces or measurement of ranges; flamboyant action, remember? Describe what's going on in any way you like. Remember the whole battle is taking place around Platform AZ-743, which continues to rotate in space, shooting its beam weapons as it does.

If you decide to keep track of positions more carefully, get a bunch of bottle caps. Use one kind for the aliens, another for the good guys. Put a bottle in the center of the table to represent AZ-743, and spin it occasionally (to represent its rotation). Then move the bottle caps to show where the fighters are.

Space is three-dimensional, though. The table may not be enough. Put the bottle caps on top of books or bottles or something to represent elevation.

And there's no reason ships have to stay on the table. Space is infinite, after all. The ships can fly onto the sofa, or the bookcases, or even hide behind an asteroid (the bowl of corn chips) to pop out and shoot at an unwary opponent. A ship can take advantage of a passing energy storm (the cat) to escape its opponents while they regroup. Encourage this insanity by reducing to-hit chances for shots at long range, for obstacles between bottle caps, for strategic use of household pets, and so on.

Slavery or victory!

So the PCs shoot up aliens, and vice versa. We'd really like the PCs to win after a few casualties. If they do:

Suddenly, on your communication consoles appears an image of the McShmegagus standing aboard the bridge of the alien mothercraft.

'Sassenachs!' he snarls. 'Earrrrthworrms! You ha'e won a victorrry, ye think; so ye ha'e, but a fleeting one! We shall rrreturn, Earrtrrlings, an' destrroy ye!'

The image blinks out. Slowly, the alien ship begins to fluctuate in size. It glows white and disconnects from Platform AZ-743. In the blink of an eye, it disappears.

Maybe it doesn't work that way. Maybe the aliens are beating the PCs when suddenly a huge swarm of Vulture spacecraft show up to save the day. (Yes, this is inconsistent. So what?) They blow up the blob fighters, then take the PCs aboard. Betty-U and anyone who defends her is executed as a traitor.

...Or maybe the jackobots from 101-L have jury-rigged a few spacecraft of their own, and, pursuing the blasphemers (PCs), arrive at AZ-743 just as the battle begins.

...Or maybe the battle in orbit triggers other orbital defenses, and the whole volume is shot through with death rays, Soviet anti-satellite missiles and the like.

...Or maybe when the PCs underwent coldsleep in Shuttlebot Vapor-7, millions of years passed, Alpha Complex is gone, and the aliens want not human women, but the women of Earth's new dominant species, intelligent cockroaches.

Anyway, the PCs now have no way to return to Earth. The PIE fighters have no shields, and burn up on reentry. The only operative shuttle to AZ-743 has been dismantled by scrapbots, and Azie-Comp will want to execute the PCs for unauthorized use of the PIE fighters.

Here's one touching ending:

After our valiant heroes fight off the alien scum, they return in triumph to AZ-743. Azie-Comp decides they acted properly in using the

PIE fighters, and promises to do everything it can to help them return home. It patches together a satellite link to The Computer. The PCs talk to The Computer and explain what they've done. Their friend responds:

'Loyal Citizens, The Computer is touched beyond words. Betty-U, your sentence of death is hereby commuted because of your heroic actions in defense of Alpha Complex... nay, in defense of all humanity. All of you; Alpha Complex shall know of your heroism. It will be preserved in the memory of our people for all time to come. We cannot thank you enough. 'Alas, no further shuttles are available at this time. Rescue is impossible. Thank you for your cooperation.'

The 'experimental elevator' was the last one Alpha Complex had. There's no food on AZ-743, by the way. At this point, the player's options are pretty limited: There's death by starvation, by explosive decompression and by burning up on reentry.



6: Debriefing

But, you know, the PCs might persuade Azie-Comp to build a new shuttle. Or they might glom onto a stray blob ship the aliens left behind. Or they might stumble on the Transdimensional Collapsatron, thereby justifying the title of this mission collection.

If, by one of these incredible strokes of Gamemaster generosity, the PCs get back to Alpha Complex, The Computer promptly summons them to debriefing. Surrounded by heavily-armed YELLOW clearance Vulture guards, the surviving characters are escorted into a dark room highlighted by a single

blindingly-bright terminal. Anything on the terminal is completely illegible.

The Computer speaks! 'Citizens! Have the Communist infiltrators of Platform AZ-743 been terminated?'

If anyone so much as mentions even the possibility of failure, The Computer immediately orders each PC subjected to a separate, in-depth interview. Between the drugs and the electric needles, the truth is revealed. Afterward, those Troubleshooters innocent of overt treason are offered the

chance to participate in a follow-up mission to take out the infiltrators once and for all.

On the other hand, if the PCs answer with a chorus of 'Yes, Friend Computer! The traitors have been terminated!' then there is every chance The Computer will congratulate them, give them Official Commendations, declare them Heroes of Our Complex and promote them all one Security Clearance.

Then you can send 'em out on a *really* deadly assignment!



Bot roster

Model	Size	Speed	Weapons	Specialties	Armor	Description
Guardbots	water cooler	sprint	Blue laser rifle (W3K) Mace (S4K)	Violence 16	4	Tentacles; small brain; literal programming.
Shuttlebot Vapor-7	yacht	incredible	—	Management 16	2	Speaks in military jargon.
Jackobots	human	sprint	Hands (O5K)	Violence 10	1	Humanoid but with waist jets; argumentative and fanatical.
Spybots	tennis ball	real fast	Shock (S3D)	Stealth 14, Violence 05	—	High, squeaky voices.
Patrolbots	human	sprint	Blue laser pistol (W3K) Gauss gun (W3K) Club (S4K)	Violence 16	4	Waist jet thrusters; police-state mentality.
Gunbots	The Hulk	sprint	HE shell (W2K) Particle beam (D1V)	Violence 16	5	Large barrel on jet-propelled chassis; cross between a heavy battle tank and an underpaid security guard.
Wallbots	turret	immobile	Laser cannon 1	Violence 18	4	Friendly, philosophical; enjoy conversation.
Scrapbots	weasel	sprint	Claws (O5W)	Violence 04	1	Weasel-sized and weasel-shaped; packrat personalities.

PIE fighter damage

1	Pilot hit.
2	Front gunner hit.
3-4	Tail gunner hit.
5-6	Beer man hit.
7-8	Cooler hit: No more beer for the rest of the battle. Make players from that ship go without munchie and soft drinks.
9-10	Computer hit: Make Arbitrary Justice rolls for that ship's piloting and firing.
11-12	Small hole: Cabin loses pressure. No one can do anything for one round, while they find and don spacesuits.
13-14	Huge hole: See Explosive Decompression Table.
15-16	Engine hit: Vehicle can't turn, accelerates into void until its fuel is gone. Another fighter might be able to catch up and rescue the crew.
17-18	Front gun hit: It explodes (S3K energy, 2m radius)
19-20	Tail gun hit: It explodes (see 'Front gun hit').

Pun names from previous editions

The original editions of *Orcbusters* and *Clones in Space* went in heavily for pun names. For this edition, being humorless curmudgeons who just want to spoil innocent high-spirited fun, we deleted the puns. For GMs who enjoy Zap play style—and, obviously, both these missions are pretty Zappy—here are the names we changed, along with their original pun versions.

Karly-I-KNA: Kouble-I-KAN

Simon-I-JVN: Saur-I-MON

Betty-U-YLF: Bette-U-LYF

In addition, the original *Orcbusters* had pregenerated PCs named Frowd-O-THF, Bubba-R-IAN, Sonja-R-FTR, Jahl-Y-ELF, and Grump-Y-DWF. The *Clones in Space* PCs were Flashgo-R-DEN, Buck-R-GRS, Jonk-R-TER, Kimbalky-R-NSN, 'Doc' Moe-R-BIS and Barb-R-ELA. Nope, we're not making this up.

Amusing Failure

Pilot

1-4	Vehicle keeps going straight: Wherever that is.
5-6	Vehicle turns and heads straight for Platform AZ-743: Pilot must make another roll to avoid collision. Perversity penalties, anyone?
7-8	Vehicle starts spinning like a top: No one can fire until this condition is corrected. Each character in the vehicle must make a Violence roll to avoid nausea.
9-10	Vehicle smashes into nearest other vehicle: Whether friendly or alien. I2V impact damage for both. If no other vehicle is nearby, use the 7-8 result instead.
11-14	Vehicle stalls: Pilot or gunner must succeed in a Hardware/Electronic Engineering roll to restart the engine.
15-16	Vehicle stops dead, then backs up: Pilot must succeed in a Hardware/Vehicle Ops roll to get it heading in the right direction again.
17-18	Vehicle drives directly for the alien ship: Pilot must succeed in a Hardware/Vehicle Operations roll to avoid collision.
19-20	Vehicle flips over and heads in opposite direction.

Gunner

1-12	Miss.
13-14	Gun jams: Gunner must succeed in a Hardware/Weapon Ops & Maintenance roll to repair it, or may pound on it and hope (Violence roll with some penalty of the wise Gamemaster's choosing)
15-16	Hit a friendly craft.
17-18	Hit Platform AZ-743: Azie-Comp fires at this PIE fighter next round.
19-20	Gun explodes: Make an Arbitrary Justice roll for the PIE fighter with a target of, oh, let's say 15. (Or pick your own number, GM!) If you roll over the target number, the cabin depressurizes explosively and everyone inside dies. Otherwise, everyone takes S4K damage.

Explosive Decompression Table

1: Vacuum Death

1–3	Explosive decompression: What happens when internal bodily pressure gets too strong for the body to keep inside itself. Creates an annoying mess.
4–6	Internal embolism: Sometimes internal bodily pressures just rupture the insides. Much neater than explosive decompression—just as fatal, mind you, but easier to clean up.
7–10	Fast freezing: The body freezes solid in a few seconds. Victim becomes aware of ice crystals forming on his eyeballs just before brain supercools and freezes. Thawing out a clonesicle is messy and, unlike Captain America, the victim doesn't revive.
11–15	Flesh boils away: Happens when victim is exposed to naked sunlight (or occasionally plasma generators). Extremely painful, mercifully quick, relatively uncluttered.
16–18	Strangulation: Victim blacks out due to lack of oxygen. Relatively humane and tidy, but a closed-casket ceremony is recommended.
19	Combination freeze/boil: Reserve this for truly special events. One side of the victim faces the sun, the other is in total darkness. While the skin and tissue peel away from the bone on the sunside, the other side freezes into a solid block. Results in a half-clonesicle, half-vaporization—sort of clone art.
20	All of the above: We're not sure how this happens, but the effect is colorful: As the victim flies into vacuum, his entire body explodes. All that remains is an expanding nimbus of black char and shimmering motes of frozen tissue. We recommend a few moments of awestruck appreciation for the wonders of nature, followed by applause.

2: Explosive Decompression

Weapon damage depends on two factors: the frequency of its use and the drama of its effect. Use weapons as object lessons. PCs should quickly discover 'more shots fired' = 'lower atmospheric pressure.' Bright ones discover this quickly. Slower students become familiar with the Vacuum Death table.

A weapon's destructive capacity also determines the size of the hole it makes. After all, if a character just pounds a wall with his fist, it shouldn't cause—hmmm—on second thought... It *does* seem those walls *have* been badly degraded by cosmic rays, metal stress, and polishbots. It would be just *terrible* if some poor Troubleshooter were to actually punch a hole right through to vacuum.

Combat results for object damage translate to outer hull damage as follows:

OK: Boring. Nothing happens.

Lightly damaged: Minor openings in seams; slow leakage. A high-pitched whistle of air escapes the compartment, drawing small loose objects with it. The leak cannot be easily sealed. Make occasional references to the steady leakage and to the subtle and slow effects of oxygen deprivation.

Impaired: Small hole, typically made by laser beams. Constant whoosh of escaping air. Small objects (mission papers, plasticreds, etc.) are sucked out. Hole can be blocked with any large object. If the large object is a person, then skin surfaces exposed to vacuum may freeze, boil, and suffer hideous damage. We recommend group discussion of possible effects.

Heavily damaged: Large hole, usually made by a large weapon. All air is evacuated in, say, 30 seconds. Medium-sized objects (pistols, PDCs, mission equipment, etc.) are sucked out into space. Large objects, including people, can block large holes.

Busted: A major hole, usually made by explosives or imaginative characters. All air disappears in five seconds (one round). All objects fly out, including people. Sealing the hole is usually impractical. Escaping before emergency bulkheads slam shut is difficult. Being crushed by emergency bulkheads as they slam shut is marginally easier.

Junked or vaporized: Entire surface blown away. See the Vacuum Death Table.

Earth Passed Over For Invasion

BETA QUADRANT, ZGYXA—Nearly 200,000 hostile aliens from the planet Zgyxa skipped invading Earth Monday, saying it 'does not seem worth the effort.' 'A planet scan indicates its resources will be tapped by 2015, its most intelligent life form cannot fly, and it possesses no significant deposits of Tangium,' said Supreme Commander Kasha Ak-Bej, the nine-foot serpentine leader of the invasion. 'Not to mention their fleshy exoskeleton would make Earthlings unfit slaves for mining Zgyxa's molten core.' Representatives from the Council of Earth expressed their disappointment.

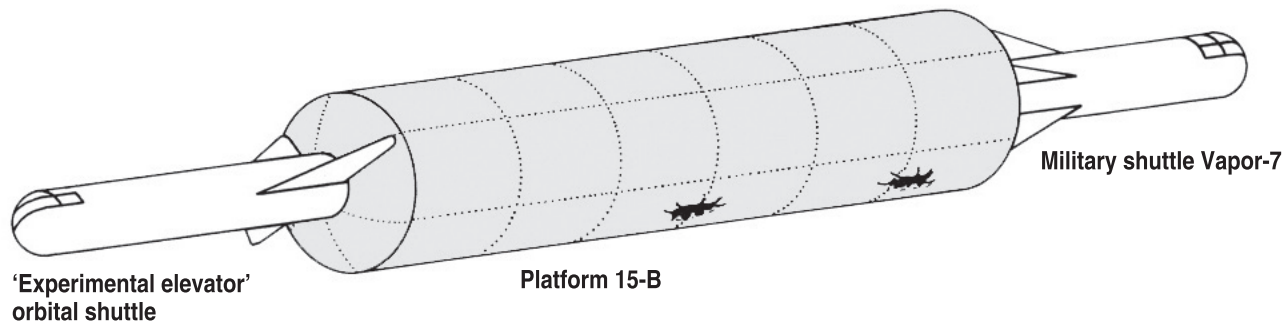
—*The Onion* (April 5, 2006)

[<http://www.theonion.com/content/node/46945>]

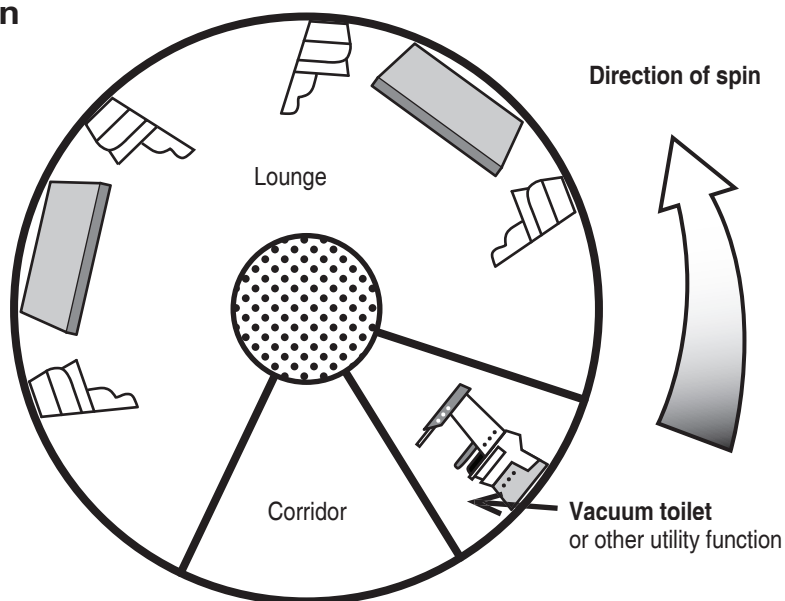


Map 1: Platform 15-B (Episode 2)

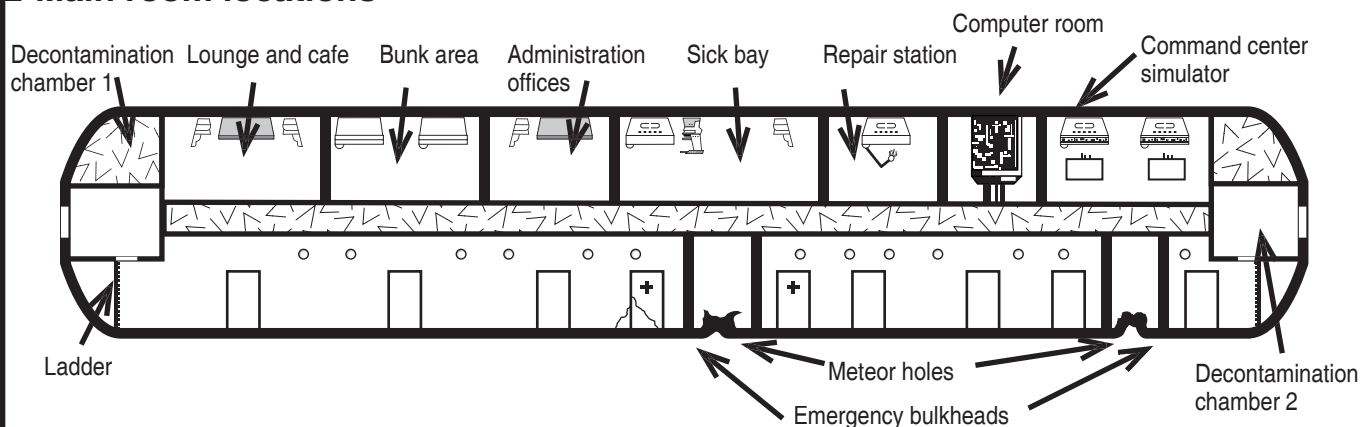
Exterior view

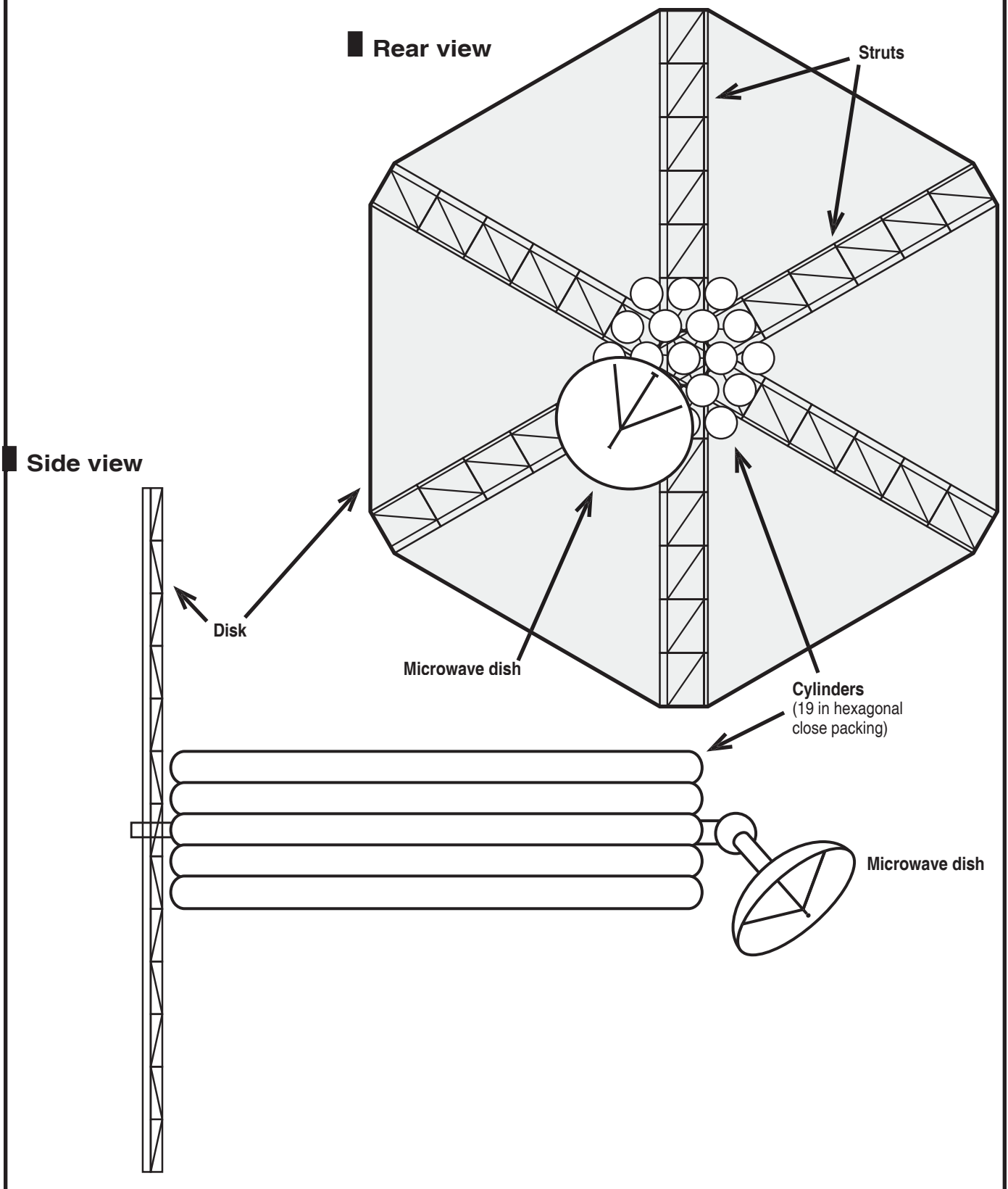


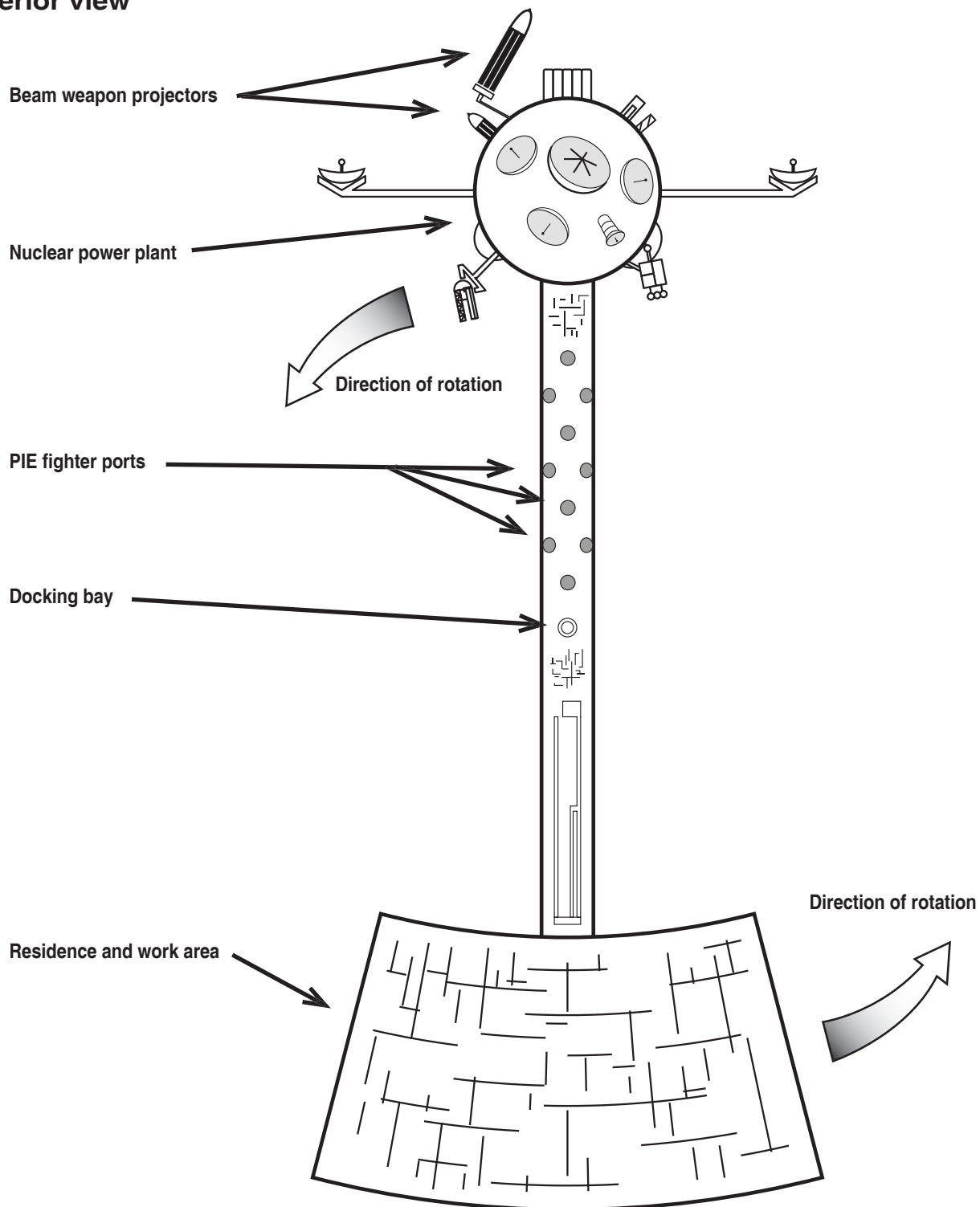
Typical cross-section



Main room locations



Map 2: Platform 101-L (Episode 3)

**Map 3: Platform AZ-743 (Episodes 4-5)****Exterior view**

PARANOIA

The People's Glorious Revolutionary Adventure

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Proletariat playtesters

THE COMPUTER

Your tovarich, da!

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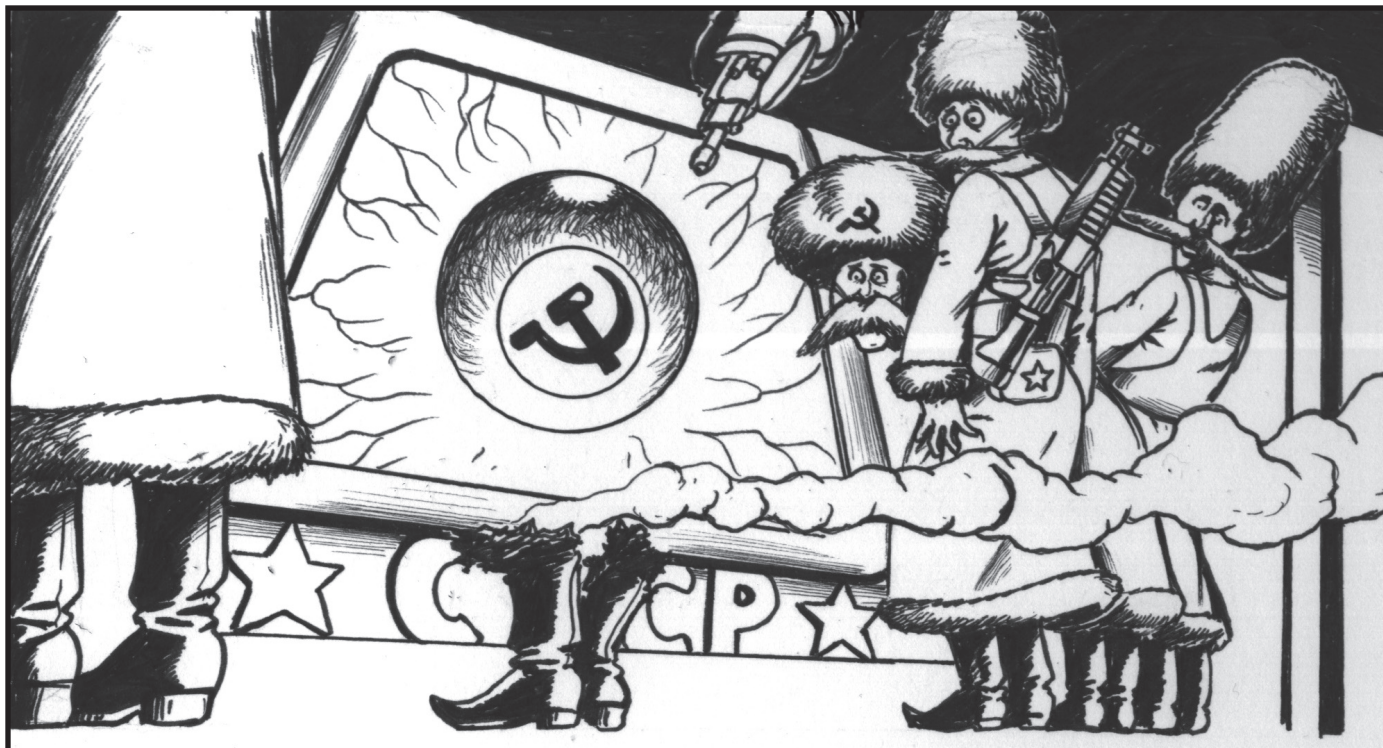
If you've never played **PARANOIA** before, this might not be the best mission to start with. But after you've experienced **PARANOIA** the way it's *supposed* to be—hang on to your furry babushka!

Alpha Complex has, of course, been at war with the Commies for all of recorded history—and then some. At the start of the war (Year 1 of The Computer), the Commies were outnumbered about 10 million to none. This attracted dissidents and malcontents to the underdogs, somewhat evening the odds and proving conclusively to The Computer the imperative need for location and termination of Commies. Dogmatic self-righteousness notwithstanding, two hundred and some years of bitterly stalemated guerilla warfare can lead to some nagging questions about the opposition. Questions like, 'Why?' The Computer wants to know why perfectly normal, happy citizens (an oxymoron) are joining the Commies in droves. And, because it believes Alpha Complex to be the only unconquered complex, it wonders what life is like in a Communist Controlled Complex Population. (That's 'CCCP.' Get it?)

Equipped with a brand new curiosity program, The Computer set out to answer those questions. It pored over all the relevant data files in its memory, and used the information supplied in both of them to construct a tiny artificial CCCP in old, abandoned HUH Sector. Next, HPD&MC populated HUH Sector with lots of citizens of proven loyalty, gave them hypnosis drugs and told them they were Commies. In fact, HPD's History Revision service firms constructed complete artificial pasts for everyone, and no one in HUH Sector recalls life in normal Alpha Complex. These loyal 'volunteers' now believe they are the happy proletariat in Alpha State, joyously serving Tovarich Computer. Meanwhile, The Real Computer watches and analyzes their every traitorous move.

The Computer has had its High Programmers refit the HUH Sector CompNode with accent programs, red star graphics and everything else necessary to create the illusion of a Communist reprogrammed machine. It has also installed loads of extra security monitors, microphones and other eavesdropping devices in HUH Sector to gather information on the actions of the volunteer Commies. This is the world your players' Troubleshooters are about to enter—the world of Tovarich Computer and All Things Red and Wonderful.

Just a few moments ago, the player characters (PCs) received the hypnosis drugs and were transported to Alpha State via a Transbot named 'Happy,' who was then destroyed for security reasons (hope that doesn't happen to the PCs). They'll be waking up soon, totally convinced they are happy Commies, with all the necessary knowledge The Computer believes a Commie should have.



Getting into an Alpha State

Preparrrink to be playink

Maintaining the secret background of the Alpha State experiment is important, so make sure you don't slip up and give it away.

If you are running a series, the difficulty arises in admitting the players' existing Troubleshooters to Alpha State without the players getting suspicious. The characters are simply given massive quantities of hypnotic narcotics (generating an altered ego, or 'RED shift'), but using such an approach with your players violates several statutes and can lead to stiff penalties, even including loss of **PARANOIA** playing time. So, in order to help out, we've provided a script of sorts to address the problem. Practice whatever you'll finally say until you sound like you're really speaking off the cuff.

Here's a sample:

'Um, OK, folks. I got this mission where you're Troubleshooters in a Commie-dominated complex, and I think it's pretty funny, so we'll give it a go. No, seriously, you're Commie Troubleshooters, or "Smershoviks," and you serve a Commie Computer—"Tovarich Computer," in fact.

'The mission's got a few problems, though. Like, there's no pregenerated characters, so I figured we'd just copy the abilities you already have for your current Troubleshooters. But there's a few changes.

'First, you're all 'Red' Clearance. Everybody change your color. If you also want to change your name, that's fine.

'Second, there's new names for your service groups... what do they call 'em? Yeah, here it is. "Proletarian Movements." We'll change those individually in a few minutes. Your secret societies and mutations, for those of you who might have them, remain unchanged, except if you're a Commie. Anybody a Commie? Good. Here's some vocabulary to help you talk like a Russkie. Umm, well, let me read this intro here, then I'll handle questions.'

Then just read the next section. See how easy players are to dupe? Well, what did you expect? They seem to enjoy being killed repeatedly... By the way, if one of your PCs is a Commie, he's now a member of the NazCIA (see page 67).

Character introduction

Read this aloud to the players in a very, very thick Russian accent:

Greetings, Smershoviks, and congratulations for being selected to serving Tovarich Computer! Tovarich Computer is being benevolent ruler of Alpha State. Tovarich Computer is heart and soul of glorious revolution. Every comrade in Alpha State is of same glasnost clearance; everybody is Red. Is nyet true some are more Red than others. Tovarich Computer never ever in whole existence is showing favoritism.

You are to be hunting capitalistic warmongering imperialist puppet pigdog traitors in service to Tovarich Computer, Mother Alpha and proletarian Oktober revolution. Is very important duty. Always to be remembering:

Be trusting no one! Be keeping laser handy! Morbid depression is mandatory! Tovarich Computer is your tovarich! Are there being any questionings?

Living in Alpha State

You can read this for yourself only, or read aloud the parts in bold to your players. The parts *not* in bold are secret, for your eyes only.

Think of all the McCarthy-Reagan evil empire clichés, and adapt them to science fiction. Everything in Alpha State is in chronically short supply. Ration vouchers are distributed for everything; borscht, shoelaces, toilet paper, haircuts, drinking water, furry babushkas ... you name it, and there's an interminable line for it. Having a ration voucher supposedly guarantees you will receive the item or service (without prior inspection on your part), but often the material is damaged or unusable, the service is 'unavailable due to excessive demand' or LL&L is 'temporarily out.' Supply shortcomings are always due to unusually low something or other, never ever poor planning.

Life in Alpha State is wildly bleak. All the lights are red, adding immeasurably to the depressing ambience, and turning every other color to deeper shades of red or black. It's always a little cold and murky.

(GM: This is because HUH Sector's thermostat systems have gone unused for so long they no longer function properly. Also, the dust that collected in the vents over the years is now slowly being redistributed throughout the sector by the ventilation system, so everything is kind of grey.)

Secret police (especially the dreaded KGB) monitor everyone and everything all daycycle long, insuring everyone's patriotic fervor and depression. Everybody turns someone else in to the KGB at some point or other. The KGB is a constant shadow of death and even worse things which darkens everyone's cycleto-cycle life. Existence consists of eating a daily meal (sometimes two meals, if you're unlucky) of cold borscht, (Alpha Complex food vat leftovers) working all day long, then sleeping in temporarily overcrowded barracks on a steel pallet with another comrade citizen who wets the bed and snores.

Alpha State is at war, and has been for all of recorded history. They are at war with the capitalists and imperialists and everyone who opposes Communism. The agents of these dark forces are the dreaded NazCIA (pronounced not-see-eye-ay), a kind of mishmash of the SS and The Man from U.N.C.L.E. These bowlegged, militaristic totalitarian bourgeois pigs are the 'Commies' of Alpha State.

In short, Alpha State is a workers' paradise overflowing with futile existence, soulless bureaucracy, unpalatable food, endless war, inadequate everything and abysmal depression. In an Alpha *Complex*, life is a utopia. Happiness is mandatory. Alpha *State* is not a utopia. It is horrible, more horrible than you can imagine—and then some. Morbid depression is not only standard, it is required—anyone familiar with Russian literature can tell you that. You must frown energetically no matter how much you are secretly enjoying yourself. You should feel right at home.

Cosmetic changes

HUH Sector, henceforth referred to as Alpha State, is (naturally) similar to Alpha Complex. Most of the changes are cosmetic, though there are a few notable differences.

The work the workers work at

(This whole section is safe to read or relate to your players.) In Alpha State, service groups are called Proletarian Movements. The names differ, but the organization, purposes and prestige associated with each remains unchanged from their Alpha Complex service group counterparts. In order of relative status:

- 1) **CCCPU (CPU):** The acronym stands for Comrade Computer's Central Processing Union, and like their Alpha Complex counterparts, they epitomize ponderous tottering bureaucracy. Where do you think the term 'Red Tape' came from?
- 2) **Red Army (Armed Forces):** Aside from the run-of-the-mill troopers, the Red Army maintains special killer elite Vulture squadrons known as the Spetsnaz—a contraction of the words spetsialny nazmyenny, 'Special Ground

(Forces).' Rumor has it that Spetsnaz troopers actually use real equipment.

- 3) **MVD (Internal Security):** The Ministry of Internal Affairs attends to all overt, public peacekeeping duties and crowd-clubbing—much akin to the vaunted HIL Sector Blues. Secret Internal Security agents—the dreaded KGB—are described further on page 68.
- 4) **USSR&D (R&D):** Lacking technical know-how and advanced equipment, USSR&D must rely on devices and ideas stolen from capitalist complexes to keep its programs alive; hence their acronym for United States' Stolen Research and Design.
- 5) **Tractor Services (Power Services):** Every aspect of Alpha State industry and transportation, from public transport tractorbuses to the gargantuan Chernobyl Memorial Nuclear Tr(e)actor, is based on the ubiquitous tractor (inasmuch as anything in chronically short supply can be ubiquitous).
- 6) **Tanknical Services (Technical Services):** These unproductive folks try to keep the Red Army's weapons working when all they're given for parts is vacuum tubes and vacuum hoses.
- 7) **Lend Lease & Lunch (PLC):** These folks are in charge of lending all manner of materialistic luxuries: everything from lasers to leftover potato gruel. Lend Lease packages arrive quite regularly from another sector or something ... no one really seems to know where. Probably Tovarich Computer knows. Why don't you go ask?
- 8) **Tass (HPD&MC):** This Proletarian Movement is much more concerned with the timely publication of Pravda ('Truth,' a colorful magazine glorifying idyllic Alpha State) than with actually preserving or developing Alpha State housing. Not that there's anything worth preserving...
- 9) **Smersh (Troubleshooters):** This is a contraction of the words smert shpionam, 'death to spies.' Those in Smersh are called Smershoviks. Mission Control in Alpha State is known as 'the Politburo.' Player characters in Smersh are termed 'cannon fodder.'

Seeing Red

Everyone in a CCCP is 'Red' Clearance. It does seem sometimes being Red is better than only being Red—depending on the Red-ness of whoever's talking.



Don't worry, Gamemaster. It's not that everyone is equal—you see, some citizens are more Red than others. In Alpha State there are different levels of Red, corresponding to the Alpha Complex ROYGBIV. In this mission, these levels are noted with a lower case prefix. Thus, there are r-Reds, o-Reds, y-Reds, etc., all the way up to u-Reds. INFRARED Clearance does not exist in Alpha State.

Everything in Alpha State is Red. This does *not* mean everyone has access to all parts of Alpha State—gosh, no! Security-restricted areas still exist; it's just everything has been painted over so it all *looks* the same. And Tovarich Computer (and all comrade citizens) use the word 'Red' for every color without changing the meaning, so it's a sticky situation.

For gratuitous implausible reasons, every NPC has subconscious post-hypnotic recollection of what clearances are where and who ranks how high. In other words, the PCs are the only ones who feel this confusion.

Lasers and reflec in Alpha State

These items are constructed under the same principle as the Alpha Complex spectrum, and are designed with wavelengths differing by less than five nanometers, so they are (technically) slightly differing shades of red, although even a Hypersenses mutant would be hard-pressed to tell the difference. Thus lasers and reflec come in r-Red all the way up to u-Red, and every level of Red reflects its level and below. In other words, the system works just like in Alpha Complex.

Sadly, as the barrels and armor were being shipped out to Alpha State, they were all piled into a few big boxes and got hopelessly jumbled. So whenever someone gets a new barrel or suit of armor for whatever reason (promotion, replacement, etc.) randomly choose or roll the color he *really* got. And, just for the record, Alpha Complex Red is considered to be higher than Alpha State u-Red, so Alpha State armor is useless in Alpha Complex. This may seem unimportant now, but when the Alpha State experiment comes to a close, all the Alpha State reflec is sure to be recycled for use in Alpha Complex.

Real differences

Alpha State differs in a few substantive ways from Alpha Complex. Make sure your players realize these, uh, minor details before they begin play.

LITTLE Brother is watching you too

As we all know, secret police are rampant in a Commie society. Therefore, every citizen who is not an undercover MVD / KGB agent belongs instead to a secret police auxiliary determined by his or her Proletarian Movement:

1) **CCCPU:** The *Vse-Rossiyskaya Chrezvychaynaya Komissiya Po Borbe S Kontrrevolisiei I Sabotazhem*, or, much more simply, the **Cheka**. This translates to the **All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counterrevolution and Sabotage**, a suitably ponderous name for a house organ about as useful and efficient as the human appendix. 'Cheka,' incidentally, translates as 'linchpin.'

2) **Red Army:** Troopers belong to the *Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye Upravleniye (Chief Intelligence Directorate)*, or **GRU**. Not that there's ever been any intelligence in the army. The GRU is the arch-rival of the MVD and KGB (below), but is more military than political in bent.

3) **MVD:** Undercover operatives for the MVD belong to the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti (Committee for State Security)*, or **KGB**. They are, if possible, even more horrifying than IntSec.

4) **USSR&D** runs the *Gosudarstvennoy Palitychiskiy Upravleniye*, or **State Political Directorate**—but you can call them the **GPU** for short. Regardless, they are mostly concerned with technical plagiarism; political subtleties tend to pass them by, as do the laws of physics.

5) **Tanknical Services:** The constant tension between this group and USSR&D can be seen in the competitive similarity of the names of the Movements' secret police. Tanknical Services operates the **Unified State Political Directorate**; that's the *Objedineniy Gosudarstvennoy Palitychiskiy Upravleniye*, or **OGPU**. So they're unified. Big deal.

6) **Tractor Services** endorses the **GUGB**. That's the **Chief Directorate for State Security**, or *Glavnoye Upravleniye Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* if you want to be incomprehensible. Their organization is tighter-knit than the other Proletarian Movements', owing to a number of unforeseeable, unpreventable problems with nuclear power facilities that have resulted in

totally unjustified persecution of Tractor Services personnel.

7) **Lend Lease & Lunch** operates its own spy network too, ostensibly to gauge proletariat reactions to meals. It's the **People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs**, or *Naradnyy Komissiya Vnutriniy Delah (NKVD)*. Theoretically, the word 'internal' is gastronomic in reference.

8) **Tass** runs the **KI**—the *Komitet Infarmatsiye*, or **Committee for Information**. Perhaps the best organized and informed of the secret police forces, the KI sadly lacks the gumption to do anything with the considerable knowledge it has on file. Wimps.

Having skipped all those impossible Russian transcriptions, can you wonder why the Russians are so cranky? They actually have to use those horrifying pronunciations day after day just to ask for a glass of water. But you, the overworked GM, need not remember all these names. They're included to provide color and to impress your players with the ease with which you fake—er, *speaks* Russian. When talking one-on-one with your players, you can simply refer to each of the groups as 'your secret police organization,' or, simpler still (but perhaps less conducive to infighting), you can make everyone KGB.

Communist communication

If you wish, you may read this aloud to your players:

Though direct communication with Tovarich Computer is possible through the ever-present confession booths, all other communication is handled by a central communications nexus run by Tass. It is hopelessly out of date, based on telephone technology instead of wireless communication. This terrible system is called The Communist Party Line.

Picture this, Gamemaster: The Smershoviks must gallivant around Alpha State carrying field telephones and trailing extension wires all over the place. These wires naturally get broken by passing bots and tractors, which then drag the field telephone down the corridor, maybe taking a few PCs along for the ride. Repairing damaged lines requires resource and innovation, such as persuading a passerby to wet his hands and grab the loose ends.

Assuming they can use the phone without garroting passing VIPs, there are always several other callers on at the same time.

This whole charade was necessary, by the by, to keep unwitting citizens from intercepting decadent capitalist broadcasts from the rest of Alpha Complex. See the lengths to which The Computer will go to keep its citizens happy?

Roleplaying suggestions

Some suggestions for setting the mood and making things more fun:

Talk Rrrrooshian!

Ewerrrybody in Alpha State talk vith good, thick, *Rrrrooshian* accent! Not speakink vith accent one of ten varning signs capitalistic mutant traitorism! To maintain the Alpha State illusion, every NPC, and especially Tovarich Computer, should speak with accents thick as Ensign Chekov. Not only should you roll your *r*'s and change your *v*'s to *w*'s, but speak deeply and heartily, like a psychotic Santa. Also, don't use many articles, pronouns or prepositions.

Commie glossary

associate: comrade

Cold Fun: Cold borscht

[expletive]: kaopectate!

friend, buddy, pal: *tovarich*

goodbye: *do svidoniya*

headgear (any): *babushka*

hello: *zdrastvuitye*

hi: *zdrastye*

Hot Fun: [does not exist]

no, not, not yet: *nyet*

pistol: *pistolyet*

please: *pazhalsta*

rifle: *veentovka*

Security Clearance: *glasnost*
clearance

team, bureau, council: *soviet*

thank you: *blagodar vas*

Troubleshooter: *Smershovik*

water, other beverages: *vodka*

yes: *da*

Insults

Bourgeois, capitalistic, counter-revolutionary, cowboy, czarist, decadent, dogmatic, elitist, fascist, imperialist, money-grubbing, mutant, oppressive, reactionary, running-dog, slave-driver, swine-pig, *ptui!*

Slightly broken present perfect tense is best. If don't understand, nyet to despair, just to be imitating printed dialogs in glorious book!

On this page we provide a vocabulary list to help you and your players pepper your language with authentic-sounding words (like 'Smershovik Soviet' instead of 'Troubleshooter team'). Copy this list and pass it around so everyone can talk incomprehensibly.

Moustaches

Everybody knows all Russians have big moustaches! Even the women. Just look at any Russian Olympic team, and tell us the women weren't shaving at a younger age than most American males. So likewise, every player should have a big honking black moustache. Failure to have a moustache at the start of play earns five (5) treason points, four of which are removed if the offender improvises a moustache during play. There's lots of ways to get a good moustache:

1) Grow one. This option requires good hormones and lots of warning. Impossible to improvise. Dyeing and waxing are optional, but they bring in the women by the truckload.

2) Draw one. Why not? You've done it on posters and magazine covers all your life. A big black handlebar moustache sweeping across your cheeks adds a lot to hilarity. Just don't use blue, green, or purple ink unless your hair is a matching color. And for goodness sake, if you're going out in public soon, **DON'T USE A PERMANENT MARKER!** (The designer had to call in sick for a whole week.)

3) Buy one. Most local joke shops carry fake moustaches, and almost everyone else does around Halloween. Theatrical supply shops are a better bet, and their moustaches look more realistic. These shops also sell spirit gum, which is great for affixing belly button lint to your upper lip.

You, the intrepid revolutionary GM, should keep several moustaches nearby to switch roles when you play NPCs. Switch your moustache, use slightly different speaking patterns, and voila! Instant comrade! When speaking as Tovarich Computer, improvise a big bushy moustache from silver tinsel. Your players will find it inspirational, and they'll tell your prospective dates all about the absurd lengths you go to when playing **PARANOIA**.

Clothing

Assign Party Reprimands for a lack of red clothing. Optional but fun are furry hats, greatcoats, big clompy boots (grab those

winter galoshes!), puffy shirts with vests, and lots of gaudy jewelry. Players showing creativity and dedication in their attire should get a credit bonus and an extra bowl of (real life) chips, if not an Official Commendation. As Gamemaster, the designer bought surplus Red Army medals to add to his air of authority.

For props, consider downloading Communist flags, posters or publications from the World Wide Web. Caution: We take no responsibility for late-night visits from your country's intelligence agencies.

Mission overview

The PCs have been assigned to Smershovik Soviet #1917 and are about to embark on their first mission together.

Episode 1, Mobilization: After your standard find-the-briefing-room-and-go-to-R&D escapee, Alpha State-style, the Smershoviks are ordered to seal a bathroom. When they arrive, they find traitors of every conceivable description running into and out of the bathroom, which the PCs should assume has a breach leading Outdoors. (The breach is actually between Alpha State and Alpha Complex.)

Episode 2, Fiddling on the roof: The Smershoviks are sent to capture the last Alpha Complex escapee, Morris-O-BPM-3, alias Death Leopard archtraitor The Harlequin. He makes his stand atop the Chernobyl Memorial Nuclear Tractor as agents of several legal and treasonous agencies converge on him in a frenzy of nuclear-powered destruction.

Episode 3, Convoy: The Smershoviks must return Morris-O to Alpha Complex. They sail to USA Sector while trying to survive every Soviet sub disaster imaginable.

Episode 4, Red bug: When the characters return, they are promptly sent back to USA Sector to infiltrate and spread the people's glorious Communist revolution. Although they can do a lot of stuff, they ultimately fail and must run back to Alpha State.

Episode 5, Red sunset: Given the failure of the covert operation, Alpha State prepares to invade Alpha Complex. Just before the invasion begins, Alpha Complex invades Alpha State. Alpha State falls, and the PCs get captured.

Episode 6, Wakey-wakey: The Smershoviks get antidotes for the hypnosis drugs they were given before the mission began. Then they undergo a merciless debriefing and traitor-bake, and everybody dies.



1: Mobilization

The Smershoviks (Troubleshooters) begin their grand tour of Alpha State. The Smershoviks are sent on their first assignment: seal up the leak in the Room of Bath. First, they must find their briefing room and then learn what's going on. At USSR&D they are mobilized and equipped with unpredictable gizmos. Then they deal with Reds of both sorts and figure out a way to seal the gap in the Alpha State perimeter, all the while dying like flies.

Background

There's a leak in the bathroom—a security leak, that is, between Sectors BER and LIN and Alpha State. See, about 20 years ago, the area where these three meet used to be DIS Sector, which was dissected in a major Alpha Complex urban renewal project. Most of the area DIS occupied was annexed by BER and LIN Sectors, and the remainder was renamed HUH Sector. The human element of DIS Sector was relocated to BER and LIN, resulting in HUH Sector's abandonment.

When DIS Sector was partitioned, everything was equally divisible or negotiable between the annexing sectors' bureaucrats, with the exception of one bathroom at the exact center of DIS. Neither side was willing to simply yield political control, so two high-level CPU citizens performed a little creative (OK, overtly treasonous) programming, and the bathroom fell under double jurisdiction.

There are three main exits to the bathroom, two of which lead to BER and LIN. The third leads to HUH Sector; however, this exit has been impassable because it (like all other HUH Sector facilities) has had no power to operate. Power has been restored with the creation of Alpha State, and now, for the first time in 20 years, the door can open. The door is clearly marked 'Room of Bath' on the Alpha State side, so lots of furry-capped red revolutionary citizens have been coming and going (so to speak), much to the surprise of those in BER and LIN who frequent the bathroom on both official and treasonous business.

It hasn't taken long for citizens in both Alpha Complex and Alpha State to note this major security breach, and soon (just about the time your PCs arrive on the scene), defectors start pouring through in both directions. So, from both BER and LIN Sectors, Friend Computer sends Troubleshooter Teams to investigate, and likewise as Tovarich Computer it sends a Smershovik Soviet (the PCs' mission team).

Prrre-mission brrriefink

The Smershoviks are assembled in the Smersh barracks and lend-leased their Communist Party Line. Answer the players' questions about how Smershovik Soviets operate, how (and why) they communicate with the Politburo and so on. Then hand your players Red Alert reference PGRA/IA. The Kremlin is impossible to miss, even for Smershoviks—so read the following aloud when the Soviet arrives:

The Kremlin is located in the exact center of a large plaza, surrounded by vintage buildings (hey, they're over 20 years old) with roofs shaped like soft-serve ice cream. The Kremlin itself is a monolithic structure dominating half of Alpha State. Its interior has all the cheerful ambience of a prison for the criminally insane.

Even a cursory exploration of the Kremlin halls reveals to the PCs, a) all the rooms in the Kremlin are numbered, not lettered, and, b) they are now hopelessly lost.

They then doubtless pester Tovarich Computer with a request for a map or directions to Briefing Room 'T.' They receive nothing, as Briefing Room T is not inside the Kremlin; it's a temporary booth set up outside the building. Thus any request for a map or directions receives a reply from the CartoGrafix System saying simply 'Syntax error.' Any other question about Room T prompts the Facilities Data Base to respond, 'Werry sorry. Room T is nyet existing.'

If they never think to search around the building, then booth T—excuse us, 'Room' T—is squarely in front of whichever exit the Smershoviks use. But give everybody an Official Reprimand for extreme tardiness.

T for six

Briefing Room T is, as stated, a temporary booth, staffed by a large citizen with razor stubble and a build somewhere between that of Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Michelin Man. This is their Mission Coordinator, **Olga-R-HGJ-4**. Olga-R is coarse, rude, smelly and aggressive—and, far less obviously, female. When you're playing Olga-R, speak in a deep, throaty voice, and act like an effeminate gorilla. Unless the players actually ask her, don't let on that Olga-R is anything but a male in a dress.

Whenever the PCs finally find Briefing Room T, read the following aloud:

Room T is basically a shack, built with almost as much care and structural stability as capitalist Americanski exploitative kissing booths. The big citizen behind the booth leans forward and says, 'I am Olga-R-HGJ, am being Mission Coordinator. First, I get to knowing you. All capitalist oppressor mutant traitor swine-pigs, please now to raise hand. None? Da, is good. Please to be meeting wery important Briefing Officer of Smersh Politburo.'

Olga-R produces a huge television. As the set warms up, the sound of static builds to deafening levels. Soon the picture fades in, and when the vertical and horizontal holds pause in their fluctuations, you can barely discern the face of an extremely old citizen. At the bottom of the screen is the name **Pyotr-R-YHC-1**.

Pyotr-R is the Briefing Officer for Smershovik Soviet #1917. His appearance, mannerisms, and voice are so decrepit it's impossible to determine his age. To simulate the briefing, turn on your television to any channel with static, crank the volume up, and speak quietly in a high gravelly voice. And because this is a closed-circuit transmission, Pyotr-R won't respond to questions or comments. Continue:

Pyotr-R speaks: 'Zhdrastvuitye, comrade Smershoviks. (cough) Is to be problem in Room of Bath for fixing by you. (cough cough) Werry sorry problem is very c(hack cough)ing, and cannyet be telling you details for re(cough) reas(cough) reaso(cough) reasons of glasnost. (cough! wheeze!) If there is being threat to Alpha St(aackh!), you are to be (cough)ing and sealing up of room—'

At this point Pyotr-R starts coughing and hacking uncontrollably. With one hand he clutches his throat, and with the other tears at his shirt. Something disconcerting flies out of his mouth. Pyotr-R keeps staring with bulging eyes, straining to finish his last statement, but two orderlies arrive and wrestle the convulsive comrade onto a stretcher. Olga-R shrugs, then

Olga-R-HGJ-4

Maternal CCPU briefing officer
 Adrenalin Control; Romantics
 Violence 12; Discipline Wayward
 Smershoviks In Motherly Yet Flirtatious
 Manner 18; other ratings 07
 Tangler; v-Red (violet) reflec (L1) and
 GM Fiat armor

starts handing out your assigned mission equipment.

Give the players the Mission Materialistic List, reference PGRA / 1B, and let them distribute their equipment. Have Olga-R make helpful suggestions. Then she orders them to visit USSR&D to volunteer for experimental device assignment.

USSR&D

Nothing bad happens to the PCs in this section. This is a standard 'get-ready-get-set' **PARANOIA** prep, which gives you time to find out if all your players know what they're doing in Alpha State. However, the experimental items they receive set them up for big falls later on.

USSR&D is easy to find; it's located in the temporary mobile-homelike shack in the middle of a vast wasteland of twisted metal and smoking boots. It's just across the plaza from the Kremlin—you can't miss it.

You thought we said CCCPs only stole things from other complexes, right? So where did these obviously Communist items come from? Through the years, The Computer has been storing Communist weapons and devices it liberated from Commie secret society members. Now it has a perfect opportunity to test these devices and assess the severity of the Communist threat to Alpha Complex. Of course, these things don't work better than any other **PARANOIA** gizmo.

Here are the devices; distribute them as you see fit. We personally recommend having big guards give each PC one device; read him the boldface text at that time, and read the non-boldface stuff to yourself. Later, when one of the gadgets is adequately tested, you can give that player another gizmo from the list.

Borzoi Bot

An incredible variant on the classic doberbot, this bot was developed to aid infiltration and bypass low-security checkpoints. The borzoi bot represents a breakthrough in planar engineering: it's less than two millimeters thick, so it can slide through the thinnest gaps, and is almost invisible from the front.

GM: This bot is about the size of the silhouette of a Great Dane or large Doberman. It has savage fangs, one on top, one on the bottom. The bot has two major disadvantages: First, planar engineering necessitates only the barest minimum of third-dimensional joinery; the bot cannot turn itself from side to side, any more than you can roam the fourth dimension without the aid of hard drugs. So, unless a bystander helps out, the borzoi bot can walk only in a straight line. The other problem the bot has is with balance; one good shove plops it right on its side until someone stands it back up. While it's on the ground, the best it can do is to bite the sole of someone's shoe. But aside from these few shortcomings, the borzoi bot is a (believe it or not) reliable device.

Hammer 'n' Sickle

Yes, both, and yes, fastened together. Not welded, but riveted like a pair of scissors. All good Communists had this amazing tool on their flag for hundreds of years; it must be quite valuable! it's a little awkward for a melee weapon, although it does great for opening cans, vats, etc., and it's not too bad at cutting paper, hair, and such things.

GM: To attack, the user makes a Violence/Primitive Weapons check. Incidentally, it's hinged in such an unusual way that if the user rolls 18-20 to hit, he smashes or amputates a finger (Maimed result). Thus a clumsy or unlucky character can soon be truthfully called 'all thumbs.'

Instant Siberia

This large snowglobe-like grenade is made of clear plastic, and when it is turned upside down, small white flecks swirl around delicate electronics. It is essentially a thermal implosive. When activated, it instantaneously lowers the temperature of every inorganic

item within 25 meters to about -10 or -20 Celsius. This heat loss causes water vapor to condense out of the air as snow, or hail if it's really humid.

GM: The grenade also throws the sector climate control systems out of kilter, as suddenly every thermostat is frozen solid. Fans and blowers go to emergency speed, blowing the frigid air at unbelievable velocities. Incidentally, if anyone thinks to take a good stiff chug of vodka before using Instant Siberia, that foresightful comrade avoids ill effects.

The Iron Curtain

This ponderous piece of equipment is some three meters long and masses about 30 kilograms. It looks, when completely collapsed, similar to a home projection screen, with a main boom section (containing the tightly rolled curtain) and a tripod stand. To use it, one must spread the tripod legs, lock them, stand it up, fiddle around with the main boom and press the Big Red Button. Doing so immediately sends sheets of steel shooting out left and right for five meters or until firmly embedded in a bulkhead. In other words, it's an instant 3x10-meter wall.

GM: The curtain is made of high-strength molybdenum steel. The joints on the thing are all loose, and users may inadvertently set the thing up sideways or end-on, splitting up the Smershovik team (or even individual Smershoviks).

Molotov Cocktail

This device is a simple martini glass filled with a strongly aromatic compound and two olives skewered on a toothpick.

GM: It's too bad the Commie researchers grossly misunderstood the purpose of the original Molotov cocktails; that said, this is truly a remarkable achievement of biochemistry. It is useless unless drunk. Those who imbibe even a small draught explode like a napalm shell, but not for a while... Let 'em think nothing happened. The olives are just a garnish.

Mud pie

This large, discus-shaped charge, fired with a cone rifle, explodes upon

**USSR&D items****Borzoi Bot****Speed:** Sprint**Weapons:** Bite (Violence 14) S3K impact, armor-piercing**Armor:** Thin steel (E1/I2)**Hammer 'n' Sickle**

S4M impact. Slightly reduces user's Unarmed Combat specialty rating.

Instant Siberia

Anyone moving without snowshoes or skis must make Violence/Agility checks to stay on his feet. Thermal stress means all highly technical devices malfunction on rolls of 16–20 (roll once the first time the device is used, and once every time a malfunction would inconvenience the players). Instant Siberia operates for about 15 minutes or until the fun wears off.

Iron Curtain

Armor 5, hardened

Molotov Cocktail

V1V energy to drinker, W3K to all within 5m.

Mud Pies**Range:** 15m (thrown)**Effects:** All characters in mud must make Violence/Agility rolls to move. Weapons and vehicles malfunction on an Ops roll of 18-20.

impact, covering the floor in a 25-meter radius with shin-deep mud. Mmmm boy.

GM: The mud slows everyone down, and clumsy characters or those stunned in combat might slip and fall. The mud also gums up technical devices, especially vehicles. Three Mud Pies are available for testing. Mud pies are devastating when combined with Instant Siberia; imagine shin-deep ice everywhere!

Russian Roulette Wheel

This is an experimental compact cone rifle. The MVD/KGB wanted a heavy weapon they could conceal easily while on secret missions, and the cone rifle was chosen as the most flexible

heavy weapon available. The Russian roulette wheel is small enough to fit in a pack. It looks like a normal roulette wheel, as it relies on conversion of angular momentum to kinetic energy for launching the projectile. The operator spins the wheel good and hard, and drops in the cone.

GM: Works fine; it's just that they haven't yet figured out how to aim it. Wheeee! Roll a die or something to determine what random direction the shell goes. If the operator rolls a 20 to hit, the cone lazily wobbles out of the wheel and drops on his toe. (Yes, the Roulette Wheel can fire a Mud Pie.)

Sputnik

When launched, this baseball-sized metal sphere immediately begins zooming around in circles, orbiting whomever activated it. No one knows what good it is, but hey, it's the first of its kind. It's got to be years ahead of anything the capitalists have done!

GM: Don't believe for a minute the Sputnik has no effect on play. If the PC moves down a narrow corridor, it'll ricochet repeatedly off both walls, producing pockmarks (and fines) left and right. It'll interrupt intimate conversations (or hand-to-hand combats) by bashing the other guy in the temple. It'll look stupid. Intimidating. Official. Treasonous. And, if you've just got to let it really be good for something, if the PC gets hit by weapons fire and the damage roll is a 20, the fire hits the Sputnik instead of the PC.

Eventually, whenever it's most inconvenient, (like when the PC is standing at the edge of a nuclear reactor power core), the Sputnik runs out of energy, its orbit decays and it falls to the ground.

Is good to bathe

The Smershoviks are now ready to handle the minor problem at the Room of Bath, which is now crawling with defectors.

At the start, nobody notices the PCs' approach. Everyone's too busy trying to maneuver to a stall or an exit. This is the scene as the Smershoviks close in:

The sounds of a mob drifts down the corridors as you approach your mission coordinates. Suddenly, two citizens run around the corner toward you. Millimeters behind them,

slugthrower bullets slam into the wall. One citizen is apparently a YELLOW from Alpha Complex; he's tall and rather stout. He screams at you, 'I am defector! Be prrrrotectink me! Political asylum!'

The other citizen wears the red coveralls of a loyal and valiant proletarian freedom fighter right here in Alpha State. He carries a laser with a red barrel. He sees you, stops dead and looks around furtively.

The YELLOW Alpha Complex citizen is **Rush-Y-YEV-4**, a Commie attempting to defect. He squeals like a pig when someone shoots at him. Puffing and sweating, he runs behind the PCs for protection and keeps demanding political asylum. Rush-Y, being a Commie, speaks with a phony Russian accent, just like any other Alpha State citizen.

The Red with him is **Dmitry-R-NDT-1**. He just tried to defect to Alpha Complex, but was

Room of Bath NPCs**Rush-Y-YEV-4***Defecting/live Alpha Complex Commie*

Fat coward; Communist; Electroshock; all ratings 03

YELLOW reflc (L1)

Dmitry-R-NDT-1*Would-be Alpha State defector*

Ordinary-looking but furtive; NazCIA; Adrenalin Control; all ratings 06

RED laser (W3K); r-Red (red) reflc (L1)

Wembley-G-WBO-2*Alpha Complex IntSec GREEN goon*

Standard-issue burly lout; FCCC-P; Regeneration; Violence 10, other ratings 04

Slugthrower (dum-dum rounds) M3K impact; GREEN reflc/kevlar (L1/I3)

Sergey-R-ACK-1*Alpha State Tass reporter/KGB agent*

Little weaselly intellectual; SMERSH/ Illuminati; Hypersenses; Management 08, Stealth 08, other ratings 04

y-Red (yellow) reflc (L1)

stopped by an IntSec GREEN goon (described below). He is, however, a quick-thinking traitor; when he sees Dhow the PCs react, he helps them by trying to mercilessly gun down every NPC they shoot at. Hypocrite.

Two pursuers turn the corner, weapons drawn. One is a burly GREEN IntSec agent from Alpha Complex; he carries a slugthrower. The other is another red-clad Alpha State citizen, a short thin guy with a Tass reporter's badge. He is unarmed. What do you do?

The GREEN pursuer is **Wembley-G-WBO-2**, a standard-issue Alpha Complex IntSec GREEN goon who has chased him all the way back from Alpha Complex through the bathroom and into Alpha State. Wembley-G's life mission is to kill Commies everywhere. After Dmitry-R-DNT-1 is dead, Wembley-G wanders back to Alpha Complex—unless one of the players opens his mouth and talks in a Russian accent.

The Red pursuer is Alpha State Tass reporter (and KGB agent, not to be redundant) **Sergey-R-ACK-1**, who saw Rush-Y slip out of the crowd in the bathroom wearing yellow, an obviously class-repressive treasonous color. Sergey-R is short and slight of build, with a wispy goatee and John Lennon glasses. Throughout this encounter, Sergey-R takes notes on everyone's actions while he runs scurrying back and forth.

This is a crash-course in Alpha State and Communism. Whatever the players do, you can use their choices to condition them as baldly as you require. Try to ensure that in the future, the players roleplay Commie Smershoviks to the hilt. This means you can nail 'em in the final debriefing. In other words, the whole of *The People's Glorious Revolutionary Adventure* is a trap. No thanks needed; it's our job.

Once these few citizens have been taken care of, the Smershoviks must close in on their objective and deal with the madding crowds of defectors. Read the following aloud:

Ahead you see glorious revolutionary Room of Bath, and off to the right a sign: Alpha State Geological Survey Marker FB4.89-38FO:3NC9-23J. There is a large crowd in the area. Upon seeing you, someone yells, 'Holy kaopectate! Smershoviks! Be runnink for lives!' Citizens scatter in all directions, some right, some left, some into the Room of Bath. One citizen standing by the door waves to you, points his arms in opposite directions, and says, 'They

are to have been going those vays!' What do you do?

The PCs can pursue anyone who fled at their approach. There's all types in the crowd: Alpha Complex and Alpha State—defectors, spies and vigilantes—intentional lawbreakers and those who simply went into the wrong bathroom. The Smershoviks can chase them, and can even catch a few. But while they're away from the entrance to the bathroom, another small mob of people stampedes into Alpha State.

Be very quiet

Now things get sticky, as the PCs attempt to complete their assignment: Enter the Room of Bath and seal the breach.

When the Smershoviks return to the bathroom, pull out the game map and place it gently on the table. Get quiet, move slowly and cautiously, but do it gradually. Speak ever more softly. Describe the start of their exploration in nothing short of a whisper. The PCs sneak in slowly and fan out. They see a large but ordinary communal bathroom. Everything seems quiet. They tiptoe across the tile floor (ssshhhh). Then...

R-R-R-I-I-N-N-N-G-G-G The Communist Party Line goes off, and all the built-up tension is immediately released as every NPC in the room simultaneously panics! All over, people burst out of stalls and other hiding places! Some run for an exit! Some run for another hiding place! Some just run in circles! Everyone thinks he's about to die, so it's no-holds-barred mutation use and slogan shouting.

There are about two dozen traitors. Spend a few rounds sowing chaos; be funny or unusual, plead for mercy or bluff arrogantly, commit high treason or innocent acts, but most of all, PANIC! (By the way, if anyone remembers to answer the phone—it's a wrong number.)

Just when the PCs are starting to cope with the pandemonium in the potty, the Alpha Complex Troubleshooters arrive and start shooting trouble. Don't give your players even one round to regroup before you read:

Suddenly red-clad, armed and armored Troubleshooters burst in both doors! One person charges through each door and is felled by a barrage of heavy fire from the other door. Pausing, the two groups examine each other's uniforms. They all mutter an insincere apology. Then both groups storm into the Room of Bath. What do you do?

There are at least five Troubleshooters, each with red laser pistol (W3K) and red reflex (L1). They intend to kill traitors (i.e., everyone they see) and, whenever possible, each other. They let no one escape into Alpha Complex. If the PCs refuse to speak, they might just survive, because the traitors in the bathroom divert the NPC Troubleshooters' attention through rapid application of laser fire.

But the moment the PCs open their mouth and the Troubleshooters hear their accents, it's all over. What better time, then, for the Smersh Politburo to call back—just to make sure the Smershoviks understand that, inasmuch as this is a threat to Alpha State security, they're supposed to seal up this breach. Because the Alpha State map shows an outer wall at this location, the Smersh Politburo decides the Smershoviks have found a major breach where capitalist traitors enter from Outdoors. It must be sealed at once! It's also an annoying bureaucratic interruption, for the Politburo demands the PCs' attention (aloud, hint hint).

It's up to the players to figure out an ingenious or ridiculous way to seal the breach in the wall. If they ask for suggestions from Smersh Politburo, their superiors reply with completely inane responses that obviously won't work at all.

Players are often ingenious, so we're sure they can come up with a good way to plug up the area. Both brilliant and funny ideas work, but the best are both. Some possible solutions:

- ④ Paint a sign saying 'Food Vat Volunteer Recipe Taste Test Station' and place it in a prominent location.
- ④ Confiscate a bunch of toilet paper rations and build a wall out of TP painted to look like brick.
- ④ Flood the room and drop in a high-power cable. It'll look like a disco!

Regardless of the option they choose and whether or not it will ultimately work, the Alpha Complex NPC Troubleshooters harass the PC Smershoviks and try to prevent the completion of the wall. Clone replacements pop up at embarrassing times, hampering the PCs' efforts. The only real solution is to kill everybody. And don't let your PCs go through the doors. The Politburo will be displeased.

When the PCs do find a solution you're happy with, the Red Army finally shows up and relieves the exhausted Soviet. The players' solution holds off Alpha Complex citizens for a while, but the sounds of battle sporadically



echo through the sector for the rest of the mission. Just a little reminder.

Debriefing

The PCs pass lots of Red Army soldiers on their way from the bathroom to their debriefing at Room T. The soldiers mutter about someone building an almost useless wall, and swear to get revenge on the culprit.

As you return to Briefing Room T, Olga-R turns to you and says, 'Werry glad to see you are being back, darlinks. Is sad to be saying Pyotr-R is nyet to be with us. Tovarich Computer is said Pyotr-R is nyet breathing werry good at all. Poor Boopsie. Are you big, husky Smershoviks vanting to be telling to me about mission and accomplishing? How depressing vas it?'

This is a more or less typical debriefing, although if anyone is still speaking without an accent, get 'em for it. Finally, read:

Olga-R absently dismisses you. She's obviously engrossed by the sudden flurry of reports coming over the set. Most seem to feature citizens with some sort of whitish paste plastered on their faces. Probably some sabotage in LL&L.

2: Fiddling on the roof

The PC Smershoviks pick up one of the loose ends left over from the previous episode: a stray Troubleshooter from Alpha Complex. They must capture him alive and unharmed from the top of a haphazardly built nuclear reactor (colloquially called a 'nuclear tractor'). Of course, it's not as simple as it sounds, because other people want to capture him, too—and kill anyone who gets in their way.

Background

Somehow or other, the Smershoviks must have sealed the leak, or else they're still in Episode 1 and you're getting ahead of yourself by reading

this. So shower praises on your proletarian players; Alpha State is once again safe for demagoguery.

Most of the Alpha Complex renegades prove easy to spot and incarcerate, as MVD personnel are only too happy to grant their request for asylum by placing them in one. Yet not all those trapped in Alpha State have been so judiciously apprehended. One such bourgeois pig is an Alpha Complex Troubleshooter, **Morris-O-BPM-3**.

Morris-O, though proud to be a Troubleshooter, thinks the profession too grim and depressing. That's why he became a star class Death Leopard, using the nom de guerre 'The Harlequin.' When he slips into persona, he dresses head to toe in giant black-and-white

checks and polka dots, complete with long curled shoes, funny hat with bells, and typical whitefaced mime makeup. He has dedicated his existence to enriching everyone's daily life with many smiles, and more than a few StyroKreem pies.

Now, trapped on the wrong side of the bathroom wall, Morris-O faces his greatest challenge. Signs everywhere display Tovarich Computer's cliché slogans; HAPPINESS IS TREASON and MORBID DEPRESSION IS MANDATORY—ARE YOU MORBIDLY DEPRESSED? Gosh, if ever there was a need for The Harlequin, it's here! So, ducking behind some cover, Morris-O discards his drab ORANGE reflec jumpsuit, and presto! here comes the fun!



The Harlequin first announced his presence by gamboling up to one of Tovarich Computer's glasnost cameras and sticking out his tongue. Upon seeing this impressive close-up of The Harlequin's quivering lingual appendage, The Computer ran a crosscheck on its identification tattoo and identified Morris-O-BPM-3, a Troubleshooter reported missing in action an hour ago.

Morris-O is a proven, loyal and capable Troubleshooter, so when he suddenly starts opening his oral orifice in public The Computer decides one of its most valuable agents is the helpless victim of Commie mind control in Alpha State. It decides to take drastic action to save this valuable (though tragically manipulated) Troubleshooter.

Briefing

After the previous episode's debriefing, give the players just enough time to get almost out of sight of the Kremlin before you read:

As you're about to exit the plaza, you hear a now-familiar limpid voice calling after you. 'Yoohooski! Comrade Smershoviks! Tovarich Computer is vinting this for yooooou!' You turn and see Olga-R skipping up to you daintily (sorta), waving a piece of paper overhead. Suppressing an urge to run, you wait until Olga-R gives it, with a simpering smile, to your Red leader.

Give your players Red Alert PGRA/2A. After they've read it, tell them Olga-R is walking with swaying hips back to the booth. When the PCs arrive, she has set an old-fashioned video monitor on the floor beside the booth. It makes an annoying buzz as it warms up.

Staging hint: If possible, get some sort of electric buzzer for this briefing, and have it running until Olga-R turns off the set. The louder and more obnoxious, the better. If you don't have a buzzer, use an alarm or noisemaker, or get one player to make a loud, ugly sound as long as his vocal chords hold out. The volume of the set can't compete with the buzz, so speak quietly as you read:

When the picture finally fades in, the low contrast and brightness wash out details, although the name Pyotr-R-YHC-2 is legible at the bottom of the screen.

'Please to be velcoming me as your Politburo Premier, comrade

Smershoviks! Am to be giving to you very wital mission.

'Is being right-ving dogmatic imperialist lackey in Alpha State, and is vandalizing beautiful progressive edifices and faces of many comrade citizens with illegal squishy substance. Please immediately to be apprehending decadent money-leeching bourgeois swine-pig. Is dressing like both White Russian and Black Russian.

'Slave-driving ruthless wealthy oppressor is to be alive captured. Repeat! Alive! Is to be no Smershovik spilling blood or drinking Black Russians on mission.

'Traitor is being found near nuclear tractor this sector. Very close by. Nuclear tractor very safe, but there is special varning to be giving you.'

[Chuckle. Roll the die. Mumble something about a Violence check. Look surprised, and pretend to search for an 'in case the die-roll fails' read-aloud. Read:]

With a gut-wrenching gasp and a shocked expression, Pyotr-R suddenly falls backward, chair and all. For a while nothing is visible, except Pyotr-R's shoe propped up on the desk. Then a worker from LL&L comes on the screen, removes the shoe and puts a tag on Pyotr-R's big toe. He glances directly at the camera, reaches out of sight—and suddenly your screen goes blank.

Olga-R is too busy buffing her nails to notice all this. Because the PCs have no idea where to find the nuclear tractor in this sector, they must ask either Olga-R or Tovarich Computer. Asking The Big Red One is a big mistake, because The Computer kicks into a big long propaganda spiel glorifying the nuclear tractor, and anyone who walks out on this presentation gets an Official Reprimand for failure to display proper revolutionary zeal. Those who sit through the whole six-hour program get a Reprimand for watching TV when they should be capturing traitors.

Asking Olga-R gets a different response. With an exaggerated display of surprise, she says:

'Oh, nyet! Do none of my big, powerful, ruggedly handsome Smershoviks know where is famous big nuclear tractor? Kaopectate! Is being werry unpatriotic!'

After scolding them soundly (with loving pats on portions of their anatomy), she pulls out a map and points to its location. Before the PCs can do anything else, she clamps a handcuff around *[your choice of PC's]* wrist. The cuff is attached to a briefcase containing the equipment in Mission Materialistic List PGRA/2B.

Incidentally, the briefcase is easy to unlock—give a positive modifier to their Security Systems rolls if they try. However, the cuff around the PC's wrist is impossibly hard (Gamemaster fiat armor), and it's clamped to his gun hand. The briefcase is KGB surplus, stamped with the words: KILL COURIER UPON OPENING.

The big red tour

Now the Smershoviks take an amusing tour of Alpha State while looking for the nuclear tractor. This gives you a chance to steep the players a bit more in the ambience of their surroundings.

Finding the nuclear tractor is easy. We've even provided a map of Alpha State for you on page 95 to show your players, so they can navigate their own course. Inasmuch as the players' map doesn't have the key, you are of course free and even encouraged to rearrange things to your heart's content. Here's the key:

- 1) **The Kremlin.** The capitol of Alpha State houses all the top bureaucrats.
- 2) **Kremlin Plaza.** A large open square surrounded by laser cannon turrets.
- 3) **USSR&D labs.** Located in a zone of wreckage and rubble, these temporary shacks deal more death than the Kremlin does.
- 4) **The bathroom.** The PCs went here in Episode 1. It's not a safe place to be, especially for Smershoviks.
- 5) **The Chernobyl Memorial Nuclear Tractor.** This is the mission objective.
- 6) **Spetsnaz FiG airbase.** More on this in Episode 5, though one FiG is seen in this episode.
- 7) **Smershovik barracks.** The PCs hang out here if they ever get time off.
- 8) **Siberia.** The MVD and KGB place traitors in this small white room. There's a bright flash, and the traitors are gone—siberiated.
- 9) **Communist Communal Cafeteria and Cold Borscht Bar.** Everyone eats here. The food is Alpha Complex leftovers tinted with Red Dye #2.



10) The Warm Water Portal. The Smershoviks will head here in later episodes.

Feel free to lead your PCs on a merry chase around the State. When you've had enough, go to the next section.

Entering the tractor

Having arrived at their destination, the PCs prepare to infiltrate a nuclear tractor, while trying to avoid the 50 other traitors who are also after The Harlequin.

There's one more thing that needs doing before the players can enter the nuclear tractor to catch The Harlequin. See, Tovarich Computer has ordered extra firepower for the mission—air support. Ordinarily such ordnance is delivered via the excessively capable Red Army pilots, but The Computer has had baaaad experiences allowing Vulture pilots to fly Indoors, and it sure as heck ain't gonna trust no Spetsnaz pilot to avoid killing Morris-O. So, for this mission, the tactical air support will be in the hands of the Smershoviks. And, it need hardly be said, nobody told the PCs.

After they exit the restricted breathing area (or whenever you feel like it), read:

Two squads of heavily armed Red Army troopers goosestep up to you. They stop, unshoulder their weapons

'Boxfat' model FiG-25 interceptor flybot

The temporarily exiled Smershovik PC you finger in this section has been volunteered to pilot this very nice fighter-bomber flybot. Ordinarily a great addition to The Computer's arsenal, this particular Fiko/Guero Model 25 interceptor has been re-armed with nonlethal crowd-control weaponry. The flybot still has its nose laser (W3K energy), but the cannon has been replaced with a high-pressure seltzer hose, the bombs with bags of garbage, and the missiles have been refitted as active-terminal-guidance confetti chaff bombs. These harmless weapons can entangle or immobilize targets who fail Violence rolls to dodge them.

The PC pilot will fly this bot when the rest of the Soviet appears on the roof at the end of this episode.

and hold them at the ready. One of them steps forward and says, 'Comrades! I am being Ivan-R-DFP-1. Am taking possession of loyal volunteer. Which comrade are you to having volunteered? Was it ... YOU?'

Point dramatically at the player most likely to finger somebody else. When someone is finally volunteered to go, the troopers surround him and march him quickly away. Hand him the information reference PGRA/2C, which tells him he'll soon be piloting the FiG-25 flybot nicknamed 'Boxfat,' (See the box nearby.) Then send him into the next room. Give him some corn chips and root beer (or borscht) and let him watch a DVD of *Doctor Zhivago*. Later, you'll pull him back in when the rest of the Soviet climbs onto the roof. Be patient, it'll happen.

The gates of doom

Glorious Smershoviks! After the Red Army squad hustles your comrade away, you look around and see a gargantuan structure humming with power. Certain structures glow red or blue with their own light. On top of this complex is a sign at least a hundred meters long. It reads, 'CHERNOBYL MEMORIAL NUCLEAR TRACTOR.' From somewhere on top of this edifice you hear treasonous laughter echoing down. What do you do?

If the players hesitate, the Communist Party Line rings and Olga-R informs the Soviet, 'The traitor you are being after is being on top of nuclear tractor. Remember he is to be *alive* taken for Tovarich Computer, da?' To capture The Harlequin, the PCs have no real choice but to go in and climb up on the roof. But there are several problems.

First, there's guards at the entrance to the plant, and orders or no, they ain't lettin' anyone in! See, the Harlequin has already gained entrance past these guards, having distracted them by hitting them in the face with StyroKreem pies and then tying their shoelaces together and spinning them 'til they were dizzy. Before they could recover, a whole bunch of other people stormed past, and now the guards realize that they just let about 50 people into a highly restricted area.

As the PCs approach, they see the two guards, each carrying a flamethrower (S3K energy, area 20M, spray) and dressed in red combat armor (value 3) with spatters of some whitish paste all over their head and

shoulders. Their eyes are wide, their teeth are clenched, and their hands grip the stocks of their weapons so tightly that their knuckles are white. Golly, this is a poser, isn't it? How to get past a pair of heavily-armed borderline psychotic guards and into the compound?

Unless the players are super-imaginative, scaling the wall is out. It's high, well-defended by razor wire and lasers and mines, and has proven effective against traitorous saboteurs. Engaging the guards in conversation proves fruitless; the guards just stand there like cornered animals.

The frontal assault works, though it may be costly. Further, after the guards are dead, all sorts of lowlifes can waltz right into the area. A frontal assault with stun weapons (or even a pie or two from their briefcase) is both effective and non-destructive.

The gang's all here

After the Smershoviks get through the gate, they need only climb to the top of the nuclear tractor and capture The Harlequin. Sounds easy, right? It is, if you discount the deleterious effects of the several other groups attempting to do the same thing. The Smershoviks may run into these interfering NPCs on elevators, in stairwells or in the catacombs of the wastewater conduits beneath the tractor. See the table on the next page for a list of these interlopers, and check the next section for staging advice.

Running the big battle scene

The PCs are in a huge nuclear tractor, so huge a comprehensive map would require much of this book. Nine other groups are also running around, eight of whom also want to catch The Harlequin and one of whom wants to destroy everything. Sounds normal for **PARANOIA**. Here's how we suggest putting together this madhouse.

Let the PCs run around wherever they want, but have lots of signs pointing up saying 'THIS WAY TO ROOF' or maybe a trail of splattered StyroKreem. It ought to be pretty obvious how to track down the Harlequin.

And if it's obvious to the players, it's obvious to the NPCs, too. So whenever things seem to be basically under control, roll 1d20 and have the Soviet meet the whichever group is indicated in the table.

For that matter, there's no reason the PCs have to meet these groups one at a time. Every third encounter or so, have them meet two or more groups. Oh, and if you get the Illuminati,

1d20 roll	Group (# of members)	Description
1-2	Red Army squad (4)	These four trigger-happy warmongers are bad people to have around a nuclear plant—they have all sorts of heavy weapons and no compunction about using them on The Harlequin (as he is jeopardizing a valuable installation) or on anyone else they see. Weapons and armor: Slugthrower (dum-dum ammo), M3K impact; r-Red (red) light combat armor (2) Tactics: Mindless, brutal frontal assault on The Harlequin and anyone who has him.
3-4	MVD (5)	Five vengeful hunters, here because of all the things The Harlequin has done. If they are allowed to keep The Harlequin, he will never be seen again. Neither will anyone they capture whom they feel has interfered with them. Weapons and armor: Neurowhip (stuns); g-Red (green) laser pistol (W3K); g-Red (green) reflec (L1) Tactics: Capture The Harlequin and drag him off for questioning, along with anyone who interferes.
5-6	Tractor Services crew (8)	Eight frantic workers, here to get everybody else out, because this is a restricted area. They are after The Harlequin, because they realize he's the center of attention. They will release him at the gate with a stern verbal reprimand. They also strongly warn everybody else to leave, firing only if fired upon. Weapons and armor: Ice gun (S3K impact); full-figure environment suit. Any mutation that looks useful. Tactics: Order everyone to leave. Fire in self-defense.
7-8	NazCIA squad (3)	These three fanatic SS/VC/SEAL-type super-commandos want The Harlequin alive, in hopes of getting this ultra-anti-Commie to join their ranks. Because they're traitors already, they have no code against killing. Weapons and armor: Needle gun (S3W impact armor-piercing); combat suit (2); Adrenalin Control mutation. Tactics: Drag off The Harlequin and anyone with him, then indoctrinate him with capitalist-pig-dog propaganda.
9-10	Death Leopard gang (6)	Six fun-lowink wandals! They are to be vantink Harlequin too, because he is beink one most bitchink animal of party, da! They are to be hawink fun (in depressed Alpha State way) and recruitink new member! Weapons and armor: Spraycans and joy buzzers; GM Fiat; entertaining mutations (Telekinesis, Pyrokinesis). Tactics: Kidnap The Harlequin. They're the only group The Harlequin might willingly go with.
11-12	Corpore Metal Terminators (2)	The Harlequin has brought together a number of superfluous biological intelligences, so these multi-limbed scrubot impostors try to herd them all toward Morris-O for efficient terminal cleansing. Weapons and armor: Three sonic pistols apiece (S3W energy; Wound = stunned and deafened); radiation shield (armor rating 3). Tactics: Exterminate. Exterminate.
13-14	Illuminati operative (1)	There's one in every group. They follow their own inscrutable motives, conveniently doing whatever you most want done. Weapons and armor: As the rest of the group. Each infiltrator has the Teleport mutation. Tactics: Act like the group, but be the last one killed. When you need a plot device, the infiltrator does something unpredictable.
15-16	Mystics commune (30)	These 30 Messiah-maniac yoyos sense The Harlequin has discovered true enlightenment, and they stampede after The Harlequin wherever he goes, begging him to teach them. Like disciples, they imitate whatever he does; whenever he flings a pie at someone, they assume he's teaching the target, so they imitate the target too. Weapons and armor: None. Tactics: Do everything possible to promote comedy. Imitate anyone who seems enlightened.
17-18	PURGE saboteurs (4)	These four bloodthirsty saboteurs actually couldn't care less about The Harlequin. They just happened to sneak in the back way, and they're here to blow the whole place dome-high. When this is discovered, all the other groups gang up on them, thereby letting The Harlequin escape. Weapons and armor: Slugthrower (solid AP ammo, W3K AP); r-Red (red) reflec (L1); Regeneration. Demolitions 14. Tactics: Plant a really big bomb; this takes two successful Demolitions rolls. (The PCs need one successful roll to deactivate it.) Kill anyone in their way.
19-20	The Harlequin	Though Morris-O-BPM-3 is not technically after himself, he is trying to preserve his own skin, and is therefore an obstacle to those trying to capture him. Weapons and armor: Cream pies and other slapstick props (stun); GM Fiat. Charm mutation Tactics: Have fun! Get everyone to laugh. Don't get captured; that's no fun

go ahead and roll another group, but have the Illuminati member act up somehow.

Generally, a meeting with another group involves an exchange of dialogue and/or small arms fire, and then one or the other group flees/pursues/continues to the roof. Chases are common in this episode. Don't forget to mark off dead comrades.

Because only Smershoviks are equipped for immediate clone replacement, they eventually win this struggle, though we hope your players are imaginative enough not to have to win through attrition. Ideally, they arrange for one group after another to get hold of The Harlequin, suffer attacks from everybody else, then take him for themselves after everyone

else has killed each other off. If your players are doing good roleplaying and getting the MVDs to go after the Red Army, and the Red Army to go after the NazCIAs, etc., etc., then by all means oblige them. That's what's supposed to happen! Sure, don't make it a pushover, and have some plans backfire, but this whole scene is a crazy-funny slaughterfest.

Up on the roof

Did you forget your player in the other room, waiting for you to come tell him when it's time to fly? So did we, almost.

When your PCs make it to the roof for the Harlequin's last stand (which should be when

about half the enemies have been killed, or half an hour of real time, whichever comes first), have all surviving members of all the different groups make it up there too. The PCs are surrounded by many angry citizens. Their goose is cooked for sure ... but suddenly, rise out of your seat and dash into the other room!

Turn off the *Doctor Zhivago* DVD, inform your chosen pilot of the general situation and ask him what he wants to do. Don't allow anything too outrageous, and remind him capturing the Harlequin (alive) is absolutely vital. But hint broadly that if anything accidentally happens to the pilot's fellow PCs while he's taking care of



the rest of the mob—well, into each clone's life a little seltzer, garbage and confetti must fall.

Describe this scene dramatically, with the howl of the jet causing the mob to hesitate, and the awesome appearance of the Boxfat as it makes its first attack run. Let the pilot roll his Vehicle Operations specialty, or Hardware or Violence skill, or even Management as a last resort (he's talking to the flybot brain). Unless he blows things really badly, let him save the day and clear the roof, meanwhile capturing The Harlequin. The poor sap's been sitting in the other room for half an hour now! Time for a little fun!

In the end, the Smershoviks should recover The Harlequin. Once the PCs are outside, the Politburo calls to check up on the Soviet, and orders them to proceed to the interior of the Kremlin where they will continue to guard The Harlequin and also receive their debriefing. They also rejoin their pilot comrade. Hope everyone has enough clones left to finish the next four episodes!

Be careful about what the PCs do with The Harlequin. They aren't allowed to kill him, though by this time they'll desperately want to. If The Harlequin is indeed killed, let the players know this is A Very Bad Thing. The first PC

who reports it is killed out of hand for even acknowledging the possibility The Harlequin might die. Eventually someone will wise up and tell Tovarich Computer The Harlequin is 'alive, but nyet very responsive.' Then the Smershoviks get to lug around a slowly stiffening corpse for the entirety of the next episode, until the body is returned to Alpha Complex and thence to The Computer. The Computer assumes the stress of isolation, subversion, abduction and liberation overtaxed poor Morris-O's heart, and he died a hero's death.

3: Convoy

The PCs, having caught an Alpha Complex infiltrator, must now repatriate him. However, The Computer doesn't want Alpha State Smershoviks to know their world is merely an experiment, nor does it want Alpha Complex citizens to know there's a sector full of moustachioed Commies nearby. Therefore it sends the players Outdoors in a ship to transport Morris-O home by a circuitous route through snow, ice and other hazards.

From The Computer's viewpoint, things are going badly. Portions of Alpha Complex have figured out HUH Sector is a nest of Commie activity, and certain groups are preparing immediate action. There's been cross-contamination between Alpha Complex and Alpha State. And now one of its prized Troubleshooters is in the hands of a bunch of Smershoviks. Morris-O's presence threatens to destroy the whole experiment, because he knows enough to convince everyone Alpha State is a sham. The Computer wishes to repatriate Morris-O immediately.

Yet Morris-O's captors must return him to Alpha Complex without anyone in Alpha State getting suspicious about its proximity. Furthermore, The Computer knows how contagious Communism is, and so it must take steps to prevent Morris-O's infection with Communist propaganda. Those to whom Morris-O is delivered must not grow suspicious, either. Overall, a sticky situation.

Mission alert

The Smershoviks prepare for their dangerous and clandestine trek to that far-off Capitalist Complex. If your players pat themselves on the back for 'figuring out' they're on their way to Alpha Complex (while still not realizing that

they're starting from there as well), you're doing your job.

After they've guarded Morris-O for a while, the Communist Party Line rings. Smersh Politburo summarily orders *[whichever PC has the most clones left]* to report immediately to the nearest confession booth.

In the booth, Tovarich Computer runs through the standard questions subroutine. 'Zdrastvuiye, citizen. Are you depressed? Da? Wery good. How is coming your five-year plan? Are you to be meeting production quota? Are you loving life in Alpha State?' After the player has answered these simple questions, give him Red Alert reference PGRA/3A from the hardcopy printer in the booth. Tovarich Computer says (read aloud):

'This is being wery important mission, comrade citizen. Is to be clandestine operation; be telling no one about real objective. Say you are going Outdoors to be depressed by Siberian ambience.'

Gosh, does this mean the player can't show the red alert to his Soviet comrades? Hmmm.

Meanwhile, the briefing

While the lone Smershovik was sweating vodka in the confession booth, the other Smershoviks were ordered to bring the prisoner and report (yet again) to Briefing Room T, where they find Olga-R combing, teasing and styling her hair—what little of it she has. Whenever you decide the missing Smershovik returns from the confession booth, read the following:

Olga-R pulls a large picture tube from behind the booth and places it on the floor. No case,

just a large cathode ray tube trailing lots of tangled wires.

The aged figure on the screen is identified by scrolling subtitles as Pyotr-R-YHC-3. He sits in a tall chair, slouched at an uncomfortable angle against the back. Were it not for his mouth moving, you'd swear he was already dead. Olga-R shrugs to indicate there's no way to control the volume, and starts fiddling with your [any male PC's] hair.

'...ERS IMMEDIATELY,' says Pyotr-R. The sound of a heart monitor pulse-beeps through every pause in his speech. "OU WILL TO BE GIVEN EXCESSIVE MATERIAL AND WATER TRACTOR TO PUT IT EVERYTHING ALL INTO. (eee-eee) WATER TRACTOR IS ALSO BEING MODE OF TRANSPORTING SOVIET. (eee-eee) SOVIET WILL BE FOLLOWING VATER ROAD CODENAME 'VOLGA' TO RESIDENTIAL DOME. (eee-eee) THERE WILL BE MEETING WITH CONTACT AND RETURNING.

'I AM TELLING YOU OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT DANGEROUSNESSES ALSO. (eee-eee) FIRST, EWIL IMPERIALISTIC TERRORISTS ARE HAVING REMOVED CEILING FROM OUTSIDE. (eee-eee) BE WERY CAREFUL (eee-eee) NYET TO BE LETTING THINGS FALL ON YOU. SECOND...' (eee-eee)

(Here there's a long pause. More pulse-beeps. Then they stop. Read:)

On the briefing monitor, Pyotr-R is still leaning in his chair. His mouth is no longer moving; it's hanging limply open. The set now gives off a steady beeeeeeeep. After a while, another citizen steps on screen, checks Pyotr-R's pulse and shakes her head sadly. She nonchalantly slips a chronobot off his wrist and starts rummaging through his pockets as Olga-R turns the set off.

Olga-R then tells the PCs they must report to the Warm Water Portal on the far side of this sector to receive their mission equipment and set out. She gives them a packet of passes for the Trans-SIBERIA Railway, and tells them the terminal is on the opposite side of the Kremlin Plaza.

Warm Water Portal

Now that the PCs have experienced the fun of just finding out what their mission is, they can enjoy the experience of getting to the start point!

No need to go into details about the transtube terminal—it's just like any other. The Smershoviks board the train and, after unscheduled stops for maintenance, refueling and the extinguishing of unscheduled engine fires, eventually arrive at their destination.

The so-called Warm Water Portal is a small naval station just inside the dome of Alpha State. When the dome doors are opened, the small harbor opens directly onto a passing stream which flows more or less around Alpha Complex before meandering into the ocean. The current is also extremely convenient for disposal of waterborne waste, so right beside the single pier is a huge sewer pipe that sporadically glugs out the semi-congealed slime from this and several adjacent sectors.

The warm waste water is extremely beneficial to Alpha State, for the temperature of the water keeps the Outdoors stream free of ice for quite some distance from the port during the dead of winter—which, incidentally, it now is.

Standing at the end of the lone, long pier is a citizen from LL&L named **Sasha-R-LPO-6**. Piled next to him are several boxes of equipment. The PCs need not sign any forms for the equipment; Sasha-R explains quite pleasantly the equipment is all Red Army material, and Spetsnaz guards have signed the forms for them and will oversee their punishment should any of the Red Army's equipment not be returned.

Tied to the end of the pier is their vehicle for this mission, a small dinghy flying a huge red

flag from the bow. Painted on the gunwale is the vessel's name: the Glorious Oktober Overthrow of the Dogmatic Slave-driving Hedonist Imperialist Pigdog Landowners Oppressing Legions of Laboring Industrial Proletarians and Other Peasants. The GOODSHIPLOLLIPOP is barely big enough to hold its acronym, to say nothing of the PCs, Morris-O and their equipment. Despite an automatic shigthrower mounted on a stand in the center of the boat, it doesn't look particularly defensible.

The dinghy is propelled by a single outboard motor, a tractor-shaped device with fins on the treads, attached to the hull by the 'blade.' To an onshore observer, it would look like the boat was being pushed by a small tractor on the water's surface. The throttle and rudder are controlled manually by someone who must sit in the dinky saddle.

The mission equipment crates are filled with all the stuff listed in the Mission Materialistic List reference PGRA/3B. The PCs are loaded up and ready to go. The doors open! Time for the Soviet to endure the gorgeous wonders of the Outdoors, as they make their wintry way from Alpha State to Alpha Complex.

Exposure

The Smershoviks board their craft and set out into the cold, blustery winterscape. The little boat churns the choppy water as the Communist Party Line extension cord slowly unreels into the inky depths, causing a slow crescendoing dread of mounting long-distance rates.

Remember how, in the Red Alert, Tovarich Computer said 'nyet to be talking to prisoner'? Tovarich Computer was concerned if the Smershoviks talked with Morris-O at length, either party might discover the truth about what Alpha State really is. That would make Tovarich Computer unhappy, and when it's unhappy, people tend to visit Siberia. So that's one reason to not talk to Morris-O.

There's others, too—like the squirting flower he has in his lapel, with which he squirts ink on anyone who leans too close during conversation. Morris-O also has a joy buzzer, Chinese finger traps and other gizmos to annoy and perplex anyone who listens to him. If none of this dissuades the Smershoviks, and they seem about to pump Morris-O for valuable storyline-spoiling info, skip forward to one of the attacks later in this episode.

After a short but pleasant boat ride down the river, doing the usual Troubleshooter/Smershovik things like depth-charging innocent fish, the river narrows, and a sheet of ice

spreads from shore to shore. What do they do? They really don't have much choice. Tovarich Computer would frown on (i.e., siberiate) anyone who didn't pursue the mission, so they must go on.

So there they are, trudging trackless wastes in the dead of winter, trying to follow the course of the frozen river. The camera pans back. Six black shapes with furry babushkas against a vast expanse of white. Nothing but snowy plains as far as the eye can see.

Now would be a good time for an airborne raid by NazCIA parachute commandoes, who grab The Harlequin and lead the PCs on a merry chase into the snowy emptiness. Just an idea.

'Das Bot' Redux

No convoy mission would be complete without a sub attack; at least, this one wouldn't. The frozen river begins to widen out, and the PCs can go back to travelling on the river. They'll probably be pleased. Suckers. Did anyone pick up on the clue that they therefore must be approaching their destination?

So now comes the sub attack scene, featuring the fabulous U-Bot 416, originally seen in the mini-mission 'Das Bot' in *PARANOIA Flashbacks*. If you lack access to the U-Bot 416, it's a snap to create your own Alpha Complex mini-sub: Just watch a World War II sub movie, shrink the sub to hold six Troubleshooters, and add gobs of high-tech flair and a decrepit bot-brain autopilot named 'Lucky.' Give it a few torpedos and a bunch of incomprehensible controls, and you're ready to roll.

Things seem to be getting back on track. You're back on the 'Volga,' progressively moving along on your required revolutionary heading. Sure, it's freezing cold, your hands are numb, your ears are frostbitten, your little proletarian red corvette has started to leak, and you haven't eaten in a while, but hey, you're not dead. Yet.

(You notice, over there, downstream a bit, a stream of bubbles moving just under the surface of the water. It seems to be headed your way.)

Give everyone one chance to prepare. Then:

KABOOM! A sheet of ice right in front of your ship blows up spectacularly. Ice and water spray into the air,



drenching you thoroughly. Quick, what do you do?

Especially paranoid characters may look up, assuming the attack must come from NazCIA parachute commandos. Suckers. That means they don't spot the second torpedo.

And here starts the combat. For details, see the box nearby—or, you know, just wing it. The PCs can use either Violence/Vehicular Weapons or Projectile Weapons to fire the automatic slugthrower. They can use Hardware/Vehicular Operations to maneuver the boat. Meanwhile the NPCs (a bunch of RED Troubleshooters) are bubbling along under the surface in the minisub, so it's unlikely the PCs can even target the enemy without cleverness.

Either describe the battle using your eloquent narrative style, or diagram it on paper. We recommend filling up your tub or swimming pool and using bath toys for miniatures. Add a couple trays of ice for realism, then order your players into the water to simulate their drenching by the explosion. Roleplaying at its best!

If the players win the battle, their dingy little dinghy springs several leaks (post-battle stress) and starts sinking. The enemy minisub, even though it might be burning or adrift, still floats. Even if the sub is halfway to the bottom, it mysteriously bobs back to the surface. The PCs must abandon their own ship and commandeer the sub—or drown, if they're being recalcitrant. Give the players time to transport most of their equipment before the boat goes under.

If, on the other hand, the PCs lose, their ship sinks. So do they. Their furry babushkas are left floating on the surface, drifting downstream like so many leaves, mute testimony to the PCs' demise.

Halfway to the bottom, the characters can see, through the murky water, the enemy has taken a victory dive to gloat. But as the sub passes through the sinking Soviet, the enemy's evil grins suddenly turn to expressions of horror! Immediately the sub maneuvers under the survivors and brings them, drenched and freezing, back to the surface.

(The crew of the Alpha Complex sub is a batch of inexperienced RED Troubleshooters. They engaged the PCs, who naturally looked like Commies with their furry babushkas and such. Now that the Troubleshooters can see the Smershoviks clearly, they conclude the PCs are also Troubleshooters whom they torpedoed by mistake.)

Jutland-on-the-Volga

For this encounter you can draw up a hex map of a winding river, if you're into that sort of thing—it will need to show a typical stretch of river, 10m per hex.

The Smershoviks' boat can move up to **three hexes per turn**, and change facing by one hexside once a turn. Add 1 to speed and turning if the piloting player succeeds in a Vehicle Operations roll. The boat has a belt-fed swivel-mounted automatic **slugthrower** loaded with **solid AP rounds** (W3K impact armor-piercing). The ship hull has **armor rating3**.

The enemy sub can move **four hexes a turn** and can change facing twice (plus one if the pilot can roll 10 or less). It takes one turn to submerge or surface; while doing so, the sub can move normally, but only in a straight line. If the sub submerges, halve the movement numbers (and no bonus for piloting), but the movement is hidden.

The sub has **armor rating 5**. It mounts **three torpedoes**; it can fire **one every three turns**, but only while submerged (W3K energy to PCs, I3J to the boat, area 5m, range basically unlimited). When a torpedo is fired, give the PC Smershovik pilot aboard the boat a Vehicle Operations roll to dodge the torpedo. If the roll fails, BOOM!

The sub also has a **laser cannon with five shots left**. The cannon can fire **every turn**, but only while on the surface (W3K energy to PCs, I3B to the boat; range 100m).

The sub pilots are **six enemy Troubleshooter** scumballs with **RED laser pistols** (W3K) and **RED reflec** (L1). They have Sub Operation 10 and Sub Weapons 10; other ratings 06. Their tactics are simple: dive, fire, surface, fire, repeat.

Back in the USA

The PCs have finally arrived at their destination (pretty much the same place they left from). All they have to do is hand over Morris-O and skedaddle, right?

Soon the Volga bends, and the players can see in the distance the shining dome of Alpha Complex (USA Sector to be exact). This dome is a spur sticking way out from the rest of the megalopolis, so the PCs cannot tell USA Sector and Alpha State are connected. Further, they have no real concept of how far they are from Alpha State, for they have no experience with Outdoors scale. If the PCs try to contact anyone via the minisub radio, a booming message blares, 'MAINTAIN RADIO SILENCE!'

See, the folks in USA Sector spotted the Smershoviks in their boat an hour or three ago with a remote surveillance patrolbot. They deduced the Smershoviks were Commies launching an amphibious assault. Now they've mobilized everyone in USA Sector to meet this large raid, and the powers that be have set up a big ambush for the Commie invasion fleet. (Rumors have gotten out of hand.) USA Sector records showed a RED Troubleshooter team Outdoors in a minisub, so they radioed them and briefed them on the situation.

Everyone assumes when the sub arrives that these are the returning Troubleshooters, and they're told to dock quietly so as not to alert the impending Commie barbarian world-conquering invasion armada with all

their battleships and stuff. To top it all off, The Computer (unaware of the treasonous rumor mill) has told the folks in USA Sector the approaching ship carries someone dressed in black and white, and this person must at all costs be delivered ALIVE to the nearest confession booth.

As the Smershoviks approach, read the following aloud:

The opening in the dome is about 30 meters wide and semicircular in shape. You see two armed citizens in red overcoats standing on a ledge at the right side of the opening, about three meters above the surface of the water. One appears to be scanning the Outdoors with high-powered binoculars; the other is simply standing with her arms folded around her gun. You also see a man on the bank near you jump out from behind his hiding place in the white powder. He looks around cautiously, waves a red flag to get your attention, draws his finger across his throat and points at the pair on the ledge. He then jumps back into hiding.

The man in the opening, an Armed Forces corporal, is indeed watching for the Commie water-breathing mutant hordes; the woman beside him is a sort of port traffic cop from Internal Security. The man on the bank's message was supposed to be interpreted as 'Hey! Cut your engines! Dock where that

woman instructs you to! Sadly, most players interpret it as instructions to assassinate the lookout and the port traffic controller (go figure). Read on:

As you enter the dome opening, you notice the area has been well secured. The doors are all sealed, and you see a few security bots stationed in inconspicuous places. It seems they've been expecting your arrival. The woman standing on the ledge gestures to an open berth just inside the dome, raises her finger to her lips, and points at the back of the lookout next to her.

No she didn't. She pointed Outdoors, at the impending apocalyptic Commie invaders of doom. The lookout was just in the way. It's *entirely possible* the players may *accidentally misapprehend* this gesture; just thought we'd warn you.

■ We are here! We are here!

The PCs dock. A guy in red combat armor quietly scuttles over to them and hands them two cone rifles, a flamethrower, a gauss gun,

some brass knuckles and a plasma generator. If anyone tries to speak, he shushes them. He winks, nods towards the opening Outdoors and whispers 'Go get 'em.' (If anyone's wearing a furry babushka or something else obviously Commie, he dismisses it as a war trophy. He doesn't notice Morris-O.) The trooper scuttles off. Now what?

Do as you're told: Some players persist in following mission orders and delivering Morris-O to the contact, whom they might presume to be the two at the entrance. If so, read:

You march up to the citizens with the Black-and-White-Russian in tow. Hearing your approach, they turn. [Roll some dice.] Suddenly they both scream at the top of their lungs! The dock erupts in shouting voices! What do you do?

Now skip down to 'Caught red handed.'

Skullduggery: Other players sneak up and attempt to assassinate one or both of the REDs on the ledge. Should they choose to leave The Harlequin behind, he's gone by the time they return.

It's no problem taking out the two by the door (or anyone else for that matter). But anyone

they kill drops a rifle or something, which goes off. Read:

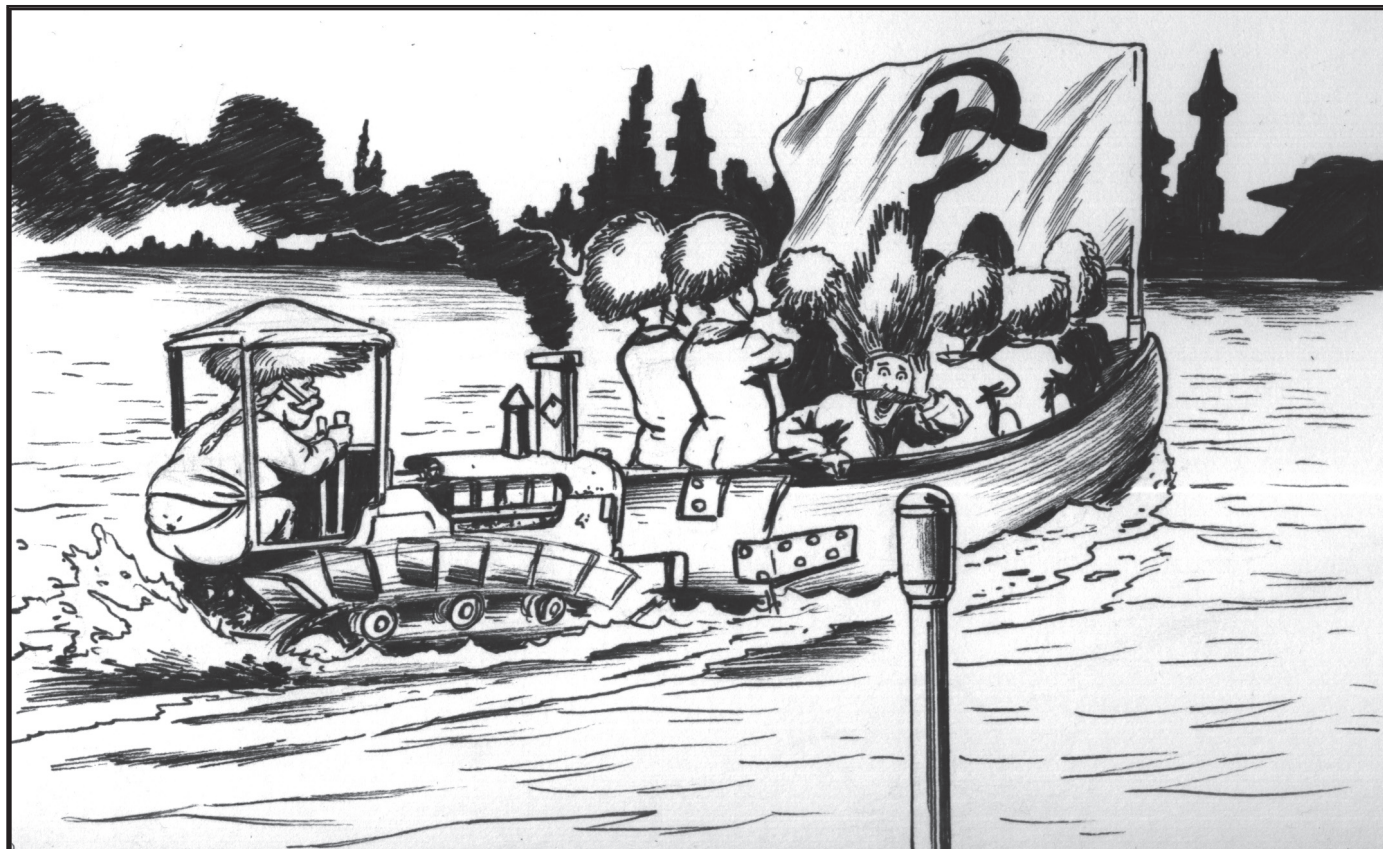
Somewhere someone yells, 'FIIII-IRE!' What do you do, brave proletarians?

Again, skip down to 'Caught red handed.'

Wait here quietly: If you have mercilessly abused your players until they're insensate, incoherent quivering blobs, they'll just sit still, holding Morris-O, waiting for something to happen. In that case:

The air is filled with electric anticipation. All is quiet. Someone sneezes. Tense 'SHHH's' fill the air. A whispered 'sooorry' echoes. 'SHHH!' again. There's a steady drip from the ceiling of the dome into the water. You wait some more. Now what?

Eventually your players must do something; no **PARANOIA** player can sit on his hands for long. You hope they'll choose one of the two options above. If not, then perhaps your players get into a typical player 'discussion.' Or, if they're being really boring and you're tired of waiting for them to shoot someone, let The Harlequin use his prehensile toes to flip a tray





of fuel oil on someone. Or send a YELLOW by. Anything to spur the players to action.

Of course, if the players are careless in moving Morris-O from place to place, some USA yoyo sees and recognizes him as The Commie To Be Captured Alive Or Else. When someone in the area, PC or otherwise, finally yells or shoots someone, read the following:

Caught red-handed

For a second, everything is silent. Then: BAROOOOOM! A veritable explosion of noise! You can hear people yelling things like, 'They've infiltrated!' and 'Die, Commie traitor!' People run every which way, laser fire and projectiles whizzing through the pandemonium, striking seemingly at random. A detonation shakes the area as an AP cone wings overhead. What'll you do now, comrades?

The correct answer is Go Home Very Fast. See, all the NPCs in the area are so wound up, they react reflexively, assuming they've been infiltrated or the Commies snuck in on the river bottom or they'd been flanked or even that the Commies were invisible. (Invisible Commies! How stupid can you get?) [Editor's note: Designer Edward Bolme self-deprecatingly references his 1989 mission *Alpha Complexities*, reprinted in the original *Flashbacks* volume.]

Now, in the panic, old prejudices are coming out, and if somebody's always suspected his buddy was a Communist sympathizer, well, his buddy takes a cone between the eyes. Anyone near the water is suspected of having just crawled out of the water to establish a Commie beachhead. Anyone up high is shot in case he's a paratrooper. Anyone else is shot at as a skilled infiltrator. In short, the whole area is a panic-stricken free-for-all, and everyone's targetting Commies—real, suspected, or no.

Once the players start heading out on the minisub (or maybe a different vehicle if they want), the survivors in the area start after them, firing with everything they've got. The PCs should naturally choose the better part of valor and submerge. Let 'em.

Staging hint: When you read this next part, it's best if you can have a couple of alarm clocks hidden behind your chair. Every good sub's got good alarms, and you shouldn't rob your players of the enlightening experience of hearing them.

During the following emergency, if the PCs check the sonar, it shows a vague blur all across the screen. They discover the fire

extinguisher box contains only a four-liter jug of water. Nothing they can do with the depth gauge (or anything else) can prevent them from running aground. So wind those clocks, and read:

'BZZZZZZZZZZ!' Suddenly one of your alarms goes off! It sounds like the early warning sonar system, and there's a light flashing beside the screen—quick, what do you do?

(Give 'em two seconds to check the sonar screen and start to panic. Then read:)

With a soft CRUNCH the sub suddenly decelerates to less than half its former speed. Everyone falls on his respective face. There's a hideous screeching noise all along the hull and the engine is laboring alarmingly. 'EHHNNNT! EHHNNNT! EHHNNNT! BZZZZZZZZZZ!' Another alarm! Several red strobe lights fracture motion in the cabin—what do you do?

(They're about to run aground. Let's hope they brace themselves.)

'AAOOOGAH! EHHNNNT! AAOOOGAH! BZZZZZZZZZZ!' A split-second of terror, then KARRUMPH! The sub jerks to a violent stop, the hull screeches piercingly and the floor of the sub buckles as it hits something which is evidently quite solid. Everyone who is standing again gets thrown back on his face. The top hatch pops off like a cork, popping your ears at the same time. Thank goodness you aren't still fully submerged!

The sub is stranded on a shoal not far from USA Sector. Vulturecraft are already en route. (You can mention the low whine of approaching flybots.) The Smershoviks must bail out before the bombs arrive. Unfortunately, swimming is not a Smershovik's long suit. Neither is surviving ground zero of a Vulture strike.

Personally, we can only think of one way out—climb into a torpedo tube and launch yourself at the shoreline! The torpedoes are fired with compressed air, so it would work, though it'll hurt a bit. But who's gonna stay behind to press the button? Maybe they can hit it with a well-placed throw with, say, a grenade. (What could go wrong?) If the players manage to think of this, it works, though they're squished violently at launch; they hit the shore a few hundred meters from the sub. Everyone takes a Wound. The PCs are now safe, as

the Vultures pay no attention to the obviously misguided missiles. And you thought we'd written ourselves into a corner.

Nothing to do but walk home.

Debriefing

The PCs, having survived the trek to and from Alpha Complex, are debriefed about the glorious success of their glorious mission. Then they go somewhere and stew awhile.

When the PCs return to the Warm Water Portal, Sasha-R directs them to a nearby confession booth for debriefing. All the characters must wedge themselves into the booth so Tovarich Computer can see them clearly. Read:

'Very sorry Pyotr-R-YHC-3 can nyet to be debriefing you, Smershoviks. Pyotr-R is to be having medicalistic problem—his blood pressure is very low, very low indeed. But I am to be digressing, is nyet to be of concerning you. Tell me, comrade Smershoviks, where is to be the prisoner whom to you was being entrusted?'

Tovarich Computer asks that because it has yet to reestablish contact with USA Sector's dock. Ask in a threatening voice; make the players think they really screwed up bad. Let them accuse each other. If you feel like it, finger someone as the guilty party and Siberionate him in a lowkey way.

And then—that's all for the moment. Give all the PCs a commendation or something. Give anyone who doesn't open his mouth a bunch of rubles. And if the players lied about Morris-O, Tovarich Computer will find out when communications are reopened with USA Sector; chalk up some Official Reprimands, and bring up the subject in the next episode when someone tries to lie again...





4: Red bug

The Smershoviks get an alert to invade 'another' Alpha Complex. They set out in the T-88 (a nifty half-tractor) to infiltrate USA Sector. A bunch of high-clearance GREEN goons immediately send them to quell unrest among the INFRAREDS, which gives them an opportunity to actually succeed at their mission. The Smershoviks eventually get noticed by IntSec and somehow escape back to their beloved Alpha State.

Background

In previous episodes, the Soviet encountered a bunch of counterrevolutionary imperialist pawn soldiers apparently entering Alpha State from the Outdoors. The Smershoviks captured one of these horrid foreign agents, then took him away to another dome and, after capturing a foreign capitalist warmongering submarine, maybe saw some people not (gasp!) not dressed in Red.

Given these observations, correlated with interrogations of defectors in the MVD's political asylum, Alpha State High Programmers have deduced the players visited a non-Commie Alpha State close by. Like the loyal, fanatical and downright evangelical Commies they are, the Alpha State bigwigs want to spread the People's Glorious Revolution to the enemy complex and its poor, downtrodden proletariat.

But Our Friend The Computer would nyet be invading itself, would it? Of course not—but... unfortunately for Our Pal, one of the trusted High Programmers who helped engineer the Alpha State experiment was a sneaky ULTRAVIOLET Commie code-named

'Rasputin.' Rasputin is one of the greatest Commies who has ever lived, for his hacking expertise has been instrumental in many successful raids and his fiery, passionate devotion to the People's Cause has won the Commies many converts. He is indeed a great leader, and many Commies would obey him to the death. Quite a few already have.

So what has this man done to thwart Friend Computer? He put a bug in the programs he wrote. Rasputin was in charge of Alpha State programs dealing with ambience. But when he wrote the programs for Computer graphics, accent and human interfacing, he buried in them a little program that would be accessed when one certain thing happened. The program would automatically seize control when The Computer tried to stop the Alpha State Commies from spreading the revolution. In other words, right now.

When the Alpha State bureaucracy starts rolling with its invasion plans, Tovarich Computer attempts to intercede and put an end to it. Imagine its surprise and horror when, instead of stopping the preparations, it hears itself praising the Commies and offering helpful suggestions!

So now the 'sane' (and we use the term loosely) portion of The Computer is helplessly watching the Commie-programmed Tovarich portion plot its own downfall.

Briefing

The episode begins innocuously and, as a few **PARANOIA** scenes occasionally do (cough), quickly turns ugly in a completely different direction. Read:

When last we left the daring protectors of the proletariat, the Smershoviks of Soviet #1917, you were not slaving away at a manual power generator like you are now.

You were mobilized early this morning to crank a gargantuan handle to generate enough power to make up for the energy deficit left by the sector's nuclear tractors. Your progressive faces, flushed with glorious labor, are as red as the clothes you wear. You are werry loyally, patriotically and enthusiastically depressed.

Suddenly, your Soviet gets a Red Alert!

Give the players Red Alert reference PGRA/4A. Let the PCs run around to secret society contacts and such before reporting for briefing. When they once again reach Briefing Room T, Olga-R is dusting it thoroughly with a dainty lace handkerchief. She pauses, pulls out a minuscule TV set and places it on the booth. The Smershoviks must cluster around to see and hear, for the screen is small and the tinny sound doesn't carry. The subtitle 'Pyotr-R-YHC-4' is all but illegible.

During Pyotr-R's broadcast, Olga-R continues dusting the booth, then moves on to dust the male players, pausing in her humming long enough to whistle appreciatively as the Smershoviks bend over to squint at the screen.

'As you vere founding out this morning, comrade Smershoviks, power output quotas in this part of Alpha State have being consistently lower than projected expectations calculated for



five year plan. To being in fact, power output is been consistently within five percentage points of five sevenths below production curves; consistency of power generation gap is pointing at conclusion of reactionary capitalist terrorist sabotage. Is certainly being same counter-revolutionary forces which were to have invaded Room of Bath a little to left of FB4.89-38FO:3NC9-23J.'

Pyotr-R pauses. He tries to take a deep breath, with marginal success. 'You are to be counterinwading capitalist home base, identified as Alpha State, near here where you vere having sail in Glorious Oktober Overthrow, careless sinking of which has been duly noted. You are to be leaving from Varm Vater Portal immediately after briefing is being finished to be lend-leased tractor for land infiltration. Also materialistic equipment is there awaiting for you. Bebare only the NNNNGGGGGG!'

Pyotr-R grimaces horribly. His body stiffens, and he slumps to the desktop. Shortly after, medics run in and begin CCCPR. Olga-R wakes up from a dusting reverie and switches off the set.

After the PCs have asked Olga-R a few questions she can't answer, they can (and in fact must) leave for the Warm Water Portal.

Outfitting and escape

The PCs prepare for the big invasion by receiving their glorious revolutionary equipment. Meanwhile, The Computer is duking it out with Tovarich Computer for control of Alpha State. And you thought things were confusing before!

The Smershoviks are given a Red Army escort to their destination. Read:

As you enter the glorious revolutionary Warm Water Portal, you see once more citizen Sasha-R-POL, speaking with another man in full Spetsnaz combat armor. Sasha-R looks nervous. The large Spetsnaz guard strides purposefully over to you and introduces himself as Igor-R-NQY-3.

'Comrades,' he says, 'your Soviet has been being relocated into another dome nyet wery far from here, because is being Alpha State completely

Igor-R-NQY-3

Fearsome Spetsnaz warrior

Red Army; Adrenalin Control and Regeneration; Management 10, Intimidation 14, Stealth 08, Violence 11, Knowledge skills 07.

Flamethrower (S3K energy, area 20m spray); combat suit (armor rating 5, hardened).

PGRA/4B equipment details

1) Yes, there are **40 land mines**, but none of them have any fuses.

2) **'The Gospel According to Marx'** is a standard Commie propaganda pamphlet, written with a skill rating of 8.

3) **The flags** are flags. Great for morale, but PCs who sell them as souvenirs are executed as capitalists.

4) **The Sta-Lert pills** are high-powered drugs designed to let dedicated comrades work 24 hours a day for weeks on end to subvert a capitalist complex, and then to croak from overexertion.

5) **Experimental infiltration device, 'Red Square'**: Lastly, toss in any untried USSR&D trash and the following pseudo-scientific gobbledygookish experimental device:

The Red Square is named for its visible effect. The device itself is a modest belt crammed with all sorts of high-tech electronic gizmos. To operate the device, put on the belt and flip the switch. The operator of the device will appear to be standing in a red square, two meters on a side. So now the PCs can more or less safely wander about Alpha Complex in flagrant violation of the security laws because they're standing or walking in a mobile red square.

Because the square is simply an area of effect and does not of itself exist, it can move wherever the operator moves. Unfortunately, the device lacks gaussian shielding, and any electromagnetic activity can upset it.

T-88 'Cossack'

To demonstrate the considerable trust and faith Tovarich Computer has in its Smershoviks, the PCs are given the Alpha State equivalent of the crawler. The Computer did this, not because the PCs deserve it, but because it wants to know what's so great about tractors. The vehicle the Smershoviks are given indeed represents the Alpha State of the Art in nonmilitary (i.e., substandard) transportation. This means it's marginally slower, definitely bulkier, and considerably smellier than your average Ukrainian cart horse.

Carefully reconstructed from poorly compiled descriptions of halftracks and tractors, the T-88 is almost the worst possible hybrid. Its dozer blade is high enough to impair visibility, and it also scrapes the floor, thereby reducing speed and creating the intolerable noise of fingernails on chalkboards. Its caterwauling engine belches acrid clouds of gray smoke.

But wait ... did we say 'halftrack?' Yes indeed, the wheels on right side sport a full track (half metal, half plastic), and the wheels on the left have hastily improvised rubber and leather tires, some of which don't quite touch the ground.

The Cossack is equipped with an autopilot with the disposition and diplomacy of an ulcerated mule. The autopilot has already had its course programmed in. It will not deviate from its course one iota, as it tells the PCs in no uncertain terms. Thus it trundles inexorably on, regardless of the players' actions.

overrun by capitalistic bourgeoisie moneylenders. Beloved Tovarich Computer is honoring you with mission to invade this tottering decadent elitist dictatorship society. You must liberate masses.

'Here is mission materialistic equipment I am to be giving to you.

Vas liberated from semi-capitalistic LL&L. Also am to be giving you very dependable armored fighting tractor for transporting of soviet to destination.'

Now seems like a good time to go over the mission equipment in player handout

PGRA/4B. (For more about this stuff, see the box nearby.) Let your PCs scabble through the boxes briefly before Igor-R gets impatient and continues.

When you're tired of explaining crates of equipment to your players, Igor-R harrumphs loudly and says:

'And now you are to be loading up. Good luck, comrades. And please to be remembering; atheism is on our side.'

While all this has been going on, the untampered part of The Computer has invaded the MVD subprocessor in a desperate attempt to regain control of Alpha State. It wants to stop Smershovik Soviet #1917 from leaving Alpha State, and the quickest way to do that is to brand the lot of them traitors with thousand-ruble bounties. Duly alerted, MVD agents have descended on the Warm Water Portal like supersonic vultures converging on a road kill. Read:

Suddenly you hear laser blasts! 'Comrade citizen!' says Tovarich Computer, 'Investigate source of treasonous firing!'

Igor-R-NQY-3, your Spetsnaz guard, seems very offended and draws his flamethrower. He strides confidently over to the hallway where the shots came from and lets loose with a very impressive pyrotechnic display. Through the billowing clouds of burnt plastic and goodness only knows what else, you hear a megaphone proclaim, 'Tovarich Computer is to be informing us that the Smershoviks are capitalist bourgeoisie traitors! Halt in name of Tovarich Computer! Surrender and you will nyet be tortured, only killed!'

'What? I am having ordered nyet such thing!' bellows Tovarich Computer. 'Smershoviks, carry out your orders!'

The vid screens flicker for a second, then Tovarich Computer speaks again, saying, [read this in a non-accented voice] 'I repeat. All members of Smershovik Soviet #1917 are hereby declared traitors. Rewards of unprecedented dimension are offered for their immediate termination. Stop them from leaving!' Igor-R turns his weapon on you. What do you do?

If they gun down Igor-R, he fires back until killed. If they try to talk with him, he listens because things are so confusing, thus buying

enough time to unfold the last bit of this drama. If they head for the T-88 now, Igor-R fires.

Getting out

Meanwhile, Tovarich Computer assesses the situation and attempts to win the subprocessor back. When the PCs have decided what to do (or a few combat rounds have passed), read:

Suddenly, 'Nyet! Yes! AARRRG!' yells Tovarich Computer. The massive doors leading Outdoors open and close repeatedly. 'SSmmmmershoviks must be leaving immediately in tractor-trt-t-tra- (switch to no accent) traitors! Stop them!' Igor-R looks up, his distaste quite evident. 'Very strange. I am being going now.' He rapidly exits. On the ragged edge of insanity, Sasha-R-LPO turns and dives into the water. The doors to Outdoors open about halfway and stick, trembling to a high-pitched whine. 'Get out get out get out! Ahhh! Doors are now open!' says Tovarich Computer. 'Smershoviks, do your proletarian duty!' The sound of the MVD troopers is rapidly getting louder. Now what do you do?

OK, look: Lots of armed MVD guards are about to pour into this area. They still think every PC is a traitor worth a whole pile of rubles. There is only one realistic option now: Run. Grab the T-88 and get out before it's too late. If they whine to Tovarich Computer, it replies, 'Nyet to be worrying about MVD or nyething else. Go subvert capitalists. Leave everything else to me. Trust me. I am your tovarich. Only ... hurry!'

Border crossing

So the Smershoviks go putt-putting Outdoors in the T-88. Their directions are to Go West and Infiltrate. We've been this way before, so you know what to do—just remember the T-88 won't deviate from its course.

After what seems like an eternity, the T-88 trundles over a small rise. Spread out in front of the Soviet is USA Sector. Obvious paths lie between the large craters and laser-burned earth. Wheel marks and the occasional road kill confirm these paths are often traveled, at least by vehicular traffic. Somehow the T-88 barely manages to maneuver through the safe areas.

As they get closer, they see that the halftractor is homing in on two impressive guard turrets, between which stands a blast door. The turrets are large and glossy, and pack truly impressive triple-mount laser cannons. The turret guns stay trained on the Soviet during their approach.

When the Smershoviks get within 20 meters of the turrets, mechanical voices boom out from big speakers: 'HALT! ADVANCE SINGLY AND GIVE THE PASSWORD!' In the interest of self-preservation, the T-88 finally stops.

The turrets are actually guard booths, each manned by one Armed Forces BLUE trooper. The two on duty now have both forgotten the password of the day. They have absolutely no idea whatever—too many happy pills last night. The password is as often a phrase as a word, so no matter what the PC says, the guards feel obligated to give him the benefit of the doubt. Read:

After you've taken a few steps forward, the voice bellows, 'THAT'S FAR ENOUGH! GIVE THE PASSWORD OR DIE!'

(Let the player say whatever he wants. Opening fire now or turning around would be a bad idea. When the player speaks:)

The turrets are silent for a long time. All you can hear is the throbbing hum of the immense generators and capacitors for the laser cannon. Then a small hatch opens at the base of the right-hand turret, and a small citizen slips out and runs over to the other turret. It opens, and you see the citizen's comrade leaning out. They converse for a few moments, then the second shrugs and disappears back into his turret. 'YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND GO ON IN. THE, UH, THE PASSWORD WAS CORRECT ENOUGH FOR ME. GOT ANY LUGGAGE TO DECLARE? HAVE A NICE DAY. AH, THE REST OF YOU CAN GO ON IN TOO, I GUESS.' The blast door swings ponderously out like a drawbridge.

Sure, it may stretch credibility for the Soviet to enter Alpha Complex this way, but how else would a bunch of Rrooshian-speaking Commies get in?

(Well, there are probably half a dozen good ways, and your players will think of all of them. This is the only one we Famous Game Designers thought of, before it was time for our nap.)



Inside Alpha Complex

They made it!

The Smershoviks are admitted into Alpha Complex. Happiness, *nyet* morbid depression, is mandatory. Heck, from the PCs' point of view, treason is mandatory. And *colors!* Gobs of colors, more colors than the Smershoviks have ever seen in their Alpha State. And with the colors comes class distinction, repression, conflict and revolution.

Whenever the novelty of gallivanting around in Alpha Complex wears thin (if you let 'em wear it as thin as is fun, you'll have to wing a lot—or you could skip to the end of this episode and then come back here), the PCs turn a corner and see several GREEN Internal Security goons standing in a cluster near a large barricaded double door. One of the IntSec goons sees the PCs and points.

If the PCs don't panic, a couple of the goons start jogging over to them, saying 'Hold it right there.' Behind the double doors is the INFRARED cafeteria. There's a lot of INFRAREDs in there. There is also no Hot Fun. This is a bad combination.

Things are definitely getting ugly, and there's about to be a riot. And The Computer has activated the IntSec goons to deal with it. The goons happen to notice a passing batch of RED Troubleshooters (Smershoviks, that is), and who better to take the blame and physical abuse if the INFRAREDs don't settle down?

Read:

One of the Internal Security citizens clamps a heavy hand on Red Leader's shoulder and smiles. "REDs! Just the folks we were looking for!" he says.

Pulling the Red Leader to the double door, he continues; 'Listen, all of us at Internal Security have heard how good you guys are at controlling the lower menial types. We got us a whole bunch of laborers in there, and they're none too happy. They didn't get their Hot Fun, and they feel exploited. We have to get them calmed down so they can get back to their 16-hour shift in the munitions factory. But I'm telling you, there's masses of them in there. So see what you can do with these people.' He whips the door open, and the squad of goons propels you all through.

You're standing on a balcony landing overlooking one end of a large room. Stairs descend on either side down to the main floor, which is crowded with a seething mass of disgruntled subhumanity. The INFRAREDs all

wear unwashed shoddy black clothing, and the room is filled with their loud displeasure.

The INFRAREDs carry various implements known to cause unfavorable occurrences when applied directly to vital body parts. They all look big and stupid. And mad. The din quiets suddenly as they take notice of your sudden arrival. OK, soon-to-be revolutionary martyrs, what do you do now?

Given a bunch of zealous Commies, an oppressive society and the unwashed masses in the room, the answer should be obvious. Just remember first that the INFRAREDs have been trained since birth to believe that Commies Are Bad. It is not smart to outright admit that you're a Commie to these folks, most of whom have been attending the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer since Junior Citizenship.

Second, the INFRAREDs are pathetically dense. These are the genetic rejects and cloning flubs that are placed in marginally useful tasks. Some are literally too dumb to die. They are nearly incapable of abstract thought, so convincing them of the greater cause of world revolution is hopeless. The players should think directly; gain their stomachs and their hearts and minds, such as they are, will follow.

When acting as the INFRAREDs, take your cue from this:

PC: So, comrades, why are you being upset?

INFRAREDs: WE HAVE NO HOT FUN!

PC: But Tovarich Computer is playing game of seek-and-go-hide with you for Hot Fun.

INFRAREDs: Huh?

PC: Hot Fun is being hidden! Werry fun go looking for it! Maybe behind door. Below floor. Tear things up and look, and maybe you will be finding Hot Fun before anybody else is finding any! Maybe is under helmets of guards outside this door!

As long as the PCs don't screw up really bad, they can start a full-scale insurrection. The INFRAREDs run rampant, rioting in the hallways and generally making a mess of things.

Your players are now experiencing a post-stress syndrome known as a 'power trip.' They will almost certainly attempt to engineer another revolt, given how easy the first was. With or without rioting INFRAREDs, there's

USA Sector map

Pull out the Generic Map of Everything (page 95). The USA Sector layout is identical; only the buildings are different.

1) HPD&MC Video Programming

Office: Here mid-level, technically orthodox yet vaguely suspect bureaucrats decide tonight's vidshows.

2) Big BLUE Bureaucratic Building:

Every service group maintains an HQ here. If traitors blew up the building, efficiency would treble.

3) Food vats:

The stench permeates this entire area.

4) CPU Paperwork Field Testing

Lab: Here eager volunteers test new forms.

5) Troubleshooter Dispatch:

Smershoviks can probably infiltrate this high-security complex if they keep their mouth shut. They might get activated to hunt Commies!

6) R&D test field:

Mad scientists test new weapons and vehicles. Lethally dangerous.

7) INFRARED barracks, mess hall and communal sink:

The PCs start the riot here.

8) Hospital:

Here many people are sick, tied down and immobile. All the antibiotics in the world can't protect them from infection by Commie propaganda!

9) Mass execution chamber and power surge control grid:

Here convicted traitors await the next power surge and simultaneously save valuable Computer property from damage.

10) Armed Forces Outdoors Mission

Assembly Area: The only thing in this enormous chamber is the Model 425 Mark 4 Main Battle Tankbot (from 'Me and My Shadow Mark 4' and *Alpha Complexities*, in *PARANOIA Flashbacks*).

Troubleshooting (so to speak)

The PCs can easily mess up this storyline. They could panic, open fire, run away, try to fast-talk the GREEN goons...

That's fine! Really. Tovarich Computer will punish them for failing in their only real chance to overthrow Alpha Complex. Just skip this part of the episode and let them get back to Alpha State alive.

If you just love this episode and must use it -- well, there's about to be a riot. It is the work of a moment to send a few squads of BLUE Vulture Warriors around the corner as extra persuasion for vagrant Smershoviks. (That would make a cool band name. 'Ladies and gentlemen, the Vagrant Smershoviks!')

a whole lot of obnoxious things a group of Commies can do in Alpha Complex. Here's some examples:

- 1) If the Commies can break into the PL&C warehouses, they can quite literally paint the town Red! This'll cause all sorts of problems for IntSec as low-clearance flunkies storm into high-clearance labs to play with all the new gadgets like the reactor overload dampers, treason files, and other stuff.
- 2) They could place a red herring: Run up to a big group of Armed Forces guards, hand them a huge pile of propaganda pamphlets and Commie flags ('Guard these! Are being wery important ewidence!'), then head some goons their way.
- 3) They could reprogram bots to zoom about in public places waving Commie flags.
- 4) They could replace all the traffic signals with red lights and lock up traffic for hours.

Then, when they've done enough damage and half the sector lies in ruins, a random citizen approaches the PCs and casually asks what's happening. It quickly develops he's a Commie sympathizer—or so it seems at first. After the players have gotten him all excited about becoming a Commie, the citizen runs off to recruit his friends as well. Very innocent.

But then the citizen returns with all his friends from Internal Security in tow. They close in by the truckload, because they want the agitators who started the INFRAREDs rebelling, and they want them in the worst possible way.

Deus ex machina, and we're proud of it

Now that we're so close to the tantalizingly mind-crushing debriefing in Episode 6, it would not do to have the Smershoviks wiped out. Here's a handy way to save their little Red cabooses.

Just when things look blackest, just when the Smershoviks are cornered in a closet by two platoons of IntSec agents, some doberbots, a crowd of angry citizens bucking for promotion, the 1477th Vulture Strategic Bombing Wing and the Mark 4 Main Battle Tankbot, there's a sudden crescendo of noise: yelling, pounding, things breaking. Then hordes of stampeding INFRAREDs burst onto the scene, smothering the opposition and bearing the Smershoviks triumphantly along as fellow revolutionaries.

The Communist Party Line rings; Smersh Politburo says Tovarich Computer has been demanding an update. Press for full details, and eventually someone admits the Smershoviks have blown their

cover. Tovarich Computer gives a recall order. The sweeping tide of INFRAREDs deposits the Smershoviks like so much flotsam near the door through which they entered USA Sector, and the PCs can leave. A FiG-25 airdrops (drops, not parachutes) a new T-88 tractor for them to drive home in.

Oh—and what if the PCs failed to incite the riot? Well... in that case you can wipe them out. It's their own fault for ignoring orders.

Debriefing

By the time the Smershoviks return, Alpha State is completely controlled by The Commie Computer—the last few bits of Our Friend, after holding held out in some old Tass RAM chips, have been completely consumed. Tovarich Computer wants to know all about what the Smershoviks did in USA Sector; how much damage they caused, their estimate of USA military strength and stuff like that.

The more damage the PCs did to USA Sector, the happier they make Tovarich Computer. Show this by instantly rewarding every act of sabotage as soon as the PCs report it. Get the players to mention everything they did and some things they didn't. Let them bask in the glory of being revolutionary heroes. Even when the Smershoviks have to tell how they blew their cover, don't change Tovarich Computer's attitude from immeasurable satisfaction. This should worry your players greatly.





5: Red sunset

Alpha State is invaded by a screaming yellow horde of imperialist dogbot soldiers. The PCs run and hide to fight a guerrilla war under the guidance of Igor-R-NQY-2, the elite Spetsnaz commando. The Smershovik Soviet attempts to steal a FiG-25 from an occupied Alpha State airbase, but they are captured before they succeed. Or maybe after, if you like megadeath scenarios.

This is the big climactic episode, so even here, in the 'pre-mission briefing,' try to inject a note of excitement into everything that goes on.

Background

The Computer (the real one) was, needless to say, quite disconcerted when it drove itself out of Alpha State. Even worse, upon reviewing extensive camera footage, it realized Smershoviks from Alpha State had shown up in USA Sector to spread the Glorious Communist Revolution. Obviously, its grand experiment has gotten completely out of hand and is now a threat to the safety of Alpha Complex. Threats must be destroyed, and loyal citizens must be rescued. This, however, is a threat *composed* of loyal citizens. Dicey.

Because the experiment is clearly running amok, a whole mess of YELLOW clearance Vultures have mobilized to pacify Alpha State. Ordinarily they would all be equipped with stunners, but one of the last pieces of data obtained from Alpha State indicated a large military buildup. Shelving the safety of innocent though hypnotized citizens in preference for its own safety, The Computer arms the invading YELLOWs to the teeth. Isn't it grand? A cast of thousands—and thousands who end up in casts!

Invasion

Allow a suitable pause to refresh, then read:

After you finished your last mission and debriefing, your glorious Soviet dispersed. Your comrades around you feel the People's Revolution is all the more safe from a reactionary fascist counterrevolution with loyal and patriotic Smershoviks like you to defend Mother Alpha. Later, you are again summoned to appear before

the Smersh Politburo for a mission briefing.

Give the players Red Alert reference PGRA/5a. It ought to be ominous enough to prompt discomfort. After the usual scramble, read:

As you go to briefing room T, you see squads of elite Spetsnaz guards everywhere, all marching in the general direction of the Kremlin. Units the size of divisions begin forming up, their banners and cadre in front. It's really quite a spectacle.

In the briefing room, Olga-R pulls out a large gleaming case and pushes a button on top. A large glossy video screen pops out with a smooth hydraulic release, and the screen flickers to life. It displays Pyotr-R-YHC-5 in crisp, clean color. It's obvious this screen is brand new and state of the art. Read:

Pyotr-R is lying in a hospital bed. He's apparently not feeling terribly well. He's got an IV in his arm and an oxygen mask over his mouth and nose. Electrodes are attached to his skull, giving a very unusual reading on a nearby monitor. Other devices monitor his vital signs, while a large machine behind him occasionally goes PING!

'Zdrastiye, Smershoviks! Congratulations on assignment this mission. Is glorious opportunity serve reolution,' he says. 'You are to be having honor to lead very best troops in Alpha State!' He gestures dramatically, sending the probably expensive blood pressure monitor crashing to the floor. 'Nyet only that, but I am having priwilege telling you all Alpha State vill vatch your ewery move this mission! You are so honored!' He starts gesticulating even more wildly. 'You are to be wanguard of revolutionary army! NOW is time for ALL good Smershoviks to COME TO—' *Poit!* You see Pyotr-R's sweeping gesture pop the IV needle out of his arm. He immediately slams back on the bed, his frenzied expression locked forever on his aged face. You all hope you don't look that silly when you die.

Olga-R gets the PCs organized, and just as they're heading out of the square they hear a whistle, sort of like an incoming cone rifle shell. Did one of the Spetsnaz troopers fire accidentally? Nope, it's just the first shot of the invasion force—a tacnuke aimed to wipe out the Red Army in one swell foop. If you can find a tacnuke to detonate, do it! It'll sure scare your players and help set the mood. Then read:

The Spetsnaz soldiers all lookup. What do you do? Too late! Flash! Brilliant light temporarily blinds you and BOOOOMMM! You're all thrown violently to the ground and stunned by a massive shock wave as a fireball engulfs most of the square. What do you do?

As the PCs run from the scene (the only logical or in fact survivable alternative), read:

Alarms start going off all over the place, and panicked citizens stampede every which way. Then, with a 'YEEHAAAAWWWW!' two yellow-clad warriors come charging down the corridor, mowing down comrade citizens left and right. At the same time, a large Spetsnaz commando falls out of the air and lands on them, crushing them completely.

This is mega-macho Spetsnaz elite airborne frogman commando and covert operations specialist Igor-R-NQY-2, last seen barbecuing MVDs in the Warm Water Portal. Remember? If the players lack the common decency to even thank him for squashing the YELLOWs, he grabs one by the ankle and says, 'Please to be letting me come with, comrades! I can be helping you!' This is a bona fide Major Hint.

If, on the other hand, your players feel compelled to help (or at least look at) Igor-R, read them the following description:

The Spetsnaz soldier is the citizen with the flamethrower you saw in the Warm Water Portal. He is dressed in full battle armor, which is scorched through in several places and covered with black soot. He says, 'What happened? Last I am remembering was in square with 40,000 proletarian comrades waiting orders to invade enemy territory ... who are yellow peoples I sit on?'

With that question, it ought to be easy to get the players to deduce they're being invaded. If they need proof, a simple glance upward (easy for Igor-R who's on his back) confirms it—there's scads of YELLOWS all over the place; in parachutes, descending down ropes, zooming around in YELLOW-clearance flybots, etc.

Why? Because The Computer must destroy its Alpha State counterpart. Modern invasions and data bus infiltrations have all failed, and now the Commie Computer is trying to enter the rest of the Alpha Complex system. There is only one choice left for The Computer: It must turn off the power to the HUH Sector CompNode. This is somewhat akin to curing your split personality by putting a bullet through your left frontal lobe, but The Computer has no viable alternative.

Therefore, at this time, the alarms cut back off, the lights cut out, and the air grows immediately stuffy. Power to Tovarich Computer was just cut. After a brief moment, emergency lights come on and sirens restart on minimum levels (beep—beep—beep). If anyone has the bright idea to tell Tovarich Computer that something has happened, every screen displays the message 'WAIT ONE MOMENT,' while a looped tape says, 'Nyething is wrong. Do nyet move. I'll be right with you.'

Red Rovers

As the PCs evade the blitzkrieking Vultures, Igor-R tells them between gasps of pain he can help them fight the capitalist imperialist totalitarians, and leads them to a hiding place he knows of that can serve as a base of operations.

Depending on how your players are doing on clones, now's the time to throw in a few chance encounters to run up the body count until everyone is on their fourth clone or higher. An ideal way to do this is to have the players get chased by Vultures all the way across Alpha State and back, getting extra mileage out of the maps from earlier in the scenario.

But they eventually find a place of refuge somewhere, thanks to Igor-R-NQY-2 (unless they let him get killed, in which case they deserve to be run to ground like deer). Read the following to your weary players:

Under the knowledgeable guidance of Igor-R-NQY-2, you finally reach a place that seems safe from the invading YELLOW hordes. It's a small building, apparently gutted and barricaded a long time ago by Tass workers. Igor-R leads you in through an ingenious secret door, then indicates you can all relax for a

Firefight map

See Map 4, the FiG base on page 96. **Key:**

1) Land of living mines: Self-aware, mobile, burrowing explosives, similar to the pesky percussives in the mission 'Me and My Shadow Mark 4' (reprinted in the original *PARANOIA Flashbacks* volume). The living mines slowly, silently crawl under unwise or immobile characters, then detonate (W4V energy, area 2m).

2) Burly wall: A tall, thick concrete wall (armor rating 6, ablative) topped with electrified barbed wire (S4W energy plus stun, automatically on contact). Make an Arbitrary Justice roll to determine on which side of the wall a stunned character falls.

3) Motor pool: Pool of oil, that is, leaking from the perforated crankcases of several T-88 'Cossack' tractors. One has a flamethrower mounted to the rear; another has an industrial fire extinguisher that looks, for all the world, just like a flamethrower.

4) FiG-25s: The PCs are after these military flybots. They fly! They fight! At least, they fly with a successful Hardware/Vehicle Ops check, and a Violence/Vehicular Combat check to hit a target.

5) Neutron bombs: Please don't shoot lasers in this direction. Each bomb weighs 30kg; there are 55 bombs in a pyramidal stack. It takes one PC five turns to load a bomb onto a FiG, two PCs need two turns, and three PCs take all day. If a bomb blows up, it has adverse consequences all across the area. Pop the map in a microwave or something.

6) Fuse box: A big strongbox full of electronic bomb fuses. Sure hope the players remember to put fuses in the neutron bombs; otherwise the bombs won't explode unless hit by a stray laser shot.

7) Fuel storage tank: Armor rating 4, hardened and fireproof. Not affected by flamethrowers, thank goodness, but a cone rifle shell or something similarly major ruptures the tank, covering the area with gobs of small fires (S3M energy).

8) Coolant storage tank: Armor rating 4, hardened. Full to the brim with pure (200 proof) alcohol. If ruptured, the tank spills booze across the tarmac, and everyone not wearing a gasmask gets drunk from the fumes.

9) Cooled liquid storage tank: Armor rating 3. Full of supercooled water. If the tank ruptures, water sprays everywhere and instantly freezes. If all three tanks (#7-9) get hit, things get interesting as drunken Smershoviks weave between fires on ice-slick tarmac in oil-slicked T-88s. Then the fire blows the bomb fuses, the explosion hits the neutron bombs, and...

10) Big important building: Full of Vultures. When you start to run out Vultures, a few more storm out of here.

11) Vulture guards: They start here unless you want them elsewhere.

12) Control tower: Three storeys tall and filled with high-tech comm and tracking gear. Enterprising PCs can gather intel and maybe assign incoming Vulturecraft to dangerous flightpaths.

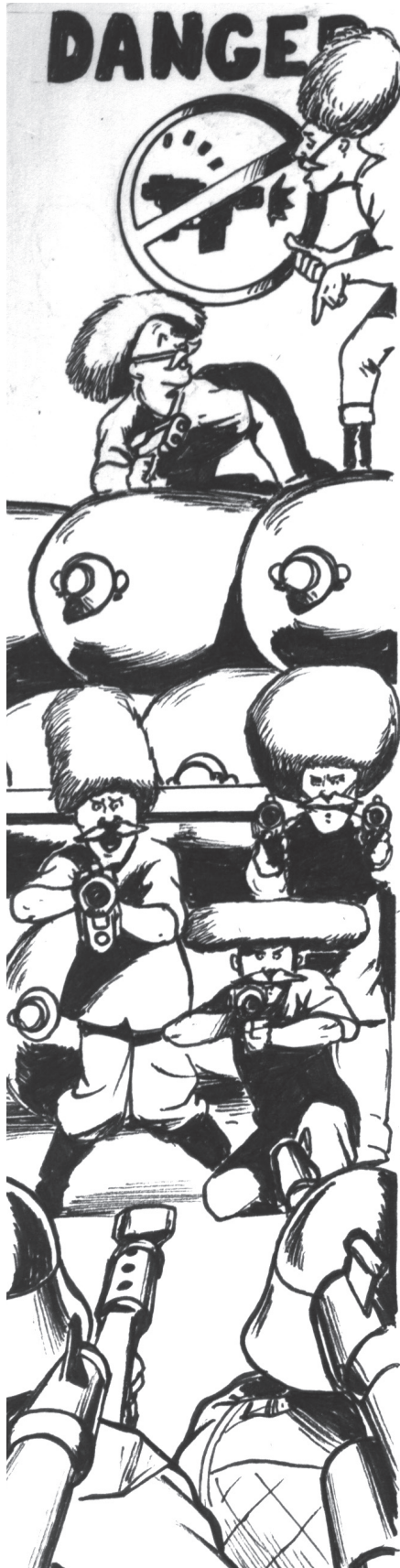
13) Guard towers: Heavy anti-personnel lasers (W3K, unlimited range) and anti-aircraft missiles (I3V energy armor-piercing, area 5m). Both are on swivel mounts, but the missiles fire only upward. Each tower is manned by two BLUE Vulture guards who are specially trained not to fire near the tanks or bombs. PCs can use these weapons with a Violence/Energy Weapons or Projectile Weapons check. Have the PCs been specially trained not to fire near the tanks or bombs?

BLUE Vulture guards

Violence 10, Energy Weapons 14, Projectile Weapons 14, Don't Hit The Tanks And Especially Not The Bombs 16

BLUE laser pistol (W3K), stunner (20 shots, stuns), BLUE battle armor (3)

Tactics: Usually, 'Shoot first, don't ask questions.' This situation is less heated, so the Vultures want to capture Alpha State Commies. (You need some survivors to interrogate in Episode 6.)



Red Rovers

Standard YELLOW Vulture. One of thousands.

YELLOW laser rifle (W3K); YELLOW combat armor (4)

while. You can still hear the voice of Tovarich Computer echoing softly through the sector, 'Nyething is wrong. Do nyet move. I'll be right with you.'

Pause here and let the players re-evaluate their position. It's nice to be able to get your bearings sometimes... When they're done yakking, read:

Presently Igor-R rises stiffly to his feet. Gazing though the cracks in the walls of the building you're in, he watches the clean formations of yellow-clad troops marching about Alpha State, rounding up defenders of the proletarian revolution.

Igor-R turns around and sits painfully, leaning his back against the wall. He looks at you and shakes his head sadly. 'Comrades, we are having been invaded by elitist imperialist terrorists. They are having infiltration beloved Alpha State and subversion Tovarich Computer's defense subroutines.

'So, comrades, it is being up to us for continuation of fight against dogmatic oppression and capitalist mind-control devices. And, comrades, I am having plan.'

'Nyet wery far from here is Red Army base of the air. On airbase is full squadron FiG-25 Boxfat fighting-bombing flybots. Wery good vehicles. Also on base is weapons and fuel. Weapons are wery big neutron bombs. Kill imperialist puppets, leave products of proletarian construction intact.

'You, comrade Smershoviks, must be stealing FiGs and dropping of bombs on heads of capitalist warmongering slaved rivers and pinkerton middlemen. Now I am to be telling you how to fly FiGs and drop bombs.' You receive a lecture several hours long, in which Igor-R gives you definitive instructions on the operation of a FiG warcraft. Everyone add 2 to your Hardware/Flybot Operation specialty, and 1 to your Violence/Vehicular Weapons specialty. After the lecture, Igor-R

draws a map showing how to quickly get to the airbase, and another map showing the airbase itself, which looks like this.

Place the FiG Airbase map on the table, just so they know what they're getting into.

After all that, Igor-R says, 'Please to be hurrying, comrades! Is nyet much time before it is too late for saving of Alpha State. Invaders begin searching every building very soon! Good luck!' And with that, he slips into unconsciousness.

Firefight

It's time for the Smershoviks to try to recapture the FiG-25's. This is the last chance the PCs have to really succeed. They can (almost) win back Alpha State from the invading capitalistic warmongers! They can at least do a lot of damage. Just remember—the better they do here, the worse they get hosed in the final episode. So let 'em do really well.

Getting from their secret hideout to the airbase is no real problem; soon the PCs reach the edge of the captured Spetsnaz compound.

The more we think about it, the more we like the idea of PCs zooming around Alpha State with devastating neutron warheads. Go ahead. Let 'em have their fun; they'll pay for it in the next episode. But boy, will they be disappointed if they forgot the fuses...

They can fly around all they want. Roll their Vehicular Weapons specialty to see if they hit their desired target or instead hit a POW camp or a lower-flying FiG or something. Then, when they're through watching zillions of NPCs blown miles into the air in a thermonuclear fireball, ask the players where they intend to land their FiGs. There is nowhere. Even if the PCs didn't trash their own airfield, it's the only one in Alpha State, and there's plenty of folks awaiting them there.

There's no exit to the Outdoors. If they try to blow a hole in the dome, it collapses atop their jets; the only possible way out is through the Warm Water Portal or the Room of Bath wall, and we doubt any of the PCs has the skill to fly an eight-meter wide jet through two-meter hallways...

There's always the Kremlin plaza. Yeah. They should land there. No one stops 'em. Takes a while for the hordes of goons with heavy stunners to arrive.

6: Wakey-wakey

The Alpha State experiment has worked both better and worse than The Computer hoped. Better, because it was outstandingly successful at creating a bunch of Commies, and it got to see how Commies work and how ingenious they are. Worse, because now The Computer has found out just *how* ingenious Commies really are. The Computer wants to find out who in the experiment, if anyone, is actually loyal, and who has been corrupted.

Try to avoid a pause or break between the last episode and this one. The more your players are in the habit of speaking with Russian accents, the better.

Debriefing

Here the Troubleshooters awaken from their revolutionary dream and rapidly readjust to a non-Commie environment. After their capture, read this:

Oh, how bitter is defeat at the hands of imperialist warmongering soldiers!

Soon, arrogant cowardly brown-nosing bloodthirsty bourgeois guards drag you out of the compound.

You are taken against your will to the edge of Alpha State—when suddenly an unseen door in the wall opens out onto a sewer pipe painted a most elite shade of blue! Of course! Infiltration—the way the Dark Forces conquered Mother Alpha.

Strange—the corridor gets bigger. Sure doesn't look much like a sewer pipe to you any more... must be some fascist propaganda trick!

The hapless Soviet is led to a large yellow room. There is a black square in the center of the floor, and Computer cameras adorn the front wall. Already in the room are Olga-R-HGJ-4 and Pyotr-R-YHC-6. Olga-R rushes over and embraces each of the PCs, sobbing openly. Pyotr-R is seated in a wheelchair in the back corner of the room, his chin in his hand and a scowl on his face. See if the players have anything amusing to say. Then read:

Seated behind a table opposite you is a citizen dressed in a horrible shade of yellow. A sign identifies this craven foreman stoolie as Marcus-Y-EJO-2.

One of the imperialist troopers gives each of you a pill and crams it down your throat at cone riflepoint.

Read this next part in a dreamy, wavy, funny voice that gradually gets normal as the PCs 'wake up.'

You begin to feel funny—perhaps it's an exploitive capitalist mind-control drug! No... that's not it... you're remembering things now. Alpha State... it's just a dream—you were volunteered for it... a mission in a capitalistic city, hypnosis, post-hypnotic suggestion, totalitarian domination... the glorious revolution...

NOW you remember it all! Life before Alpha State, living in Alpha Complex, being volunteered for a secret experiment, hypnosis drugs to make you think you were a Commie, when all the time you were serving your friend The Computer. Now here you are, and what does this YELLOW yoyo want?

Playtesting shows certain players, realizing at this time the magnitude of their upcoming hosing, choose instead to immolate themselves (and as many others as possible in the room). Give your players a chance to do so. When things are cleaned up, read:

Marcus-Y rises and says, 'Welcome, citizens, to your final debriefing. Thank you, I guess, for your supposedly loyal service to The Computer. I'm afraid we have some investigating to do, and probably some psychological tests and surgical restructuring. But I feel confident we'll find all your faults. The Computer and I shall make sure of it.'

Interrogation

Are you ready for this? The Computer sent a bunch of loyal citizens to be archtraitors. While they were Commies, they were rewarded for being good Commies and punished for being bad Commies. This helped maintain the ambience in Alpha State.

However, The Computer feels anyone who rebelled against being a Commie has deep-seated, unconscious objections and antipathies toward Communism, whereas anyone who was a real good Commie has a lack of same, if not outright sympathy for the Revolution. Therefore, if a PC was a good Commie, he will now be executed. For every commendation, promotion and backpat a PC earned, give him an equal amount of trouble.

With one exception. The Computer knows Troubleshooters are clever; that's why they're Troubleshooters. If a player can show he earned his commendations by deceiving his superiors, then he is instead rewarded for hampering the Communists—just so long as The Computer doesn't think he's done the same things on previous missions.

Someone who deliberately sabotaged missions is rewarded now, even though his previous clone may have been executed in Alpha State. The Computer rewards those who simply cannot bring themselves to follow Communism, even under hypnosis. Give him a commendation for every treason penalty he got in Alpha State, plus a few hundred credits for every clone terminated for treason.

The characters' relationship with Tovarich Computer is complicated, for it simultaneously represents proper authority and the very soul of Communism. Disobedience to Tovarich Computer cannot go unpunished. Obedience to Tovarich Computer cannot go unpunished. Heh heh! Guess that wasn't so complicated after all.

Most important in this debriefing/trial pre-execution warm-up is roleplaying. Anyone who keeps talking in a Russian accent gets terminated, pronto, because it's obvious even anti-hypnosis drugs were unable to remove the Commie influence from his brain.

20 questions

Here's some double-edged questions to inspire your own creativity in tormenting your players. (Comments and safe answers follow each question in parentheses.)

- ☹ Do you think The Computer did a good job faking a Commie Complex? *(No matter how you answer, The Computer may be insulted.)*
- ☹ Are you glad you were chosen to serve The Computer in this manner? *(A positive answer may be interpreted as Communist zeal.)*
- ☹ How do you feel, given that your previous clone was executed as a traitor in Alpha State, when the whole thing wasn't real in the first place? *(Great! I died in the service of The Computer!)*
- ☹ How do you feel about Commies, now that you've been one? *(Best to deny that you were ever really a Commie; you just*



FLASHBACKS

CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

gritted your teeth and faked it, looking for a weakness.)

- ⑦ How could life in Alpha State have been improved? (*Remove Communism.*)
- ⑦ Were you plotting to overthrow the Commies in Alpha State? (*Say yes and you're a secret society traitor. No, and you're a Commie.*)
- ⑦ Do you think The Computer's judgment has been fair? (*Yes! Execute me again!*)
- ⑦ If The Computer asked you again to be a real live Commie, would you want to? (*I wouldn't ever—never ever in my whole life—want to be a Commie! But I'd do it for The Computer.*)
- ⑦ Do you feel you know too much about Commies to be safely released back into mainstream life in Alpha Complex? (*If they say yes, they're aware of the danger of their knowledge; give Official Reprimands and let them go.*)

If they say no, they're obviously hiding something—perhaps they're more infected than first thought.)

These by no means are the only questions you can ask, nor are the given answers the only safe ones. And everything is open to convoluted interpretation. Oh, heck, just let 'em kill each other! That's what they're here for, isn't it?

After he's finished with the PCs:

Marcus-Y turns to Olga-R with a stern look. Olga-R winks bawdily at him. He blushes slightly and says, 'You, Miss [stress the 'Miss'] Olga-R-HGJ-4, are hereby pardoned for your actions, which in no way endangered Alpha Complex or The Computer.' Olga-R leaps for joy and thanks Marcus-Y profusely.

'And now for you, Pyotr-R-YHC-6. You were a loyal and fawning Commie. You adhered to and advanced the teachings of Communism. Do you have anything to say in your defense?'

Pyotr-R is deep in thought. You can see the strain in his face.

'Well?' Marcus-Y shouts. 'You'd better think fast, *comrade*, because I've got a special execution lined up that's three hours long.' Evidently Pyotr-R can't think of anything that can save him, because he's keeping quiet. Looks like he's chosen the stoic approach to his imminent execution.

'Fine. By the power vested in me by your friend and mine, The Computer, I do hereby charge you with grand treason and arrest you in the name of Alpha Complex. Come with me!' Seething with hatred, Marcus-Y strides across the room and grabs Pyotr-R by the collar. There's a soft 'fwoosh,' as Pyotr-R crumbles to dust and seeps onto the floor, leaving Marcus-Y holding an empty jumpsuit in a pale cloud of human motes.

Marcus-Y stands stupefied for a minute, then angrily throws the jumpsuit on the pile and kicks it, raising another cloud that settles mostly on his pants. With a snarl he turns and strides out of the room. Olga-R trots beside him, brushing off his cuffs.

Player handouts

:RED ALERT

:Reference PGRA/1A

:Soviet #1917

*****RED ALERT!*****

:SMERSHOVIK SOVIET #1917 TO REPORT IMMEDIATELY BRIEFING ROOM T FOR BRIEFING OF ROUTINE DEPRESSING MISSION OF INSPECTION AND REPAIR ROOM OF BATH

:COORDINATES: A LITTLE TO LEFT OF FB2.89-38F0:3NC9_23J.U23n/V82FLR9

:FAILURE TO BE REPORTING PUNISHABLE BY SUMMARY SIBERIANION

:BE STAYING ALERT! DO NYET TRUST NYETBODY! BE KEEPING HANDY LASER!

:MATERIALISTIC LIST

:Reference PGRA/1B

:Soviet #1917

:TOILET PAPER, ROLLS, TWO

:TOWELS, PAPER, ROLL, ONE

:SEAT, TOILET, REPLACEMENT, ONE

:SOAP, HAND, FIVE LITERS

:MOP, ONE

:FLUSH VOUCHERS, THREE

:SINK VOUCHERS, ONE MINUTE, FOUR

:SINK PLUGS WITH CHAIN, TWO

:TILE CLEANER, ONE LITER

:RUBLES FOR PAY STALLS, TWENTY

:RED ALERT

:Reference PGRA/2A

:Soviet #1917

*****RED ALERT!*****

:ATTENTION SMERSHOVIK! REPORTING IMMEDIATELY AGAIN BRIEFING ROOM T FOR WERRRY IMPORTANT MISSION FOR CAPTURING TRAITOR AT LARGE

:MISSION IS TO BE WERRRY SAFE

BECAUSE YOU ARE NYET ALLOWED

FOR FIRING OF WEAPONS

:MORBID DEPRESSION IS MANDATORY!

:PIES, SUDO-CREAM, TEN

:PIE CATAPULT, SHOULDER-FIRED, ONE

:SELTZER BOTTLES, ONE LITER, THREE

:SILLY STRING, ONE LITER, THREE

:NOISEMAKERS, TWENTY-FOUR

:PILLS, DEPRESSION, TWO GROSS

:INFORMATIONAL BRIEFINK :Reference PGRA/2C :Soviet #1917	:RED ALERT :Reference PGRA/3A :Soviet #1917	:MATERIALISTIC LIST :Reference PGRA/3B :Soviet #1917
Congratulations, honored comrade! You are being recipient signal honor of flight of werryry werry nice Fiko/Guero Model 25 interceptor fighting-bombing flybot 'Boxfat'! Please to be varming up of Hardware/Vehicular Operation specialty while listening to following:	*****RED ALERT!***** :COMRADE SMERSHOVIK! YOU AND PROLETARIAN SOVIET ARE TO BE TAKING OF DANGEROUS PRISONER TO OTHER DOME AND THERE TO BE DELIVERING TO RECEPTIONIST FOR SAFEKEEPING :SOVIET #1917 IS TO BE LEAVING FROM WARM WATER PORTAL TO OUTDOORS. PRISONER IS TO BE BRINGING ALONG :NYET TO TELL NYETBODY WHAT YOU ARE TO BE DOING REALLY. NYET TALKING TO PRISONER FOR REASONS OF GLASNOST. ALSO NYET LISTENING TO PRISONER WHO IS BEING DANGEROUS LIAR :IS TOP SECRET MISSION! TRUST NYET ONE NEVER!	:BABUSHKA, FURRY, BIG, BLACK, ONE :BABUSHKA, FURRY, BIG, TAN, ONE :BABUSHKA, FURRY, BIG, GRAY, ONE :BABUSHKA, FURRY, BIG, RED, ONE :BABUSHKA, FURRY, BIG, ARTIFICIAL COLORS, TWO :COMMUNIST PARTY LINE EXTENSION CORD, WERRRY BIG ROLL :CARTONS, RUSSIAN UNSEASONABLY BAD WINTER PROVISIONAL PROLETARIAN SURVIVAL GEAR, INDIVIDUALISTIC, SIX :WHO ARE CONTAINING EACH: :THERMO UNDERCLOTHES, ONE PAIRING :HOT COCOA MIX WITH MARSHMALLOWS, PACKETS, SIX :IGLOO CONSTRUCTION INSTRUCTION SHEET, ONE :ICEPICK, ONE :SNOWSHOE, ONE
1. Model FiG-25 'Boxfat' has cannon-mounted wings, two (2). 2. Model FiG-25 'Boxfat' has bomb-mounted undercarriage. ATTENTION: In order for obeyment of mission directives, weapons of Model FiG-25 'Boxfat' are being having been retrofitted for your convenience. Number of bombings is being perestroikaed under glasnost laws. 3. Model FiG-25 'Boxfat' is also having werryry fast missile guidances. 4. Model FiG-25 'Boxfat' is also having special veapon mounted of nose. ATTENTION: Veapon of nose is being perestroikaed.		
You are to being launching and having rendezwous with rewolutionary comrades werryry soon, maybe one half hour. Maybe. Have depressing day!		

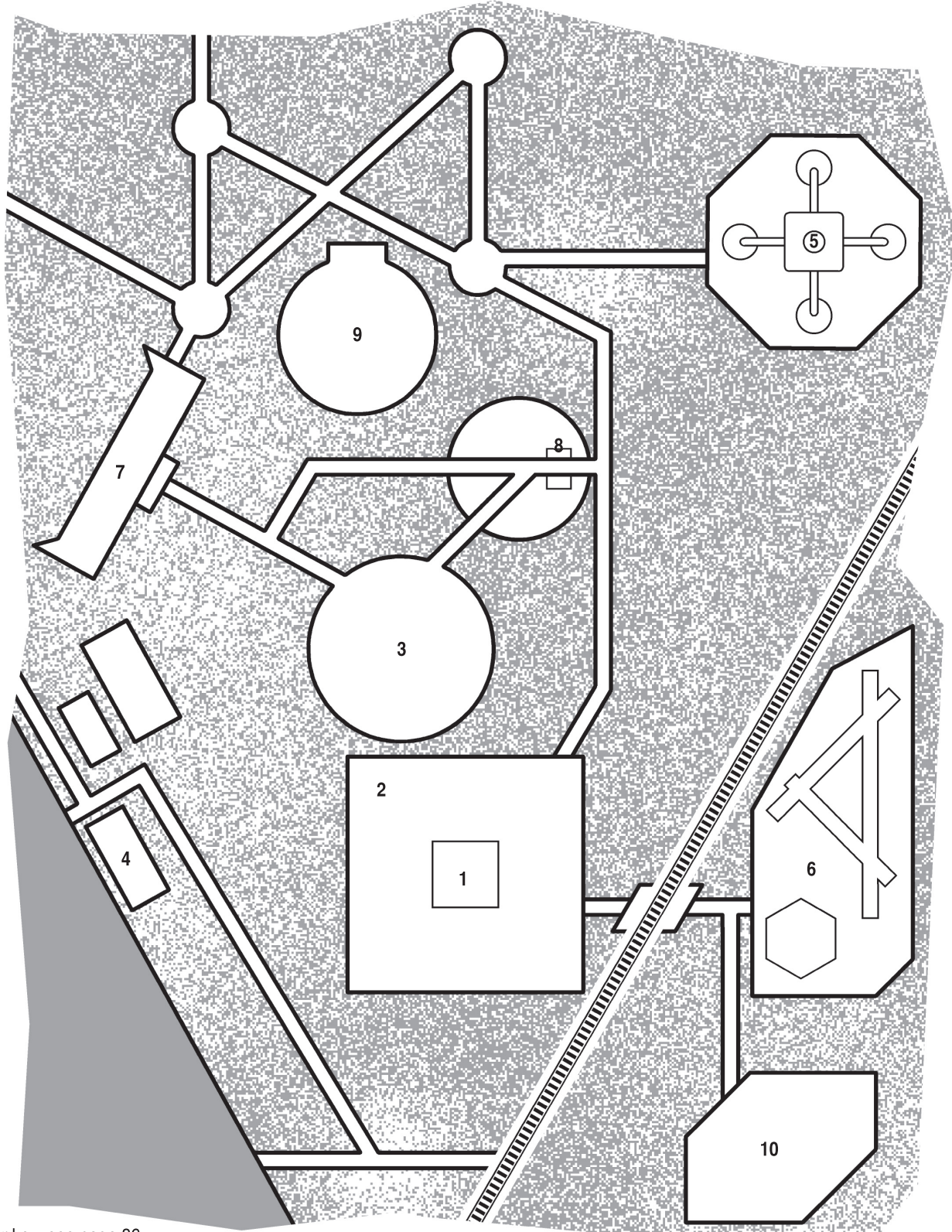
:RED ALERT :Reference PGRA/4A :Soviet #1917	:MATERIALISTIC LIST :Reference PGRA/4B :Soviet #1917	:RED ALERT :Reference PGRA/5A :Soviet #1917
*****RED ALERT!***** :ATTENTION SMERSHOVIKS! BE IMMEDIATELY REPORTING FOR WERRRY GLORIOUS SAFE ROUTINE DEPRESSING MISSION OF SPREADING COMMUNIST REWOLUTION. IS TO BEING SUBVERSIVE MISSION AND WERRRY SECRET. :BEING SURE TO BE PACKING EXTRA CHANGE OF UNDERWEARINGS. :REMAIN ALERTED! SERVE TOVARICH COMPUTER!	:EXPERIMENTALIST INFILTRATION DEVICE, ONE :CRATES, THREE :EACH WHICH IS TO BE CONTAINING: :PAMPHLETS, 'THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARX,' 20,000 :COMMUNIST BATTLE FLAG, 3x5 METERS, ONE :COMMUNIST PARADE FLAG, 6x10 CENTIMETERS, 10,000 :BOX, ONE :IS TO BE CONTAINING: :BOXES, TWELVE :EACH WHICH IS TO BE CONTAINING: :BOXES, SIX :EACH WHICH IS TO BE CONTAINING: :STA-LERT TABLETS, EIGHT :EACH WHICH IS TO BE CONTAINING: :CAFFEINE, 20 GRAMS :BUFFERS AGAINST CARDIO-VASCULAR SYSTEM SHOCK & TUMMY UPSET :LAND MINES, FORTY OR SO :COMMUNIST PARTY LINE EXTENSION CORD, WERRRY BIG ROLL	*****RED ALERT!***** :ZDRASTVUITYE, SMERSHOVIK! TOVARICH COMPUTER IS BEING SELECTING FOR YOU GLORIOUS PROLETARIAN-PRIVILEGE OF PARTICIPATION IN OWERT SUPPORTING OF PROLETARIAN REWOLUTION :SOVIET IS BEING WANGUARD IN LEADING OF RED ARMY INTO NEARBY CAPITALIST RUNNING-PIG-DOG ALPHA COMPLEX PTUI :ENTIRETY OF OPERATION IS DEPENDING ON SMERSHOVIK PERFORMANCE AND PATRIOTISM AND GENERALLY BEING GOOD COMMIE :REMEMBER, THOUSANDS OF WERRRY LOYAL RED ARMY SOLDIERS WILL BEING AT ALL TIMES MARCHING RIGHT BEHIND YOU :TOVARICH COMPUTER IS YOUR COMRADE!



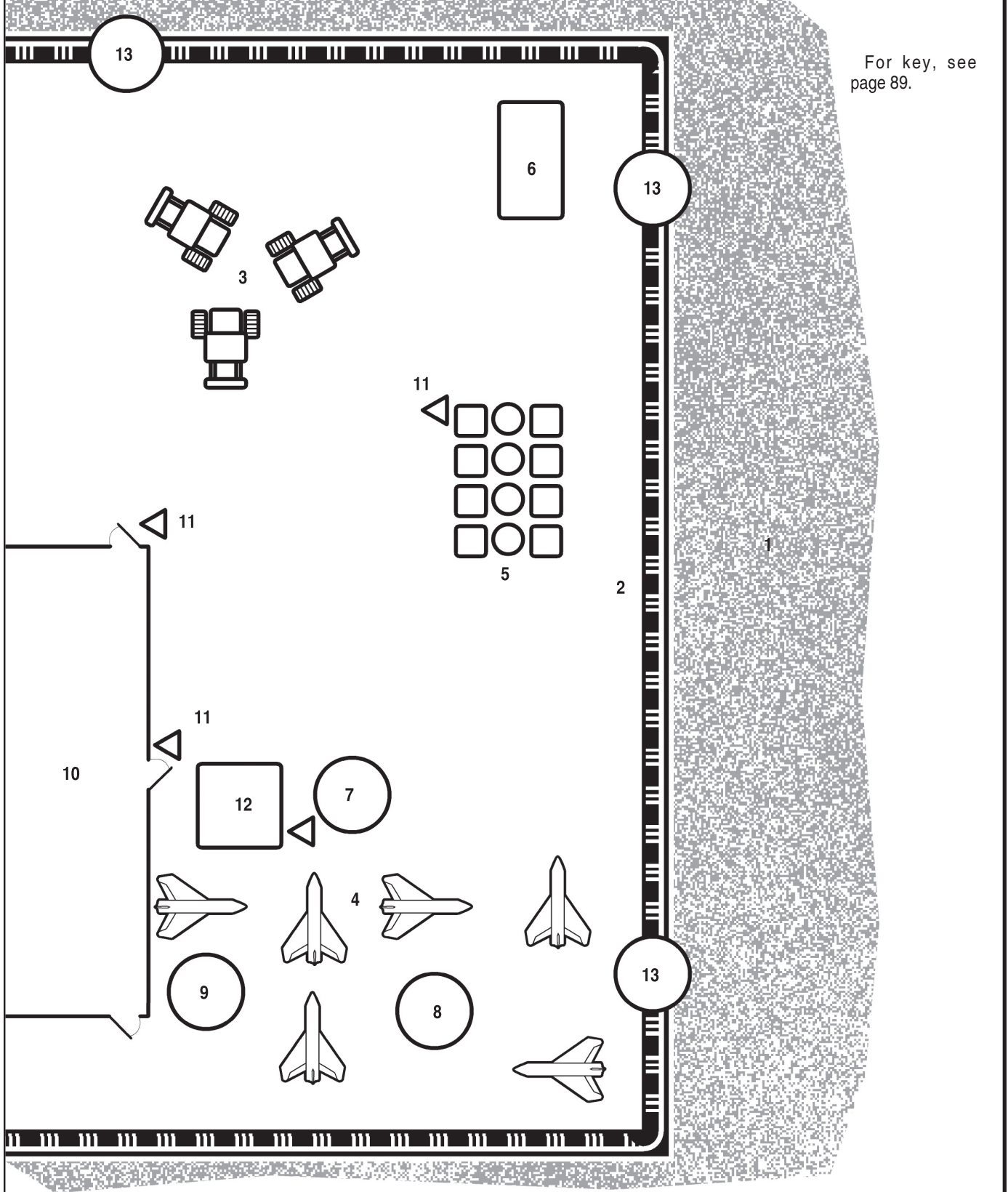
- Room of Bath (Episode 1)
- 1: Alpha Complex BER entrance
- 2: Alpha Complex LIN entrance
- 3: Alpha State HUH entrance (players' entrance)
- 4: Sinks
- 5: Toilets
- 6: Mirror
- 7: Paper towels
- 8: Showers
- 9: Paper towel bin
- 10: Decontamination booth
- 11: Communal toothbrush
- 12: Jacuzzi (broken)
- 13: Hole in floor
- 14: Shoeshine seats

- Nuclear Tractor
(Episode 2)
- 1: Cooling tower (open top)
 - 2: Very tall ladder
 - 3: Power lines
 - 4: Power relay station
 - 5: Heavy water tank
 - 6: Stairs to hatch
 - 7: Piping
 - 8: Observation (no railing)
 - 9: Control room
 - 10: Pile of graphite rods
 - 11: Access to reactor core
 - 12: Radio antenna
 - 13: Fireman's pole
 - 14: Stairs from ground
 - 15: 100-meter drop

Map 3: Generic map of everything



For key, see page 86.

**Map 4: FiG Base (Episode 4)**

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