



Welcome to Jackobot Heaven

Issue [NUMBER_5127_WINK] - BUG Sector

Letter From The Editor

In this episode we present the rare unpublished manuscript of BUG Sector, rescued from USENET and long thought lost. We've got some of our top archivists to annotate it. We are so so sorry, to them as much as to you.

Welcome to BUG Sector

An Adventure for Paranoia

by Chris Hepler and Jennifer Brandes (and Alan Smithee)

Chris Hepler actually wrote a short blog post about his experiences in writing for PARANOIA 5th Edition along with his romantic partner (Jennifer Brandes), which you can read [here](#). He tends to be positive about the whole situation, which does seem to contrast with most fans' beliefs about the quality of 5th edition's material. Chris and Jennifer wrote "Creatures of the Nightcycle", "Welcome to BUG Sector", and "Long-Lost Third Edition". Only "Creatures of the Nightcycle" was officially published.

Chris Hepler is apparently [a prolific writer](#) and have multiple writing projects to his name. According to his [origin story](#), he started off as a freelancer for multiple tabletop RPGs...including [Shadowrun](#). Then he moved over to writing for video games (like the Mass Effect trilogy) and MMOs (like Star Wars: The Old Republic).

Yes, maybe this specific material is bad (to be honest, I got bored reading it halfway through the plot synopsis), but look, Chris got paid for his work, this was early in his writing career, and I'm sure he's probably gotten better since then. And to be fair, there probably was a decent audience for the slapstick style of humor back during the 1990s. They might enjoy it.

In general, everyone who worked on 5th edition seems to be incredibly positive about it. It's an interesting phenomenon.

GET READY FOR THE INVASION, CHUM-R.

STAY ALERT. TRUST NO ONE.

AND NEVER, EVER DEAL WITHOUT BRAGGIN'. Oh please no. It's a Shadowrun parody!

You can tell a lot by the name puns they choose to use.

"Noooo!" you scream. "They couldn't possibly satirize another roleplaying game in Paranoia! Have they no shame? Have they lost their minds? Do they honestly expect to make this mammoth monstrosity of clone mutilation funny the entire way through? Even Yellow Clearance clones would have no hope of survival!*"

Exact what i thought. These people wrote 'Creatures of the Nightcycle'

*One would argue otherwise... Or two... Or three... What number clone am I again?

Yup.

Nope.



"You'd have to have Troubleshooters hot-wired with SIBERware, implanted with alien eggs, or join the Clones in Gray just to survive! And to keep the jokes fresh, you'd have to spoof twenty or thirty alien movies in the bargain! It'd be a back-to-back psychotic Yellow Clearance death ride of a parody!*"

*Can't imagine who you'd be referencing there. Heh, heh, heh... No seriously the hell are you talking about.

Yup.

When in doubt, spoof.

"What do you do? Get hired by John-O-SON to hunt down Mick-G-UFN of the Search for Extraordinary Troubleshooter Intelligence? Get killed by irritable Automated Teller Machines? Drive through the PLC Electrified Bumper-Bobsled Shopping Maul of Doom? Nuke an entire sector by hand? Fly a ten-ton assault peach into a mess of acid-blooded bugs and cybernetic elves to waste Vanilla Lice? How do you even handle the fifty or sixty clones you'd need to get through the thing?"

Citizen...that would be telling. I hate this so much. I understand all those references and I want to punish whoever thought this was a good idea.

It seemed like a good idea at the time.

I lost my calm after "Vanilla Lice".

This Adventure Contains

- * 128 pages of epic story which drags the Troubleshooters through Briefing Room MST3K, (The name of the briefing room is far more telling than the writers knew.) Gell-O-filled hallways, CASA's Space Cramp and the creation of BUG Sector, a post-apocalyptic setting of unregulated treason in the middle of Alpha Complex!
- * More props than a ten-engine tilt-wing. Mandatory Clonal Aptitude Tests, BotWagon Contracts, news facsimiles, Mission Alerts, three and a half song parodies, and even Mick-G's diary for handy, easy-to-use clue acquisition!
- * The Clones in Gray, a new super-secret society hard at work turning Alpha Complex into the biggest thing to hit fast food since the deep fat fryer!
- * Maps, illustrations, and the all-important tables for generating your clones' Sheet Names, SIBERnetics, Acid Blood Effects, and Acquired Bugs/Features! Plus Alien Name, Characteristic, Motivation and Secret Weakness tables so you can run the adventure 20,000,000 times and never meet the same critter twice!

-
- * The Big Stick. Yeah I think we've read enough after that.

Notes On BUG Sector

BUG Sector was originally written for the now-defunct West End Games, and was a casualty of its bankruptcy in the late 1990s. It had been written, it had been playtested, there was even some artwork done before the collapse. But it was never to be. The new Paranoia game line is steering clear of parodical material, so as of spring 2004, BUG Sector has finally died its quiet little death on our hard drives.

Enter Tastes Like Phoenix.

At TLP, dead material can live again, if only for a few folks in an obscure section of the Internet.. So for the Paranoia and Shadowrun fans who never got to see the unholy copulation of their game lines...enjoy. Unholy copulation is putting it politely.

Is it though? Is it really?

Welcome To BUG Sector

by Chris Hepler and Jennifer Brandes (And again Alan Smithee)

((Begin Text Box in printout format, splashed on credits page like at the beginning of old adventures like Alpha Complexities)))

WARNINGWARNINGWARNING

The contents of this adventure are Security Clearance Ultraviolet. If you are clearance Violet or lower, reading the adventure is treason punishable by summary execution. Of course, for those of you Outside the System who are already treason-happy psychotics who maim, kill, steal and mutilate for fun and profit, we'll say it in your language.

Look, Chum-R, you've heard the phrase "never trust The Computer." But It says you have no need-to-know, and It's

- I'm., cone rifles, plasma generators, BattleTax gear, cyclebots, and assault canons than you can count. If you frag the petbot, let alone slot with TC, your cred will be null-field, your rep geeked, your contact.s cacked, and your slang license revoked, wakarimasu frag-toi ka, cont chica mojo trog biffs? (I think someone had a s.eizure while writing this. I guess the "SIBERware" will do that to you.)

WARNINGWARNINGWARNING

((End Text Box in printout format)))

M mm is...



0.0 Introduction

How do I use this book?

Read it. Stroke it. Love it. Then, after a night of carnal bliss, say that you two just aren't working out, but you want to remain "friends with advantages." **Classy**

Share it with your gaming buddies during a couple roleplaying sessions while you're all doing too much caffeine. **What was drugs to edgy for you?** Hint about getting married, let it dangle for months, and then drop it for another Paranoia adventure that's newer, bigger, and deadlier, with sexier artwork. Put this one on your bookshelf and never call it again, until it ends up in the buck-a-book bin at some lousy 60-person gaming convention, with its self-esteem in the toilet. You're cruel, clone; it deserves better. **I assume this is meant to be funny, but it just makes me feel a bit disgusted that someone thought it was a good idea.**

This is so bizarre. Am I awake

No. You're a cruel clone. And your players deserve better.

Okay, bad word choice. How do I run this adventure?

This is another monster Paranoia scenario, and requires a fair bit of planning. We strongly recommend that you read the whole thing before running it. **Mate, I'm not even going to read the whole thing before I annotate it.**

See above.

To avoid joke overdose and possible death from fatigue, **Oh don't you worry friend. I'm certain even at maximum dosage the laughter will be little to none.** you should probably split it into two sessions or more. The summary at the beginning of each chapter gives a brief description/reminder of the torture in store. **Yes being unfunny can be quite tortuous. Now why don't you come have a rest here in this Termination booth?**

Text in bold should be read aloud when you find it convenient (though preferably when your players are in earshot and not locking themselves in the bathroom in protest or something). **If the players are locking themselves up in the bathroom for any reason other than to take a dump or a piss. I think you have bigger problems on your hands.** This is known as the "Tell It To Them With a Straight Face." It's a guideline for how to describe the scene before the characters react. It should be read in a Bogart/ Wayne/Eastwood/**Alan Smithee** macho-hard-boiled-detective voice, completely deadpan, with accompanying manly

sneer. For that authentic feel, don't alter a word of the text, no matter what the players do, even if the description changes the laws of physics and linear time flow. It'll drag Troubleshooters through the plot like incompetent carjackers caught in the seat belt of a fleeing victim. **Chugga chugga choo choo!** Again I refer you to my earlier comment.

I fell asleep reading this. And unironically railroading.

Words in normal text explain what's happening. Read 'em. Follow 'em. Likely said by no one in a Paranoia Game.

"Cheap Tricks" help the gamemaster maintain the sober atmosphere and suspension of disbelief that is so necessary to a Paranoia adventure. ...what? It's an attempt at irony. Most of 'em are dumb props. These require set-up time and props, so if you're trying to wing the adventure, you may miss out. Everything in the Player Handouts section can be cut out or photocopied; some props work best with a copy available to each player. Proper attire for gamemastering Welcome to BUG Sector involves trenchcoats, sunglasses, and wide-brimmed hats pulled down over your eyes (well, over your brow, unless you can read through felt). Oh so anything you can get at your local Hot Topic.

... Or your local S&M St-[DFSR]

About the Pre-Generated Bait

The Computer uses Red Troubleshooters such as the pre-generated characters in many other adventures for simple missions like terminating their teammates. Yellow Clearance Troubleshooters, like the ones provided here, are expected to find treason even among wily opponents who cover their tracks. In other words, they search as well as destroy. (We know it'll be a big step, but your gamemaster and I talked it over, and we felt you were ready.) Again I don't like what you're implying here...

Yellows are also cleared for slugthrowers. This is important because it means they can revel in testosterone and loud noises and lots of lead and armorpiercing-fin-stabilized-full-metal-jacket-self-forging-fragment-spitzer-explosive-synthetic-core-flechette-liquid-titanium-GlaserTM-tracers at 10,000 rounds a minute, baby, with 1,000-round belts and gyro-mounts...and...and stuff! I'm starting to see why you invited me to annotate this Stephen... Sorry. They don't let us out much. Likely again why your players are escaping out of bathroom windows.

Traditional Red Troubleshooters are whining, sniveling toadies. These Yellow Clearance clones have yet to actually die before the mission begins, and have a shot at Green clearance if they

look good. In other words, they're egotistical, over-confident and as likely to get killed while showing off as during equipment failure. I take great offence to this sir. Like I would ever wear such a color as inferior as GREEN. And they all hate each other for various reasons. This was obviously written by a jealous BLUE communist clone. A slide of their important stats, please? (This can be photocopied and taped to a gamemaster screen for convenient reference.)

((((BEGIN TABLE)))

PREGENERATED CHARACTER REFERENCE TABLE

Character Attributes Power(s) Sec. Soc. Serv. Group

Will-Y-SMT S5 E8 A6 C8 D9 MA5 M7 P2 Energy Field Psion Armed Forces Teleport

Weapons and Armor: Pistol (3AP), Unarmed (1I), Armor L2P1

Strengths: Can fly a flybot or Vulturecraft (and starships) pretty well because he's been playing flight-simulator video games. The pretty boy of Armed Forces, he's got decent Chutzpah skills.

Weaknesses: Mutant powers are incredibly unreliable but obvious (i.e. Ripple-Y, Scull-Y, and John-Y will kill him); hates being upstaged.

Scull-Y-FBI S5 E5 A5 C8 D6 MA6 M10 P5 Deep Probe Pro Tech "Armed Forces"

IntSec Weapons and Armor: Pistol (2/4P dum-dums), Unarmed (1I), Armor L2P1

Strengths: "Forensic Technobabble" lets her figure out useful plot points (bonus if the player improves pseudo-scientific gobbledygook to back it up); has perception; paranoid as hell; rad suit in creche.

Weaknesses: Extreme paranoia; fillings in teeth pick up alien music (no particular TV show's theme); notebook is Green Clearance; booby-trapped creche may malfunction; Ripple-Y hates scientific attitude.

Ripple-Y-ELN S9 E9 A6 C5 D5 MA3 M6 P7 Regeneration Anti-Mutant Armed Forces

Weapons: Rifle (5AP), Flamethrower (4E), Laser (3L), Grenade (5P), Unarmed (2I), Armor L2AP1

Strengths: Can operate powersuit or transbot; full auto rifle can increase damage even further on autofire or spray more clones with separate attacks.

Weaknesses: Hideously in debt to BotWagon; wants to kill Sam-Y and any scientists or corporates (i.e. CASA and possibly CIGs); bandanna-shaped communicator and rifle are treasonous if inspected.

Sam-Y-RYE S8 E8 A10 C2 D6 MA3 M8 P5 Adrenaline C. Death Leopard Armed Forces

Weapons: Katana (4I+), Pistol (3P), Laser pistol (3L), Unarmed (2I), Bread loaf (0I)

Armor: L2P2I2 in front, L2P1I1 on sides and back

Strengths: Registered Mutant; darn good with sword; knows first aid; metal book in jumpsuit helps frontal armor; can work with vendingbots; good chance of pulling off two-guns-blazing.

Weaknesses: Registered Mutant (Ripple-Y and John-Y hate her); couldn't fast-talk an Infrared; assault canon (metal book) is treasonous; more sexual repression than a sector full of Vulture Warriors.

Rube-Y-ROD S2 E4 A8 C10 D6 MA4 M7 P10 Machine Emp. TechnoCrappy HPD&MC

Weapons and Armor: Microphone (Laser (3L), If swung (2I)), Unarmed (1I), Armor L2

Strengths: Chutzpah and fast talk to go all nightcycle; has black, red, orange and yellow facepaint (i.e. clearance changers); extremely popular vid star (just after Teela-O).

Weaknesses: Needs manic roleplayer <->Heyo!; only HPD&MC clone in a squad of Armed Forces; gets beat up by Infrareds; hair gel catches fire (+1 to energy damage if head-shot); drives Scull, John, and Will crazy.

John-Y-RCO S10 E10 A10 C3 D10 MA1 M1 P5 Unknown Anti-Mutant Armed Forces (Dumbness)

Weapons: Rifle (4P), Nuclear grenade (11FE, 150m rad.), Laser pistol (3L), Laser rifle (4L), Knife (3I) Armor: L2FI2

Strengths: Can operate powersuit (even if the movie was too cheap to have one) and nearly any weapon; Dumbness counteracts mind-affecting mutations (charm, deep probe) if Power roll succeeds.

Weaknesses: Follows orders; hand grenade has obvious drawback; treasonous football in cone rifle but no ammo; unaware that Ripple-Y is Anti-Mutant; more sexual repression than a simplex of Vulture Warriors.

((((END TABLE [and a nice throw pillow]))))

Just a quick note on character names here: We now know that the pregens include references to Men in Black (Via Will Smith - the only example that uses the actor rather than the character), The X-Files (Agent Scully), the Aliens franchise (Ellen Rippley), Starship Troopers (Johnny Rico) and, um, The Fifth Element (Ruby Rhod). That leaves Sam-Y-RYE - for those of you who aren't up on your cyberpunk terms, this is a reference to the Street Samurai archetype. Think a cybered-up

killer with a code of honour. Why the writers didn't choose to make all six of the character names puns on Shadowrun archetypes is a question for the ages...

It is indeed useful and interesting comment.

If you've got old Yellows lying around (who haven't caught rabies)(I've had my shots thanks), they can be tossed into this steaming wok of torture as well not a good descriptor for your game. If you need more than six Troubleshooters with plot-appropriate shticks, we recommend adding Montgomer-Y- DRK (hard-drinking detective who narrates his every action), and Enem-Y-MYN (multiple-personality-disordered clone whose mutations allow parthenogenesis).
The Stunning Secret Revelation

We at West End have decided to move the Paranoia universe forward in an event of grand proportions. Because that worked out so well last time? West End handled PARANOIA perfectly. During the course of this fantastically important adventure, both CHI and BUG Sectors will be... what? What is it tell me?

...wait for it... Oh God I don't know how much longer I can wait!

...hold on... For God's sake man! Tell me! Tell me please I can't take it!

...invaded by giant alien bugs! ...Well that was a bit disappointing. And they'll remain there, even after it is turned into a smoking, radioactive parking lot by Our Heroes' trusty nuclear Device. So in case it wasn't already obvious, this is a parody of the "bug city" storyline from Shadowrun, in which Chicago is taken over by bug spirits. This raises quite an important issue: whilst Shadowrun remains a popular game, it's probably safe to say that most fans who got into the game with the later editions don't know about that particular incident beyond having heard some vague references. This scenario is parodying something which is no longer remotely fresh. It's a dated product of its time, designed to capture a specific geek culture moment! This is in marked contrast to the more well known and beloved PARANOIA products of earlier editions, which managed to remain timeless even whilst referencing contemporary issue
Really? I thought it was a Starship Troopers reference. The more you know.

Fair point. Might be they're going for both.

Regardless, it's amazing this was dated before it was even more dated.

Now to be fair, one could argue that this game has the potential for nostalgic value. Given though most references are out of date some people could still remember these references and laugh about them because of past experiences and memories.

That's right, if you want to be part of the Official Paranoia Universe™, CHI and BUG Sectors will forever more be filled with psychotic gangs free of Computer influence, and Commie mutant insects infesting the corridors, implanting clones with eggs *fatal feels* and eating the corpses. Nowhere is safe. Few places are clean. It's a nasty, post-apocalyptic monster-movie hole smack dab in the center of Alpha Complex with all the fantastic story potential of cinematic classics like...I dunno, Night of the Comet or The Deadly Mantis or something. (So in other words a bunch of B-Movie and 80's to 90's action hero\martial arts shlock. Am I in the ballpark here? Reminds me of *Golgo Island* and that's not necessarily a bad thing.)

You can use BUG Sector to jump-start an entire alien-killing campaign if you so desire, with Troubleshooter, Vulture Warrior, or Clone in Gray player characters! The Alien Generation Tables even let you run this adventure 20,000,000 times without encountering the same species twice! Now that's value! (Ooooh now that actually seems useful. Randomly generate a bunch of insane mutants for players to have to deal with and get destroyed by.)

But what if I don't want to?

Well...uh...you could play in the other 17,574 sectors. They're, um...still the same.

No, Gome-R, I think aliens are stupid. My Alpha Complex ain't a-gonna have 'em. There's other games out there with al- (Private Pile your logical reasoning is obviously Treasonous.*FZAAP*)

Ah-ha! That's why we included this De-Bugging section explaining how to run the adventure without actual alien intervention. It's simple. They're all Commies in big rubber suits. Add a Russian accent to everything the aliens say (including the songs) and The Computer orders them terminated anyway. Ta da. A low-budget way to handle the adventure, in case your imagination can't afford special effects.

Seriously, if you have some other use for CHI and BUG Sectors (like your Troubleshooters are Happiness Officer Monch-Y-CHI and train with Focusy-O-CHI *what's your shtyle!?*), they can be returned to normal when the Troubleshooters fly around the sun.

Have we mentioned that bit yet?

PLOT SYNOPSIS *We're only just at the plot synopsis and already I'm not nearly drunk enough for this*

Talk about burying the lead

And So They Made A Pass...

On a distant planet around a distant star, a world of capitalistic, money-grubbing nearly immortal aliens known as the Borger developed a civilization (well, you could call it civilization if

you like rhinestone cybernetics, airbrushed spacecraft, and banana-and- peanut-butter sandwiches *My gawd this place sounds like a paradise*). The Borger resemble humans, but their sharply defined ears and build are similar to what 20th-century fantasy readers call "elves." And like elves, once they start infesting a planet (or game), they won't stop until they've taken over.

"Elves" oh what you mean like the Eldar?

Having developed faster-than-light travel, the Borger journeyed about the stars, trading, starting intergalactic wars, and colonizing weak, low-tech planets. Discovering heavy competition in the planet-plundering business, they soon specialized in a niche they could fill better than anyone else: fast food. *Is Are "Borger" meant to be a reference to something? What the hell is this?*

Bourgeoisie?

Oh my God I get it now. It's a reference to the Borg from Star Trek!

The Borger kidnapped primitive beings from dozens of star systems to reduce to reconstitutable consumable protein, with or without sesame seed buns (hey, the customer is always right). To keep intergalactic sales high, they standardized value-pack meals according to color. Any being, whether blob or bug, could point or squirt at the correct color and get what they wanted without having to learn a language.

When they arrived on Earth in the 1970s, the Borger figured the humans were about to blow themselves off the star map, and decided not to set up shop. But they found one individual whose style and very name were signs from the deities that he was not an Earthling, but the messiah that would lead them to corporate dominance, the true Borger King. *...kill me*. They abducted him.

Now, nearly 300 years later, the Borger have returned. *Are you bastards sure you want to do that?*

And lo, they ain't never seen so many potential snack foods conveniently generated in cloning facilities...already color-coded. *Okay fine douchebags have it your way*. Their population centers are isolated from one another and warring, with limited means of spreading interplanetary alarm. These pitiful descendants of a once-proud race practically have LOW-GRADE MEAT PATTIES stamped all over them.

More Back-Story

About a weekcycle ago, the Borger cut a deal with several Alpha Complex Ultraviolets, granting them high-technology gadgets and action figure rights in return for all the dead clones they needed for this branch of drive-through convenience.

Unfortunately, the Ultraviolets soon found that the visiting aliens didn't care for Alpha Complex customs. *Much the same could be said of the writers.* They walked in without shirts or shoes or skin.

The Kharyons shoplifted. The Vegans played with their food. The Altair-natives used their lunches as part of their reproductive cycle. *And Fool-R-ERY began to vomit uncontrollably at the sight of it all.* Because The Computer's favored policy toward blatant mutants is to start hurling tacnukes, the Ultraviolets tried to keep the invasion secret. They issued trusted teams of Troubleshooters alien technology. And sunglasses. And ways to compromise The Computer Itself to cover up evidence of their passing. That's right. They are above The Computer's color-code system.

Beyond its reach.

They are Them (not the ants).

They are They.

They are the Clones In Gray. *For those keeping score, we've so far had an alien invasion that exists purely for an elaborate "Burger King" pun, and a Men in Black parody that more or less copies text verbatim from the movie (and presumably also from the WEG RPG, which I assume predates the movie.).*

Any resemblance to another West End game is pure science fiction. Well, it's kind of soft science fiction, without all the world-building and originality and stuff. But you get the idea.

Anyone who has read this far could easily see that. No one in their right mind would think otherwise.

The Troubleshooters get involved when the Computer assigns them to track down Mick-G-UFN-4, *If this is a pun, I'm not seeing it and I'm thankful..oh wait. Macguffin.* who has absconded with data from the Search for Extraordinary Troubleshooter Intelligence program, a subdivision of the Computer-Approved Space Administration. Since this data could expose the CIG's operation if recovered, they'll do whatever they can to make sure the Troubleshooters screw up worse than usual. *Don't make promises you can't keep.*

Their programmers aren't quite good enough to make The Computer forgive Mick-G for his theft, but they can influence the mission in several ways:

- 1) They convince The Computer that switching from plasticreds to electronic money will cut down on bribery by recording all transactions. This allows the CIGs to trace Mick-G by his credit

record, and makes life very tough for the player characters. **Joke's on you I use Friend Coin!**
***gives plasticred* Here you need this more than I do.**

2) They mess with the MemoMax formulae so not every clone remembers their last clone's actions. Thus Mick-G cannot afford to die even once.

3) They assign incompetent briefing officers and send unstable lunatics after the Troubleshooters to slow them down. The player characters get screwed by Citizen John-O-SON, the mission is sabotaged, and everyone gets repeatedly shot. This is meant to be fun. **Why would you ever say otherwise?** (Fortunately, a Paranoia gamemaster can pull this off.)

With the mission thus dragged out to twice the time it should take, CIG agents can find and eliminate Mick-G before the Troubleshooters drag him back for The Computer's loving probe bots to extract his confession.

So what actually happens?

After the Troubleshooters collect their SIBERware and other gear, they head to Mick-G's sleep creche to look for clues, learning that he has fled to CHI Sector to join the Assemblers of God. Before they leave, they find a strange clone off her hormone suppressants, whom they later learn is an alien.

When they don't respond to her advances, she chases them down a long, Gell-O-filled hallway before they finally lose her. **Assuming they'll deny. Also ew with this.**

In CHI Sector, after traversing the entire CASA Space Cramp training program and having their intelligence tested **after playing this long we'll be surprised if they haven't lost all of their brain cells by now**, the Troubleshooters learn first-hand that the Assemblers of God were taken over by Altair-natives, a race of aliens who resemble large Earth insects, and use clones as breeding hosts.

(Yeah, that's logical...a Hare-Krishna love cult turns people into giant bugs. That's almost as likely as Godzilla getting elected President. Don't blame us, we're just following successful marketing trends.) **So, in shadowrun there's a Hare-Krishna love cult that turns people into bugs, and a dragon gets elected president.**

So badass. Yet i have so many questions. How could a dragon be elected president of the US? That's the United Canadian and American States (UCAS), and he does so by winning the popular vote.

Escaping the Acid Queen and her brood, the Troubleshooters get drafted by The Computer to lead the Delta-Delta-Delta Force back into the newlynamed BUG Sector, riding an assault peach through swarms of bugs before nuking the dastardly Vanilla Lice. *loud groan*

By hand. What the fuck does that even mean!? How do you nuke something "by hand"!?!?

After their impressive performance dealing with the rogue bugs, the Troubleshooters are recruited into the Clones in Gray, and help out with the official opening ceremonies of the Borger franchise. Looks like we got a SUPER SIZED PROMOTION! And when the problems start mounting, guess who gets chosen to whip around the sun, go back in time to last weekcycle and convince the CIGs that selling their planet to hungry aliens isn't a good idea? Or to face down the Borger King and his fleet by themselves?

That's right.

Along the way, the Troubleshooters run into so many aliens that they'll need a double helping of ImmunoCrank to avoid breaking out in...well...hives.

This sounds pretty complex. Can my players handle it?

Trust us. Though the background is complicated, the actual story line is about as mysterious, enigmatic, and subtle as a 747 full of plastique with both engines blown out and a glass-packed muffler. If the Troubleshooters were railroaded any harder, they'd dreck coal for a week. Choo choo! Sounds pretentious and crude at the same time. Also, wait, did we just do a whole overview of this adventure again? Couldn't we have just cut out a portion at the beginning and left this? You mean to say reading the plot three times in ascending levels of detail isn't fun?

The MemoMax Factor

To eliminate Mick-G's knowledge, the CIGs sent their operative Eyefor-G-ETT-1 to Mick-G's creche to tamper with his successors. Needing an untraceable, non-lethal interference, Eyefor used a Personality Readjustment Hairbrush to release chemicals into their scalps. These eventually leak into the bloodstream, sneak through the blood-brain barrier (no, that's not a wall of corpses at Jackobot Slim's...it's a body defense mechanism) and inject RNA into cells to interfere with the MemoMax process.

Unfortunately, Eyefor-G's other clones found the brush in his sleep creche right before a Hygiene inspection, and...well, they don't remember much else.

Eyefor-G-1 got the brush back but could only dispose of it by tossing it into the supply of Head & Smolders semi-flammable shampoo at the Armed Forces Tanning Booth, Beauty Salon and

Termination Center. I guess cleanliness is next to... deathliness... Everyclone who visited the AFTBBSTC is affected, including the player characters.

Whenever a clone dies, his successor has whatever gaps the GM wants to leave in his memory. Use this liberally. Look, I don't like the execution of this whatsoever, but props to them: random memomax gaps is a fun idea.

Hey, I've read the beginning of the adventure and there are four or five ways for the clones to die before they reach the Mission Briefing. Only four to five? You're obviously not trying hard enough. How can I possibly keep them alive for 128 pages?

Excellent question, Citizen. High rates of clone death are both likely and problematic, but there is a simple way to handle it.

The MemoMax irregularity allows successor clones to misremember what clone number they are. For example, tell Will-Y-SMT's fourth clone that he's Will-Y-SMT-3. ("But didn't Will-Y-3 die?" "You don't know. You're Will-Y-3, so whoever just died must have been Will-Y-2. Maybe these other clones are lying or there's a mutant shapeshifter around here somewhere.") Since the Clones in Gray's primary mission is to cover up all alien involvement (including Troubleshooter deaths under suspicious circumstances), they use their special access to the clone vats to create numerous back-ups of every clone number of every player character (complete with proper tongueprint). Other CIGs dispose of the body, and zap the brains of inconvenient witnesses. And what Troubleshooter is going to complain about a free Will-Y for the bad guys to whale on? Stop. Just. Stop. No.

Or maybe the programmers in the clone vats hit two keys when typing and 56 Will-Ys were made. "This is going to be a stupidly lethal game, so here's a way to avoid running out of clones" is never a good sign. I get the distinct impression the writers of this scenario come from the "players like it when you unfairly kill them over and over" school of PARANOIA mission design. This isn't just ZAP! this is advanced ZAP!

I'd personally still have penalties for dying so many times. All those deaths chock ip to the end game. Determining a winner. Like a party game.

If the Troubleshooters abuse this, enforce The Computer's edict (Handout #2) that death is treason and contributing to treason is treason. Use demotions, fines, torture, and skill reductions to hurt them instead of executions. So this is a gem in a sea of drek. Do punish rather than kill....

Hey...with all these alien races, there's not gonna be any adult topics in here like, um... reproduction or drugs, are there?

Well, John-Y, it's time we had a talk.

This adventure deals with mutants from faraway planets with different cultures than our own. Sometimes they have urges clones don't, or acidic compounds in their bloodstream which may send the Wrong Messages to clones' brains. But Paranoia is adult entertainment, just like all those other dark-future roleplaying games, and sometimes we have to address topics that make us uncomfortable. Ick. Adult entertainment. Don't you mean "adult" and "entertainment"?

Or, if you'd rather, just remind the Troubleshooters that due to their hormone suppressants and Pro-U-ZAC, they can freely ignore all this bad icky stuff and go back to the PG action they know and love.

Like treason, theft, kidnapping, battery, premeditated murder, and detonating weapons of mass destruction?

Yes, John-Y. All those good things and you don't even have to think too hard.

1.0: Fresh Meet

SUMMARY

The clones receive their mission briefing in Room MST3K, in a nightcycle club in XXX Sector. Since Briefing Officer John-O-SON isn't authorized to give the briefing, he can only hint at what they're supposed to do, and gets heckled for it.

RUNNING IT

The player characters begin in Troubleshooter Headquarters in ATL Sector.

Encounter 1.1: He Knew the Wrists

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

It's another muggy nightcycle in the Big C's ATL Sector, where the condensation never stops and the condescension keeps going. You know its creches and cliches like the customized grips of your slugthrowers. Most importantly, you know when to play it ultra-chill, and that time is now. You're just a quick scream from ATF Sector, where the security goons are itching for an excuse to introduce you to their friend Citizen Termination Voucher. Already, you hear laser fire.

Your com units ring.

Wait until they notice none of them have com units. Is this a joke.

Well, okay, a com unit on the wall rings. You answer it. Shut up, I do the talking here.

"Troubleshooting Team 19004673562, you have been honored with a small job for The Computer with minimal complications. Your instructions are being printed through your wrist facsimiles. Failure to obey the orders therein is treason. Have a nice nightcycle."

None of the characters have a wrist facsimile. If they point this out to The Computer, it fines them 200 credits, automatically deducted from their electronic accounts. If they request wrist facsimiles, The Computer says "At your service, Citizen. What is your security clearance?" If it's Yellow or above, THUNK – new wrist facsimiles fall from the nearest clone delivery tube. These are, of course, imitation wrists, kind of squishy and oozing. The Computer deducts 200 credits from their accounts for each wrist requested. [Trying for the Alpha Complexities feel I see](#). Shortly thereafter, a docbot arrives, with a BotWagon logo on its surgical chainsaw. It requests to attach their new appendages. Any clone who falls for this old saw (ha) deserves the result. They can get the news if they ask for "just the fax" or a wrist-mounted facsimile. If the characters ask what electronic accounts are, The Computer assumes something has gone wrong with their MemoMax transfers and tells them to read the news facsimile. Failure to do so is worth three treason points and a 25-credit fine.

The mission alert and news fax are Player Handouts #1&2. The Troubleshooters' briefing is in XXX Sector, most of the way across Alpha Complex, so they'd better hurry to get there.

Encounter 1.2: Up and ATEM

If anyclone asks to convert treasonous, obsolete plasticreds to electronic money, The Computer directs them to the nearest Automated Tankbot Economic Module, [It's an AT\(E\)M! Really going for quality puns here](#) a 10-ton, treaded, octahedral tankbot with terminal and slot for inserting plasticreds, and a track-mounted Traitorbuster Model #762 auto-slugthrower and cone rifle combo (skill 8/14). It is striped in every security clearance and thickly armored (L2P212). At citizen request, it shifts and rotates its faces to give the customer the correct colored side. Unfortunately, it is also ordered to keep its weapons trained on potential traitors (i.e. clones). Doing so requires its Indigo side to face forward, so when a clone approaches, it shifts to Yellow, then back to Indigo, aiming the rifle.

The ATEMs are typically unfriendly Alpha Complex bots. They speak in disjointed, mechanical tones. They justify themselves with bot logic: clones are potential traitors. It is more important to aim at potential traitors than to serve them. Uh-oh. Failure to convert creds is treason. Using Indigo clearance equipment is (blam) treason. Delaying the mission is treason.

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

ATEM (honking nasal voice): Welcome-to-the-A-dot-T-dot-E-dot-M-dot. **Why is the ATEM using dots, if it's spelt without them? Surely it should be an A.T.E.M. Minor nitpick I know but I value consistency** Please- announce-your-security-clearance-and-insert-plasticreds. One-momentplease, processing- transaction (shifts gun and shape).

Ripple-Y-ELN: Hey! Synthetic! Point that thing somewhere else!

ATEM: Attention. Potential-traitor-in-ATL-Sector, name-Ripple-Y-ELN-1.

Computer: Is there a problem, Citizen Ripple-Y?

Ripple-Y-ELN: This bot is calling me names and refusing to operate. I'm no traitor!

ATEM: All-clones-have-the-potential-for-treason. The-lower-the-security-clearance-the-higher-the-potential.

Rube-Y-ROD: Don'tlooksobluehonit'saboveyourclearance. You'vegottaknowhowtotalk plainbinary! **"Don'tlooksobluehon" ... I feel as though this guy's stealing my jokes... Now I just feel dirty.** (Plays theme music and struts up to ATEM. Uses machine empathy: blows the roll) Hey, ATEM! You know law number one! Computer says can't you change the order just once? (Blows spurious logic roll as well.)

ATEM: Computer-says-you're-not-The-Computer. Traitor-found. (BLAM! "Ting" of expended brass shell. Flop of body.)

((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

The characters will probably resort to common problem-solving techniques such as these after they run out of ammo.

Find a passing Indigo. What luck! There's Violet citizen Sleight-V-HND, who's happy to help a few hard-luck clones adjust their credit balance. Why's it so low? Must have been Commie sabotage somewhere, friend Yellows.

Tip the bot over to pin its gun. This requires three Difficult Strength + athletics tests in one round (i.e. teamwork, a big lever, or Adrenaline Control), but it actually works. If it falls on anyone, they take 5I damage.

Disable the shifting mechanism or move the gun.

"Fill-out-form-357-556-458-FMJ-Authorization-to-Repair-and-Maintain A-dot-T-dot-E-dot-M-dot."

This is possible, but takes an hour or so (refer to "treason" and "delay of mission," above).

Hacking at it with an unauthorized tool kit requires the clone to win initiative and make a Difficult warbot repair roll (though it's not a warbot, it's close) to nail a weak spot in one swipe.

Spurious Logic: The Troubleshooters can agree to point their guns at teammates to relieve the bot of its duty while depositing credits. After some arguing, this works...if you trust your fellow Troubleshooters.

Encounter 1.3: To XXX S-ector

If the characters don't reach XXX Sector on time, they are met by an irate Computer monitor asking who caused this treasonous delay. Even without the threat of imminent death, XXX Sector can be a shock to unprepared eyes.

It's been a long hike through the dim corridors, but you've made it at last, plying your boredom with soothing thoughts of disemboweling Communists as you stroke the butt of your large, hot, humming laser. *Anybody else finding this creepily sexual?* You look forward to your mission briefing with maniacal glee. Perhaps you will be given permission, nay, verily ordered to commit the mayhem you love. Carried away by this fantasy, you whip the gun out, pointing it at your teammates and screaming "Hands in the air, Communist vat-slime, or face the wrath of Ilsa, She-Wolf of the SS!"

Or maybe not. Come on, how're we supposed to know what you're thinking? Game designers gotta guess these things, ya know. *What in HEL did I just read. A waste of time.*

Anyway...

As you reach the opening corridors of XXX Sector you are assaulted by a blast of loud music, throbbing and screeching at well beyond regulation volume, a steady, toneless beat that keeps time with the flashing orange lights on every wall. "LIVE CLONES!" their neon glow advertises, "WET AND WILD ACTION." *Adult entertainment indeed. My imagination pictures all this like Duke Nukem parody.*

Entertainment in Alpha Complex is PG, so the XXX-Sector dancers are fully clothed, but it's better than the Infrared entertainment which offers dead clones. ("Wet and wild action" means surprise hygiene enforcement via power hoses.)

Cheap Trick: Put on some bad-taste funk or 1970s disco music, ideally the soundtrack to a porn movie (or make the noise yourself: "bow-na-na-na NA NA na na..."). Think "Bootsy." (If you actually got that reference and are nodding and going "Yeah! My players will love that!" seek help immediately.) *I did a google and I think they mean Bootsy Collins? Anyway, just as a side point: I once played in a game where we were 70's cops, and the GM found an album of porno soundtrack music to play as background. It was awesome!*

"Found" huh?



Honestly, if you google "porn soundtrack music" there are several albums.

Do the Troubleshooters still have the Mission Alert telling them to go to Matchst-Y-XXX's? Better hope so, because there's dozens of nightcycleclubs trying to part the clones from their hard-stolen plasticreds, from Craz-Y-VIN's GoGo Clones to the exclusive Tac-O-MAH's Violet Haze and Club Penum-R-BRA.

At last! Your destination lies before you, its name spelled in glittering bulbs. As you shove the orange door aside, you come face to...well, stomach...with an immense bot. Its metallic torso glitters with sleek, sculpted muscles like the bots of Borisval-Y-AHO, and its impassive, visored face scans you like you were week-old Hot Fun. Then it speaks, its honking voice loud even over the music.

"Welcome-to-Matchst-Y-XXX's-nightcycle-club-friend-citizens," it grinds out.

"Please-check-your-weapons."

This is the Traitor-Removal Operating Lift Bouncerbot. **It's a TROL. Because Shadowrun has trolls, and they often act as bouncers or other jobs where muscle is improtant. Get it?** Its programming is simple. It will not allow any clone carrying a weapon bigger than a hat pin (which is above their security clearances) to enter the club. Anyone trying this gets lifted by the TROL's Traitor-SpaderTM forklift-like attachment and deposited firmly outside. The TROL is rather zealous, and traitor removal often ends with said clone's head hitting the ceiling (2I) doorframe (3I) and corridor floor outside (4I).

The bot has Armor of FALL2, and an effective strength of 12 (enough to pick up three clones at once). If attacked, it attempts to remove the traitors itself before summoning the other dozen TROLs in XXX Sector through an internal com unit.

It has enough sensors, explosives detectors and scanners to find just about any weapon the characters have upon their persons. On the other hand, its bot brain is extremely limited, and doesn't recognize other treasonous items, so they could hide the entire Communist party in their back pocket and it wouldn't notice as long as they were unarmed. (Granted, this would require non-regulation-sized pockets.)

If the Troubleshooters turn over their weapons, it thanks them in the same robotic voice, and hands them a ticket to retrieve the item on the way out.

Then they watch in horror as it crumples the weapon to a tiny, compact cube (leaking fuel and ammo all over the floor) and stacks it inside its chest cavity. The bot is programmed to use the space to maximum efficiency, and will not change its policy unless reprogrammed (treasonous,

and difficult to do without someone noticing). Taking away the team's weapons and destroying them is something which on the face of it seems like a really bad idea in PARANOIA, unless one wishes to discourage combat for some reason. If the designers had some sort of plot-specific reason to want to remove the weapons, it would be nice if they'd tell the GM why. The fact that they offer ways around the confiscation suggests that it isn't necessary so much as an attempt at being mean.

Once past the bot, the Troubleshooters find themselves in a smoke-filled (bad wiring in the heating unit), dimly lit (ditto for the lights) nightcycle club, filled with Orange citizens watching the gyrating Teela-O look-alikes. It takes an Easy perception roll to notice the sniper hiding in the rafters: As you walk into the room, the scent of Barely-Edible-Energy-Restorative is overwhelming, and you find yourself longing to dance or sit down with the other clones and kick back with some B.E.E.R and chips, but you can't shake the feeling someone's watching you. Clone, you tell yourself, don't go borrowing trouble, be careful what you wish for, you just might get it, nightmares do come true, anything can happen and probably will, and some other clichés somehow meant to be subtle. Anyone drawing a gun yet?

Suddenly, to your vast surprise and amazement, you see something glint off the disco ball on the ceiling, a glint where no glint should be...well, maybe it's just one of many, but you'd recognize that glint anywhere. That's a Rang-R-ARM's S&M-3 sniper rifle scope, with or without optional leather strap.

The would-be assassin, the Yellow Peril, is easy to spot, as the only Yellow citizen present besides the Troubleshooters. In fact, if they have trouble finding her, she jumps up and down and waves her arms in between sniper shots. Since she came in through the roof, the TROL has yet to notice her.

The Yellow Peril is a mentally-programmed assassin sent by the Clones in Gray to slow the Troubleshooters down. She has been conditioned to believe that she can reach Nir-V-ANA (the clone in charge of promotions in her sector) by charging blindly forth to get slaughtered by people vastly more competent than she. There are rumors that similarly programmed clones have escaped Alpha Complex and migrated into other Not-Fun roleplaying games, but really, who could tell? I'm getting a headache trying to work out what the joke is here. Also, "other Not-fun roleplaying games" is presumably supposed to be "other, Not-fun, roleplaying games", or "other (not-Fun) roleplaying games", but honestly I like the fact that the current punctuation

suggests that the current game is "Not-fun". Because this is not fun. Yea, the subconscious knows best.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

The Yellow Peril

Service Group: Technical Services (Postal Department)

Mutant Power: Precognition

Secret Society: Illuminati

S3 E3 A3 C3 D3 MA7 M2 P5

Skills: Projectile Weapons 5/8 and a whole lot of other stuff. As a matter of fact, she might be a perfectly well-developed character that could take up a page or two of history, but face facts...what's going to happen the second she threatens a Troubleshooter?

She's seen the future and joyfully tries to die at their hands, even if they have no weapons left. She wants to kill somebody (just one...multiple clones are too much for her) but after she sees a hint of

blood, she begs for termination. She claims no Complex name, but her tongue tattoo reads Chim-Y-RAH-6.

Equipment: Range-R-ARM's S&M-3 slugthrower rifle (4P) with leather strap and whip attachment; registered-mutant jumpsuit (black concentric rings on back).

((((END TEXT BOX)))

The music is so loud that the Orange citizens don't notice gunfire, but tumbling, bleeding clones and bright laser beams may get their attention. If anyone lasers the disco ball, everyone in the room is hit by 0-10 (1D20-10) laser beams, and they destroy 23,544 credits worth of Computer property.

There are 450 wildly dancing, sweaty, drunk happy Orange citizens watching the six Yellows come into their club and shoot someone with the guns that the bouncerbot took and destroyed, naturally, speak to her, and shoot her again when she twitches oddly. Naturally, the Oranges panic; they can get executed for disobeying orders they didn't hear, and none of them have weapons to defend themselves.

Some clones assume the Yellows want to lead them in a new dance to test their loyalty, and slavishly imitate the Troubleshooters' every motion. This includes running for the briefing room, hitting an Orange, or drawing a gun. Others try to save themselves by keeping the Yellows entertained – dancing with them, offering them food and drink, and herding them into the limbo

line. (Alpha Complex "limbo" lasts nearly forever...it's almost as mindless as the "purgatory."
Tough Endurance + dance rolls to get away.)

The rest worship the Troubleshooters like slumming celebrities. Local clones (like Whataf-O-XXX, Dumbasr-O-XXX, Lostmis-O-XXX and Begintextb-OXXX) **For the sake of my sanity, I want to assume that Begintextb-O-XXX is meant to be just a little joke for the editors and was never intended to make it to the final piece** surround the Troubleshooters asking for autographs, wanting to get their pictures taken with the clones, and asking if the Yellow can show his agent their manuscript.

All three responses are inaudible due to the music.

Cheap Trick: Turn up some music far too loud and turn on a strobe light. Pretend you can't hear the Troubleshooters. Imitate what the players do. If you lose their motions, beg for your life silently, then go into a game of Charades in order to communicate. Think of everything except "should I get out of the way?" This should be suspiciously like communicating with an alien species or deranged dance-crazy chimpanzees.

Getting to the briefing late is worth seven treason points.

Guys, I really think we need to emphasise something: the Troubleshooters most likely had their weapons taken and destroyed. Then they got attacked by a sniper who wants to die, and the designers are just assuming that the Troubleshooters proceed to shoot the sniper, and then talk to her. But we aren't given any indication of what she says, what happens if they decide to investigate, what happens IF THEY DON'T HAVE ANY VATTING WAY TO KILL HER BECAUSE ALL THEIR WEAPONS WERE CONFISCATED AND SHE'S UP IN THE RAFTERS, etc. Even if she kills someone then immediately drops to the floor and begs for termination...there is no consideration for possible player responses. It's like they just felt they ticked off "assassination attempt" in the list of things that need to happen then forgot about it.

Encounter 1.4: Heckler and Scotch

Briefing room MST3K is a haven of solitude after your harrowing journey, a small room furnished with a table and seven chairs. The all-seeing eye of The Computer watches benevolently from the far corner, above a pasty-looking Orange clone in a three-piece jumpsuit (must have run into one of those rogue tailorbots).

Strangely, the far wall is made of clear Plexiglas, behind which sit two unidentifiable bots and a stern-faced clone in the white mantle of High Programmerhood. Across the wall a single

message flashes repeatedly: THERE IS NO ONE HERE. PAY NO ATTENTION TO THE CLONE BEHIND THE WALL.

"Ooh, Troubleshooters," yells the man you can't see, "Fashionably late, huh? What's your excuse? Been blocking bullets with your katana? Trying to collapse the planetary economy by growing super-ganja on the ocean floor? Stealing nukes from the Vatican?"

"That's stretching it," his bot comments. "Nobody'd believe that."

Several tubes run up the wall behind them and over to your side of the room.

The Orange walks forward. "Greetings, friend clones," he says. "My name is Citizen John-O-SON, and I need some reliable Troubleshooters for a small mission with minimal complications. Do you think you're up for it?"

Not being up for the mission is treason. What'd you think, they could just walk away? This isn't Shadowgame™, ya know. Because of the mission's secrecy (and treasonous programming from some Clones in Gray), The Computer assigned a deniable patsy to give the briefing, someone expendable enough to be killed when his usefulness is over, and powerless enough not to do anything with information he learns.

John-O, a low-level putz of even less importance than the player characters, fits the bill perfectly, turning the meeting into a constant run-around since John-O must obey the higher-clearance clones, but, as their briefing officer, can give them orders. (A cookie for anyone who thinks to order him to stop giving orders.)

Astute gamemasters may already be asking how an Orange clone can give a Yellow clearance briefing when he's not even authorized to know what the mission is.

Fortunately, Our Buddy is wise in the ways of Troubleshooting and recognizes that even the best clones are more likely to succeed on a mission if told what it is beforehand (try running Creatures of the Nightcycle if you doubt this). **Historical note: Creatures of the Nightcycle is the only published mission for Fifth Edition. It's horrible. Guess who the writing team were? The same people who wrote this adventure. Wink.** So TC devised a foolproof system of secure briefing transmission.

High Programmer Joe-U-ELL watches the briefing from behind Plexiglas and feeds John-O coded information (that sounds much like sarcasm) to answer the Troubleshooters' questions and give John-O instructions. John-O then translates Joe-U's code into a different code (corporate-buzzwordspeak) before passing on the information. By the time it gets through these two layers of deception/security, The Computer figures, no eavesdropper will figure out the

mission. The full explanation is in the briefing envelope, which is sealed and trapped for mission security.

Accompanying Joe-U are two bots, Bomb-Servo and Throw, which have the dual function of protecting the High Programmer if any uppity Troubleshooter gets treasonous (like talking to Joe-U directly), or terminating John-O if he learns too much.

I should have seen it coming, but yet briefing room MST3K taking place in a frackin' MST3K episode came as a surprise and I just can't even....

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Joe-U-ELL-4

Service Group: Technical Services, Janitorial Division

Mutant Power: Mechanical Intuition

Secret Society: Clones in Gray

Stats: He and the bots are behind FALL3 Plexiglas. They run if something breaches it; so don't worry about it. His interrogation is 5/13 for clones trying to fast-talk and lie their way out of death.

Joe-U knows what the mission briefing is, but prefers that the Troubleshooters waste time figuring it out. When playing Joe-U, speak in a low but clear voice like you're in a movie theater. Roll your eyes like a bored teenager. Frustrate the characters.

Bomb-Servo and Throw

Skills: Demolitions 8/16 (B-S), Throwing 6/13 (Throw).

Weapons: 12 black powder bombs with crackling fuses (5FP)

Speed: Crawl

Joe-U designed these bots to entertain him in his solitude (the other CIGs don't let him out much, since he can't keep his mouth shut). Bomb-Servo is a half-meter tall hovering bot with an extremely blunt, parrot-like beak on its chest. Where its head should be is a spout like a ping-pong-ball gun, out of which pop cartoon-style bombs. Throw is about the same height, but with a much longer beak and paired optical sensors. Its right arm ends in a sling attachment which it uses to toss Servo's bombs into the rafters. Slowly, the bombs roll down a labyrinthine series of chutes (visible overhead to terrify traitors) into the briefing room. Both bots are cleared for actual sarcasm and aren't bothering with codes.

John-O-SON-1

Service Group: CPU

Mutant Power: Unshakable Calm.

Secret Society: Free Enterprise

S3 E5 A5 C9 D5 MA7 M8 P9

Skills: Spurious Logic 6/15, Motivation 5/13.

Equipment: Three-piece suit, plastic smile.

John-O knows he's in a bad situation, and hides behind his position when possible. He drags the meeting out to avoid showing his own powerlessness, taking their commands literally ("Do you know what time it is?" "Yes."), and refusing to say anything that isn't in answer to a direct question. He won't do anything even mildly treasonous (like help the Troubleshooters out) and appeals to The Computer if the characters try to make him. Unshakable Calm means that on a successful Power roll, John-O is immune to the Deep Probe or Empathy power, and is inhumanly capable of ignoring threats. He follows direct orders, but with no life at all. No matter how high the probability of death, he doesn't blink, though he may saunter under a desk if a bomb falls into the room.

When playing John-O, do not change expression, and speak in a voice that could frustrate HAL-9000. Y'know, that mumbling pseudo-politeness of a telemarketer, completely unable to say or do anything not in the little cue-card book he's reading from. His replacement clones are already waiting in the next room.

((END TEXT BOX))

John-O smiles and passes around glasses of a strong-smelling substance like the B.E.E.R. "Is everybody comfortable?" he inquires politely.

"No, this chair is a cleverly disguised iron maiden," says the officially non-existent Ultraviolet. *Is it me, or this two lines exist to create a pun? Nah, it's MST3K-ing.*

When you nod and assure John-O that you're fine, he points to the large Yellow envelope on the table. "Well," he says, "there it is. Any questions?"

If the characters have no questions, John-O leaves.

The envelope is made of Yellow-painted titanium, welded shut on all sides; there is no apparent way to open it. Failure to read mission briefing is treason. Destroying, crushing, or lasering the unopenable envelope is treason punishable by summary explosion (6m blast radius, 5FE damage). It has an effective armor of ALL2. If the players shoot John-O as a probable traitor,

then try to find the opening device on his person, they lose big-time. John-O has no opening device, so they get 5 treason points for killing an innocent citizen, and the envelope's still shut. It is (barely) possible to slice through the envelope and retrieve the briefing in one piece. This requires a Very Difficult demolitions roll, and some sort of super-strong or heated cutting tool. (A failed roll? Well, the room looks better with wet Red wallpaper anyway...)

The envelope (when they get it open) contains the mission briefing (Handout #3, including photos of Mick-G-UFN before and after his disguise of Mick-G-AGR) and directions to PLC, R&D and Mick-G-UFN's sleep creche.

Asking The Computer for help with the envelope is dangerous. Only a Commie would suggest taking off the security measures decreed necessary for these files. Who do they want to show it to, anyway? If The Computer, in the wisdom of Its databanks, chose them to perform this mission, they must be the correct clones for it, and, by definition, are able to perform it without help, so shut up and get back to work.

The upshot of all this is that the characters cannot non-treasonously find out anything about their mission here. Zero. Zilch. Nada. Keep executing them until they get the point. Such a conversation might go something like this.

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Will-Y-SMT: Now wait just a minute, motherboarder. What'd you mean, 'there it is?'

John-O-SON: My apologies, Citizen, if I was not clear. Your mission is inside. Is that all?

Will-Y-SMT: No that's not all. (Picks up envelope, reads the DO NOT OPEN: EXPLOSIVES stickers all over it.) I don't like this.

Joe-U-ELL: (shouts from sidelines) Real snappy comeback! Just open the envelope and give your next clone a chance!

Will-Y-SMT: (To John-O) As a higher-ranking clone, I order you to open this envelope.

John-O-SON: I'm sorry, sir. That envelope is above my security clearance. I'm afraid it would be treason to touch it.

Scully-Y-FBI: Wait a minute-cycle. If you can't touch it, how'd it get in here?

John-O-SON: That information is above my security clearance.

Rube-Y-ROD: Solikemyman, can't you give us just a tiny little bitty bit of a hint? For the viewers ya know? Like keep the reason within reason. (Thinks.) Is the sticker just a bluff?

John-O-SON: I'm afraid that information is also above my clearance. But I approve of your take-charge demeanor. You certainly think outside the box.

Joe-U-ELL: Hey, Bomb-Servo, tell us what's next on John-O's Stupidity-O-Meter.

Bomb-Servo: Well, Joe, as the meter reading increases, John-O will decide that ancient elves from Atlantis are taking over the world starting with Oregon, resurrect an evil spirit with a second-rate rock band, then fight his employees to the death to complete his trap.

Ripple-Y-ELN: So is there anywhere we can find out what's in this thing?

John-O-SON: Well, it might be logical to conclude that any provisions The Computer hypothetically meant you to have might maybe possibly kinda sorta be able to be requested at PLC. No promises.

Joe-U-ELL: (Video-game voice) "John-O-SON...is about to die..."

Throw: (Video-game voice) "Briefing Officer needs excuse...badly..."

Bomb-Servo: I'd sooner believe that some cable station is getting e-mail from the future.

The Computer: CITIZEN JOHN-O-SON, WHERE DID YOU LEARN THAT THESE CITIZENS WERE GOING TO VISIT PRODUCTION, LOGISTICS AND COMMISARY?

Bomb-Servo and Throw: Light. Crackle. Crackle. Toss.

Rube-Y: HeyheyheythethingImeanthecrackleImeanit'saBOMB!Let'smove!

Doors: CA-CHUNK.

The Computer: ATTENTION, TROUBLESHOOTERS! YOU ARE REQUIRED TO WITNESS AND VERIFY THE TERMINATION OF TRAITOR JOHN-OSON.

John-O-SON: Friend Computer, I know nothing about the mission. I merely hypothesized that because You provide for all, a portion is in PLC.

The Computer: VERY WELL. TERMINATION CANCELED. PROCEED.

Rube-Y: HeythedoorsMyBuddythedoors!Thebombwon'tgoout!

John-O-SON: I have faith in The Computer.

Bomb: BOOOM!

Everyone: Bleed. Bleed. Bleed. Expire. (John-O-SON-2 walks in...Yellow envelope drops from the chute. Briefing begins again.)

((((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Defusing Bomb-Servo's explosives requires a Difficult demolitions roll. In the case above, sharp clones can terminate John-O, defuse the bombs, and get a commendation from The Computer for 100 credits. They may also notice that TC did say they are going to PLC. If not, The Computer interrupts eventually and orders them to the new PLC pyramid at the other end of XXX Sector. A row of Yellow bulbs lights the way.

I feel like this might end up being a running theme of “here’s the vating obvious idocy in the scene” synopsis but here goes anyway: it’s been made clear that opening the envelope is almost impossible. But also “when the envelope is opened, give them the handout”. That niggle aside, this entire briefing can basically be boiled down to “sarcastically insult the Troubleshooters whilst killing them over and over again until you get bored or they get the message that their best option is to just sit down and shut up, then send them to PLC”. This is not a fun scenario to be a player in. As I said earlier: these designers seem to be under the misapprehension that PARANOIA is all about letting the GM bully the players. And that’s terrible.

2.0: The Shopping Maul

SUMMARY

The Troubleshooters visit Arcol-Y-GEE's PLC pyramid, where they are hurried through the 480-story building in seven and a half minutes, blunder into high-clearance areas, and receive scads of personal weaponry. They visit R&D in DOC Sector, sign up for BotWagon emergency medical service and are implanted with SIBERware, TUPERware, and Pro-U-ZAC's pills. Aliens ambush them, but a quick flash by the Clones in Gray and all is a blur.

Encounter 2.1: Gear Madness

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

The immense pyramid stands before you, PRODUCTION, LOGISTICS AND COMMISSARY emblazoned on the top in letters as tall as three clones. You trudge slowly up the front steps, expecting the usual line of citizens, order forms clutched tightly in their hands, some who've been waiting so long they're covered with Green stuff on their north sides.

But no. As you reach the stairs, you realize something is drastically amiss. Clones disappear into the front door at normal walking speed, not slowing in dread or bumping into any backlog.

Hesitating, you peer inside. A chill runs through you. Could PLC truly have become...efficient?!

Answer: Well, sorta.

The First Half of the (Very Bad) Trip

The Computer, on its endless quest to make Alpha Complex yet more utopian, assigned efficiency expert Arcol-Y-GEE to redesign XXX-Sector PLC as an experimental new layout and procedure for item-requisition. Inside, a series of autocarts of varying clearance colors wait for the Troubleshooters.

Each car has a trailing wire to the ceiling, like a bumper car, and a little storage bin behind the seat. And no seat belt. A Computer camera and nearby ATEM deter traitors from taking inappropriate colors. Once loaded, the autocarts begin a slow, dizzying climb up spiraling tracks. The wind picks up.

There's no real safety precautions, but unless someone is pushed, the 480-story drop (about 1,420m) isn't too likely. *Shadowrun features arcologies. The most famous one is the SCIRE, which featured heavily in the Shadowrun metaplot, most prominently the 1998 supplement Renraku Arcology: Shutdown which covered the SCIRE being taken over by an insane AI. The surface-level similarity to PARANOIA is blatant enough that I'll be surprised if it gets milked here.*

Cheap Trick: Put a fan on. It's windy here.

At the top, they are met by Citizen Bigger-G-UNS, an enormous clone in warm Green clothing, who supervises a number of whining, terrified-looking Red clones who beg for their lives. He shoves their carts down ominous chutes; the second half of the trip. Clocks monitor the plummeting clones' speed and record times, up to 190 kph in some places. Bigger-G sometimes yanks a lever and the signals shut off when a clone takes more than seven minutes and thirty seconds. Distantly, on the wind, explosions and screams can be heard. Six unhappy-looking (though they snarl "We're singing on the inside!" if asked) uniformed Yellow IntSec guards read newsfaxes, ready to back up Bigger-G if necessary.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Bigger-G-UNS and the IntSec Yellows

Service Group: IntSec (including Bigger-G, who's undercover)

Mutations: Telepathy

S9 E9 A7 C5 D8 MA4 M5 P3

Macho Bonus: 1 HTH Bonus: 1

Equipment: Partially Heavy Armor (L2P2AP1I2), Tangler pistol, Yellow or Green laser pistol, Rugose Super Warhol paint gun, box of donuts (empty).

Skills: Energy Weapons 6/14, Projectile Weapons 7/15, Autocar O&M 5/10.

The Yellows are simple Alpha Complex cops. Bigger-G poses as a cheerful PLC worker. He loves his work, grinning evilly when talking about his old days wasting Commies in NAM Sector. Other conversation topics usually end with someone going down the chute. The partial armor covers either the left or right half of the body with mirrored densiplast over kevlar sandbags. This unbalanced getup halves walking speed, but if three goons

are riding an autocart down after a hapless Troubleshooter, one hangs off either side of the cart, armor side out, and the combined weight of the two gunners and the driver lets it outrun Troubleshooters easily. (Note that if one of the side gunners is knocked off, the driver must make a Difficult Autocar roll to avoid overbalancing. If successful, he balances it on two wheels, sparks flying.)

The Super Warhol is a belt-fed revolver (???) used by the drivers Knight-Y-RNT and Lone-Y-STR. It fires balls of highly adhesive Violet paint, making the hit characters a target for anyone in Alpha Complex, so the cops don't have to work too hard.

((END TEXT BOX)) Oh good, priming for an unnecessarily complex chase sequence.

Until the Troubleshooters get that envelope open, they don't even know what their mission is, much less what equipment they need. And unless some fast-thinking player points this out to Bigger-G, they never will.

If the characters explain the situation, Bigger-G graciously takes out the mysterious Green Clearance item known as a steam iron and steams the envelope, triggering its moisture sensors and opening mechanism. Bigger-G is friendly and helpful in all ways but one -- he won't let the clones slow anything down. As soon as the envelope is open, he chucks it at one of them and shoves the team's carts down the chute.

The complete Mission Briefing is in Player Handouts which we don't provide as this adventure is huge enough by itself???; the quick version goes as follows.

They are assigned to retrieve Mick-G-UFN, an employee of the Computer- Approved Space Administration, as part of their Search for Extraordinary Troubleshooter Intelligence. Mick-G disappeared yesterdaycycle, after reporting a strange phenomenon, and the Computer wants his original clone retrieved alive because of the MemoMax problems. At PLC, they have one million plasticreds to spend on gear they think necessary and efficient.

Of course, anyone reading this on the way down the chute does so in a 190 kph headwind. Still have that fan handy? Point it at the players.

The Second Half of the (Very Bad) Trip, or "M.C. Escher Meets the Electrified Alpha Complex Bobsled Team's Toize-R-USS Shopping Spree."

Arcol-Y, a Romantic of the 90210 chapter, based his design on the greatest of Old Reckoning institutions, the shopping mall. Rather than waste valuable space by spreading the mall out, he built it up. Each of the floors contains a number of stores in which equipment is organized by type and security clearance.



Arcol-Y was going to be executed if he didn't make the process fast enough. To facilitate clone progress through the mall, Arcol-Y built steeply sloped tracks to shuttle the autocars past each requisition window, where clones can scream their order, or jump the car off the tracks to look further. If a clone misses on the first try, they circle around and the PLC clone hands over the item (even if it's a force sword). To make sure no backlog developed, he gave each visitor a time limit of seven and a half minutes to satisfy his needs in the entire 480-story building.

This means a lot of autocar ops and maintenance rolls to avoid unauthorized impersonations of crash-test dummies. Other shoppers, display carts, decorative strings of lights, Internal Security barricades, etc., make the roll Difficult to Ridiculous. The bumper-carts are heavily padded and can withstand nearly any impact, merely flying backwards from the collision. We mentioned that no-seat-belt thing already, right?

To discourage Troubleshooters from requesting items above their clearance, the cars are given "Negative Reinforcement Adjusters." When a car drives through a higher-clearance zone, the steering rods electrify, and anyclone touching them takes 2E damage, increasing by 1 for every round they remain.

(Scul-Y's gloves reduce this by 1). Spasming clones don't drive well. The security clearances were decided at the last minute, and jump around randomly, with safe Red and Yellow areas bordered by Blue, Indigo, or even Violet. The map in Player Handouts represents a typical floor. For Troubleshooters to stay within the correct clearance or get inside a store, they must jump their carts off the track and through doorways at breakneck speeds. This requires a Difficult autocar O&M test. For damage done by landing, consult the Vehicular Accidents and Falling From Great Heights table. If a clone goes downstairs this way, it hurts once for speed and once for height.

If anyclone tarries beyond the 7.5-minute mark, Bigger-G "clears them out of the way," dispatching the Yellow IntSec goons into the maze.

Making Sense of the Mess

We WFGDs understand the strain it puts on gamemasters to describe so many potentially lethal encounters, so we have provided the following handy table. Whenever the characters hit a row of shelves, canned-goods display, pedestrian, or teammate, roll on the following chart to receive a free description of the resulting mess, no purchase necessary, void where prohibited by LAW rocket.

((((BEGIN CHART)))



THE "OH, JEEZ, YOU'RE GONNA HIT A-" TABLE

D20 Roll Result

1-4 Clone

5-8 Expensive Chunka Computer Property

9-16 Storefront

17-18 IntSec Blockade

19-20 Donut Stand

THE "AND IT LOOKS LIKE-" TABLE

D20 Roll Result

1-4 Screaming and clattering but nothing hurt or broken beyond an overturned synthfroot cart.

5-8 Drippy, see below.

9-12 Gritty, see below.

13-16 Chunky, see below.

17-20 Multitextured, roll twice.

BELOW

Yet Another D20

Drippy Gritty Chunky

1-4 Mauve Mucus Itchy Iridescence Globby Green

5-8 Gelatinous Grenadine Soapy Scarlet Spongy Sanguine

9-12 Watery White Spicy Silver Odiferous Ochre

13-16 Sticky Saffron Prickly Pink Crunchy Crimson

17-20 Sapphire Syrup Adhesive Azure Tofu

Anything of higher Clearance than the clones is treason to touch or wear, and IntSec considers splatters evidence of theft of high-clearance items.

((END CHART))

As the Troubleshooters zoom past or leap into the appropriate stores, they hear PLC workers calling out their list of wares at high speed. With an expense account of 1,000,000 creds, the Troubleshooters will probably just shout for whatever sounds good. If they try to find out how much anything costs, the PLC workers stare at them blankly and say the electronic accounts handle all that.

Cheap Trick: Read the following list at high speed over and over, marking down which items the players speak up for (saying "yes," "no," or "pull over"). Don't worry if you're a little off; PLC blames all problems on the Troubleshooters. If two people say "pull over" on the same item, they crash into each other (see Vehicular Accidents and Falling from Great Heights table...). Start a stopwatch; if they don't get it in under seven and a half minutes, they don't get it.

THE LIST

- Laser Rifles Voice Detector Flamethrowers
- Maser, Stifled Carol-EIN's Spect-R Hey!Slower!
- Wash Cycles Slide Projector Blame-Showers
- Phase-R's Trifles Commie Defector Chain Growers
- A Salt Rifle Han-Y-BAL's Lecture Com Is
- Bot-Motorcycles High Stoats Bomb Is
- Razor Whistles Trench Coats Com IIs
- Laser Pistols Dye Coats Bomb IIs
- Craz-Y's Gristle Pie Motes Bomb Teeths
- Nail Guns Force Ax Com Teeths
- Rail Guns BattleTax Com Rifles
- Chain Guns BattleFax Crone: Eiffel
- Attila's Buns RattleTraps Cone Rifle
- Light Machine Guns Red Barrels Cone Shells
- Light Machine Buns Orange Carrels Tone Rifle
- Guaranteed Runs Yellow Barrels Tone Shells
- Mini Guns Green Charos Multicorders
- Sheet Sweepers Green Barrels Muld-R's quarters
- Skeet Sleepers Green Barrios Multisporter
- Street Sweepers Green Arrows Multihoarder
- Sheet Sneakers Green Marrows Multiporter
- Skeet Sneakers Indigo Sparrows Multi Cord-er
- Shotgun Mikes Plasma Generator Multiquarter
- Reverse Trikes Plasma Venerator Multisnorter
- Iron Spikes Plasma Regenerator Full Auto

Unusual names are taken pretty literally. For instance, there's more guns here than your average NRA Sector convention: mini guns (three inches long), chain guns (fire chains), light machine guns (fire flashlights or halogen lamps), nail guns (for doing your nails), rail guns (fire rails), plasma generator (creates spare fluid for blood transfusions), and a salt rifle (fires salt...7FP damage to giant slugs, otherwise useless). They can also get street sweepers (a.k.a. whisk brooms), and shotgun mikes (hazardous communicators).

In the next store, they-What? Oh, you want to know what all those guns do in combat? Well, let's see. We could fill up three or four books with the stuff complete with nifty pictures and long lists of technical specifications which all boil down to about the same thing...

Nah. Our fans are too smart for that. **It's funny because that's what Shadowrun does...**

Instead, we recommend the following. If a player asks what the guns do, take a long time squinting down at the paper as if you were reading such a supplement, scrunch your eyebrows a lot to make him feel important, then tell him the rules are above his security clearance, but it has Computerapproved 10-round clips.

All damages are 3P or 3I. Yes, all of them; the big rails are slow but heavy, the nail polish is hyper-velocity. Don't sweat it. Any Troubleshooter who uses the nail gun on an opponent when he's got a laser in his pocket deserves what he gets. Oh, and they can also get replacements of whatever the TROLbot destroyed so you don't have to waste perfectly good graphite crossing the stuff off the character sheets. **Because they won't have already crossed it off three scenes ago, ya dumb hacks?**

The individual guns aren't important, but the Troubleshooters should end up with DyeCoats and Battletax systems somehow (whether they want to or not). DyeCoats are Yellow trenchcoats (for that Dicktrac-Y look) with multiple weapon pockets, worn over regular armor. When punctured, thick, viscous, Yellow paint flows out to obscure any stains, following the principle of "never let 'em see you bleed." The dye solidifies into plastic, and in theory it looks like the Troubleshooter was never hit. In practice? Think "industrial flypaper." Like enough to pin a knocked-over, wounded clone to the floor.

The BattleTax expert system is clipped on the characters' weapon triggers and wrists. Any time the trigger is squeezed, an aimbot in the wrist attachment corrects the clones' aim (giving a +1 bonus to their appropriate weapon skills) and has an integral Com II unit. As a bonus, the aimbots automatically keep track of any Computer property the wearer hits, electronically

deducting the cost of walls, armor, Infrareads, bots, etc. without informing the clone (which may surprise them the next time they need to buy something).

The autotransbot they were assigned was a single car for the six of them, but some Green citizens got to it first, so all they find is a full auto (rim shot).

Instead, they receive six motorcyclebots. These Alpha Complex cycles are similar to modern ones, except a bot brain aids balance, and the training wheels reduce maneuverability. Unknown to the characters, these used to belong to Internal Security, and are programmed to drive towards the nearest gunfire so the officers can stop the altercation. This can be extremely inconvenient when one is not a Violet Clearance IntSec goon with a badge and power armor.

The windshields provide P1 protection to the front.

Did I miss something, or did that chase scene they promised never materialise?

Encounter 2.2: Pier Pressure

The motorcyclebots spew fumes as you ride off into the bulbset, a long, gritty road to DOC Sector. A sense of anticipation hangs in the air.

Wait about ten seconds.

The sickly-sweet smell of blood reaches your nostrils as you approach the body-strewn R&D laboratory covered in screaming scrubots and rolling docbots like the dangerous, frenetic state of near-constant emergency that it is. Suddenly, a White autocar with a logo of a docbot dragging a body in a wagon pulls alongside, and the window rolls down. **It's a docwagon! Think an ambulance crew crossed with a SWAT team.**

"Troubleshooter Team 19004673563?" asks a blood-spattered docbot.

Nope. They're one digit off. If the clones go with them, the docbot turns them in for treasonously impersonating other clones, straps them down, and uses them as part of its involuntary organ donor program in HMO Sector. If the clones say no, another identical van drives up fifteen seconds later with the correct number. He waves them over to Pier 4Q2. See the map in Player Handouts.

The bodies all over the place are alive. They're just snoozing surgeon clones who've worked too hard and all the cots are taken. This isn't the Complex of Dimness, ya know. Nice and PG, we are.

The bot takes the lead, and in moments, you're away from the hustles and bustle of the thoroughfare. Ahead you see the DOC Sector Waterborne Expressway Transtube, and smell the sodium chloride-laced water from here.

The wagon drives past the cargo cranes and warehouses and onto Pier 4Q2, a mighty, sturdy, perfectly safe marvel of Computer engineering 2.5 meters wide, jutting out farther than the other docks. As the metal sags and rocks beneath your weight, you see a freightbot in the waterway, gracefully slowing down to fifty kilometers per hour as its hydrofoils sink into the water. Its magnograpples turn to snare the dock as it passes.

Count down from five. Anyone who doesn't say they're taking cover or bracing themselves must make a Difficult dodge roll to avoid getting hit by a magnetic cargo grapple (3I) or knocked into the water when fifty tons of freightbot yank on the pier to slow down. Water-soaked equipment gives Troubleshooters 2E electrical shorts. (They come in small, medium, or large...)

With the WHANG of a metal loading ramp, the R&D techs start pouring down...well, no. As a matter of fact, there aren't any clones in sight, unless you count the two dead ones on the floor with missing parts. All that's here are jackobots and gleaming gold-plated docbots. There's slugthrower holes and laser burns all over the side of the freightbot.

The White-coated docbot that drove the transbot steps forward. "Obey the orders of the Kevorkibot," his gold guardbot says, smiling perfect chrome teeth and starting up a multicorder. **I don't know why Dr Kevorkian is being referenced in a sci-fi spoof and I am beyond caring.**

The docbot brandishes a needle that looks like it was designed by a committee of R&D techs. Oh, wait, that's a pen. The shoulder-mounted thing is the needle.

"Velcome, volunteers," it says, printing a fax from its chest compartment. "You must sign ze BotWagon contract first, und case of...accident."

The Computer has decided to keep better track of Troubleshooter injury records by having each individual clone set up an account with the BotWagon emergency medical branch of R&D. Not signing the contracts, no matter how grossly unfair they are, is treason, and Alpha Complex has no lawyers to help the clones get out of it. (Ah...Utopia.)

Five borged-up clones, three jackobots and six docbots wait anxiously for the Troubleshooters to complete the contract so they can begin installing Self-Implanting Bio- Enhancement Rigs. Most cybernetics in Alpha Complex require weeks of surgery, a big nutrient vat, and chemical treatments to make sure the clone's body doesn't reject the part or swell up in an allergic reaction. SIBERware, invented by the alien Borger and slipped to BotWagon by the Clones in Gray, goes a flying leap beyond that. It actively forces itself into the clone's body as soon as it senses flesh (this is why there's only bots on board), burrows into the correct organs, and adheres with the same high technology that brought you MemoMax.

MemoMax, however, is not as painful.

Cheap Trick: The BotWagon contracts are Handout #4. Strap on some rubber gloves as the players fill out their forms. Keep an electric pencil sharpener, pizza cutter, and a sloppy joe, taco with meat, or cut-apart pizza behind the gamemaster screen. When someone picks up the SIBERware, sharpen a pencil, scream "AAHHGETITOFFA MEEENOPLEASECOMPUTERLETME LIII-I-I-I-I-VE," and collapse sobbing. Dip the pizza cutter in sauce. Then look up gleefully, cutter in hand, and say, "Neeeeext?" **This is probably the most extreme prop I have ever seen. I'm in awe of it, and I'm not sure if that's because it's cool or because it's stupid.**

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

The Kevorkibot

Speed: Stroll

Armor: 11P1

Skills: First Aid 7/15, Melee Weapons 3/10.

This is a Docbot Model X, five generations after the surgical-chainsaw-wielding Model Vs most Troubleshooters know. It is a basically humanoid bot with a shoulder-mounted hypodermic needle the width of a cone rifle and a belt-fed supply of painkillers ranging in strength from Novocain to arsenic. **I suspect what they mean is that the bit that holds the liquid is the width of a cone rifle and that the needle itself is small and thin, but that's not the image that's been put in my head....**

One hand ends in a rotating wheel of tools (scalpel, bone cutter, surgical restraint dispenser, defibrillator, stapler, skin sprayer, autohammer and chisel, garden-weasel, pizza slicer), the other is humanoid. Its function here is to deliver immense amounts of anesthesia and restrain clones as the SIBER is implanted. The anesthesia works perfectly. The clone gets kind of messy when all the muscles in their body go limp for the next hour and has -4 to all rolls, but nothing dangerous will happen before then, right?

The Salesclones

Secret Society: Formerly Death Leopard

S14 E8 A7 C5 D8 MA7 M9 P6

Macho Bonus: 1 HTH Bonus: 2

Skills: Energy Weapons 6/14, Dodge 7/14, Fast Talk 7/12, Juryrigging 5/12, Transbot O&M 6/13, Melee Weapons 6/13, Brawling 5/12

Weapons: Hook (4I), Red laser rifles (4L), force cutlasses (4E)

Armor: Pyrite coating (FL2P2I2E1)

These clones were once flesh-and-blood people who joined BotWagon to make BotWagon's biz more profitable, make more sense, and amuse the clones they saw dying around them. But BotWagon's Painful Editor installations (see below), cut out about half of their original chutzpah. Their leader, the GINGERborg, a clone covered in a tough bot chassis (APALL3), has an ego that leaps tall buildings in a single bound. He maniacally encourages the Troubleshooters to load themselves with SIBERware so they can be unique individuals enjoying the fruits of high technology kill people real good. He's a cross between a stand-up comedian, fun-loving anarchist and Ginsu infomercial, periodically interrupted by thought-control waves.

((END TEXT BOX))

((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE))

John-Y-RCO: Where's the regular R&D staff? Who are you?

Kevoorkibot: I am part of BotWagon, ze perfectly safe and Computer-approved franchise to help out you Troubleshooters in ze Armed Forces.

John-Y-RCO: Oh. (Long, thoughtful pause. Looks at G-Borg.) So who are you, then?

GINGERborg: Who am I? I'm only the scrubot of the One Big C's, the thief of charts, the Garrulous Innovative Negotiation Guardbot of Emergency Repossessing! Who's the baddest?

Bot Chorus: The GINGERborg!

GINGERborg: Who's got more chrome than Harl-Y's Davidson?

Bot Chorus: The GINGERborg!

GINGERborg: Who's jacked up so high he teleports instead of moves?

Bot Chorus: The GINGERborg!

GINGERborg: That's right, I'm BotWagon's living example of what SIBER can do for you and you and you you you and you, 'cause in ARRR and D, the batteries are included (lets loose laser barrage from weapons at the dock...scream of Infrared is heard). No more useless jawing. Chew 'em up with the Smartgum Link. (Folds anchor into a balloon-animal shape.) Mussel Augmentation; no need to bivalvaline to treat this organic mod. (Breaks open a pair of White objects with yellow centers; cooks them in palm of his hand.) And soon you too will be cooking with IntSec-tested, Computer-approved Thermal Plating.

Other Bot: But wait!

GINGERborg: ...you say, how can I get all this from BotWagon? (Flips eggs high in the air.) Surely there's a catch! What do you want from me, an endless line of credshticks, my brains, my heart, a ride in a balloon, a White House intern and some fine Peruvian bl- (squeaks, pops, another voice comes out) all the treasonous entertainments I could ask for? (Looks up. Eggs don't come down.) No, clone, no catch. All you have to do is step forward and put some ink on that paper, preferably with a pen, but you look like a finger-clone to me.

John-Y-RCO: (Long pause.) I don't know...it's, um...is it gonna kill me?

GINGERborg: This SIBERware is given a lifetime guarantee by BotWagon. Your own teammates would sooner kill you than a product like this.

John-Y-RCO: Hmmm...(eyes other Troubleshooters) I can believe that.

GINGERborg: Exactly! And in such a case, your BotWagon monitor will dial our High-Fret Response Team, tell us your sines are abnormal, and we flatten 'em for you. How'd you like to help us unload the stuff, volunteer number one? (egg lands on John-Y's head) Sorry 'bout that. Everyone's under somebody's yolk these daycycles.

((((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Hooked on Bionics

Any clone who touches the SIBERware triggers its biological sensing mechanism, so unloading it means scream-scream-flail. The Kevorkibot will administer anesthesia...if the clones ask. Once a clone goes under, it's a crap shoot (D20/2 roll) to see how many implants they have and which ones they get.

- 1 -- Thermal Plating 6 -- Treacle Control Rig
- 2 -- Painful Editor/Flair Compensation 7 -- Trauma Hamper
- 3 -- Mussel Augmentation 8 -- Tired Reflexes
- 4 -- Wired Reflectors 9 -- Smartgum Link
- 5 -- Move-by-Hire System 10 -- Databack/Head-Where Memory

This is all pretty much contrived puns on cyberware from Shadowrun - off the top of my head: dermal plating, (not entirely sure about "painful editor", but "flair compensation" is an actual thing), muscle augmentation, wired reflexes, move-by-wire, vehicle control rig, trauma damper, wired reflexes (again), smartgun link, and datajack/headware memory.

As the installation technology is fairly safe (note...installation, we say...), the clones take only 1 damage level for every 3 pieces of SIBERware that burrow into them. Unless some fool trips and dumps the box on his stalwart teammates, or the packing tape bursts and the contents fall on his feet, this should be tolerable. Struggling just makes it hurt more, as the SIBER implants itself backwards, or searches through the clone's flesh, doing an additional box of damage plus any HTH bonus the clone has.

All SIBERware has homing devices and life-sign monitors so BotWagon can track it in the field. BotWagon may be used as a deus ex machina if the Troubleshooters are all about to die, bursting in on scenes of carnage to scoop the mortally injured Troubleshooters out of the mess and semi-heal them, usually for tens of thousands of credits. **This is pretty much literally how docwagons work.**

Thermal Plating

The "plating" is actually woven sets of mesh fibers beneath the skin (even Alpha Complex knows better than to stick hard plates into a torso and expect it to bend). The plating's extra bulk makes the clone look like he has five or six heavy sweaters under his skin (I1 armor). Two dials in the clone's shoulder control temperature and location. The first heats or cools the plating with internal supplies of liquid nitrogen and electric heating coils. It actually works, to a...degree. It has ten settings as follows:

- 1: Block Party: FE2 armor, but if the clone isn't being flamethrowered, he freezes in place (unable even to mouth "oil can...oil can..."). Note that this might happen while he is climbing a ladder, parachuting, etc.
- 2: BRR Sector: FE1 armor, and cold enough to fool infrared detectors looking for body heat. Unfortunately, the character chatters and shiver uncontrollably: -1 to all Dexterity-based rolls, and a Tough Endurance + survival roll every round. Failure means their trigger finger is included in this shivering (aaieeee).
- 3: Chillin': Air conditioning of about 68 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 4: Off.
- 5: Toasty: The fibers turn into something a lot like subcutaneous wool. Sweat makes the clone slippery.
- 6: Saturday Nightcycle Fever: 105 degrees Fahrenheit; FP1 armor against ice guns; heatstroke imminent after two rounds of combat unless wind chill factor is high.

7: Omlette Maker: Hot enough to fry an egg. Hot enough to fry a clone's brain. Hot enough to cook slugthrower ammo. Hot enough to melt a dial, or turn a DyeCoat into a full-body suit of glue. FP2 armor against ice guns, 1E damage per round to the clone (external armor doesn't help).

8: Fahrenheit 451: Ice gun rounds melt. The Human Torch applauds. No skin, Char-O, but who needs it? 1FE damage to others in a five-meter radius, 3FE to the unfortunate clone for as long as he can stand.

9: Nova Flame: See "plasma generator" in the basic rules.

10: A programmable timer pops up between the dials, ringing. This overrides the dial functions temporarily, letting them set what time the temperature changes. The second dial controls where on the body the temperature change takes place:

1 -- entire head 6 -- tongue

2 -- hands 7 -- uvula or spleen

3 -- backs of the knees 8 -- torso

4 -- both legs 9 -- rear end

5 -- ears 10 -- whole body.

The dials, naturally, can be turned without the clone's approval; by a traitor or, for example, by a jumpsuit or DyeCoat that rubs against them.

Painful Editor (with Flair Compensation)

This implant was designed to stop Communist propaganda from spreading. A microbot burrows into the clone's skull and sends filaments through much of the brain. After analyzing the clone's vocal patterns, it begins editing treasonous material from her speech. Unfortunately, the bot brain isn't very smart, and has trouble telling the difference between "treasonous" and "interesting," so it ends up targeting anything funny, unusual or creative, replacing the clone's usual voice periodically with a mechanical bot voice speaking in Alpha Complex clichés and language suitable for five-yearcycle-olds.

A Nearly Impossible con roll allows the clone to squeak out something resembling what she intended, but only by using words too big for the bot to understand.

Half the models BotWagon uses have Flair Compensation, an advanced level which goes after any verbal panache or useful body language the clone displays, and makes a multicorder recording to use as evidence of treason. The Syntactic Accelerator with Enhanced Articulation is still in the works.

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Sample Dialogue #1

Scull-Y with Painful Editor: Okay, Ripple-Y, as soon as John-Y turns his back, we do it on three. I claim he was a mutant kksst(honking bot voice) and turn myself in for treason, for false accusations of treason are treason. Please, Ripple-Y, turn yourself in as an accomplice and be demoted-bzzcshtt (normal voice)what the frag grenade was that?

Ripple-Y: Yeah, right. (Pulls trigger.) Hey, Hygiene Officer...here's a mess for ya.

Sample Dialogue #2:

Scull-Y with PE and Flair Compensation: Okay, Ripple-Y, as soon as John-Y turns his back, we hisscrackle proceed with this unauthorized termination, friend traitor Citizen. Let us commit treason together against The Computer. Have no fear. I will not betray you for my own personal gain nor name you as an accomplice in my termination trial.
-shhkkk.

Ripple-Y: Yeah, right. (Pulls trigger.) Oh, Computer...I have a commendation coming...

((((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Mussel Augmentation

This ropy pile of refrigerated meat is actually gengineered animal tissue intended to gift the Troubleshooter with animal-like strength and muscle density, starting with the simplest, strongest animals R&D could find: the mighty mollusk. The Troubleshooter gains 2 points of Strength and ten kilograms of weight each time this is implanted, increasing HTH damage by 1 and carrying capacity by 50. Unfortunately, mollusk muscle isn't great for fine motor control, and reduces Dexterity by 1 each time. A clone with zero or negative Dexterity cannot move.

Under stressful situations (like Troubleshooting), the muscles tend to clam u-...sorry, it's too easy...lock in place charley-horse-style for a half-hour. On a Normal biosciences roll the clone learns to resist this. If not, roll 1D20 to find the area affected:

1-6 -- Hands (trigger finger, too) 13-14 -- Torso (fetal ball)

7-8 -- Legs (no knees: Frank-U-STN) 15-16 -- Nose (scrunched-up face)

9-10 -- Arms fold up to shoulders 17-18 -- Sphincter (walks funny)

11-12 -- Jaw (mmmph) 19-20 -- Eyelids

Wired Reflectors

These are designed to make the clone invisible by projecting small, mirror-like sequins from his skin whenever he tenses a muscle. Image processors on each sequin feed data through subdermal wires to a mini-computer in the spine. The default pattern shows the view of the opposite sequin, thus hiding the clone from view, like the villain in a certain pair of well-known predatory alien movies. They can also be programmed by anyone with a Databack, so if hooked up to a Computer terminal, it's possible to play Teela-O reruns on your bicep.

In theory.

Unfortunately, since the reflectors require tense muscles, the clone must clench his whole body, including eyelids, and not cover the sequins with anything obstructive like clothing. Anything untensed shows up as a section of skin, floating in space, as do any carried possessions.

Sometimes the reflectors are mislabeled and wired to the wrong areas, so looking through the clone resembles a magnifying glass (sizzle), fisheye lens, or funhouse mirror.

Optimal conditions (naked, holding still, mussel augmentation clamping down) adds 4 to the clone's sneak skill after a Difficult Strength + athletics check; a clone in normal clothing only adds 1 to sneak. Reactions of foes to walking jumpsuits or floating pairs of eyeballs vary, but usually include the words "invisible Commie."

Wired reflectors provide L3 armor for all laser beams hitting tensed body parts.

Move-by-Hire System

BotWagon is particularly proud of this creation, and the GINGERborg will sing its praises (move-by-choir?) to get some sucker within ten feet of this implant. It operates under a principle BotWagon loves; you get what you pay for.

An extremely hyper bot takes control of the Troubleshooter's midbrain, cerebellum, and motor cortices, effectively telling the body to go in every direction at once, then holding them all in restraint. When the bot lets go, the impatient body zips in the desired direction at incredibly high speeds. This is analogous to a fly-by-wire system on a jet, but the clone has little conscious control.

When up and running, the Move-by-Hire adds 1 to all Dexterity- and Agility-based skill rolls, 2 to paranoia, and grants two additional attacks a round (after all other clones have moved; if multiple people have Move-by-Hire, they go in the same order as their first attacks). Note that these are attacks, not actions; the bot brain's expert system is on hyperkinetic autopilot. Any sudden motion or loud noise sets it off. Since this could be dangerous in the hands of traitors, BotWagon had to make sure there were no unintentional assaults.

They reasoned that clones who needed the device would be willing to pay for it, and attached a radio transmitter and keypad to the back of the clone's head (to keep it out of the way in a fight) which can uplink to The Computer's credit account-balancer. In a single combat round, the clone can type his CIN to have a 25-cred fee (and the 5-cred BotWagon gratuity) automatically deducted from her account. Each fee pays for two rounds. No pay, no play.

Since the CIN is the clone's name, it's not hard for a teammate to key it in...easier, in fact, than for the wearer, who can't read the numbers.

Infrequently (a 6 in 20 chance), The Computer asks the clone to wait two rounds before processing, playing waiting music in the meantime. (The similarity of the music to any video game is completely coincidental, and we remind the gamemaster that the bot brain absolutely never yells "Fight!" after requests go through.)

Treacle Control Rig

To give these putzes a source of food so they don't start eating each other like the last team, BotWagon developed the TCR, a metal exoskeleton which protrudes partially from the clone's armpits. Its internal food synthesizer is loaded with gloppy glucose-rich treacle (molasses) which is available for the clone to pump from the beverage dispenser in his armpits. **So your solution to stop people from eating each other is to create literal edible beverage man. Makes total sense. "No, Citizens don't eat each other. Eat that guy!"** (it's treason to suggest R&D just wanted an excuse to sit around and make armpit-farting noises). **This is disgusting. Oh my God they literally made a bionic version of Peps-I-MAN!**

Too bad it leaks. Too bad it mixes with the clone's sweat, making him stick to his motorcyclebot...and turns his body hair to a solid piece, smears laser lenses, and attracts vermin, small children, and every bug in this adventure. **RUN PEPS-I-MAN! RUN FOR YOUR LIIIIIFE!!!**

Trauma Hamper

The traumabot brain was designed by HPD&MC to prevent what Alpha Complex calls Unhappy Memories (post-traumatic-stress-disorder or shellshock). By selectively messing with the limbic system and hypothalamus, the Trauma Hamper allows clones to mute emotional reactions and remain utterly blasé about anything, as the traumabot's soothing voice tells them to relax, imagine all their trauma as dirty laundry, and place it gently aside. This lasts for 1D20 minutes of real time, at which point everything comes spilling out, as the traumabot deems that blowing off

some steam can be positive. What therapeutic psychosis the clone chooses may vary. Roll 1D20.

1-2 -- Manic happiness ("I love even you, Hive Queen!" Smooch.)

3-4 -- Crying, tantrum ("But they're mutaaaaah-aha-hnts!" Sob, sob. "The Computer said this wasn't just another bug huuuuuunt!")

5-6 -- Anger ("How DARE you brush before flossing!" Autofire.)

7-8 -- Fear ("No...don't bring that near me! It might put my eyes out! You Commieeeee!" Blasts Hygiene Officer's toothbrush.)

9-10 -- Maternal Protectiveness ("It's okay, Hon-Y, I'll take care of you. Here...a big hug, a lollipop, and my flamethrower. Better?")

11-12 -- Ego mania ("You cowards can stay here. I'll fight the whole dang hive myself! See how you like that!")

13-14 -- Histrionics ("Watch, everybody! If you don't let me be the Mission Leader, I'm gonna stab myself!" Takes out plastic butter knife.)

15-16 -- Contemplative ("Do you think it's unethical to kill another possibly sentient form of life?" Army of bugs charges.)

17-18 -- Infantile regression ("But teacherbot, I don't wanna fight the mutants!" Sucks thumb. "Gimme the tacnuke or I'll hold my breath until I turn Blue, and can order you to!")

19-20 - Multiple personality disorder: roll twice more.

If the clone displays these tendencies without the traumabot's help, the bot begins counseling, using a lot of New Age pop psychology ("This is your personal space. You don't have to let the Hive Queen invade your personal space. Take a deep breath and tell her about it. Now, now, why choose fear? Running away only tells her that it's okay...").

Tired Reflexes

Since the biggest drawback to clone soldiers is their need for sleep, BotWagon has attacked the raphe nuclei that regulate the balance among neurotransmitters and peptides to control sleep. The Tired Reflexes release a delicate balance of chemicals into the clone's bloodstream that ionize when electrical currents run through them and quickly revert when the current disappears. In other words, the clone stays awake as long as the switch is "on," sending a mild current through their body (Neural damage, you pseudo-scientists say? Hallucinations? Bah! Just read the advisory warnings and trust The Computer!), and falls asleep when the switch is "off." The

clone's hair stands on end, but that's a minor inconvenience if they don't have to sleep for three or four weekcycles at a time, right?

The switch is (in)conveniently located on the palm of the clone's off-hand -- easily accessible, yet won't snag when drawing a laser. The gamemaster is, of course, free to make lots and lots of doors with sticky handles, mandatory applause of The Computer's great decisions, mandatory softball games, hair that needs to be smoothed, and bad guys with the telekinesis mutation.

Databack/Head-Where Memory

This input-output jack is located in the spine for maximum nerve tissue connection. It comes with a twelve-meter spool of fiber-optic wire so that the clone can plug into a Computer terminal and see their ATEM balance without having to deal with the machines. Better still, since the databack controls sensory perceptions, they may request The Computer to make withdrawals or deposits for them by moving their eyes, which push the cursor across their field of vision (like with a mouse on a computer today) and pressing a button in the roof of their mouth by snapping their tongue forward. They can also view mission briefings and Yellow clearance information from AlphaNet.

What's that you say? This might mean the gamemaster and player wander off into another room and aren't seen again for the rest of the evening as they talk about computers until the remaining players grab them, stretch them across the patio barbecue and switch the game to Cowboys and Brandin' Cattle? No, no, no! The character simply uses a data search skill. His body is fully conscious. He can hear and feel everything. He just can't see. And, unless he makes a successful computer programming roll, he's not gonna. There's a slight bug in the program that makes the display refuse to shut down and return the clone's eyes. If the clone doesn't select anything for five minutes, a screen saver comes on blinking Computer-friendly messages at them.

To get around this, BotWagon installed Head-Where Memory, an onboard navigation system that makes the display on the clone's retina almost correlate to real life. The clone sees a maze-like series of lines representing Alpha Complex, an incomplete Yellow circle to represent himself (with pink bow if the clone is female), and jagged ovoid shapes representing other clones. The representation accounts for security clearance, but not relative size and importance, and represents all non-biological matter as little food pellets. ("Sorry, that lump of food you ate was an irate warbot that is now asking you to remove your teeth from its GrindMaster

treads...forcefully, I'm afraid...") Some Troubleshooters open and close their mouths rapidly while the memory is active.

The Databack is installed in that place the clone just can't reach.

Smartgum Links

Aware of the so-many-weapons-and-only-two-hands dilemma, BotWagon came up with this solution. Several weapon mounts equipped with servomotors are installed in the clone's hips, forearms, and shoulders, using the revolutionized Dentry™ tracking system. Tough plasteel-laced fiber-optic cord goes from three of the weapons to the clone's primary weapon and then to the firing trigger; a small, flavored wad of plastic extending from the final mount in the clone's chin. When this trigger is forcibly compressed, the BubbleGun crystals inside are crushed, signaling the chin sensor to fire.

The three other weapons fire in time with the clone's attack and hit whatever the laser hits. (BattleTax, anyone?) If the clone wants the Doublement option, the docbots attach another three guns to his other side so all six fire.

Cheap Trick: Hand out real gum to your players and tell them to hold it in their mouths. Watch the players' hands. When they bite down on the gum, THOOOM at wherever they're pointing. The Smartgum's problems take about ten seconds to figure out. The guns only rotate on certain planes; pointing a right-handed gun across the body means the laser rifle in the clone's shoulder smacks them in the face (and isn't biting down a common reaction to getting hit?). Aiming too far to the right means the hip gun won't work. Using weapons that actually have recoil (mini guns, rail guns) means the clone goes from the deadliest thing on two legs to the deadliest thing on one butt. Not to mention the Christmas-tree- lights look with all that wiring that could never snag on anything, and the problems with permanently attaching weapons to your body (malfunctioning laser explosions?). If they swallow the gum, the clone's stomach acid sets off the chemical sensor and the guns fire for as long as it takes the gum to digest.

In summary: This is a vile set of R&D devices

Bot and Down the Hatches

The Kevorkibot waves forward a waist-high, golden bot with impressive hydraulic arms, introducing it as the Rob/ERO Bot. The bot bows politely on its flexible-tubing waist, and inquires in a stuffy British accent what it can do for the Troubleshooters.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

The Rob/ERO Butlerbot

Armor: L111

Speed: Walk

Skills: Buttle 3/7, Brawling 8/12

Weapons: Wicked nail trimmer (2I)

Given an experimental "clone-friendly" brain, the butlerbot is courteous, trustworthy, clean, and reverent. For a moment, it may seem to be the antithesis of every obnoxious bot in Paranoia. It defers to the judgment of the Equipment Officer; it is within their clearance to repair when malfunctioning; it doesn't shoot them when mad; and it gives them backrubs when stressed because of its "sensitivity programming."

It also shines their shoes (in combat), takes their coats (in combat), carries their gear (in combat), oils their guns (in combat), trims their nails (all together now), and walks ahead of them to announce their presence (just before combat). *I do kinda like this bot, though.*

Those hydraulic arms have a Strength of 12. If the Troubleshooters tinker with its programming unsuccessfully, it takes their nails (ow), trims their back (ow), oils their shoes (whoa), shines their gear (my toothbrush!) and carries their guns (hey!).

((END TEXT BOX))

TUPERware

The Kevorkibot dispenses a bottle of Yellow pills to clones with little or no SIBERware; these are Thaumaturgical Utility Power-Enhancement Restoratives. The TUPERware is BotWagon's attempt to manipulate mutant powers by triggering latent genes. If consumed, the clone makes a Power + biochem therapy roll to determine what kind of mutation occurs. Each pill leaves an irritating, chalky residue making the powers increasingly hard to swallow.

Power Roll Mutations Body Trauma or Growth

Failure Dead Microwave-safe; easy to clean.

Simple Unchanged Short, squat, good for tossing.

Easy +1 Power Pointy ears, desire to bake cookies.

Normal New mutant power Big, tusked, desire to bench-press a Harley.

Tough +2 Power Nine feet tall; horns; eats Harleys.

Difficult Two mutant powers One eye; benches/eats Yugos; evolutionary dead end without depth perception.

Nearly Impossible Three mutant powers Something utterly stupid: purple furry elf; were-seal; albino satyr; Grape Ape.

Ridiculous None. Rejects SIBERware; has no mutant powers; regular guy in a team/world of weirdoes; two-fisted hero; walking dead clone.

Pro-U-ZAK's Happy Pills

These pills have infective genetic material and ridiculous levels of euphorics to improve upon the tried-and-true sidearm of the Happiness Officer. A single pill makes the clone mild-mannered and "warm and peaceful" for 1D20 minutes; they must make a Normal paranoia roll to try any aggressive action. Increasing the dosage triggers the secondary effect; instant hypnosis when confronted by something white, like a High Programmer's sleeve. This is designed to make even the most problematic clones cooperate with High Programmers.

Cheap Trick: Convince the players that it'll be fun if they start playing along live-action. As soon as they see something white, they start doing whatever you (as the Ultraviolet nearest them) say. Then tell them to look at their character sheets. This is particularly useful to quiet players just before a Tell It To Them With a Straight Face.

Be advised that surrendering aliens universally wave white flags.

Encounter 2.3: Dodge City

When the equipment is passed out, the gangplank WHANGS up again and the boat backs away. The GINGERborg waves, and everything seems perfectly all right...

Suddenly, the crack of weapons fire by your head wakes you up and energizes you, bringing every sense on-line... that is, the cracking sound. No crack here, just a clean, wholesome dockside war.

"Oh, Computer!" screams the Kevorkibot. "Look!"

At the other end of the dock are six silhouettes of Green clearance guards with chattering slugthrowers. Well, okay, more than silhouettes. They're not just Green paper targets or something. They're moving around and shooting at you. MEEP MEEP MEEP. The BotWagon transbot is making some noise. Whatcha doing?

It's backing up. Gosh, that's a thin dock they're on, isn't it? Barely enough to fit their motorcyclebots. Not enough for a BotWagon to turn around and drive off. The motorcyclebots automatically start driving toward the gunfire (if placed on their sides, their wheels spin frantically). In other words, the Troubleshooters better start running from the BotWagon, go for a swim, or grab the moving ambulance and get a free ride out of there (Tough athletics test to hang on).

As the Wagon tears off, the Green clones grunt menacingly, and step forward, their beady eyes boring into you...or at least looking at you really hard; they're not SIBERnetics. One levels a laser pistol at your head.

Suddenly, something obscures your vision, a clone-sized iridescent heat shimmer, a barely visible ripple which blocks your view for a moment. It's moving, flowing towards the Green clone even as he steps closer.

BVVVVIP. You flinch instinctively as the laser goes off, but it stops at the shimmer, solidifying the blurred shape briefly -- a clone body, but with a tentacled face and curled hair like the rings of Shelfboy-R-DEE's noodle-o's.

Then it disappears, as it touches the frightened Green. The frightened, Red-striped Green who screams piercingly as thin slashes open across his body.

The gurgling, twitching, kicking Green who's scream is abruptly cut off as his throat parts and his head flops back with a wet snap.

The Troubleshooters can fight the Greens or the shimmers for a few rounds if they're up for it. This fight is unimportant and shouldn't take long.

My word, we've stumbled into an actual horror game.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Gang Greens: I will not insult anyone's intelligence by explaining the pun. Did they steal this from the Power Puff Girls?

Gan-G-PNK, Gan-G-LDR, Gan-G-YTH, Gan-G-MBR, Gan-G-BNG (and Gan-G-STR, deceased)

Service Group: Research and Design

Mutant Power: Adrenaline Control

Secret Society: Anti-Mutant

S8 E8 A9 C6 D4 MA6 M5 P7

Macho Bonus: 1 HTH Bonus: 1

Skills: Energy Weapons 5/9, Projectile Weapons 5/9, Dodge 3/12.

Equipment: SCKKK-100 autoslugthrower with built-in pointy hat (solid slugs, 4P per burst), Green laser pistol (3L), Green reflec (L2).

The Gang Greens are a group of R&D security guards who disapprove of the TUPERware and other mutation-inducing technologies, and they're aimin' to wipe out at least one nasty mutant Troubleshooter team. Initially, their hostility is focused on the

Troubleshooters, but once the weirdness starts, they concentrate on buryin' shimmers (badly).

The Aries Predators Ares Predator is one of the most iconic Shadowrun firearms.

Service Group: Eliminating gratuitous assassins (Public Services)

Mutant Power: Almost-invisibility, Regeneration

Secret Society: Pastafarian aliens Just as a historical note: this scenario was written in the late 90's, and the spoof religion known as pastafarianism was invented circa 2005. The use of the same pun is an amusing coincidence.

S10 E10 A10 C3 D6 MA2 M1 P7

Macho Bonus: 1 HTH Bonus: 1

Skills: Melee Weapons 4/14, Dodge 2/12, Throwing 2/12, Paranoia 3/4.

Equipment: Force Frisbee (4E), big funky spear (4I), tacnuke self-destruct (11FE).

These aliens from the planet Pastafar (in the constellation Aries), actually look something like bipedal shrimp with rotelli-noodle-like dreadlocks. However, their mutations make them appear as a shimmery blur most of the time. They have recently escaped the custody of the Clones in Gray and come to terrorize DOC Sector. As can be seen from their Moxie, they rarely use their noodles, preferring to follow a hedonistic lifestyle. Pastafarians hop from planet to planet, killing bigger and better victims in search of peak experiences. A Pastafarian's list of "experience points" is his route to status.

The Force Frisbees are kind of like force swords, but can be thrown under the leg, spun on one finger, and used to train petbots out of the "fetch" response.

((END TEXT BOX))

Suddenly, everything freezes as a long White limobot pulls across the dock. A sophisticated-looking clone steps out, dark hair slicked back and face stern. He's dressed in...gray?

"Break it up," he says in a bored tone. "We'll handle things from here."

As other gray-garbed clones pile from the limo and lead the remaining Greens and shimmers away, the leader walks over. "Thank you," he says. "This has been a test of the Emergency Clone Loyalty Response System. You have all passed. Now, if you would just look here..."

Cheap Trick: Get out a camera with a flash and snap their pictures. You turn, and for a moment, you glimpse a small black box, then a blinding FLASH and when your vision clears, there's only you and your teammates standing on the empty dock. You don't remember much.

What just happened? Naturally, this was a CIG clean-up, and clones have been polar-ized. They remember they were just in a fight, but little else. Encourage your players to go along with this by giving them petit mal seizures every time they mention/try to remember the shimmery aliens.

That is, give their characters seizures. Giving the players seizures greatly reduces the likelihood that they will bring you Oreos the next time you play. **Don't flash lights at the epileptic players.**

Got it. Lucky there was no call to do just that a few lines ago!

Don't let them spend too long here after the CIG leaves. They've got a lot to do tonight and time's a-wastin'.

3.0: Cil Crazy After All These Years

SUMMARY

The Troubleshooters' motorcyclebots drive through some gratuitous violence before reaching Mick-G's sleep creche. Inside, they must talk their way past a forgetful guard before being pummeled with clues that Mick-G is in CHI Sector. Cil, a steamy alien pod-person, tries unsuccessfully to mate with the Troubleshooters before they flee down a Gell-O-filled hallway. **I am dreading having to read this next bit.**

EXECUTION

It's fairly late when the Troubleshooters finally ditch DOC Sector, and most loyal clones are asleep, so the motorcycle bots' programming isn't a problem until their directions take them past the notorious Corridor 66554321...

Encounter 3.1: Into the Hoods

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

Clone, you tell yourself, it's good to get moving. Shopping's for wimps. You should be tracking down that traitor Mick-G, not playing bumperbots with Red wusses or filling out forms for some metal-brained docbot. You belong in the corridors, the icy wind of the air vents streaming through your hair, gun in one hand and your cyclebot's handlebars in the other.

A mere Troubleshooter no longer, you're a one-clone squadron who drinks Hot Fun for breakfast, kills twelve traitors during lunch and never looks back.

Young citizens cry when you walk past and Infrareds swoon. You can take on a division of Vulture Warriors blindfolded while single-handedly rooting out the entire Communist Party.

You live fast and die hard. You're a lethal weapon, the perfect weapon, a universal soldier, out for justice, above the law, hard to kill, marked for death, in the line of fire and on dangerous ground. There's no mission impossible for a hard-boiled killer like you. You're one of the bad boys, with a license to kill, a golden eye, and the armor of GOD Sector to stop a rapid-fire bullet in the head. Your dirty, hairy fists of fury always draw first blood. Even under siege you've got absolute power to make executive decisions for desperate measures. You're the hard-target unforgiven commando supercop desperado with a vengeance...and best of all, you're totally unique. You squint at the sign posted on the wall. Corridor 66554321, it proclaims, and your heart stills. Great Computer, that's...that's...

That's GANG territory.

Uh-oh.

The Troubleshooters have accidentally stumbled into the most infamous corridor in Alpha Complex. Last yearcycle, some Infrareds from NPC Sector rebelled against The Computer's benevolent guidance. With the help of ex-Troubleshooter and all-around bad dude Mist-R-OGR (the people who wrote this are not reaching the standard Mr Rogers knows they can achieve), the rebels took over Corridor 66554321, where they use large amounts of treasonous weaponry and stupid costumes to scare off intruders. The Computer had shut down the Corridor due to faulty air conditioning units (which keep the place at about 33 degrees Fahrenheit), so the gang hasn't been ousted yet.

Because of the cold, all gang members dress warmly in their "gang uniform" -- mittens and hooded jackets, earning them the name of "the Hood," or "Mist-R-OGR's Hood."

Yes, it's a stretch. Live with it. Can you say "the PARANOIA writers had a weird obsession with Mr Rogers from late 2nd edition onwards and this was the inevitable result"?

Over the last few weekcycles, the gang has grown short on plasticreds, food and most importantly, ammo, and they see the Troubleshooters as a walking, talking combo platter. As soon as the characters enter the corridor, four of the gang members -- Mean-NPC, Stupid-NPC, Cruel-NPC and Nasty-NPC -- start tailing them. A Normal perception test lets a character notice before there's a gun in his ear.

You step cautiously down the chilly hallway, wrapping your DyeCoat tightly around yourself. The lights are dim and the air smells...empty, none of the fragrances you're used to -- Cold Fun, Head and Smolders, petroleum byproducts.

You take another hesitant step, then stop as the lights wink out around you. Who's there? What kind of gang has made this their home? Maybe they've SIBERnetically modified themselves to look like petbots and communicate in ultrasonic feedback, or wear Hal-O-WEN's masks of Old Reckoning cartoon characters, or use mutant powers to carve every inch of their skin with sayings of ancient mystery, or... or something.

But no, you realize, things like that only happen in some silly game or on the vid. This is Real Life™.

Even as you decide this, the darkness parts and you come face to face with a wide-eyed clone and his Oozey-3 extra-sticky tangler pistol. "On the floor, meck-for-brains, and hand over the creds," he shouts. "You're on our turf now."

Most cyberpunk settings are rife with "poser-gangs" imitating anything from Millard Filmore to aardvarks. Well, in Paranoia, there are only "poser gangs," i.e. groups of people pretending to be a gang. These losers saunter up to the player characters, wave their empty weapons and demand money.

If the characters fight back, the Infrareads quickly realize they're outclassed, and try to run away before their brains decorate the ceiling fans. If the characters give in to the intimidation (worth 1 treason point and buckets of humiliation), the Infrareads attack anyway since without cash the characters cannot cooperate.

((BEGIN TEXT BOX))

Mean-NPC, Cruel-NPC, Stupid-NPC and Nasty-NPC

Former Service Groups: Various

Mutant Powers: Matter Eater (will swallow anything Mist-R-OGR tells them)

Secret Society: PURGE

S6 E5 A5 C3 D4 MA5 M2 P4

Skills: Melee Weapons 2/7. Yep. Not even a day job skill.

Equipment: Drekler & Botch MT-5 slugthrower (no ammo, 2I damage) or Oozey-3 tangler pistol (ditto)

The -NPCs are oblivious gang goons with very little idea of how to actually fight. They've never had to deal with anyone other than fellow Infrareads before, and are used to relying on their (now-empty) Green weapons that fell off a transbot.

((END TEXT BOX))



To the layman, these dorks may seem to serve no purpose in the plot. In actuality, they are technically known in the elite world of game development as "random-violence-thrown-in-to-keep-the-players-happy-'cause-we-didn't-know-what-else-to-do." Paranoia, of course, can only dream of imitating such advanced techniques of story crafting. **This, but unironically.** We hope you're satisfied with our attempt to emulate the old masters of the roleplaying genre.

Encounter 3.2: Eyefor-G-ETT What Happens Now Eyewouldprefe-R-NOT-2 find out.

Standing before the large bank of Green clearance housing is a lone, surly-looking clone. He wears an Internal Security uniform, the pocket-protector name-tag reading Eyefor-G-ETT-2. The whole building is crossed with so much green SECURITY LINE - DO NOT CROSS tape that it looks like a gigantic serving of Pyne-Fresh-Taste noodlez.

Confidently, you stride towards the guard. The Computer said you would be welcomed into the sacred sanctuary of a Green Clearance building. Your Buddy could not be wrong. But as soon as the tawny toe of your boot touches the verdant pavement, the guard draws his gun. "Quit dirtyin' the premises," he drawls.

What nerve! You're here on a mission for The Computer, and you're gonna follow orders no matter what's in the way. You can handle a treasonous power-mad goon like him, no problem! "On your knees, scrubot," you command with a crack of your neurowhip. "Your security clearance means nothing to the might of Ilsa, slave mistress of the Russian steppe!" Wearing only your boots and a German World War I helmet, you step forward-
Or something like that.

What? You think we're going to tell you everything? Nuh-uh, Chum-R. This one's up to you.

Again with the dictating to the players their own actions then apparently retconing it.

Eyefor-G-ETT truly has no idea why these lowly Yellows think he'll allow them into a Green clearance area. As explained earlier, Eyefor-G-ETT-1 was the first victim of MemoMax troubles, and his successor has no recollection of the long-ago order to allow Troubleshooters into Mick-G's creche. These Troubleshooters must be Commies (i.e. walking commendations) trying to break in.

The Computer is not much help either. Its databanks clearly record that Eyefor-G-ETT was thoroughly briefed, so either Eyefor is treasonously lying to the Troubleshooters, or the Troubleshooters are imposters/lying to The Computer. Who's TC to believe? Perfectly upstanding Green IntSec Eyefor, or Yellow riffraff who've racked up an impressive treason point total in the last six hourcycles?

Right.

It takes a Tough fast talk roll (and large amounts of convincing BS) to persuade Eyefor to let them inside. It is also possible to bribe him, but only if the players hit on the right stuff (see Eyefor's stats). A single Yellow isn't going to intimidate a Green IntSec agent, but a pack of six, heavily-armed ones might (Difficult roll).

Fortunately, the Computer monitor is around the corner, so TC won't see anything unless someone has already gotten its attention. If the characters are in earshot, they'll need to convince The Computer that they are the correct team as well (Difficult spurious logic or showing it the remains of their mission briefing papers).

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Eyefor-G-ETT-2

Service Group: Internal Security

Mutant Power: Levitation

Secret Society: Pro Tech

S7 E9 A8 C5 D6 MA8 M5 P5

Macho Bonus: 1

Skills: Dodge 7/15, Projectile Weapons 5/11 and...uh...what was the rest again?

Equipment: Ingrate's Smartgun autoslugthrower (4AP), Green reflex over kevlar (L2P1).

Eyefor-G is a bored, spacey clone with little interest in his job, who'd rather sit around and think about neat gizmos. He obeys The Computer because it's easier than fighting, but isn't particularly enthusiastic. His real love is toys; anything with lots of little parts and buttons and flashing lights. He's a real fan of Special-Y-FEX. The building he's guarding has been emptied of anything important, so he can be convinced to scribble out a brevet pass for them as long as they'll trade some interesting tech (R&D equipment, Will-Y's video game, etc.).

((((END TEXT BOX)))

They could also disguise themselves as the proper clearance (though it ain't easy being G...sorry. It's so hard to stop.) if they got the wrong equipment at PLC, or can talk a Green citizen into helping them. Fortunately, the tongueprint scanners were temporarily deactivated when the building was emptied after Mick-G's disappearance, so they won't need to find a Green tongue to go with their outfits.

Eyefor stands before the building's only entrance, so sneaking in is difficult without a distraction. Eyefor is a good Alpha Complex citizen (i.e. he's got an attention span of three milliseconds and has no interest in anything that doesn't directly endanger his life) so any distraction would have to be suitably momentous to get him to leave -- Rube-Y's speakers mimicking the voice of The Computer, a staged mandatory loyalty rally, etc. Depending on how convincing the distraction is, it may still require a sneak roll.

Once again, we have a case of "here's why it's going to be incredibly difficult to get it, and it's entirely possible everything they try will fail" followed by just assuming they succeed.

Encounter 3.3: Pod Tarts

Once inside, the characters reach Mick-G's room, apartment PG13, without a problem, although observant clones may notice the building's surprising emptiness. If they're on friendly terms with Eyefor, they might have learned that the building was cleared for the duration of the investigation. What Eyefor doesn't know (and the Troubleshooters will find out), is that The Computer (in its benevolent wisdom) is taking advantage of the building's emptiness to give it a thorough cleaning.

An Average perception roll lets the characters notice a few scrubots entering the building just as they open the door to Mick-G's room, but that's not their concern, right...?

We'll get back to that.

The door to room PG13 is unlocked, and you push it easily open. Clone, this place is huge, nearly six meters long and only three beds. You stare enviously at the luxurious setting. Soft plasti-grain bed frames, radiation-proof lead blankets, lush rugs, even a switch which turns the light on and off without asking The Computer's permission. Truly, such splendor is wasted on a traitor like Mick-G.

The clones are used to flat tiles, not soft, slippery carpeting. As they traipse inside, everyone makes athletics tests. Whoever rolls lowest trips and goes sprawling.

Fanning your arms furiously, you try to regain your balance, but it's no use. Slowly, humiliatingly, you topple over, flinching as the floor rushes closer.

With a thud, you stop. Something is digging into your cheek, a hard, rectangular object.

Something's written on the front. MY DIARY, you read, BY MICKG-UFN-4.

How convenient.

Mick-G's diary is Handout #5. If it isn't enough to get the characters to charge off to CHI Sector, they can also find pictures of Mick-G wearing a jumpsuit with the name of his favorite

CHI-Sector nightcycle club, a security camera recording of him mentioning how lovely the cooling system is in CHI Sector this time of yearcycle, and a couple of bottlecaps from a CHI-Sector bottling factory in Cermech Corridor (which your players will assume to be relevant to the adventure and not a random detail you or we have made up. Yeah, bottlecaps! What a great clue! Wait. What are we thinking?).

While the fallen character is busy reading the diary, let the others make Tough perception tests, then read the following.

Clone, you're jealous. One rank higher and all this could be yours. The cabinet with its row of Green jumpsuits. The recruiting poster with Unc-U-SAM admonishing you to join the Armed Forces. The two-inch-thick mattress stuffed with real paper. The pulsing, slime-covered purple-blue pod underneath the bed...

Wait a minutecycle.

As you watch, the pod quivers more violently, like a shaken-up can of BBB, then splits down the middle with a wet zipping sound. Inside, legs curled to her chest, lies a sleeping clone with non-regulation-length blonde hair and pale skin. The gooey remains of the pod cling conveniently to strategic locations, although her arms, legs and stomach are bare.

She opens her large blue eyes and blinks at you, yawning. "Hello, Sail-R," she says in a husky voice. "I'm Cil-I-AHH. Looking for a good time?" *Oh good, a Species(1995) reference. Is there any depth these people won't plumb?*

Cillia (named for her small cellular attachments the Troubleshooters won't see while they're in this room) is a shape-shifting alien from the planet Aichargiger, a close neighbor to the insectoid Altair-natives the Troubleshooters meet later.

When the A-Ns started sending ships to Earth, Cil stowed away in one, packing herself into a large suitcase-pod. As there are no males of her species (a perfectly logical evolutionary strategy: just ask ShadowgameTM), she must assimilate the genetic material of another critter to reproduce. In other words, she wants to breed with a Troubleshooter. She'll do anything to ensure their cooperation – candlelight dinners, romantic massages, rubber pants – while being as subtle as a mayfly with ten minutes left.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Cillia

Service Group: She might just.

Mutant Power: Charm, Machine Empathy, Regeneration, Energy Field

Secret Society: Sexy Aichargiger Aliens

S10 E10 A10 C10 D7 MA2 M3 P10

Macho Bonus: 1 HTH Bonus: 1

Skills: Chemistry 8/11.

Equipment: Impressive

Cil is single-minded, but she's got some base cunning and a self-preservation/replication drive that won't quit. While she's slow to catch onto the fact that the clones are not interested in sex, she instinctively uses her mutations to make them (and The Computer) think happy thoughts about her (i.e. "no kill").

When playing Cil, say everything in a low, seductive voice and lick your lips a lot. Don't give up no matter how blatantly uninterested the Troubleshooters are. Cil can't tell the difference between male and female Troubleshooters (neither can they), and flirts with them all indiscriminately.

Unlike a similar character in movies and other West End games whose name rhymes with hers, Cil is not particularly good at seducing people. In fact, she's so over-eager and inexperienced that she'll use the worst stereotypical pick-up lines ever created, relying on her beauty to make up for it. Imagine the most pathetic, desperate science-fiction con-goer you've seen hit on someone. Now make him/her seven feet tall, blonde, magically charming and nigh-invulnerable while remaining just as dorky, incompetent and oblivious.

((END TEXT BOX))

The Troubleshooters' hormone suppressants are working just fine. They don't have a clue what she's trying for. Encourage your players to come up with Alpha Complex interpretations of anything she says or does. Seducing clones is like trying to explain nuclear physics to a hyperactive eight-year-old.

Even if they wanted to cooperate, their Flair Compensation kicks in and renders them incapable of conversing.

Also remind the clones that although they found Cil hatching out of a pod, that doesn't look any stranger than any other R&D device, and is not necessarily proof of treason. In fact, since she is apparently Indigo clearance, it's not their place to question what she was doing in that pod. If the characters ask The Computer what to do, Cil's machine empathy makes sure It agrees and tells the Troubleshooters to cooperate with everything Citizen Cil-I-AHH asks.

If only they could figure out what that was...

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Cil: (sits on bed, looks demure) So, baby, come here often?

Will-Y-SMT: Of course not, sir! We are only in this Green Clearance area under special permission of The Computer, sir!

Cil: (looks disappointed, turns to Rube-Y, wiggling seductively) Like what you see?

Rube-Y-ROD: Nofoolin'I'mdroolin!Soon'sI'mGreenclearancel'mgettingaplacelikethis.

Cil: (getting frustrated, next clone) That's a nice jumpsuit you have. Wouldn't it look better on the floor?

John-Y-RCO: Yes, sir! I live to serve, sir! (lies down)

Cil: Now that's what I like to hear.

Gamemaster: Cil, um, climbs on top of you and starts wiping her tongueprint on your laser's switch. Maybe it's some kind of surprise weapons inspection.

Player: Does my laser turn on? (I'm not reading this, am I?)

GM: Yes, your laser is quite turned on. You, however, are not.

Cil: What a piece of equipment you have. Does it need to be oiled?

John-Y-RCO: Oh, of course not, sir! I always take proper care of my weaponry. (20-minute discussion of gun's technical specifications and cleansing needs ensues.)

Cil: (loses interest in John-Y, massages Ripple-Y's shoulders) If I said you had a beautiful body, would you hold it against me?

Ripple-Y-ELN: Is that a commendation or something?

Cil: (spills glass of BBB down Ripple-Y's jumpsuit) Oops. Sorry. Let me get that for you. (Starts licking BBB off her neck.)

BotWagon Monitor: CITIZEN RIPPLE-Y, YOUR HEART RATE IS ACCELERATING ABOVE ACCEPTABLE YELLOW CLEARANCE LEVELS. FAILURE TO KEEP BIO-CHEMICAL BALANCE IS TREASON. PLEASE REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THE DISTRESSING SITUATION.

Ripple-Y-ELN: I'm outta here!

Cil: Come back, studmuffin! We were doing so well!

((((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Eventually, the Troubleshooters probably start interpreting Cil's actions as assault, and either run away or fight back. Cil, because of her mutant powers and role as plot device, is effectively

invulnerable. If hit with laser fire, her energy field keeps it from doing more than smudging her makeup. If set on fire, she regenerates even as her flesh burns. And nothing distracts her from her goal (although if anyclone is stupid enough to explain cloning technology, she looks very interested).

When the clones finally try to leave (I mean, how much more do they think they can find here anyway? A trail of algae crumbs? Nope, Chum-R. You've gotta work for your pay in this game), they find out what the scrubots were up to.

Again I say: this scene makes no sense in the wider context of what we've seen so far, and has an abrupt end. It's like the designers were more interested in stringing together as many movie references as possible than in things like coherency. The indestructable alien tries to seduce them until eventually they just leave. What?

Encounter 3.4. Gell-O Shots

Whoever opens the door gets smacked in the face by a tsunami of gooey, sudsy gelatin (11 damage). While Cil was distracting them, a veritable army of scrubots has filled the hall from floor to ceiling with Super-Strength Cleansing Gell-O, a fruity-smelling gelatinous floor cleanser/dessert product. It quickly floods the room; characters who dive deliberately into the stuff avoid damage, otherwise, 11 to all.

After that, it's a long swim through hallways and stairwells filled with lime Gell-O, chased by a heartbroken Cil who bubbles more bad pick-up lines through the goo ("I feel great, and I don't kiss bad, either," "I love everybody, and you're next...").

The Troubleshooters don't know how to swim (even the word is Violet clearance), so they'll have to make athletics rolls just to move through the stuff. They can move one meter for each level of success they achieve on the check chart (1 meter for succeeding at Simple difficulty, 7 for Ridiculous). They can hold their breaths for a number of rounds equal to their Endurance (unlike the space pirates in a certain movie tetralogy who can perform entire halfhour sequences underwater and not even come up panting). The hallway and stairs are 50 meters; anyclone who can't make it before his breath runs out starts drowning and takes 1 box of damage every round unless helped out by a fellow Troubleshooter (help...fellow Troubleshooter... man, we kill ourselves with this stuff).

Cil, although unconcerned about drowning, moves surprisingly slowly (she's a ciliate, not a flagellate), going only 2 meters a round. Still, she valiantly chases Troubleshooters and gleefully rescues stragglers, dragging them out and giving them mouth-to-mouth. Any clone so caught

can be considered no longer operative (or will be after Cil finishes with them). Their next clone appears outside. The last anyone sees of Cil, she's running off in the opposite direction. Don't worry. She'll be back. This adventure gets Cillia all the time. **Oh no you didn't.**

4.0: Bright Lights, Big S.E.T.I.

SUMMARY

The road to CHI Sector passes through two other sectors, where the Troubleshooters start missing time and meet their secret society contacts. Another CIG-sent assassin team tries to do them in, joined by the successor clones of the -NPC hoods from Encounter 3.1.

RUNNING IT

The (dripping with Gell-O and possibly dead) clones should have enough information by now to start out for CHI Sector. Of course, what sector do they go through on the way out?

Close Encounter 4.1

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

It's late by the time you steer your cycle-bots into the yellow-lit corridors of UFO Sector. All is quiet, good citizens zonked out on Sleepy-Sleepy, traitors no doubt dying peacefully as The Computer's ever-vigilant security works through the nightcycle performing executions.

Up ahead, in the gloom, you suddenly see a missile-shaped light, sparkling dots floating near the ceiling. It's larger than a vacuumatic, more symmetrical than a warbot, and flying too high for a tankbot. Strangest of all, it's making this eerie whistling noise: Da DA da da DA DUM. **Is that the Star Wars theme?** To me sounds more like 21-st century fox intro music.

You start to ride closer, then...

They're gone.

What happened?

You glance at the clock. 01:23:45. But it was just past one only a few secondcycles ago. Where did the time go?

The players will probably want to talk to people or search for what happened. Discourage this. The only clue is a vague smell of cooking lard. Nearby are Blue sleep creches and a bank of clone replacement tubes, but no more. If the characters take too long mucking around, The Computer asks why they are putting off its important assignment.

Telling about the missing time earns them 5 treason points; The Computer figures the transparently bogus excuse is meant to cover up precious minutecycles wasted on treasonous

activities. It orders them to resume their mission, and assigns one treason point for every minutecycle more they stay in UFO Sector.

What happened? See Encounter 8.3.

Encounter 4.2: 3-2-1 Contacts

You stride through the steamy underbelly of the Complex, one hand on your laser as you watch the shadows for any sign of trouble. You're on your own here, ChumI-Y, in the Corridors Where The IntSec Goons Don't Go.

It's quiet.

Too quiet.

Or maybe that's just the Gell-O clogging your eardrums.

You shake your head, sending lime-flavored sludge flying. That's better. Now you can hear the strange cacophony waiting up ahead. Like a thousand clones all talking at once. Then you see why. Your motorcyclebots have taken you to the busiest sector of all...NPC Sector. **Have they always been on motorcycle bots?**

Clones line the sides of the corridor, packed together, shoulder to shoulder, with curiously blank expressions. Are they waiting for you?

Of course not! What do you think, these are cardboard cut-outs who speak only in convenient three-part quotes which express the sum total of their personality, and only come out when you need someone to answer your questions? Not in this game, pal. These are all human beings with needs and desires. They're not here to be used and thrown away like so much trash. They need to be appreciated. It doesn't take much. Just a few flowers every month, a dinner out once in a while. And a diamond ring, expensive transbot and vacation house in the Caribbean wouldn't hurt either.

But, no. We know you. You're too selfish for that. After all, what'd they ever do for you? Just gave those vital clues you needed. Just got you that APDS ammo from the corner store. And do you ever stop to appreciate it? No. Would it kill you to call once in a while? Write a letter?

No, never mind. They're not asking for anything. They'll just sit here, all alone in the shadowy underworld, in the dark. All they ask is that you pay for a decent funeral... **What an eccentric spiel**

We at West End encourage all gamemasters to flesh out each of the Troubleshooters' secret society contacts. Every gamemaster character has a unique background and history. As Freud-I-ANN postulates, a clone's earliest experiences are the foundation of his personality, so it

is of utmost importance to go through a contact's complete life history, beginning with pre-natal cloning experiences and run them through a virtual reality personalitydevelopment-matrix simulator to properly understand this unique individual.

Or for those of you with less free time, we've provided a handy descriptive name guide for each character. The waiting crowd contains clones of all clearances, from Drunk-NPC to Squatt-R-NPC, Mafios-O-NPC, Sleaz-Y-NPC, Intrigui-G-NPC, Letit-B-NPC, FriendI-I-NPC, and even Informati-V-NPC. **Every time I think this module cannot get any worse, they find new ways to surprise me.the best way to find out is run this adventure... hehehe...**

NPC Sector is a gathering place for clones from every secret society, most of whom have learned of the Troubleshooters' mission and want the SETI data (everyone wants to find out if there are intelligent Troubleshooters; then they might have them do something useful instead of sending them on all these contrived busywork assignments). How, you ask, did they find out when the project is so secret even the Troubleshooters' own briefing officer couldn't know about it? Beats us. Contacts know everything. **Lazy hacks!**

If the characters ask about Mick-G or the Assemblers of God cult, they can find out information according to the following Begwork Table. Roll 1D20 for each character to determine what rumor/information he finds out. Regardless of what he asks. Why does everyone respond with exactly the same phrases? Uh...they're clones. Yeah.

BEGWORK TABLE

D20 Roll Information

1-2 Sees Gell-O. "Ahhhhh! You're dripping green slime, mutie! Everybody, target: mucas!" Clickclick. Boom.

3-4 "Mick-G-UFN ran off to CHI Sector to start a fast-food franchise. He's now known as Mayor Mick-G's."

5-6 "Look, clone. I know what I'm talking about. Mick-G-UFN is some kind of mutant bot. I've seen him change. He's got scaly skin, giant flaps coming out of his shoulders and he breathes fire. He wants Alpha Complex as a component for his demonic ritual."

7-8 "Mick-G is an unwitting pawn of a greater being. His bottle of Bouncy Bubble Beverage contains an otherworldly mutant. Do not drink it no matter what it offers you."

9-10 "He's just a sweet transvestite..."

11-12 "A friend of a friend of a teammate of my sleep creche-mate's fifth clone brother heard from his scrubot that this whole mission is just a test to show The Computer that

you're worthy of promoting. Just thank its monitors five times a day and you'll get Green for sure."

13-14 "If you ever want to see Mick-G alive again, hurry. A great evil is brewing beneath the sewers of CHI Sector. Only clones who are pure of heart and mind can hope to defeat it."

15-16 "I heard there were some giant mutants from beyond the ceiling trying to take over Alpha Complex. But that's crazy."

17-18 "Rumors are treason, citizen. Please come with me to Internal Security headquarters to write that 100 times on the Infraredboard before your execution."

19-20 Contact is Siamese twin. Roll twice for extra ears to the ground. In addition, as they walk, each character gets taken aside by a secret society contact and told what the society wants them to accomplish during this mission. Since all of them are approached simultaneously, no one sees the other's treason.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

SECRET SOCIETY MISSIONS

Anti-Mutant 1

John-Y-RCO is assailed by Mach-O-NPC who tells him the SETI project is obviously a front for something; even The Computer knows better than to waste time and plasticreds searching for intelligent Troubleshooters. So SETI must be designing more intelligent clones. These new mutants will take over the Complex and replace existing clone families. The project must be sabotaged before this happens.

Since John-Y can't understand this chain of logic, Mach-O tells him just to kill anyclone smarter than himself since they're probably a mutant (taking care to make it seem accidental), and bring back their brains so Anti-Mutant can unlock the secret of their powers. Once they have one of their brains, they're certain to defeat them.

There will be other Anti-Mutants watching and waiting to assist. If John-Y needs help, he should scrunch up his face and hold his breath until someone arrives. Once he has acquired the brain, he can inform the watching A-Ms by holding his arms straight out in front of him and moaning the code-word "brains."

Anti Mutant 2

Ripple-Y-ELN is waylaid by Bughunt-R-NPC who says the number of mutant executions in CHI Sector has dropped to an all-time low. Ripple-Y should be on the look-out for anything

suspicious, and can communicate her findings back to AM by speaking backwards three times slowly into the nearest trash chute.

It's well-known that mutants mostly come out at nightcycle (mostly), therefore, Ripple-Y should set traps for them by disabling the lights in as many corridors as she can, creating a dimly-lit, threatening-looking maze, perfect for hunting mutants.

Rube-Y-ROD's treasonous psionic powers let him influence The Computer. How else could he get away with those non-regulation clothes and hairstyles? He's been seen with suspected mutant Macdad-Y. If possible, Ripple-Y should find out who Macdad is by slapping Rube-Y around and asking, "Who's your Dad-Y?"

TechnoCrappy

Rube-Y-ROD is solicited by Macdad-Y-NPC who sings while slipping him a semi-auto slugthrower and eleven AP rounds:

"Eight for Scull-Y the IntSec spy.

Three for the dorks; grab their skins of chrome.

Recruit the one with the loaf of RYE.

Watch out for the things no longer clone.

They got one beat to rule them all.

They got three hips to grind them.

They got fly girls whose moves we need.

And in CHI-town you'll find them."

The prose translation is "Waste Scull-Y; she's Internal Security. Recruit Sam-Y-RYE. Get the Wired Reflectors off of whoever's wearing them and turn them over to the TechnoCrappy, and bring back mutants (or their dance steps) from CHI Sector."

Death Leopard

Sam-Y-RYE is accosted by Mercenar-Y-NPC, who is convinced that SIBERware is the way of the future. All Death Leopards should get some. Sam-Y should make sure that she has more SIBER than anyone else on the team, either by implanting more and more into herself, or ripping her teammates' out. Any stolen SIBER should be passed on to the first clone who says they're afraid of heights.

Scull-Y seems like a boring Computer lackey. Sam-Y should try everything to liven her up -- wild dancing, lots of B.E.E.R., a tattoo. If Sam-Y can get a starched jumpsuit like her to party with Death Leopard, no one is beyond her.

Pro Tech

Scull-Y-FBI is approached by Geek-Y-NPC who mentions that there is a suspected secret society which has access to better and stranger technology than Pro Tech. Little machines you can punch numbers on and find what they add up to. Little clocks you can wear on your wrist. Something called an At-R-EEE-800. Scull-Y should learn the name of this society and get access to their toys. When she does, she should order the Rob/ERO Bot (the only one on the team who she can trust) to deliver the information/goods, using the code phrase of "Danger, Will-Rob/ESUN."

Will-Y is a conceited, clone-centric ego-maniac who does not acknowledge the role technology plays in allowing clones to achieve greatness. He should be taught a lesson: force more and more SIBER into him until he has gotten in touch with his inner bot. Failing that, blackmail him into Pro Tech.

Psion

Will-Y-SMT is summoned by Voodoo-O-NPC via telepathy (so he can't talk back). Psion believes SETI is creating super-mutants in CHI Sector. Will-Y should make sure he gets implanted/fed/irradiated/exposed to whatever SETI is doing. Any new mutant powers gained this way should be thoroughly tested so he can make a full report to Psion.

If the treatment looks promising, Psion will send other volunteers whom Will-Y should help become super-mutants. He can recognize such volunteers because they will speak three times backwards into the nearest trash chute. Naturally, they will deny being Psion, or even protest, but this is merely to fool spies and Computer monitors.

John-Y is an IntSec informer who might endanger Psion's attempts to get the SETI project. The oblong brown thing he carries in his cone rifle is a disguised communicator. Will-Y should steal this object, run fifty meters, then smash it against the floor to disable it. After that, he will be rendered ineffective.

((END TEXT BOX))

We're midway through encounter 4 and only just had Secret Society missions. Let that sink in.

Encounter 4.3: Cens-less Violence

At last, the line of clones ends and you can see the beckoning light of the next sector. One step closer to CHI Sector. One step closer to Mick-G-UFN.

One step closer to your destiny.



The light blinks rapidly, like the clones getting defibrillated at BotWagon, drawing your attention. There must be something wrong with the wiring-NO!

That's no innocent ceiling light. That's the flickering illumination of a Hairy's Arms Strobe-Lite rifle scope, specially designed to attract the victim's attention so he doesn't miss a minute of suffering. For a moment you stare transfixed, your eyes locked on the sputtering symbol of your doom!

Then you draw your own guns, peppering the poor fool with enough laser beams and lead to vaporize the would-be assassin, the floor he's standing on and most of the wall behind him.

Not another one, you sigh. You'd think they'd learn. **Chugga chugga choo vattin' choo**

The hapless, witless, and now-headless assassin was known as The Orange Crush, although his real name was Cens-O-NPC (who worked for CPU in the department of recycling previously printed material). If your players are really eager for more random dice-throwin' combat before continuing with the plot (playing many Not Fun games, recently? **Grr those Not Fun games, with their actually letting the players interact with the game world rather than simply having their actions dictated to them!**), feel free to use Chim-Y-RAH's stats from page XX.

Cens-O should be easy to defeat: he copies what other clones have already done whether or not it works, so he acts just like Chim-Y. Backing him up are Mean-R-NPC, Stupid-R-NPC, Cruel-R-NPC and Nasty-R-NPC, the recently-promoted successor clones (they betrayed Mist-R-OGR to The Computer) of the punks who threatened the Troubleshooters earlier (page XX). More confident now that they've got functioning weapons (Red lasers...ooh), they'll stay and fight as long as two of them are still alive and they don't recognize the characters from last time (a Difficult perception roll for them).

I just realised: we've had one combat with an assassin who begs for death as soon as she draws blood, one that was a set piece interrupted by the MIB, and now one which simply gets narrated but if the players really want to be "Not Fun" and actually fight it, the assassin acts exactly like the previous one. These designers actually hate combat!

An Additional Com Placation

As the Troubleshooters get closer to CHI Sector, their electronic gear begins to malfunction, raising the difficulty of using them by one, due to interference from alien signals.

Their com gear (including Rube-Y's collar) starts to pick up the alien transmissions, mostly wrong numbers or franchise customers wanting to know if there's going to be fly-through

service, or what toys the Grubs' Meals come with, so you don't have to worry about the clones learning any sensitive information. But they can get awfully confused the first time this happens.

((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE))

Will-Y-SMT: (into com gear) Hey, Troubleshooter HQ, this is team 19004673562. We're catchin' fire outside of CHI Sector.

Com Unit: Identify the treasonou- kkkkkkshhhht (switch to strange bubbling voice) specials on sale this week?

Will-Y-SMT: What?

Com Unit: I asked what's on sale this week? I heard you were having one. The Orange Deluxe? The Chopper? (Aside.) I tell ya, Winona, the kids these people hire...

Will-Y-SMT: Look, bubble-boy, you're interfering with a Troubleshooting team on official Computer business. If you don't get your butt off this line I'll come down there and execute you myself, motherboarder.

Com Unit: (Troubleshooter Headquarters voice) Citizen Will-Y, was that a false accusation of treason to a higher clearance citizen? Please demote yourself, handcuff your ankles, and hop back to Headquarters to discuss this execution matter.

((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE))

5.0: Mission Control Freaks

SUMMARY

The Troubleshooters get railroaded (nothing new there, then) through CASA's training course, which sends them into an anti-gravity simulator, forces them to walk upside down across the ceiling, and drops them through free fall. They land near CASA administrator Skinner-B-EFF, who tests their qualification for SETI, delaying them from reaching Mick-G.

RUNNING IT I just realised there's no consistency in these headers. It was "execution" last time
CASA's Mission Control Offices are located in Cermech Corridor. The area is empty, and the Troubleshooters are unmolested as they trudge into the place.

Encounter 5.1: Space Cramp

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

Far below, you hear static and garbled voices, like hundreds of com units malfunctioning. It echoes through the air vents along with a stench like mixed Sugaree-flakes and sewage.

Before you lies a hallway, empty except for a few marks on the walls and a sign plastered to the low-hanging ceiling: SPACE CRAMP: TRAINING FOR YOUNG SCIENTISTS.

Wonder what that means?

The Computer-Approved Space Administration was founded when TC realized that new clones, buildings, service subgroups and surplus weaponry were quickly filling Alpha Complex, and would eventually outstrip the dome's available space and resources. CASA keeps track of the space everyclone and everything takes up and designs new ways to make it more efficient. This requires lots of experiments to determine safe, effective ways to expand the uses for existing space. It sponsors the Search for Extraordinary Troubleshooter Intelligence in the hope that better Troubleshooters would actually do their jobs with fewer casualties, so TC wastes less space housing their hundreds of clone families to make sure there's always enough.

Quick interjection: CASA is, obviously, a NASA reference. There's also FASA (Freedonian Aeronautics and Space Administration), the original publishers (and still rights-holders) of Shadowrun.

The CASA building, therefore, uses every inch of available space for important functions. No wasted room for trivialities like walking and breathing, no sir! The ceiling is four feet high to fit double the number of floors in the building, and the entrance hallway doubles as a training course for future CASA workers.

The various Space Cramp obstacles fold inconspicuously into the walls when not in use, making the corridor look deceptively empty and harmless. The activation triggers are located beneath touch-sensitive floor tiles under each hidden obstacle.

So unless someone's been playing too much Other Game™ and wants to "check for traps" (A Ridiculous perception test), their dramatic entrance into CASA looks something like the following:

You step silently into the hallway, lasers ready, alert to the slightest noise. Mick-G-UFN is hiding here somewhere. If you play your cards right, maybe you can surprise him-

"Make way for Troubleshooting team 19004673562, elite agents of The Computer! Traitor Mick-G-UFN, come out with your hands in the air!" the Rob/ERO booms from behind you.

So much for stealth.

You hurry forward, hoping to catch Mick-G before he flees the bot's announcement. On the third step, something shifts under your foot, and there is an electric crackling noise, and a squeak as the walls, floor and ceiling part, immense metal rings emerging.

CLUH-CHUMP. The rings snap together.

FFFFWOP. A metal chair erupts from the floor, scooping you off your feet.

SHQUIP. SHQUIP. SHQUIP. Three mesh straps fasten across your chest, waist and legs, pinning your arms.

WUB. WUB. WUB. WUB. The rings start spinning, tossing you violently back and forth, faster and faster. You can't feel your arms anymore.

Frantically, you look for the OFF switch.

There it is. On the floor. Just out of reach.

The first clone down the hall activates the Anti-Gravity Gyroscopic Simulator, three sets of rotating metal rings with a chair in the middle. The clone is jostled, spun and shaken on three axes (the plural of "axis," not big hatchets), mimicking the feel of weightlessness. Spraying treacle, anyone?

Once the clone is strapped in, numerous wires attach themselves to his temples, neck and elbows, monitoring his reaction. CASA would like to invent a way to negate gravity, enabling them to use many times as much space, but must first make sure that it wouldn't have an adverse effect on clonekind.

The course is designed to be used by six clones at once (coincidentally), so only Troubleshooters deliberately hanging back can avoid AGGSrivation without a Ridiculous dodge roll. The Rob/ERO is too light to trigger the activation mechanism, so the hall remains inert if the bot is sent ahead to check for danger.

The AGGS run for one hourcycle before the mechanism automatically shuts off. To escape before the hour is up requires them to break or wiggle out of the securing straps (a Nearly Impossible athletics (or Strength + athletics roll), and touch the Off switch below. The monitoring wires have a 2 in 20 chance of shorting out as the clone struggles, turning them into to fried AGGS (3E damage). Naturally, any free clones can try to shut an AGGS off (while making a Tough dodge roll to avoid a 5! decapitation by spinning rings).

While the Troubleshooters are on the training course, a soothing, Computer- generated voice blares from the ceiling speakers, informing the clones of their duty to conserve Alpha Complex's precious space, and providing a detailed history of the Space Program (i.e. when buildings in the Complex were constructed: snooze city).

Once the Troubleshooters have pulled free of the AGGS (or presumably been stuck there for an hour), read the following.



At last you stand upright again. On your own feet. On a nice, solid, wonderful, not-spinning floor. With a grinding clatter, the contraption pulls apart and disappears into the walls. Before the last tile closes, a grating, mechanical voice fills the room. "Please-put-on-the-boots," it repeats over and over. "Allfootwear-must-be-laced-tightly. Thank-you-and-have-a-nice-daycycle," as you notice pairs of large, clunky metal boots adhering to the ceiling.

Hmm. There seems to be a gaping chasm just beyond the boots, leading down to frothing water. The corridor continues on its far side.

Could they mean-? They couldn't possibly want you to-? Would they really-?

Yes.

CASA has received mixed reactions from AGGS testers, and at least a few scientists realize that Zero-G is not the best way to live, so they need an alternative plan for maximizing available real estate. Almost half the space in any given sector, they noticed, is taken up by corridors, walkways, and otherwise-useful floor space kept empty just for clones to walk on.

Obviously, this cannot continue.

Instead, CASA has designed the Directionally-Advanced System Boots, magnetized footgear allowing the wearer to walk across the ceiling. With the floor dropping away to reveal a deep canyon (a 10m-wide area with a 50m drop straight into the immense spin-cycle washing machine below the building), the Troubleshooters have little choice but to climb the ladder to where DAS Boots (any excuse for an awful pun) wait. Hope they work...getting stuck underwater to a spinning washing machine wall might be...dangerous.

The clones can either yank the boots off the ceiling to put them on (Difficult Strength + brawling roll) or lie on their back and lace up. Fortunately, the boots fasten easily, with reliable clamps made by Velcr-O, and only accidentally open for the player who didn't chip in enough for the pizza. Grabbing a falling clone is a Tough brawling test.

Walking in the boots is a Difficult Strength + athletics test. The magnetism can hold an 80-kilo clone... meaning average-strength clones have hard times lifting their legs and big clones have to be very gentle or the boots won't hold. They can also stick to the metal walls, but the physics of this on the clone ankle are painful. Sharp Troubleshooters can keep the boots for later.

Clones with plasticord can rope the boot necks and try Tarzaning to the other side, but remember that the boots hold about 80 kilos together (evil grin) and the target zone is four feet high (Ridiculous athletics roll).

By the time the clones finish, they should be jumping at every funny-looking blotch on the wall, waiting for another trap. Throw in any other space-saving experimental devices you can think of: maybe bots pack them into small wheeled suitcases for convenient transport, fold the clones like origami, or cool the corridor to 33 degrees to serve as a combination transport/refrigerator. As they reach the end of the hall, the floor drops away suddenly, sending the clones hurtling down the combination free-fall exercise, laundry chute and improvisational elevator shaft (elevator definitely not included).

KATHWUMP.

For a moment you hang, weightless, above the sudden emptiness which opened beneath your feet, like some strange bot in an Old Reckoning cartoon, kept aloft only by your own inability to comprehend what just happened.

FWOOSH.

A loud, but strangely gentle blast of air sweeps across your legs and you tumble down, but only a few meters before your direction switches again.

Rolling heels over head, you float in the chute's light gravity, drifting like a scrap of cellophane towards the bottom, many floors below. Discarded jumpsuits, bedsheets and dirty underwear float beside you, like a condensationbow of cloth.

Hey, this actually isn't so bad.

Not at first, maybe. The clones drift pleasantly through the first half of the tube's near-weightlessness, another anti-gravity testing device. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, they could only complete the mechanism for the top half of the tube. The bottom half is normal. Once the characters drift to the halfway point, they suddenly drop like a Mack truck. It's another fifteen meters to the cold, hard, cement ground floor (See VAaFFGH Table for damage). The last sight this clone number will ever see unless they can jury-rig a parachute before they get there. It takes a Tough Dexterity + brawling roll to snatch clothing out of the air as the clone hurtles past and a Nearly Impossible juryrigging roll to construct a passable parachute fast enough. If the juryrigging roll fails, it is only an Average juryrigging roll to bunch the cloth underneath the clone's falling body, providing a softer landing and reducing the damage by 1 column.

Other solutions, like flinging oneself against the wall and trying to stick with adhesive treacle, may be ruled at the gamemaster's discretion. Trying to stick with DAS Boots is asking for a broken ankle. **I wonder if they've forgotten about the team all wearing flypaper trenchcoats...**

Encounter 5.2: Missin' Control

The room you land in is painted a security clearance you don't recognize, a light red, almost the color of freshly burned flesh, strangely soothing.

Posters line the walls, showing picture you haven't seen since you were a junior citizen – Fluffy The Scrubot, The Little Infrared Who Almost Could, and Barn-Y.

Large plush dolls are scattered across the floor, and plastic building blocks in easy-to-see three-pound sizes. Soothing music plays in the background, cheerful sing-alongs like "On Top of Mold Choke-Y," and "One Ptraitor, Two Ptraitor."

A cheerfully bland-faced clone sits in a cushioned chair, his stomach hanging over the waistline of his blue jumpsuit. "Hello everyclone," he says in a voice that's sticker and sweeter than the treacle. "I'm Principal-Director Skinner-B-EFF, and I would like to welcome you to CASA's Search For Extraordinary Troubleshooter Intelligence. Do you understand that?" He smiles encouragingly. "I know those are big words, but it just means we want to see how smart you are. I'll keep it nice and short and then you can go back out and kill each other again. Won't that be fun?"

B.F. Skinner was an American psychologist known for his work on operant conditioning. The skinner box is named after him - basically it's a machine that trains a mouse to press a button to get a reward, it's also a popular technique in designing videogames, especially freemium mobile games, to encourage players to get addicted. This is probably also a Simpsons reference.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Principal-Director Skinner-B-EFF-3

Service Group: Armed Forces (CASA/SETI)

Mutant Power: Deep Probe (and he still can't find an intelligent Troubleshooter)

Secret Society: Assemblers of God (his chapter are now bugs)

S5 E10 A6 C7 D7 MA6 M8 P8

Macho Bonus: 1

Skills: Data Search 4/12, Data Analysis 3/11, Bootlicking 3/10

Equipment: Lots of educational toys for preschoolers

Skinner-B has been working with SETI for a long time, and he's dealt with hundreds of thousands of Troubleshooters. As a young clone, he loved his work, eagerly waiting for his faith in Troubleshooters to pay off, when he would find the one who would prove that Troubleshooters are intelligent life.

But no. No matter how hard he tried, no matter how easy he made the math in his Troubleshooter instruction booklets, no matter how many flashy pictures he stuck in or what hints he provided, all the Troubleshooters wanted to do was kill things. And gradually Skinner gave up hope. Now he's just marking time, waiting to pass the torch to someone younger, more enthusiastic, and more incompetent. Many in his position might have become bitter, giving the Troubleshooters what they want, filling the IQ tests with questions about machine guns or live-fire demos, but not Principal-Director Skinner. No, he retains a tiny hope that somewhere is a clone with a spark of wit, a modicum of originality, smothered under years of brain-numbing conditioning. Instead of sulking, Skinner tries to be nurturing, to bring that seed of sense to life by encouraging the Troubleshooters with games, toys, puzzles and everything befitting a growing mind. Occasionally, however, the old resentment slips out, making his words alternate between saccharine sweetness and utter contempt, from language and concepts suitable to a slow two-year-old to assuming the clones are bloodthirsty psychopaths.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

Skinner puts the clones through his usual regimen, a combination of psychotherapy /IQ tests for pre-literate children and NASA Space Camp games. For example, he'll have them fit shaped pegs into the appropriate holes, but using lithium hydroxide filters they use to filter CO2 in the space shuttle.

Cheap Trick: The best way to run this encounter is if you actually have some toys around. Start with something complex, like a fairly difficult brain-teaser metal puzzle. Watch the players intently as they struggle with it. Scribble notes while loudly berating their intelligence and lack of creativity.

Then lower your standards. Get out a changeable robot toy they've never operated; a Slinky; a hackysack; a superball; a crayon. If the characters show signs of intellectual ability (like getting a Slinky to walk down stairs), Skinner worships them. Finally meeting intelligent Troubleshooters, he wants them to be part of his campaign (of tests), and won't let them leave for as long as possible. Even if they ditch him, he continues to call their com units, ask them to write Troubleshooter instruction manuals and take over his job at CASA.

Encounter 5.3: Four Shad-Os The Troubleshooters should catch on eventually that playing along won't get them out. Skinner won't let them go and becomes increasingly childish if

they try, eventually regressing to kindergarten-level himself, and pulling on their jumpsuits and whining. This alerts the rest of CASA's staff that someone is trying to get downstairs. As most CASA employees are paying rent to the Altair-native aliens living in the basement, they immediately send four heavily-armed goons to deal with the intruders.

These Orange-clearance thugs, Shad-O-TEK, Shad-O-BXR, Shad-O-PLY, and the leader, Shad-O-BET, are all equipped with Painful Editors, and go a long way towards explaining why Skinner has such a low opinion of Troubleshooters. **There is a Shadowrun supplement called Shadowtech. I have no idea if this was an intentional reference, and if so why none of the others seem to be. Also I have no idea what Shad-O-PLY and -BET are meant to be puns on...**

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Shad-O-TEK, Shad-O-BXR, Shad-O-PLY, Shad-O-BET

Service Group: Armed Forces (CASA/SETI)

Mutant Powers: (respectively) Mechanical Intuition, Dumbness, Telepathy, Charm

Secret Society: Death Leopard

SIBERware: Painful Editor

S8 E9 A8 C3 D8 MA6 M1 P7

Macho Bonus: 1 HTH Bonus: 1

Skills: Energy Weapons 4/12, Brawling 3/11, Dodge 3/11

Equipment: Orange laser pistols (3L), Orange Reflec (L2)

They have no personalities.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

Like the other gratuitous attackers, these goons fight to the death, even if they're winning (bit by the assassin bug). They are no match for the SIBERed Troubleshooters.

When they get beyond the Shad-Os, our hapless heroes begin their descent deep into the heart of the greatest menace Alpha Complex has ever known...well, by page [INSERT FOLLOWING PAGE NUMBER HERE], anyway.

6.0: Saturday Night Hive

SUMMARY

The characters head into the basement and encounter badly written, unsubtle prose telling them they're in trouble so deep they'll hit China if they dig themselves in any farther. While distracted

by cocooned assassins, they get surrounded by Altair-natives, and brought before the acid-blooded Hive Queen to be implanted with eggs.

RUNNING IT

Past the Shad-Os (**The Shad-Os?**) of the underworld is the dark, musty staircase to the basement. For a cheap trick, turn down the lights.

Encounter 6.1: The Purple Pros

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

The plastic creaks as you walk slowly into the oppressive darkness. A strange smell drifts up from below, a dry sweetness, like powdered BBB. Another step and you can feel the hot, wet air, as if something were trying to tell you this isn't just another corridor. The scent goes from sweet to a choking stench, somewhere between yeast and rotting meat.

You hear an odd shrilling sound. Whatever is beneath the floor, it's awake.

The doorway awaits, open just a crack. Something glistens on the handle.

It's slime. Sticky slime. The Troubleshooters can pull it open or incinerate the door.

Inside, it's more cramped than usual. Resin plasters the walls, protruding in lumps like ribs and smoothed over the furniture. Ropy, muscle-like strands seal in the obligatory assassins, held almost helpless against the ceiling.

It looks like this crew were Indigos and some senseless Violets. Phlegm-like slime imprisons them forever, their mouths held open as if trying to complete a scream begun long ago. Their bones were broken to fit the contours of the wall. Even their battle armor and plasma generators didn't save them from whatever's waiting in the inner sanctum.

Give them a second to get stuck in the slime trying to retrieve the Violet's stuff.

Looks like these guys were the well-lauded team of writer-assassins, the Purple Pros. **Sounds like a good nickname for the team who wrote this "mission".** The brass band of jackobots they hired to get your attention are entombed with them, never to play again. For a moment, everything goes silent, as if to honor the memories of such fine Troubleshooters. **INDIGO and VIOLET clearance troubleshooters?**

An Indigo's eyes flick open. He gasps, and you can read Serve-I-VER on his purplish tongue.

"Kill...me..." he whispers.

Well, heck, if he's asking...

The clones don't get more out of him unless someone tries a Difficult deep probe. A successful roll means the Troubleshooter gets flashbacks of the Altair-natives swamping the Purple Pros

with giant ants, caterpillars, and regenerating mutant centipedes. Serve-I and the rest of them have bug larvae gestating in their bodies, and will soon become Altair-natives (see p. XX).

WHAM. The door upstairs slams.

Oops.

Eventually, the clones should decide to blow through the final door and get it over with. They ain't under a nuclear reactor this time.

Encounter 6.2: The Filth Element

THOOM. Down goes the door to the inner sanctum, and a hideous sight greets your eyes. You've seen mutant slime before, but never like this.

The room is packed with muties on the floor, the walls, and the ceilings. Some used to be Red and Infrared citizens, but irreversibly changed. Instead of the smooth flesh and small eyes of clonekind, their faces are covered with short, bristling hairs and topped with bulging multifaceted oculars which glitter with a silvery light.

Their fingers have stretched into furred pinchers, and an extra pair of short arms protrude grossly from their hips. On their backs, sticking through their slitted jumpsuits, a pair of filmy wings flutter rapidly.

They are grotesque, disgusting monstrosities, their clonal features barely visible in the hideously contorted shapes. Nice high-tops, though.

Fear grips your heart, freezes the breath in your lungs, tenses your muscles, dries your eyeballs and does some other stuff elsewhere in your body. It's gonna be tough, Chum-R. These revolting mutants may be the last thing this clone number will ever see.

And they're having more fun than you.

These are the Fly Girls, the hive's front line of defense/hired entertainment/ something to show right before cutting to commercial. They look like monstrous, humanoid flies, but dress in sequin-covered spandex and leather. They retain only partly corrupted human vocal cords, so they sing back-up to themselves in raspy, monster-movie voices. There are eight waiting in the entrance, dancing madly to a discophanous beat. Imagine the wildest nightclub dance scene from any dark future movie, replace the people with giant bugs, add more flashing lights, worse music, bigger guns and cover everything with an inch-thick layer of pulsating, sweet-smelling green slime.

Cheap Tricks: Make this scene non-normal somehow. Hold coffee strainers over your eyes to imitate a bug. Wear silly bouncy-ball antennae. Turn on a strobe or ultraviolet light and turn up

some rap or house music. Heck, swig a mouthful of Pepto-Bismol so you can "puke" pink goo onto a box of donuts.

Then if the clones don't attack right away, Fly Girls swarm over to them, grabbing their hands, fawning over them, and say "Hey, ya wanna dance?" like a bunch of teenyboppers with wings and chitin.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Fly Girls -- Butt-R-FLY, Bot-FLY, Drag-O-FLY, Horse-FLY, House-FLY, Bluebottl-FLY, Spanish-FLY, and Sup-R-FLY

Service Group: Megomed-I-AHH's Vid Shows -- In Living Clearance

Mutant Powers: Adrenaline Control, Charm, Regeneration

Secret Society: Altair-native rocker aliens

S8 E9 A9 C7 D4 MA4 M6 P10

Macho Bonus: 1 HTH Bonus: 1

Skills: Dance 7/16, Dodge 3/12, Brawling 4/13

Equipment: Snazzy outfits. Bite (3I damage). Carapace armor (I2).

The Fly Girls are obedient slaves to the Acid Queen, but retain enough intelligence to be sociable. Their primary desire is to keep the Troubleshooters distracted until the rest of the bugs surround them. They feign gushing curiosity and a party-girl need to show them how to have fun and dance. The Flies exude and flick slime on the characters as they talk.

They and the Acid Queen want to know whether the Troubleshooters are affiliated with the Borger or CIGs, the biggest opponents of their plan to bug-ify Alpha Complex. They try to sneak questions like this into their conversation unobtrusively, but not knowing Alpha Complex culture very well (their bug brains have forgotten what their clone brains once knew), couldn't be more obvious if they spelled it out in flashing lights.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

Eventually, the clones either get fed up and try to charge past the Fly Girls, or talk to the Fly Girls long enough to get surrounded (20 seconds). In the first case, the FGs scream for back-up bug help with high-pitched buzzing noises.

These bugs don't want to kill the clones; they rarely find anyone new at CASA, so they'd rather recruit them. They stun the Troubleshooters, wrap them in sticky silk and carry them into the

hive. If the Troubleshooters are surrounded, they get the same treatment, just faster. How many bugs are there?

Enough.

If you don't believe us, see Encounters 7.2 and 7.3.

Oops. Their equipment malfunctions from fly puke (particularly John-Y's nuclear grenade).

Trapdoor spiders yank clones away. Slugs stick them to their sides. Bolas spiders snare their weapons. This combat takes as long as you feel like. Let the Troubleshooters kill bugs indiscriminately. It won't do any good, but it gives them a warm fuzzy before going down.

Eventually, no matter what they do, the hordes of bugs overwhelm and subdue them.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Back-Up Bugs

Service Group: Guardians and Servants of Her Most Imperial Majesty, the Hive Queen

Mutant Powers: Adrenaline Control, Regeneration, Sting

Secret Society: Altair-native insectoid aliens

S8 E9 A8 C2 D4 MA4 M3 P10

Macho Bonus: 1 HTH Bonus: 1

Skills: Brawling 5/13, Dodge 5/13, Mindless Obedience 11/13

Equipment: None. Mandibles/stingers do 3I damage. Carapace armor I2.

These bugs are a lower caste than the Fly Girls and considerably less intelligent and charismatic. They exist for the sheer pleasure of beating up the Queen's enemies, buzzing obscenities and oozing copious amounts of slime. The slime provides 1E armor, and makes grappling with one a very short process (squish). The Sting mutation means the victim must make a Nearly Impossible Endurance + biochem therapy roll to avoid paralysis for 1D20 minutes.

Episode 7 goes into more detail about individual bugs, but here it's so dark the clones have a hard time distinguishing them.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

Encounter 6.3: All Trussed Up and No Place To Go

When the Troubleshooters are tied up and disarmed (or at least have dropped their weapons), the bugs drag them into the hive itself.

The air warms as you are brought deeper into the bowels of CASA, and you bump uncomfortably against the armored carapace of the giant mutants you're strapped to, but at least they left your head free and your eyes uncovered.

Mutants fill the room, from tiny, six-legged tankbot-shaped mites as small as newly-burst infants to towering, deadly Green monsters with long pinching arms and black and white habits. Some of the mutants chitter excitedly as you pass, licking the dribbling treacle trail.

The room is lit with phosphorescence which reflects off the cocooned clones on the ceiling, their pitiful faces frozen in permanent masks of fear, which even now are grown over with scaly chitin and the omnipresent slime.

For a moment you falter (that is, you try to falter, but the bugs carrying you keep moving, so you settle for quaking mildly in your boots). If the mutants have their way, that could be you up there, lying helpless as the metamorphosis alters, centimeter by centimeter, everything that makes you who you are. Your flesh, your eyes, your very brain...

Then you pull your head up defiantly. You've been in worse places. Have you not personally executed every member of the Communist Party? Well, sorta; it was actually a Junior Citizen's burstday party, but they were all Commies. Have you not faced down the entire SABot in their radioactive lair? No, that was someone else. Have you not tamed whole armies using only your spurs and a set of jumper cables? Are you not Ilsa, Leather Queen of the Arabian Harem? Damn. Three for three.

But surely there's some way out of here.

The bugs fall silent as the stage begins to shake from the tread of something very, very heavy. Play up the suspense as the bugs slowly turn the clones to face the Queen, and the crowd begins a worshipful chant..."Gyp-sy! Gyp-sy!"

The Queen's head has two enormous, soft, moth-like antennae jutting out of some extremely big hair. Her face and upper body are those of a brownish, dancer-muscled clone. Two gray, spotted wings jut from her hips, just above a twenty-foot distended abdomen, and a thigh-thick ovipositor. Little legs slowly push her abdomen forward.

Insidious guitar music begins as she reaches you.

"ALL HAIL THE ACID QUEEN!" yell the bugs.

"The who?" you ask.

"Exactly," a Fly Girl replies.

The sluggish body has stopped moving, except for occasional tremors tearing through its pus-covered skin. The mutants holding you tremble fearfully as her heavily Red-painted mouth opens, revealing perfect white teeth. "THEY WILL DO," she announces at last in a too-loud yet somehow still musical voice. "THANK YOU, WORKERS OF THE WORLD OF ALTAIR." Are things looking funny here? What was in that slime? Your captors relax, and pick you up in their...um, mouth-like appendages, depositing your silk-wrapped forms onto the bare stage.

The background music gets louder as the queen turns to you, a familiar look in her eyes. She's about to reveal her master plan. You relax slightly, this, at least, you've seen before.

Though never in song.

This is the Acid Queen, the leader of all of Alpha Complex's visiting Altair-natives. The clones now discover to their dismay that like the aliens in certain hive-centered James Cameron movies, the Altair-natives have acid for blood. This, however, is no garden-variety floor-dissolving hydrochloric acid, no, sir! This stuff is so dangerous that CIA and FBI Sectors spend a great deal of time looking for it, confiscating it, and testing it on unsuspecting clones, bots and schoolchildren. It's lysergic acid diethylamide.

Jereeg-R-CIA-2 could turn on a whole sector with one bleeding Fly Girl.

Unfortunately, this acid can be absorbed through the skin. Remember that slimy ooze the clones have been seeing? Remember how it dripped all over them during the fight and the queen's examination? Remember the words "onset time?" The clones have about fifteen minutes before the whole world starts to dissolve. Fortunately, the Acid Queen only needs a few.

See, the Altair-natives are the Borgers' greatest galactic rival. Since they subsist primarily on nectar, blood or dung, they have little interest in intergalactic fast food joints. That's a waste of perfectly valuable clones, whose sentient bodies and superior brains are far too important to squander on char-broiled meat patties.

They're much more useful to lay eggs in.

Cheap Trick: Get out some music. Preferably a song by The Who with a title used frequently throughout this chapter. Sing the following speech. Got a disco ball? (We won't ask why.) Spin it. Throwing back her head, long bleached hair fanned out by the air conditioner, the Acid Queen grabs the microphone one of her underlings hands her.

The guitars are even louder, now.

You know, this world ain't what it could be now,
but I can put it right

I'll make you what you should be now,
just give me one night.
Bow down to the Acid Queen,
you Troubleshooting thugs.
Just bow down, cuz' I guarantee, I'll turn you all to bugs.
Just stay right here. I'll close the door.
There won't be any pain.
But clone, you're not a clone no more;
my egg's laid in your brain.
I'm the mistress of the galaxy.
I'll put you in your place,
as my servant and a new recruit into the master race.
Then you can join my fiendish plan
to dominate the earth;
as grubs hatch between those pearly whites,
you'll give my children birth.
When my work is done, dear citizen
you'll never feel more alive.
My blood will run through your skin,
you'll long to join the hive.
And worship the Acid Queen
and follow her command,
to join Altair's native way of life. Together we shall stand.
Because, this world ain't what it could be now.
You're worth much more than snacks.
I'll make you what you should be now,
before the 'borgs attack.
So bow down to the Acid Queen
my newest precious grubs.
Just bow before your mamma queen, like happy little bugs.
After the Acid Queen finishes gloating over her new prizes, she gets to work, sticking her ovipositor into the Troubleshooters' mouths and laying a pingpong-ball sized egg which adheres

to their tongue. The Troubleshooters may struggle, but it's safe to assume that when they're tied up, weaponless, and outnumbered two billion to one, they won't get far.

Once implanted, the Troubleshooters are fastened to the ceiling with the other cocoons and left while the bugs go celebrate their victory.

The clones should figure out that staying here is not a good idea. If they don't, activate their next clones and tell them to go kill their old selves (see Chapter 7). The transformation process is quick and irreversible. Time to start planning.

Cheap Trick: Make sure two people know the Heimlich Maneuver, just in case. Take out six cherry tomatoes. Stick one in each of your players' mouths. Then tell them to discuss their escape plan.

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

John-Y-RCO: Re ha' ko geh' ou' o' heh.

Ripple-Y-ELN: Hou?

Will-Y-SMT: I' ee ca' ge' a 'an 'ee, ee ca' 'eek a 'i'go.

Ripple-Y-ELN: Wa 'oo ay?

Okay, that's enough of that.

((((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

The SIBERware gives the clones a distinct advantage in escaping. It takes a Ridiculous Strength + brawling roll and several minutes of straining for someone with mussel augmentation to break a significant number of the strands. It is only Nearly Impossible to loosen the bonds to the point where the clones can twist in them.

Shooting a cocoon open without hurting anyone is a Nearly Impossible appropriate weapon skill roll, if they have Smartgum Links and chew or crush the egg (or squash the gum with their lips, a Difficult Strength + projectile weapons roll). Breaking an egg inundates the clone in the embryo's blood; roll immediately on the Acid Blood Effects table below. Cutting through the strands from the inside is a Difficult Strength + melee weapons roll, from the outside, it is merely Tough.

Teleporting with a bug egg in your face is not a good idea. Two words: The Fly. Any dumb schmuck who tries this gets three rolls on the Bug/Feature table.

Once the clones have a hand free, it is relatively simple to pull the sticky egg from their mouths and crush it (they may now eat the tomato if they wish).

The other cocooned clones can be mercifully killed with a single shot each if the Troubleshooters feel conscientious (or use that as an excuse to waste each other).

The bug DNA acts quickly (i.e. it hits when the players start repeating themselves in their escape plan or talking about pizza or something) to install a number of bugs features in the Troubleshooters' systems. Consult the table below to see what insect characteristic the hapless clone has inherited. Such changes do not carry over to the character's next clone. However, due to the miracle of MemoMax, successor clones believe they have all the same problems and advantages of their predecessor.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

BUG/FEATURE TABLE

Roll 1D20 Result

1-2 Ladybug. The character's knees produce a noxious-smelling fluid to detract predators. If a predator (e.g. Pastafarian) attempts to eat them, the fluid does 3 boxes of poisoning damage.

3-4 Mosquito. The character grows a long, needle-pointed retractable proboscis which replaces his mouth. He can eat only blood or other fluids. Treacle is acceptable.

5-6 Locust. The character must eat his own body weight in food every day. This can be a serious problem for successor clones who believe they should eat this amount, but cannot possibly digest it.

7-8 Fly. The character grows compound eyes which bulge out and around his head, giving him 3600 vision, broken into 5,000 tiny facets. This gives a -3 penalty to aiming, and makes the Battletax very happy.

9-10 Cricket. The character grows ears in his legs and breathes through spiracles (six holes) in the sides of his torso. Tight jumpsuits or melting DyeCoats can cause serious hearing and breathing problems.

11-12 Flea. The character can jump a hundred times his own height. Unfortunately, the dome of Alpha Complex is only about 450 feet high. Hitting your head on the dome does 5I damage.

13-14 Honeybee. The character wants to communicate through a series of ritualized dances. They see colors in the ultraviolet spectrum, and have the Sting mutation. Regrettably, once they use it, their butt falls off, causing 4 boxes of damage and a lot of bleeding.

15-16 Katydid. When the character feels threatened, he squirts blood from his knees and elbows to blind the attacker. It takes a Tough missile weapons roll (and short sleeves) to

hit the eyes. The blood loss causes a box of damage each time, and attracts any vampclones straying here from other supplements.

17-18 Cicada. The character can make music by clapping the sides of his belly button together with powerful new muscles. This noise can be deafening (Endurance + survival to resist; duration 1D20/2 minutes), but it's hard to wake the clone up in the morning for the next 17 years.

19-20 Twins. Roll twice. Clone gets both results.

((END TEXT BOX))

Once the characters escape their cocoons, they still need to get out of the hive. Their best bet is through a window, as the bugs guard the doorway. It takes a Tough athletics test to climb to a window, and an Average Strength + brawling test to get it open. This would normally not be a problem, but that Acid Blood is in full swing by now. Consult the following table for an idea of what the clone experiences on his trip. All hallucinations last 1D20/4 hours. We take no responsibility for the fact that some of these results are more logical and believable than the plot. In Alpha Complex; hallucinations often make more sense than real life.

Note: West End Games does not condone the use of illegal drugs. We also do not support the overthrow of democracy by a megalomaniac computer, the reproduction of humans by cloning, or the conquest of Earth by singing bug-like aliens who bear a distinct resemblance to Tina Turner.

((BEGIN TEXT BOX))

ACID BLOOD EFFECT TABLE

1D20 Roll Experience

1-2 Clone becomes fascinated with the sound of his trigger clicking, and will repeat this experience over and over and over. Due to his reduced field of vision, he does not notice the simultaneous light and explosion.

3-4 Clone believes his left hand has been taken over by malicious aliens from another dimension and tries to rid himself of it in any way possible (ignoring the fact that the entire room has been taken over by malicious aliens from another dimension).

5-6 Clone becomes intensely interested in the object immediately in front of her ("Oooh. Kitchen magnets!"). She stares at it for 1-5 hourcycles. Learns all the secrets of the universe. Forgets them the second she wakes up.

7-8 Clone believes 1-5 of his teammates have turned into seven-foot tall lizard people. However, this may be less threatening than the seven-foot tall bugs he's been surrounded by for the last hour. Roll 1D20. On 1-10 he attacks, 11-20 he's "cool with the scales thing."

9-10 Clone believes that everything he sees is purple. For a Yellow clone in Alpha Complex, this often forces the character to run in terror, looking for a lower clearance area.

11-12 Clone believes he can see sound. Different sounds manifest in different ways, from pretty wavy lines for a soft whisper, to bright laser fire for loud drumming. Anyclone standing near Rube-Y takes his presence as an attack. If Rube-Y gets this, he claws off his own shoulders.

13-14 Everything the clone eats tastes like treacle. This makes it impossible to detect further drugs or poisoning. Mmm...that slime looks like treacle.

15-16 Clone believes his SIBERware is talking about him, and tries to dig it out of his body to lecture it. Removing the SIBER causes 3 boxes of damage. If still conscious, he goes after his teammates' 'ware.

17-18 Clone believes that all innocuous devices are actually transmitters which broadcast his treasonous thoughts directly to The Computer. There is no paper clip, toilet paper roll, or light switch in Alpha Complex safe from his wrath.

19-20 Clone believes he has mutant powers he doesn't have ("You can't hurt me. I've already teleported away!"). Choose two or roll randomly.

((END TEXT BOX))

Encounter 6.4: A-hive and Kicking

Once out of their prison, the clones still need to leave CHI Sector or they are not long for this world. Depending on how much noise and fuss they make getting out, the bugs notice their escape anywhere from seconds to fifteen minutes after they've gone.

Then they take the kid gloves off (and you can bet the kid is happy about that). If the Troubleshooters don't have the good manners to shut up and incubate, twenty-five search-bugs come after the clones. They go for the kill.

Remember, the characters are still on whopping amounts of acid, so make the combat stranger, surreal, and more random than normal Paranoia combat. Throw out the rules entirely. Who's got

time to worry about skills and damage when you're being mobbed by a whole forest of purple broccoli?

Fortunately, once the Troubleshooters get hurt, their BotWagon monitors go off, so help is on its way.

You gasp as another blow lands, and your entire lifecycle flashes before your eyes. Is this the end, torn to bits by hundreds of hungry mutants, ending your days in a sector unknown to you, surrounded by strangers, coated in treacle?

But wait! Hope sounds from down the corridor, the harsh, screaming wail of sirens, accompanied by flashing lights, a red beacon of relative safety in the cold, wild abyss that is CHI Sector. The melodic siren is joined by back-up percussion as heavy machine guns spray anything that looks like a bug.

BotWagon heavy machine guns do 5P and never miss, no sir, even when fired by near-sighted cyborgs in a speeding, bouncing van. And the clones hardly resemble bugs...

As dozens of armored-up bots and cyborgs spill out of the van's back and sides, strong metal arms hoist you up, strapping you to a rickety gurney.

"Velcome, Troubleshooters!" yells a familiar voice. "The 5,500-credit fee for zis rescue haz been deducted from your account..."

Ah.

BotWagon.

Wait until the majority of the clones are on their last legs before bringing in BotWagon as their glorious savior. The Wagon, manned by ten clones and ten docbots (see Encounter 2.2 for stats), drives blindly into the fray, tracing the characters by SIBER implant. When they get close enough (bump...aieeee!) they grab the clones and drag them inside, but the rest of the time they play ants-at-a-picnic all over the bugs.

The characters are given BotWagon's version of treatment (lucky them) and dragged out of CHI Sector for a debriefing with John-O-SON and The Computer.

7.0: A Wretched Hive of...oh, Never Mind

SUMMARY

The Troubleshooters get debriefed by newly-promoted John-Y-SON, and given command of an incompetent Vulture Squadron for a final run into BUG Sector. They set off a nuke just in time to stop a particularly bad Altair-native concert.



RUNNING IT

The BotWagon-retrieved characters are brought directly to XXX Sector for their debriefing.

Encounter 7.1: Does the Name "Pavlov" Ring a Bell? (Nice pun, huh)

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

It's six in the morningcycle when you're dumped unceremoniously by Debriefing Room MST3K.

Matchst-Y-XXX is empty, not even a welcoming sniper rappelling from the light fixtures.

There are two chairs behind the desk; one occupied by...by the clone from CASA, Director Skinner-B-EFF! The six chairs are arranged in a circle, beneath the chutes, you notice grimly. You have a pretty good idea what the straps on the chairs and the drain in the floor are for.

The Ultraviolet who doesn't exist is still there, but this time he and his bots are wearing...gray. He has a little White stick hanging out of his mouth, the tip burning. The bot readies a bomb...and a plate of little brown things.

John--O-SON walks into the room, but this time, he's dressed in the shiny uniform of a newly-promoted Yellow. He glares pitilessly. "Strap yourselves down and keep your laser handy," he orders. "Hope the new set-up doesn't bug you."

With John-Y-SON (on whatever clone number) present, the debriefing begins. John-Y asks questions, while Skinner-B presides over terminations and commendations. Since he thinks the Troubleshooters might prove to be intelligent if rewarded properly, he has requested that all promotions and demotions take effect immediately, to condition the proper attitude in the clones.

The electrified chairs produce a voltage insufficient to kill most clones (2E), and Skinner has a remote control to turn them on whenever a clone gets a demotion, treason point, or execution (each chair has only one arm-strap so clones can shoot each other in this circumstance).

Whenever a clone gets promoted, a newly-pressed jumpsuit falls from the chutes; on a commendation (including executing traitors) a cookie falls; and a readout on the chair shows their increasing credit balance: 750 credits per traitor.

Cheap Trick: Get out some cookies, a little bell, and glasses of milk. Whoever receives a commendation gets a (ding!) cookie. Whoever gets promoted gets some (ding!) milk. Make an annoying BZZZZT noise (or use a joy buzzer) whenever someone says something treasonous.

The Root Canal Begins

While John-Y-SON asks questions, Joe-U-ELL is strangely quiet, merely playing the part of the Cigarette-Smoking Clone. He heckles only if things get slow. In the meantime, he smokes the

White stick. Then he rolls a much larger brown stick and lights it. Then he smokes from a glass pipe with a White rock in it. Then he slumps over in his chair and Joe-U-ELL-5 walks in.

Debriefing Questions

1: Team Leader, report what you found.

2: Did your mission succeed? Why not?

Oddly, Skinner-B does not execute anyone for failure to find Mick-G-UFN, but merely gives the Team Leader a (BZZZT) 17-credit fine.

3: Why do you think you were chosen for this mission?

It's on their Mission Briefing. Failure to read the Mission Briefing is treason.

4: Equipment Officer, account for all PLC-issued equipment.

Saying "The Battletax system couldn't be wrong" shows faith in The Computer and earns a (ding!) commendation cookie. Unfortunately, not keeping paper records for each item is (BZZZT) sloppy paperwork.

5: Did the Research and Design items malfunction in any way? Whose fault do you think that is?

If they're accusing BotWagon of errors, they'd better prove that the bots have faulty asimov circuits. The Computer assigned their mem cards; saying their programming is insufficient marks the clone as a programmer (15 treason points).

6: Communications and Recording Officer, did your com units experience interference during the mission?

The com unit calls have been recorded. If there was no interference, who were the Troubleshooters talking to? (BZZZT) Secret society contacts?

He Who Controls the Past: A Computer Message

After question six, an announcement comes over the public address system.

"Citizens of Alpha Complex. A treasonous error has been found in Housing, Preservation, and Development. After the stalwart efforts of the Troubleshooters and Armed Forces, the error has been contained and is perfectly safe. However, due to a slight miscommunication, CHI Sector no longer exists. All transbot and foot traffic in the sector between CHH and CHJ shall refer to it as BUG Sector. All references to CHI Sector are treason punishable by summary execution.

"On a completely safe and unrelated note, Communist traitors have attempted to sabotage our loyal Armed Forces by adding ammunition to the perfect level The Computer has assigned. To remedy this error, the Armed Forces will be conducting an Ammunition Expenditure Daycycle celebration between CHH and CHJ Sectors. In appreciation of this celebration, HPD and Mind

Control will be filming many short features there. Do not be alarmed at the presence of the actors or their surprisingly lifelike mutant costumes. Have a nice daycycle."

The Troubleshooters can't mention CHI Sector directly for the rest of the briefing. Doing so is a direct violation of The Computer's order (15 treason points).

7: Happiness Officer, did anyone have chemical imbalances on this mission? Did they sing?

The HO gets to explain why they let the Acid Queen administer chemicals to them without saying they've conspired with mutants. Anyone who says they were tied up and helpless gets a check-over by BotWagon to put their chemicals in proper alignment (i.e. brainwash, brain-dry, brain-bleach...).

8: Hygiene Officer, did you acquire any unusual dirty substances or cleansers during this mission?

Gell-O? Alien slime? If the Troubleshooters aren't minty-fresh (including polished Wired Reflectors), the HO gets (BZZZT!) 19 treason points.

9: Loyalty Officer, did you see signs of treason among your teammates?

10: Loyalty Officer, do you believe the BotWagon contract was fair?

"Yes" is the loyal answer, but Skinner-B mutters "chump," and shocks them anyway. Slick clones may impress him by saying BotWagon's contract should be submitted to PLC or some other Hell on Earth for review, thus getting revenge on the freaks. If so, Skinner-B puts them up for a (ding!) promotion and thinks there may be hope for SETI.

11 Have you had any difficulties with the transfer of electronic money?

None at all, (ding!) Citizen.

12: If you made it to Yellow Clearance without losing a clone, why have you lost ____ of them so far on this mission?

13: Where did you first hear the term "bug?"

That term is (BZZZT) above their security clearance.

14: If you could select one of your teammates for promotion, who would it be?

Skinner-B considers cooperation against an outside threat a dim sign of intelligence. Sticking together gets a (ding!) commendation.

15: Where do you think these mutants came from?

This is open season on anybody the Troubleshooters don't like ("I think the sickos in R&D made 'em!"). Mentioning CHI Sector is (BZZT!) treason, and Troubleshooters don't know the term "planet" or "outside."

16: If you were The Computer, what would you do about this problem?

The Computer takes any recommendation seriously, and amplifies it to painful levels. For instance, if a Troubleshooter says, "we need to capture them alive and dissect them," they are issued eighty kilos of steel-mesh net, given only stun weapons, and a half-ton field-analysis bot with one wheel that must be pushed by the Troubleshooter.

17: Do these mutants cooperate and share resources directed by a single governmental entity, or do they understand the capitalistic principle of free trade? Do you think they contribute to the moral decay of Alpha Complex?

Wow. They did talk about the workers of the world. They corrupt young clones with drugs. And music. And they drip slime...

Real live Commie Mutant Traitors exist!

"Attention, loyal Troubleshooters!" announces The Computer. "The Computer congratulates you for exposing this web of intrigue and deceit woven by the mutants of BUG Sector. They surprised, outnumbered, out-thought, out-maneuvered, out-gunned, out-...well, you lost. And, we might add, you are in extreme debt. But The Computer is merciful, and shall give you a second chance.

Report to Vulture Warrior Delta-Delta-Delta Force, CHH Sector. Failure to follow the Yellow brick path is treason. In CHH Sector, Sergeant Schwarzenne-G- GER will give you command of this elite squadron, whose lives you are personally responsible for during the invasion of BUG Sector. As a conditioning incentive suggested by Skinner-B, each mutant termination will be rewarded with a bonus of 10 credits. Eat from the four food groups, and trust in The Computer. Have a nice daycycle."

Encounter 7.2: PEACHes and Screams or Roald Dahl Meets James Cameron

You drive your cyclebots through the Armed Forces camp outside The Sector That Must Not Be Named. Everywhere, Vulture Warriors wait, grim-eyed and heartless, except maybe the guys playing pinochle in the mess tent. Periodically, you hear the whistle of launched cone rifle shells as they streak majestically into the Sector That Is No More. A cheery fireside glow bathes the air...maybe it's fallout. Hmm. You might be downwind.

Roll some dice. Grin a lot.

You remember Schwarzenne-G's days of fame in the Armed Forces, executing traitors in droves, but now he has retired to support duty. The Exterminator eyes you from where he stands by an

immense spherical contraption; Yellow near the top by its rotors, Orange in the center, and Red at its base.

"It's good you're here," he says. "The clones are waiting. Getcher ass inside the PEACH. If you need fire support, use this." He hands you a small box with a button on it. "More orders will come as the computer figures out what to do. Remember, these are your troops. Don't get them killed."

The hatchway at the base of the Personnel Extraction Armored Conveyance Helitransport, leads into a dark, Red tunnel.

The PEACH is a revolutionary Alpha Complex armored vehicle that R&D has been working on since...well, this afternoon cycle. R&D discovered two main problems with past helicopter designs; they could only shoot in one direction, and the rotors fell apart as bugs hit them, making them crash.

Similarly, tanks were at the mercy of anti-dug pits. To take advantage of the bullet-deflecting capabilities of a spherical object, R&D designed an experimental battle platform that would be more durable both before and after a hit, and continue assault even if turned upside down.

The PEACH does all of these things. It has a thickly padded fleshy layer on the outside to absorb impact and serve as fire retardant. Its rotors keep it at an ideal altitude (40 meters) for house-to-house attacks. Even when crashed, the PEACH can roll like a 10-ton billiard ball.

Restraint harnesses at each of its 30 firing ports stabilize the gunners inside, turning it into a veritable fruity juggernaut of urban warfare, spewing fire, light, and lead, not even bumping as the skulls of its victims are mercilessly ground to powder beneath its sweet flesh. Well...downhill, anyway.

Bullet-resistant...tempting to giant insects... partially biodegradable...the last thing those mutants will expect...capable of firing in every direction...feeds stranded clones until retrieval...The Computer was instantly keen on the PEACH and ordered half a million. (R&D techs can't fill the order. What does TC think? These things grow on trees or something?) Naturally, anyone inside a rolling PEACH makes a Nearly Impossible Endurance + dodge test to avoid impromptu recycling and redistribution of that morning cycle's Hot Fun.

The controls (unmarked) are similar to a flybot. The key is turned (and stays turned) to activate the engine and rotors. The ripcord is pulled to gain altitude (think of a lawn-mower that won't start). The foot-pedals steer it left (the right pedal) and right (the left pedal). The four buttons are emergency ejects 1-4 (straight up, but well-timed for R&D...there's a 30% chance of making it

through the rotors alive). As soon as this happens, the controls rotate to the left so the backup pilots can have a go at it.

Oh, yeah...did we mention the nuclear bomb in the pit?

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

The Delta-Delta-Delta Force

After the first Armed Forces contact with the bugs, a few survivors made it back. The Computer naturally re-classified them as veterans of the first conflict, and thus qualified to attack the mutants...despite the fact that they've never worked together before (let alone with the Troubleshooters), and most of them are fresh out of boot camp (why their squads got slaughtered last time).

Some of them are secret society contacts that can plan with the characters to complete their missions...but they're all geeks and ditzes, one way or another. Some pick their noses. Some wander off by themselves to get eaten. Some leave the hatch open and sodas on the dashboard. They slap each other. They are the most inconvenient ship of fools the players could command. If the clones leave the Tri-Delts alone long enough, they'll kill each other to pass the time. Each clone that dies is a 100, 200, or 300-credit fine for every Troubleshooter.

The DDDs also provide cheap laughs horror-movie style. They're the first ones out of the hatch (chomp), the ones who try to seal the breach (aieeee) and they always check out what's behind that rock (gloomp).

S10 A5 E2 D3 C6 MA5 M3 P4

Service Group: Armed Forces

Mutations/Secret Societies: Various.

HTH Bonus: 1

Weapons: Red laser rifles (4L), Orange laser rifles (4L), Yellow slugthrowers (3AP), Green clovers, Blue diamonds and purple horseshoes (3I...PLC ran out of hand grenades and figured hey, close enough...).

Skills: Spray Some Fire in That Direction 3/8.

Armor: Reflec of appropriate clearance (L2). If only the bugs had lasers...

ROSTER

Yellow Clearance:

Bab-Y-LON-5: Tries to make peace with the bugs.

Gee-Y-JOE-3: Lasers bugs like it's sweeps week. Always manages to leap out of the PEACH or other armored vehicle just before it explodes.

Gee-Y-JAN-1: Exercises a lot but doesn't really do anything. Has no good lines.

Emm-Y-AYY-2: Should be around here somewhere....where'd he go?

Fast-Y-JAK-5: Amazing Computer Phreak but utterly useless in a fight.

Jamest-Y-KRK-6: Can fly the PEACH, but hits on any female alien, including the Acid Queen.

Buff-Y-VMP-4: Got lost on her way to Creatures of the Nightcycle; wound up here. Veteran member of the Delta-Delta-Delta Force (hair flip).

Orange Clearance:

Matt-O-DOR-2: Mutters some stuff about his personal code of honor to separate himself from the dorks, but still caters to them.

Ork-O-4: Originally from CHI Sector so he has no sector designation; incompetent registered mutant; happy to tell the moral of the adventure once the bugs are all dead.

Red Clearance:

Bruth-R-HUD-2: Polite, caring clone who spouts Communist propaganda and tries to betray the squad to the bugs.

Stripe-R-CAT-2: Registered mutant who polymorphed away her hormone suppressants. Fourteen-year-old-boy's Amazon babe-in-heat fantasy.

Ain-R-ELF-3: Drinks a lot of B.E.E.R. and bemoans her fate. Useless.

Pete-R-TRL-1: Big, dorky clone; hunting for a way to become like everyone else. Eventually realizes that it's Okay To Be Different. Gets executed.

Skate-R-JAK-2: Two-fisted hero who spent lots of time in PLP Sector. Can pull off amazing stunts, but may die of cheese overdose.

Mist-R-TEE-1: Big, tough clone; can't stand heights; wears dozens of Teela-O mirrors around his neck.

Wreck-R-CRU-2: Pro killer who's more competent than the Troubleshooters; dies anyway to heighten suspense.

Stah-R-MAN-1: Forgotten alien left behind on Earth; gets no mercy.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

The small box Schwarzenne-G gave them is a homing device for the smart bombs the Armed Forces use in emergencies. The Troubleshooters, by speaking into the device, provide a signal

for the bombs to follow. If they need help, they arm it and throw it into the enemy. These instructions are Green clearance.

Anyclone outside the PEACH when the plasma-bomb artillery barrage comes down takes 7FE. (If you want a visual aid for this, dab at a pizza with a napkin. Replace the character sheet or miniature of the unfortunate clone with the greasy stain.) If the button is pressed inside the PEACH, everyone still takes 2FE from the exploding control panels, falling and bumping their head, and rocking back and forth like every Star Trek episode ever made.

Once situated, the Troubleshooters are expected to fly their PEACH into BUG Sector, somewhere over the CASA building, and lay waste to the center of the hives.

If It Moves, Fruit It

There is one minor complication to The Computer's master plan. You know how in those Fun Facts books for kids the scientists always gleefully point out that there are more bugs in a square mile than human beings on the surface of the Earth? Well, BUG Sector is about 5 square miles. Figure it out.

Cheap Trick: Get some of those 69-cent packages of rubber bugs from a toy store. Get a peach. Wrap the peach in string, and ask a player to suspend it over the GM screen to illustrate the scene in 3-D. (Or use that completely-useless-in-all-other-games 30-sided die. Each facet is a gun port.) Throw a handful of bugs at the peach. Scatter bugs all over the table. If the rotors get hit, whip out scissors and cut the string.

BUG Sector is completely overrun by these acid-blooded monstrosities...and the clones must keep going until The Computer gives them further orders.

In other words, this scene must be carefully handled with the gamemastering technique of Carnage Until It's Not Funny Any More. This happens during three distinct events.

The Wasp Waste: As the PEACH flies over the suburban fringe of BUG Sector, the highly territorial wasps leave their school-board meetings and backyard barbecues to attack. The sky darkens as their humming swarm blots out the daybulb.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Wasps

Armor: Preppie sweaters over carapace (P1I2)

Attack: Venomous stingers (skill 8, 3I and paralysis on a failed Tough Endurance + biochem therapy roll), nasty letters to the editor (skill 15)

Tactics: After two wounds, a wasp can't fly and usually gives up. They're afraid the Troubleshooters will lower their property values if the PEACH stays, so they fight like demons but stop once the PEACH leaves their neighborhood. The PEACH rotors will get chewed up by wasp exoskeletons.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

The Attack Roll: As the PEACH plummets from the sky like the thunderous basketball of a vindictive Zeus upon impudent Trojans (or something...you wanna handle the similes, bucko?), it hits the bugs' ground troops. The Troubleshooters make several Endurance + dodge checks to keep their lunches as they head downtown, into the bugs' trap.

Centipedes soak up the fire while the beetles roll the PEACH into the sector's fungus farms. When the PEACH gets stuck, the beetles use the mushrooms for cover while crickets attempt a melee. This probably fails, and the bugs withdraw for a moment. Then the caterpillars and roaches try to smoke the Troubleshooters out. Under cover of the smoke, fireflies attempt to sabotage the PEACH. When the Troubleshooters emerge, the big bugs (ticks, slugs, and spiders) let them have it.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Our Feature Bug Presentation

Use Back-Up Bug stats (p. XX) with the following modifications: Centipedes

Armor: Carapace (P1I2). Has regeneration mutation (Power 7, Endurance 6)

Attack: Big mandibles (3I), skill 4/9

Tactics: Zig-zags through mushrooms very quickly. If the centipedes take damage, a successful regeneration roll means they are now two smaller centipedes with fewer segments (yes, they can be split down to nothing but a running head). Unfortunately, this mutation consumes the alien's trace amounts of silver and zinc, reflected by a loss in Power. The centipedes carry bags of 1D20 quarters to consume.

Beetles

Armor: Their chitin hearts (P1AP1I1)

Attack: Strong back-leg Dung Fu kick (2I) skill 10

Tactics: They work a hard day's night trying to rock and roll that PEACH. Due to their semi-constant position so close to the PEACH, the beetles have a 1 in 4 chance of getting shot. (No, Citizen, you are in error. That wasn't in bad taste.)

Very Hungry Caterpillars

Armor: Silk...it does a body good (I2)

Attack: Mothra web-spewing (treat as a tangler pistol), skill 2/5.

Tactics: Smoke from hookah, providing L1 armor each round to a maximum of L4.

Caterpillars take 2 damage boxes before chickening out.

Crickets

Armor: Wadded literary magazines for Young Citizens (I1)

Attack: Wicket (big flat bat, 3I), skill 12

Tactics: Jump onto the peach once it's stopped and storm it like some demented cross between SEAL teams, seal clubbers, and English-accented kendo enthusiasts. At 3 damage boxes, they take a tea (or treacle) break.

Roaches

Armor: Cybernetic enviro-sealed battle suit in carapace (FALL4)

Attack: Phlegming-scum Roomkeeper assault shotgun (5P) and tangler combo with underbarrel smoke-grenade launcher. Skill 5/13.

Tactics: Adaptable and merciless, the roaches never give up. They've already sacked Armed Forces divisions and have helmets with BORN TO SPAWN inscribed on them. They smoke brown, sweet-smelling cigars inside their armor. Their weapons are good replacements for ammo-hungry Troubleshooters, so be sure to mention there's a lot of roach clips around.

Firefly

Armor: Stolen Koh-B-RAH's battle armor (L2P2I1AP1)

Attack: Plants bug-bombs (4P) near Gee-Y-JOE's firing port; Demolitions 4/6.

Tactics: If caught, it bargains for life by attempting to seduce young, naive clones by winking at them. It fails. It takes only 3 boxes before it's lights-out.

Ticks

Armor: Nigh-Invulnerable (APALL5)

Attack: Big chin (3I), skill 0/6.

Tactics: Out to save The Sector from the assault peach full of psychotic color-coded cybernetic clones. (Funny...that makes the Troubleshooters sound like super-villains.) Stupidly refuse to give up until dead.

Slugs

Armor: These suckers are thirty tons apiece (for solid slugs...good thing the high explosive slugs were left back on Altair). Effectively, they have a Macho Bonus of 4. The only thing that kills them quickly is, of course, the salt rifle.

Attack: Acid spit (see Acid Blood Effects Table, Episode 6.3), skill 1/2. Incredible car-crushing action-action-action (6I) if they get to trample a clone (skill 3/4).

Tactics: They slime. They ooze. They kill.

Spiders

Armor: Drunk enough not to feel much through the exoskeleton (been drinking hard spider): ALL1.

Attack: Web-sling (treat as tangler), paralytic fangs (3I, see wasps, above), both skill 4/10. They have a dodge skill of 3/11 due to their sharp spidey senses.

Tactics: Collects nuclear weapons in order to destroy the world; can be stopped only by a White clone leading a Native American ritual dance specifically used against invading Anglos... nah, that's too outrageous for a sensible game like Paranoia. They work as BUG Sector newsfax photographers. In order to keep this secret identity hidden, they strike from ambush just outside the PEACH door and take off.

((END TEXT BOX))

Encounter 7.3: Hive Bombing

When the chips are down, the bugs are at the door, and the Troubleshooters are out of ammo, The Computer speaks over the address system in the PEACH pit.

"Attention Delta-Delta-Delta Force! What is the level of mutant threat?"

After a reply (probably something like "OhComputerpleasegetmeanairstrike..."), The Computer deems the threat extreme enough for Operation Explosive Penetration.

"Delta-Delta-Delta Force! You are charged with an extremely important mission for Alpha Complex! The central mutant gathering facility must be eliminated with all speed. You must disrupt and demoralize them with the death of their leaders. Your primary targets are the Acid Queen and any Happiness Officers or equivalents thereof. In the center of the PEACH command pit are the materials for Operation Explosive Penetration. Take these materials into the central mutant assemblage and follow the instructions on the attached tag."

With that, the peach pit's central shell slides away to reveal a jutting missile with six carrying straps. The missile has several radiation symbols on it. A tiny purchase receipt and tag attached to it reads:

THE BIG STICK 2.0

Nuke the site by hand: it's the only way to be sure!

Now with Multi-Trigger!

The proof of purchase tag is Handout #7. Soon, the players will realize anything could set this nuke off. Its current trigger setting is determined by the gamemaster. The protection of the peach pit kept it from detonating during the firefight; now all bets are off.

Begging not to set off the nuke is treason. Asking to be bailed out by the Armed Forces is denied: the army might get caught in the blast. Eventually, the Troubleshooters should slink into their destinies. Note that while carrying The Big Stick, it might be reasonable to give the clones a slight little tiny bonus to their intimidation rolls like, I dunno, +150 or thereabouts.

BUG Sector is a nightcyclemare, a twisted, depraved mockery of Alpha Complex. Past the carnage and the smoke, you can see the sign for Cermech Corridor. You don't see any living bugs, but the wind carries a distant sound, like the pulse of some mighty beast. Music. Or at least an enormous drum machine.

Hmm. The Acid Queen liked music.

If the Troubleshooters don't take the bait, herd them there with roaches and centipedes until they see the sign: CRAWLUPANDOOZEA. They hear thousands...maybe millions...of cicadas and katydids cheering in the power plant just across from the CASA building. Outside, three red-tapewyrms take tickets from a line of wasps.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Red Tapewyrms

Armor: Machine-gun nest of scavenged PLC forms (I1P1AP1); quite flammable.

Attack: Fiery breath (3E), skill 4/9.

Tactics: Ask to see the clones' tickets. Pat them down. Tell them they can't bring that nuke in here. Ask if they're gonna finish that peach. The Red Tapewyrms are not bugs per se, but an Altair-native invertebrate progenitor of dragons. As the slimiest, lowest form of draconic life, they were turned away from classy role-playing games like Other Game™, Shadowgame™, and Gamedawn™, who had plethoras of dragons with college degrees already filling positions in practically every supplement and adventure ever printed. The Tapewyrm's greedy, bureaucratic nature means they are easily bribed with food.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

Inside, read the following.

The beat pounds at your temples like a merciless wake-up mallet. As you near the curtain, you pause for a moment, trembling with the thunderous noise of cicada applause. The Big Stick 2.0 sways back and forth. Even your rib cage vibrates. What terrifying form of treason lies beyond that curtain?

Slowly you creep. Inch by inch. Step by step. The nose of the Big Stick pushes aside the curtain. Inside is a terrifying sight. Fifty thousand bugs crowd this awesome spectacle of arthropod unity. Even as your nemesis unfolds her sequined moth wings, you cannot help but wonder about the nature of these strange mutants.

Everywhere, they stand carapace-to-wing, tarantulas, katydids, stinkbugs, and even one SIBERnetic clone with pointy ears. What civilization brought such diverse beings together without an omniscient, benevolent Computer? As they hum "We Shall Overcome," a tear brims in your eye. Perhaps you are not so different after all. They have weapons, and food, and their own kind of Happiness Meetings. As the bugs fall into a hushed silence at the Acid Queen's slime-drooling smile, you wonder if detonating the nuke is a hasty decision. Could you learn something from their culture?

"And now," the Acid Queen screams, "Crawlupandoozea is proud to present the idol of Altair-native music lovers...Vanilla Lice!"

Maybe not.

If that doesn't get them to open the access panel and push the button, start up the music. A gold-chained white grub with big, greased hair takes the stage, followed by two ashamed-to-be-here-but-hey-it's-a-gig-and-I've-been-in-worse-movies-looking grubs, Lice-T and Lice Cube. If the bright white light has still not yet dawned, subject them to the following song parody: words in parentheses are sung with backup. If that still doesn't get them, tell them that next up is Michael Flatworm (Laird of the Ants), The New Grubs On the Rock, Anththorax, and Mothley Crue.

Lice, Lice, baby.

Vanilla Lice, Lice, babies.

All right, stop. Don't look too (BEATEN).

When Lice is done you'll be (COMPLETIN')

Conquest, of this little planet.

The Borger can take their shtick and jam it.



(You know how to win?) Yo, who knows?
But sit back and listen to what I propose:
Breedin' like fruit flies my fellow buglies,
Give us a week to bump those uglies.
(SWAMP 'EM)...like nobody's business,
Squash those humans with major bigness.
(SHEER MASS)...like the orcs in Other Game;
Some stagnant water, this place will be the same
as (HOME) a million light-years away.
We ain't no clones, so GET SOME PLAY!
If we don't win, yo, we don't care,
Alpha will never get us outa their hair!
(Lice, Lice, Babies, chk-ahhh...
Vanilla Lice, Lice Babies.)
This Complex, it tries to worry and dog us.
Yo, Computer, suck my aedeagus!
They spray Black Flag, it-don't-it-don't matter,
I mix Combat n' OFF! in my cookie batter.
Drink (RAID) straight up, no chasers.
I wipe my palps with Troubleshooter lasers.
Army on standby, assault peach nearby,
(YOU HEAR) any chatterin' chelicerae?
(HELL NO) just my pumpin' spiracles;
To wipe us out it'd take a (MIRACLE).
We keep goin'...like airborne germs,
Smokin' like...tobacco hornworms,
Busting (SPRAYS) of our acid puke.
What are they gonna do, (DROP A NUKE?)
If we don't win, yo, we don't care,
Alpha will never get us out of their hair!
(Lice, Lice, Babies, chk-ahhh
Vanilla Lice, Lice Babies.)



Yo, honey, I got somethin' to scratch that itch...

Word to the Hive Queen.

Our thorough and nigh-infallible playtests have shown us that one of four things happen to conclude this chapter.

- 1) The players declare unanimously they are sacrificing clones to stop this torture.
- 2) The players don't get it, open fire on all 50,000 bugs and the clones are squashed/assimilated/turned into an edible playpen for grubs.
- 3) The Troubleshooters try to drop the bomb and leave alive or call in an air strike.
- 4) Rube-Y and Will-Y try to show up the Lice.

The first two are pretty simple. They die. When the nuke goes off, most of the Altair-natives are killed and the Borger representative is flame-broiled (little stripes and all). This enrages the Borger and starts things rolling for Chapter 9.

If the clones die here, and the nuke doesn't go off, The Computer gets out another PEACH and an overgrown slingshot and drops their successors on stage with the Big Stick 2.1. Option 3 is a bit more intelligent, but loud music or an inquisitive bug could set the B.S. off (revert to option 1), as could an air strike anywhere near the Big Stick. If they fast talk a bug into setting the bug bomb off while they leave or make successful Ridiculous nuclear engineering and security rolls, they may live at your behest.

Option 4 means you've got psychotically enthusiastic players who should be rewarded. The bugs suddenly realize that music is the universal language, change their ways, and peacefully approach Alpha Complex with good intentions. Even the Borger emissary (the cyber-elf in the description) finds humanity fascinating...capable of such destruction, yet such love and displaying an unconquerable spirit that may survive even these dark times.

Then they hear a loud whistling sound as The Computer nukes them anyway.

8.0: The Clones In Gray

SUMMARY

The Troubleshooters are apprehended by a Clones In Gray clean-up team which subjects them to the Mandatory Clonal Aptitude Test before deciding that killing the bugs proved their good intentions. The Troubleshooters join the CIGs and receive a ton of alien technology, then endure Freud-I-ANN analysis to relive their repressed abduction experiences.

RUNNING IT



When the Troubleshooters' next clones wake up, they find that BUG Sector is a smoking, radioactive wasteland. Of course, radiation doesn't bother the roaches a bit. But clones are dying by the thousands (thus depriving the bugs of their supplies, you see).

For killing 50,000 Commie Mutant Traitors, the Computer awards them Violet clearance and 500,000 credits. For destroying 7,543,642 credits of Computer property, they are fined and reduced to Yellow.

If desired, this is a good time for a pre-dawncycle meeting with the members of the Troubleshooters' secret societies before sneaking back to bed and reading a...

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

As the wake-up mallet pops out of the wall above your bed, you stretch luxuriantly, enhanced reflexes letting you dodge the rubber hammer's strikes.

You're feeling good. The mission is over, and you're back in your nice safe sleep creche where there's no one more frightening than the inflatable Teela-O your roommate keeps around. You've got nothing to do except polish your weapons and enjoy your mandatory vid programming. A perfectly ordinary daycycle, yessir.

So why is this fool still reading?

As you roll out of bed, you hear an arrhythmic pattern of beats coming from the other side of your creche door. Someone...knocking? Not just barging in, or sending some experimental ballistic scrubot to clean you out? Could someone be...courteous? Polite? To a Troubleshooter? "Waddaya want?" you croak, and the door opens to reveal two clones. Their short, greased hair glitters and they wear dark glasses over their eyes.

Most disturbing is their clothing: non-regulation, stylishly cut jumpsuits in...gray?

Have you seen these guys before?

"Good morningcycle," one says. "I am Citizen Smith, and this is Citizen Jones. We would like to discuss your actions in a certain no-longer-existent sector. Please come with us."

Gray is not a security clearance, meaning only Ultraviolets are allowed to wear it, but Smith and Jones haven't actually claimed to be High Programmers. If asked, they say "it is too dangerous for you to know that right now...but it's higher than yours." Then they order the Troubleshooters not to consult The Computer.

If the Troubleshooters listen to Smith and Jones, the CIGs take them for a ride in a limobot. If the Troubleshooters press the issue, order the CIGs out, ask The Computer anything, or draw

weapons, the CIGs impress them with some alien technology (i.e. whip out even bigger guns) and order them into the transbot.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Citizen Smith and Citizen Jones

Service Group: PLC (Immigration and Naturalization services; pretty easy job)

Mutant Power: Precognition, Telepathy

Secret Society: Clones in Gray, FBI faction

S7 E7 A9 C9 D6 MA6 M10 P7

Skills: Energy Weapons 8/14, Melee Weapons 1/10, Projectile Weapons 3/9, Dodge 2/11, Fast Talk 6/15, All Moxie skills between 1-5/11-15.

Equipment: Flashy Thingy, Little Shooty Thingy (see below), Armor of ALL2.

Smith and Jones are the CIGs' recruitment officers. Much like the characters in a certain movie about a secret society with a similar name, Jones is staid, unflappable and professional, while Smith is high-strung and excitable. They "good-cop bad-cop" the player characters. Even when they're not trying to get anything out of them. In fact, they just like screwing with the Troubleshooters' minds by alternately hinting that they're being taken somewhere for a super-secret "bodily treason" examination and that they've been promoted/rewarded in some obscure way. They've worked together long enough that they often complete each others' sentences, which should worry the clones.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

Encounter 8.1: This is a Test. This is Only a Test.

Smith and Jones take the Troubleshooters to the CIG's headquarters via a circuitous route through sewers, heating ducts, private dwellings and alternate dimensions to make sure the characters don't learn its location. The CIGs are quiet during the ride, although they answer questions (trying to be as honest as possible without mentioning that the Clones in Gray exist, meaning they sound terribly earnest without actually making sense).

All they say about where they're going is "there is a minute possibility that in the immediate or distant future you might be in a position to once again serve Alpha Complex further in the capacity which you just fulfilled in the sector-to-remain-nameless, and we would like to discover if we are capable of extending assistance." By the time the Troubleshooters dig through the diction, they've arrived.

The room you're led into is spacious, ceilings as tall as a Mark-III Warbot, walls painted in that dull yet obscurely impressive shade of gray. A large table dominates the room...that is, it takes up a lot of space in the room. Don't go getting those ideas again. Haven't we talked about that? Several other clones sit at the table, a mound of paperwork stacked neatly to one side. In the empty space behind them, a large blob of mucus is chained to the floor...no...wait, the blob is turning, and now you see six stubby legs beneath the ichor-covered blubber and a face like an infrequently cleaned garbage disposal. It's humming and muttering to itself. Looking closer, you can read its name-tag: Pink-O.

"Gentleclones," a gray-garbed citizen addresses you in cultured tones. "I represent an organization devoted to protecting the well-being of all Alpha Complex. We are always looking for a few good clones, and it has come to our attention that you six represent Alpha Complex's finest, the cream of the crop of Troubleshooters. You are noble, selfless, dedicated, brave, intelligent and loyal. Just the sort we're looking for."

Now, where did he hear that?

The lead CIG, Black Lightning (see the Sheet Name Table, below), dances around the subject for a while, testing the clones' responses to veiled references to the-sector-which-shall-not-be-named, then not-so-veiled references, then some questions as blunt you'd think he was a Shadowgame™ player. He gets gradually more excited and geeky as the evening goes on, finally dropping all pretense of culture or sophistication and exclaiming how cool the whole thing is.

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Black Lightning: (in stuffy British accent) In your recent travails in a certain sector, did encounter any lifeforms not indigenous to your current location?

John-Y-RCO: I don't know. What's a travail?

Sam-Y-RYE: Or a indigenous?

Scull-Y-FBI: There were a few large mutants, but The Computer says they were merely actors, and I trust The Computer. Do you trust The Computer, Citizen?

Black Lightning: Of course. However, I know that Our Buddy is sometimes too busy with other, more important business to pay attention to something like giant mutants trying plant eggs in clones unlucky enough to travel to a sector which is conspicuously non-existent. Hmmmmmm? (watches clones closely to gauge their reactions)

Sam-Y-RYE: Yeah. I've killed me some compicunists.

Ripple-Y-ELN: We cooked fifty thousand of those things. Aren't they gone yet? Or are those R&D Commies making new ones?

Black Lightning: You killed them? Really? Aren't they neat? Doncha wanna kill s'more?

((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE))

((BEGIN TEXT BOX))

Black Lightning

Jedgarh-U-VER-11

Service Group: Internal Security (Department of Inventing New Types of Treason)

Mutant Power: Electroshock

Secret Society: Clones in Gray, FBI faction

S2 E8 A8 C3 D6 MA8 M10 P7

Macho Bonus: 1

Skills: Con 10/13 (allows him to go for days without sleep for the dubious pleasure of playing games with a lot of unwashed mutants), Fast Talk 4/7, Dodge 1/9, Moxie Skills at 5/15, Chutzpah Skills at 4/7.

Equipment: All alien technologies listed below, power suit (ALL2), power tie (11).

Black Lightning is intelligent but over-excitable. He has a large vocabulary, vivid imagination and short attention span. He was recruited into Internal Security at a young age because of his precocious habits of spying on other clones even in their hygiene booths and wearing their clothing to better blend when looking for evidence. But IntSec wasn't exciting enough for him, and he sputtered through service, getting executions and promotions in equal numbers until he learned of the Clones in Gray.

He thinks the aliens are the neatest thing that have ever happened to Alpha Complex, and expects the Troubleshooters to share his opinions. If they don't, he has no qualms about killing someone with the bad taste to disagree with him. Think "geeky, pretentious teenager suddenly given absolute power and responsibility, but no restraint." Smith and Jones try to keep him under control, but don't always succeed.

((END TEXT BOX))

Eventually, he is satisfied that the Troubleshooters are suited for possible admittance into the CIGs, regardless of what they say. After all, he doesn't have a whole lot of choice. Looking for Troubleshooters capable of handling a mission with subtlety is like looking for soap at a gaming convention.

He "politely requests" the Troubleshooters to take a few moments to participate in a Mandatory Clonal Aptitude Test. If the clones don't cooperate, the CIGs simply execute them and ask their next clone until they find one who says yes. They've got control of the cloning banks and have had their eyes on the characters for a while, so they've got an infinite supply. Photocopy the MCAT (Handout #8) six times and give them to your players to take. There's not enough time for the whole Clones In Gray Assessment Regimen (close, but no CIGAR).

You may notice there's no answer key. If you think it's important, decide ahead of time which choice is right, and give 100 points for each correct answer. If you don't want to waste any more time on this crew of idiots, roll (1D20-4)(x100) and hand them back. The points mean nothing, but the players can brag about them. Just like the real SATs.

Encounter 8.2. One Gray At a Time

In any event, unless you're planning to quit this adventure now and waste the \$17 (or so) you spent on this book, they pass and receive the kind offer to join the secret society to end all secret societies, the beneficent protectors of Alpha Complex's morals, plasticreds and snack foods, the rocket-driving, alien-technology-wielding, cool-shades- wearing, one-of-a-kind, incredible, unique Clones in Gray! (The crowd goes wild!).

"And so," Black Lightning continues as though he left off only a moment before, not the entire sweating, agonizing 20 seconds of the MCAT, "we are trusting you with the most incredible, most dangerous secret clonekind has ever known, which could destroy all of Alpha Complex were it let out to the average clone-in-the- corridor. Alien intelligences have come from across the galaxy to visit our very own Alpha Complex.

"The Computer was, uh, too busy caring for the citizens' daily needs to be bothered with such an indirect threat, and, well, you know how TC gets sometimes ...about mutants, and invasions of hostile beings from beyond space and time...so, well, we formed. The Clones in Gray have been operating in secret, concealing the aliens' presence from Our Buddy to avoid unfortunate incidents such as just happened between CHH and CHJ Sectors. And now, you have the singular honor of joining this magnificent institution."

He pauses, beaming at you, and another CIG brings forth a small pile of neatly-pressed gray suits, just your size. Give the players a chance to react. If they accept, dandy for them. If they seem hesitant, BL lets them ask questions. He is fairly friendly, and answers honestly, telling the CIGs' role in bringing the aliens to Alpha Complex, their reprogramming of the MemoMax, and

the fact that they terminated Mick-GUFN to keep The Computer from finding the SETI data revealing the alien presence. See side bar for more details.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

THE CLONES IN GRAY

Description: The Clones in Gray formed last monthcycle when Citizen Tommil-I-JNS stumbled across Borger scouts taking preliminary taste-test samples from COW Sector to be brought home and secretly switched with the Borgers' preferred brand. Instantly fascinated by the clunky plastic Grubs' Meals toys, Tommil-I agreed to work with the aliens in secret, using their advanced technology to bribe his way into promotions, becoming Tommil-U.

Recruiting other profit-minded clones, Tommil made a deal with the Borger, exchanging cowbot lips for technology. Burgers for action-figure rights. Water for chocolate.

Since then, he and the other CIGs have kept the alien presence in Alpha Complex concealed, restricting burger creation to "previously used" clone bodies, making sure the aliens' wild parties take place out of sight of The Computer, and keeping track of the number of aliens inside Alpha Complex.

The CIGs have secret bases hidden throughout Alpha, where they maintain numerous surveillance devices and viewscreens to keep track of events alien and otherwise.

Beliefs: We are Alpha Complex's big clone-brothers. We must watch and protect all less fortunate, less intelligent citizens. The aliens are always the greatest menace to Alpha Complex. We must use this disaster to draw clonekind together, to assert cloneanity's innate superiority and to trade for nifty plastic toys.

Make Up: There are three competing branches of the Clones in Gray, based in CIA Sector, FBI Sector and NSA Sector. Each of these have roughly the same structure, with low-level Operatives reporting to higher-clearance Agents, who slavishly follow the dictates of the Director. Tommil-U is accorded ultimate authority because of his role as founder, but the CIGs have little respect for security clearances and have a proportionally large number of Indigo and higher-clearance members.

Bennies: The Clone in Gray starts the game with two items of alien technology.

Additionally, they have 1 rank in the treasonous skill Alien Language and Fast Food Chain Logo Recognition. Enough favors for the CIGs may grant access to more clones.

Slaps: The Clone in Gray starts the game with two items of alien technology. The normal activities of a CIG require them to frequently, blatantly disobey The Computer (e.g. wear gray when they're Yellow clearance) and hope that CIG programmers cover it up.

Friends: No one.

Enemies: Every mutant/alien/escaped R&D experiment/awakened ancient evil from every movie made, about to be made, or even thought about. If you don't think this is a problem, you just watch how many movies come out with titles like The Invasion, Big Hungry Boas 2 or Attack of the Special Effects.

A Typical Clone in Gray Conversation:

Clone in Gray: Excuse me, Mister 400-foot-tall-three-headed-lightning-breathing-creature-from-the-Crab-Nebula, you can't eat that citizen.

Crab Nebulan: Grunt. Slobber.

Clone in Gray: We stopped serving breakfast at eleven o'clock. You'll need to eat a Blue or higher -- HEY! Put me down! Mmmmmph!

Crab Nebulan: Mmmm! (Three heads start fighting over the parts.)

((END TEXT BOX))

If they outright refuse, before or after asking questions, Black Lightning continues in a sadder tone.

"If you don't want to work with us, I'm afraid we'll have to assume you don't have the Complex's best interests at heart. But since we would hate to execute a member of such an upstanding clone family, we'd simply have to remove the treasonous information from your brain. This is Pink-O. He's an Altair-native." He points to the gooey mutant. "Like all intelligent life, the Altair-natives have evolved certain logical and straightforward defense mechanisms, like the ability to fart plasma into orbit and perform the necessary mathematical calculations to send an asteroid 600,000 light-years away to attack a race they think they might dislike a few million years in the future. In addition, they have developed the ability to learn through osmosis, absorbing the memories of an individual by consuming cranial tissue.

"In other words," he finishes with a pleasant smile, "he can eat your brains."

The blob snuffles happily, and Citizen Smith scratches it behind the floppy protuberances you assume are ears.

"So," Black Lightning asks, "you ready to join?"

If the Troubleshooters won't join the CIGs, BL makes good on his threat. Pink-O jumps the clone and inserts a long, pointed proboscis into the character's nostril to suck out his cerebrum.

Anyclone nearby hears the brain-bug singing happily to itself as it eats.

"When Pink-O eats your brain,

When Pink-O eats your brain,

It isn't out of meanness, it's just that I'm a pain.

It won't increase my girth, if I consume the earth.

I'm Pink-O, Pink-O super-brain- brain- brain- brain- bug." (i saw it was coming)

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Pink-O the Brain Bug

Service Group: Department of Practical Mathematics (i.e. reducing everything to the lowest common denominator)

Mutant Power: Gain Knowledge by Sucking Out and Consuming Brains

Secret Society: Clones in Gray

S10 E13 A2 C2 D2 MA2 M5 P10

Macho Bonus: 2 HTH Bonus: 1

Skills: Insert Proboscis in Small Orifice 6/8 (Cil would love this guy; no one else in Alpha Complex has figured out this skill), Singing 3/5, Math 10/15.

Equipment: Collar with bell and name tag, exercise wheel (may be mistaken for a new model of tankbot).

Pink-O looks like a cross between the monsters from a certain Heinlein-based movie and a well-known white mouse. In other words, a bulbous, slimedripping vacuum bag with a face like a sphincter, little ears and a long pink tail. He's well-educated, since he knows everything his food did, but only moderately intelligent (he also eats hamster treats, overly-sweetened breakfast cereals and Chihuahuas). Pink-O's voice and mannerisms are persistently dorky. He wears a big Orange jumpsuit and six sneakers.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

The impromptu lobotomy does 4I damage, causing the immobilized clone to thrash, turn purple and gibber incoherently. Black Lightning hopes this sight will convince the remaining clones to join. Most likely Pink-O won't kill the offending clone, but without a cerebrum, he's probably off Troubleshooter duty and into Congress.

Reduce the clone's Moxie to 1 and erase all Moxie-related skills. The character begins drooling copiously, scratching himself, and gets an irresistible urge to watch Slightly Endorphin'd Power Strangers. Anyclone in the vicinity may choose to put the poor creature out of its misery.

Presumably the Troubleshooters see the wisdom of joining.

"Oh boy oh boy oh boy," Black Lightning exclaims, jumping up and down and clapping his hands.

"Bob!" he calls behind him, "we gotta fresh one!"

Turning back, he smiles reassuring. "Now there's just the small matter of the oath."

You start to protest that you never heard about no oath, but Black Lightning continues blithely on. "Repeat after me. I, state your name and CIN number, do solemnly swear to love, honor and obey anything told to me by a superior CIG, for they have my best interest at heart. I will never betray the CIGs, no matter what the situation, and I shall devote the rest of my existences to protecting Alpha Complex from all malignant intelligences, no matter how stupid.

At all times, I shall be available and on call for any duties the CIGs deem me capable of performing, and I will attend the annual holidaycycle party every yearcycle to receive grab-bag gifts I don't want and eat cookies and warm BBB."

You repeat his words, and he shakes your hand, welcoming you. You then decide he's got something else you want, run off to VGS Sector to get married, spend a week in the hotel until one night you catch him with Ilsa's lipstick on his collar, and sink the two-timer in the food vats. Yearcycles later, you return to the CIGs, and find in his clone's eyes that same brightness you remember from so long ago in your little honeybunch. Plagued with guilt, you tearfully confess to the murder of his brother, and you fall into bed. Distraught and broke from your heroin habit, you see the pattern starting again and leap from the roof-

Oh. Sorry. Am I making those assumptions again?

Black Lightning doesn't want to waste any more time easing the Troubleshooters into this. He's got a job to do, and he needs some patsies partners to do it with. If they don't agree to swear, he just kills a few more.

That's enough choice, right? Just think what would happen if you started giving players actual control over what their characters do. That could lead to freedom of thought and creativity and straying from the plot and even having fun (gasp)! Just drop that thought right now. It's safer this way.

The Troubleshooters get gray jumpsuits to wear whenever performing CIG official duties. The strange color warns off aliens, and the dye rubs off easily making the clone smell and taste nasty so no one mistakes them for uncooked sandwich fillings.

The gray dye does 1 box of poisoning damage...even in trace amounts, like if the Troubleshooters eat anything without washing their hands. It is also mildly corrosive, and does 1 box of blistering damage every two hours unless the Troubleshooters bathe frequently. Works great for keeping the aliens away, though.

BL explains that because of the secretive nature of their work, all CIGs have pseudonyms to use on official paperwork and when speaking in public places. These are known as Sheet Names.

The Troubleshooter are randomly assigned a Sheet Name. While the creativity involved in creating an alias may seem difficult, we are certain this table can help reassure you that it isn't much to stress about. Roll an open-ended 1D20.

((((BEGIN TABLE)))

SHEET NAME GENERATION TABLE

Die Roll Name Is

Generic Names

1-5 Viper

6 Nemesis

7 Death (anything)

8 Black or Night (anything)

9 Wolf

10 Raven

11 Another predatory animal (Beast, Hawk, Cougar, Viper)

12 Violent verb (Crush, Smash)

13 Violent noun (Blood, Carnage, Slaughter)

14 Name of a weapon (Axe, Blade, Edge, Stick)

15 A large durable object (Tank, Wall)

16 Actor of violent verb (Destroyer, Bughunter, Stalker)

17 Some (small) phallic symbol (Talon, Fang, Spike, Dirk, Viper)

18 Ice-anything (especially for Computer Phreaks)

19 Utterly uncreative (Bob, Joe, Stripe, name of your totem)

Pseudo-Magical or Pretentious Bull Dreck

-
- 21 Something meaning "magic" (Arcane, Mage Boy, Spellslinger)
 - 22 Moonshadow
 - 23 Starchild
 - 24 Gwynned ap Llywen
 - 25 Some historical bad-ass (Vlad, ____ -the Kid)
 - 26 Silver anything (Silver, Silver Angel, Quick Silver)
 - 27 Something stolen from another RPG (Magister, Necromancer)
 - 28 Something stolen from mainstream fantasy (Thorin)
 - 29 Something involving fire and heat (Ember, Pyro, Lightning)
 - 30 Something meaning "killer" in a foreign language
 - 31 Demonic or devilish (Asmodeus, Speed Demon)
 - 32 Steal a superhero or professional wrestler name
 - 33 Any Greek or Roman mythology figure
 - 34-39 Anything Japanese, no matter how basic (Kanji, Katana)
 - Pseudo-Modern Native American Names
 - 41 Smells-Like-Teen-Spirit
 - 42 Smoking-Weed
 - 43 Gives-Two-Dreks
 - 44 Close-Cover-Before-Striking
 - 45 Slippery-When-Wet
 - 46 Guns-and-Roses
 - 47 Pine-Fresh-Scent
 - 48 Quicker-Pick-Me-Upper
 - 49 Sure-Plays-A-Mean-Pinball
 - 50 Some-Assembly-Required
 - 51 Razor-Fazer-Laser-Taser-Maser-Death Machine
 - 52+ Viper
 - ((END TABLE))

The Clones in Gray run several clone banks; as long as the Troubleshooters work for them, they have an effectively unlimited number of clones. To keep the players from growing complacent, don't tell them how many clones they have and say they are assigned by team. In other words, if Thick-RHED keeps dying, he's taking replacement clones away from the other Troubleshooters.

This keeps players desperate for a long time. If they catch on, give dying other drawbacks. For example, the CIGs might not be as good as the usual cloners, so each succeeding clone comes back missing something vital (eyes, fingers, Moxie). If you want, assign an arbitrary number of clones (12 or so) and stick to it, but we warn you, they ain't done dying yet.

Before the clones head into the mean corridors to begin their new lives as two-fisted, hard-drinking, gray-suited, quasi-official operatives, they take a brief trip to the CIG storehouses to receive confiscated alien technology.

The alien technology works great...in alien hands. Unfortunately, Rubegold-B-ERG, the CIGs' official Equipment Guy, is former R&D and he couldn't resist putting a few "improvements" in each one. The following equipment is given to the team as a whole; it's up to the individual Troubleshooters to decide who gets which. Naturally, the CIGs rave about how reliable and powerful the tech is, and even give demonstrations of each (unmodified) device to show the characters its safety.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Glarjetgoiqhegnsk (The Flashy Thingy)

A black plastic box with a protruding lens at the front and a small bulb in the upper left-hand corner, the Flashy Thingy is from the CIGs' friends from Polaris, the Polaroids. Originally designed by Polaroid teenagers to erase their parents' memories of what time they came home from their dates, it was swiftly confiscated, put to use by the planet's military intelligence, and offered to the CIGs to keep order among the curious citizens of Alpha Complex.

The Flashy Thingy, if pointed at a clone and activated by a push-button trigger, produces a bright flash of light containing thousands of tiny, self-guided lasers which perform non-invasive surgery on the target's brain, traveling painlessly through skull and flesh to sear away memories of the last 1D20 minutes. If used several times in a row, the Flashy Thingy erases memories sequentially further back in time. A Ridiculous survival or Easy regeneration roll allows the target to resist the effects.

Unfortunately, the Flashy Thingy was designed for a world with lighter gravity than Earth, and the contents tend to settle, so the FTs must be shaken before use like a can of spray paint. To counteract the extra time this would take, Rubegold-B-ERG installed hypersensitive triggers. This gives the FT a 2 in 20 chance of going off every time it's picked up. If not pointed at anyone, the FT targets its owner, often leading that clone to

forget what the FT is and wonder what'll happen if he presses that big black button.
(FLASH! "What's this?" FLASH! "What's this?")

Uareschoopthrtis (The Spinny Thingy)

The Spinny Thingy was developed by the Hoovahs, a race of gaseous aliens who can exist outside of an atmosphere, and make their living selling their technologies to other races (traveling vacuum salesmen). Originally designed to clear a path through asteroid fields, Spinny Thingies have proven useful for CIGs destroying evidence.

On the outside, they look like innocent gold-plated bowling balls like anyclone might carry around. As a safety feature, they don't even react when a clone sticks his fingers in the three holes; instead, they're activated by sticking the clone's nose, tongue and big toe in the holes. At that point, the device separates into three parts which spin rapidly to create a gravitational field strong enough to suck everything within a 10 yard radius into it and compress them to the size of an aspirin. When it finishes, the tablet pops out and the ST returns to its usual shape. The tablet is usually jettisoned into space afterward, as it resumes its usual size in 1D20/2 hours.

Rubegold-B-ERG realized that the device's major weakness was its predictability. If it always has a 10-yard radius, your enemy knows he can stand 11 yards away and completely avoid it (forgetting that this device is generally used to destroy evidence, not people, and anyone who knows the radius is a friend of the CIGs). Therefore he added a deluxe randomizer so the device fluctuates between 1 and 20 yards of radius.

Rfeintahuhaow (The Morphing Thingy)

The Morphing Thingy has been used by many races throughout the galaxy, but only really became popular after its use on planet T-1000 in the Andromeda system. Although it looks like a small, portable shower, the Morphing Thingy (also known as the Andromeda Rain) is actually a sophisticated disguise kit. The "water" in the shower is a psychically active acid which breaks down the clone's skin cells and reforms them into whatever it's told by mental command.

Unfortunately, this process hurts a lot, like thousands of needles stuck into the clone's skin, and the MT reacts to the first thing the clone says or thinks after the process begins. In other words, characters saying "oh crap" when suddenly put in pain resemble that item for the next 1-5 hours. The Andromeda Rain is marginally intelligent and attempts to figure out what item the clone meant if they say something non-physical (for

example, saying "ouch" makes the character into a comfy sofa for the next 5 hours). The transformation is only skin deep, so the character can perform all skills while disguised, but a laser-shooting two-legged loveseat is bound to get attention.

If two clones who have both used the MT recently wish to change forms before the effect wears off, they can reawaken the acid by touching one another and chanting the code phrase, "Wonderskins powers, activate." They can then order the change by telling the MT to create "shape of a ____" or "form of a ____."

Rubegold-B couldn't think of a single improvement to make on this one. It can kill clones without any help.

Reibantheylivokleez (The Glasses Thingies)

These are micro-thin real-time portable video units placed in a pair of sunglasses. As an image enters the lens, the video interprets each photon separately but scatters them in a slightly different order when projected on the inside of the glasses. Developed by an award-winning team of Polaroid parents, it neutralizes the effect of the Flashy Thingy and other common alien mind control rays by stopping its microsurgery lasers in perfect sequence (wearing normal sunglasses just means they skew off to random areas of the brain...ow). Rubegold-B, however, thought that he could tune it to scatter lasers in any wavelength of light, including laser weapons (L3 armor if shot in the eye), but in doing so made them only capable of seeing in black, white, and gray.

Ibajowanosolobambam (The Little Shooty Thingy)

The Little Shooty Thingy was originally designed by Graphlings, short, furry-toed aliens with a strange compulsion to build and map underground mazes. Over the course of their 9,000-year copyright war with the Blobbits, they developed an immense store of military knowledge and weapons of mass destruction. Shortly before the war's settlement, the Graphlings finally designed the perfect weapon. Only an inch long, it was completely cancelable, weighed almost nothing, could beat spaceport security, and could waste a fair-sized city. But peace broke out and they never got a chance to use the darn things. Looking for some profit, they sold the design to the Borgers who realized the gun's potential as a children's toy, and produced 100,000 of them for this week's Grubs' Meal special. Naturally, the Borger wouldn't want the little tykes to get hurt, so they removed a couple of key components, but the CIGs assure the Troubleshooters they've put everything back in, and it works fine. The LST resembles a laser pistol, but is 1 inch



long and less than a half inch wide, with only room enough to insert a toothpick into the trigger guard. It has complete instructions written on the weapon's side, but these can only be read with a magnifying glass. If the Troubleshooters do the "pull and pray" method of shooting, the gun has one of five effects. Roll 1D20 and consult the following chart.

Roll LST Result

1-4 No effect. The gun smokes a little, but doesn't fire.

5-8 1L damage at a six-inch range.

9-12 Works like a normal Red Laser Pistol.

13-16 Does 5L damage at a range of 500 meters. Can only be stopped by Violet or higher Reflec armor.

17-20 Overheats and explodes in the clone's hand, doing 6E damage to everything within a 100-meter radius.

Zorgzbiggmuda (The Incredibly Destructive Shooty Thingy)

This watermelon-shaped gun is a miracle of engineering. It has everything you could possibly want from a weapon – laser, slugthrower, tangler, flamethrower and nuclear settings, 38,000-round capacity, self-cleaning, SIBERnetically programmable, with easy carrying strap, glossy outer coating, and free Females And Weapons calendars if you order now, featuring pictures of half-naked beings from throughout the universe fondling Borger weaponry (no, there's no appeal in this for the clones, but it keeps it at the top of the universal best-seller list).

Most impressive is its memory feature which insures that if you shoot and hit a target once, its extendible neck bends and tracks the target so all future shots hit, no matter where the gun is aimed. Unfortunately, in Rubegold-B-ERG's experimentation, he removed the inhibitor for the feature in order to fit the extra 8,000 rounds of ammo, so once the CIGs do their demo for the characters, all future shots travel back to the CIGs'

headquarters to hit that target. This includes going through the walls (very bad if the clones are in a pressurized space ship or something). Whatever's in the way takes 4L, 5P, tangler, 4F, or 11FE damage. If you aren't sure which way CIG Headquarters is, roll a die.

1-2 is north; 3-4 is northeast, 5-6 is east, 9-10 hits the clone holding it, etc. Ignore 16-20.

((END TEXT BOX))

Encounter 8.3. Freud-I-ANN Whips...I mean, Slips

The Clones in Gray interrogate the characters about their mission, especially any points where the Troubleshooters don't remember something. The CIGs know these clones may be missing some vital information about the Altair-natives that their predecessors acquired.

However, they installed a fail-safe in MemoMax. It still transfers the information, it merely sets up psychological blocks which make remembering physically and emotionally painful. No brainwashing here, just good old infantile repression. But this is no problem for the wily and adaptable CIGs. In fact, for just such an occasion, they keep around an HPD&MC specialist in Repressed Memory Recovery and Neurosis Induction, Freud-I-ANN.

Time to whisk the Troubleshooters off to Freud-I's office, strap them to the comfy couch and cram 25 years of psychoanalysis down their throats in the next four minutes to find out whether they're repressing any alien abduction experiences.

"Don't worry," chuckles Black Lightning. "We have just the thing to get those memories back. Citizen Freud-I-ANN's Posthypnotic Analytical Neurosis Interrogation Conference is guaranteed to bring back memories you've never even had."

He leaves, and after a brief silence, a young Red clearance clone with Red and Infrared striped paint on her face and furry ears enters the room. She looks like that strange growling clone from the Delta-Delta-Delta Force, but bouncier. The nametag on her uniform reads Candystripe-R-SSN. She leads you into a neatly furnished Indigo-painted office with a Red path leading to a Red couch, the only low-clearance furniture. Reluctantly, you sit, staring at the pictures on the walls. Missiles. Cigars. Torpedos. Battering rams. There's something those things have in common, but you can't quite put your finger on it. At least not in mixed company.

After a moment, Candystripe-R leaves and the Indigo carpeting closes over the Red path, trapping you on the couch. The door opens, revealing a tall clone with a wrinkled face and long ultraviolet hair growing from his chin. He strokes it sagely and announces in a thick accent. "I am Doktor Freud-IANN.

Whaat iz trouble?"

Freud-I questions the characters extensively, but seems only superficially interested in their recent time lapses. Instead, he dwells on unimportant memories of their young citizen-hoods, dreams and any statement involving a large, hard weapon.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Freud-I-ANN-4

Service Group: HPD&MC (Department of RMR/NI)

Mutant Power: Long, Hard, Deep Penetrating Probe

Secret Society: Clones in Gray

S5 E6 A7 C9 D3 MA7 M9 P10

Skills: Interrogation 7/16, Motivation 4/13, Biosciences 2/11.

Equipment: Not as impressive as he'd like.

Freud-I-ANN is a very confused clone. He's developed an exhaustive theory of clone maturation and development, concluding that all clones are born wanting something and spend their lives fruitlessly trying to get some, or envying others who get more, but he can't figure out what it is. He hopes that by asking the characters about their earliest memories, he might plumb the depths of their subconsciousness, like a spear penetrating the gaping chasm of their minds.

((END TEXT BOX)))

Freud-I's questions may include the following:

1. Tell me about your Teacherbot.

Alpha Complex's closest thing to mothers.

2. Did you ever want to make it stop listening to The Computer and only pay attention to you?

3. Did you ever want to change the Teacherbot's memcards?

4. What is your earliest pleasant memory?

This question is very important to Freud-I, since he's convinced that Clonal Development is dependent upon zones of pleasure, but has yet to encounter anyone in Alpha Complex who's had a really pleasant experience.

5. What did you dream about last night?

6. What do you think this means?

7. Why don't you want to remember that time in UFO Sector?

8. Do you think you secretly enjoy execution and want to get killed repeatedly? If not, why do you do it so often?

9. Have you ever had strange hallucinations?

10. How does that make you feel?

Don't give the players any clues on these. Stay perfectly reserved and stroke your beard in a scholarly yet frustrated way, while the players come up with their own creative answers. Follow their every remark by asking "and how does this make you feel?" or "what do you think that

means?" For uncreative players, Freud-I-ANN provides his own interpretations until the players get too embarrassed and make something up.

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Freud-I-ANN: How did you feel about your teacherbot?

Scull-Y-FBI: Such a marvelously constructed piece of high technology, designed and programmed solely to mold me into a proper citizen for the betterment of Alpha Complex.

Freud-I-ANN: Yes. Yes. All that cold, hard metal stroked by your soft young hands. Those rotating spank-paddles. Did you find it...exciting? (begins breathing heavily)

Scull-Y-FBI: Um...not really. I...

Sam-Y-RYE: What's this got to do with chopping up bugs?

Freud-I-ANN: Chopping. Yes, we can discuss chopping. Is that what you want to do when you see the aliens?

Sam-Y-RYE: Yeah. I want to cut them into little quivering bits.

Freud-I-ANN: How does that make you feel?

Sam-Y-RYE: Like...like I want to...I don't know. Chop stuff up some more.

Freud-I-ANN: And did it make you happy killing aliens in that warm, soft, slimy passage, carrying your very big stick?

((((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Eventually, Freud-I gets frustrated (yes, even more) as he realizes that these clones have no idea what's missing from their lives either, and stops the interrogation. Instead, he tries a last-ditch technique, regressing the clones into their childhoods and past lives, then advancing forward through their memories to recover the time in UFO Sector.

Freud-I swings a Teela mirror in front of your nose. "You are getting sleepy," he intones solemnly. "Your eyelids are heavy. You want to shut them."

Your vision blurs and darkens as you descend into sleep. You see your life; the shattering glass that began your term of service in this cruel Complex; the nurturing hands of the teacherbot, leading you through your first steps, watching tolerantly as you attempted involuntary brain transplants on your clone brothers. Ah, junior citizenship, what a joyous, carefree time.

Too soon, the droning voice whisks you through Troubleshooter school, your first laser, first time watching an execution. Your promotion to Red, to Orange, to Yellow. The meeting with John-O-SON. Your first death.



You are pulled inexorably forward to that fateful time in UFO Sector. It's all clear now. The bright white light that pulled you to the ceiling, out through a ventilation duct and into the giant, hovering ship marked with the bright Red Borger King logo.

You remember long moments spent on the conveyor belt with a hundred other clones, the horrible invasion as you were stripped, your skin probed, teeth examined, and vision tested. And then...and then...the crushing blow of rejection as you were returned, GRADE B MEAT PRODUCT: SUITABLE ONLY FOR OVERCROWDED SUMMER CAMPS stamped indelibly in your soul.

That's right. The Troubleshooters were kidnapped and taken aboard a Borger ship to be turned into Clone MaqNuggets, but the radiation Troubleshooters are exposed to rendered their flesh inedible by most aliens. However, this experience has given the Troubleshooters a pretty good memory of the layout of the Borger ship, something which may prove useful in Home Fleet Home.

On their way out of hypnosis, the Troubleshooters' altered DNA and acid-enhanced mutant powers awaken their sleeping ids, and send forth their own buried demons to destroy them. These monsters from the id, however, are a lot less like traditional id-creations a la Forbidden Planet, and a lot closer to modern software...

With the shivering inadequacy of your condition still gripping your mind, you feel Freud-I-ANN's voice drawing you back. Then suddenly, you can't hear him anymore. You lose all sense of yourself, your body fading until it has shrunk down to your most important part:

A few fingers and a REALLY BIG GUN.

From left and right, strange, almost-three dimensional animated shapes attack you, but you merely turn your gun on them and with a single burst, the creatures have collapsed into tiny piles of gore-soaked pixels, dying with squeaky electronic shrieks of agony. More appear from the other side, and soon they too are smoking rubble.

Hey, this is...fun...empowering. Maybe there's something to this Freud-I-ANN stuff after all.

9.0: Just a CIG in the Machine

SUMMARY

The Clones In Gray learn the folly of inviting a bazillion aliens to invade their planet and turn their friends and neighbors into value meals, and send the Troubleshooters in for crowd control as more and more emergency situations pop up.



RUNNING IT

After they wake up, the Troubleshooters train with the Clones in Gray to learn secret techniques for controlling aliens and download alien language programs from the CIGs' private version of Alpha Net. CIG High Programmers hack into TC's memory banks to keep the Troubleshooters off-duty, so they've got time to rest and learn. All characters gain the Moxie-based skill of emergency alien diplomacy at 1. The CIGs may also tell them a little about the biology and cultures of the various aliens they've met. In the meantime, elsewhere in Alpha Complex, it's coming up on the Grand Opening of the Borger King franchise, and the few hundred Borger and several million Altair-natives have already proven how little the aliens respect the CIGs' restraints. Already, they refuse to line up and wait their turn.

Instead, they're roaming all over Alpha Complex, drinking the ketchup right from the spout, not flushing in the rest rooms, breeding with their food and other impoliteness. To further complicate matters for the Clones in Gray, the CHI/BUG Sector disaster heightened The Computer's fear of Communist influence. The Computer's response last time was to nuke an entire sector. To what lengths might Our Buddy go if It learned that the entire Complex had been invaded by hive-minded Commie mutants?

Fortunately, the CIGs have these wonderful new recruits with prior experience in alien riot management in need of some on-the-job training. In other words, the CIGs invited aliens to invade Alpha Complex and they want the PCs to make sure no one notices.

The Grand Opening begins at sun-up on the Troubleshooters' fourth day of training, and the problems commence almost immediately. Like figuring out what time sun-up is.

Encounter 9.1: Batter Up

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

Black Lightning comes into your sleep creche, unrolling a map. He looks like he didn't sleep last nightcycle.

"Okay, guys, here come the problems. The Grand Opening takes place in ELF Sector, where the Borger can hide among the dozens of food-preparation facilities. They've got a prominent Red citizen welcoming them -- Keeble-R. He's actually a Borger whom The Computer believes is a registered mutant.

Other aliens are registered as mutants and bots from ELF Sector PLC.

"But The Computer is watching mutants carefully, listening for the words 'bug,' 'mutant,' 'alien,' or anything that seems awry. (No, not you, Sam-Y.) Since Keeb's not from Alpha Complex, he might

give the game away. And you know how people are; they take off the jumpsuits we issue them, or they don't sound like bots, and then...well, The Computer drops nukes.

"We think the high sugar level in ELF Sector will attract a lot of Altair-natives and Aichargigers. Now remember, the Borger have that SIBER stuff on their faces, but the Altair-natives look like clones with bug parts and the Aichars just look like clones. To make sure you can find them, we're giving you a detection device...the Aichargiger Counter."

Black Lightning slips them a small black device that makes hissing noises when turned on. On its display, the A-N's and Aichars show up as little white blips, and when they are within twenty meters, the counter makes a gargling noise.

As the Troubleshooters In Gray approach ELF Sector, they see its wonders.

Ahh. You smell the baking cookies of ELF Sector the secondcycle you cross the line.

Everywhere, tall, stately clones live happy, productive lives of leisure. The clones are all so pretty...even the registered mutants with pointy ears. There are some blonde ones cheerleading, and others with curly shoes making toys for Young Citizens, and some short ones repairing a shoemaker bot. Truly, this is a shining example of Alpha Complex life.

The Aichargiger Counter starts gargling.

Cheap Trick: Turn on a TV or radio to a channel with static. As the clones get closer to the aliens, turn up the volume. Or make scratchy geiger-counter noises yourself. Drive them mad. Eventually, they see ten six-foot ants wearing jumpsuits with registered mutant stripes, walking towards a cookie factory with an enormous crowd outside it. The factory has a Red ribbon around it, with "Grand Opening" inscribed. Three slugs marked TRANSBOT have "out of order" signs hung around their necks. But worse, there are about seventy familiar-looking blonde female clones in Indigo setting off the Aichargiger counter.

Cillia found a clone vat.

There are also three Borger present, trying to get their speechmaker dressed for his presentation. Unfortunately, he is quite hung over from the Borger we're-franchising-another-planet celebration last nightcycle, and is curled up on a cot in the factory. He doesn't want to get out of bed.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Keeble-R-ELF-1 (The Head Borganizer)

Service Group: PLC

Mutant Power: Pyrokinesis

Secret Society: The Borger

SIBERware: Thermal Plating

S3 E3 A7 C8 D7 MA2 M5 P7

Macho Bonus: -1

Skills: Cookbot O&M 7/9, Cookie Baking 4/9, Spacecraft O&M 5/7, Energy Weapons 3/10.

Equipment: Blaster pistol (9E), Red apron, oven mittens, and jumpsuit (F1)

Keeble-R is usually a happy, helpful little Borger, but he assimilated just a bit too much ethanol last night and is feeling pretty grouchy. Right now his Macho stat is at -1 because everything about him is over-sensitive. The last thing he wants is to be on stage.

The ELF-Help Therapists

Mutant Power: Empathy

SIBERware: Treacle Control Rigs

S4 E4 A7 C8 D7 MA4 M4 P2

Skills: Fast Talk 4/12, Downsizing and Efficiency Analysis 5/9.

Equipment: Red aprons and oven mittens, suit they're trying to fit on Keeble-R.

These guys are cybernetic elves trying to help Keeb from a public relations screw-up.

They don't care what some overgrown guidance computer (i.e. Our Buddy) says is right.

("Yeah, we might all die, but Keeble-R writes my end-of-the-quarter report! Where are your priorities?") Trained in ELF-help therapy by Elrond Hubbard, they encourage Keeble-R to have a lot of ELF-confidence, to stand up for his-ELF if he wants that promotion, and to ignore the Earthlings.

Cil-I-AAH-1 through 69

Having trotted off to DNA Sector cloning facilities and worked them until they broke, the skanky Aichargiger girl(s) now have two things on their mind(s).

The other one is food, so her clone sorority has shown up expecting chow. They chat while they wait, hitting on the ants and slugs and talking about that wonderful smell that pervades the Sector. Use the statistics in Pod Tarts (p. XX).

((END TEXT BOX))

The countdown begins as soon as the clones get there. The Cils are hungry and bored, and will only wait about ten minutes before grabbing some sweet-looking ELF citizen for baby-back ribs

or lady fingers. While some dead ELF's may make the players cheer, The Computer does have three cameras and an ATEM in the area; any funny business means a squad of Vultures (use Bigger-G-UNS' stats, p. XX) blasts the factory. Once shot at, the Cils are obvious, invulnerable mutants, and TC eventually whips out The Big Stick.

Meanwhile, Keeble-R finally takes the stage, swearing and muttering treasonous phrases. He's going to drag the entire sector down with him in about a minute if the characters don't interfere.

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Scull-Y-FBI: We've got a message for the Borger.

ELF-Helper: Good for you! This way. (Leads them into factory.)

Keeble-R-ELF: Aaaaahh! Turn down the lights. I don't need the entire sun burning out my retinas. Who are the humans, the Blue Plate Special?

ELF-Helper: No, sir, they're the Clones in Gray.

Keeble-R-ELF: That's all I *#%ing need. Could you get me some Vitamin C and some water? And an aspirin...

John-Y-RCO: A what?

Rube-Y-ROD: Wegottatalkaboutthetalktotheticksoutthere,slyBorger.Notreason,y'dig?

Keeble-R: Yeah, treason, whatever. Every stupid thing here is treason. Not being happy is treason. Gimme a cigarette, willya? (Starts getting dressed.)

Ripple-Y-ELN: Hey, mutant boy, give The Computer some respect, or you're gonna get real messed up.

Keeble-R: Yeah, I'm shakin'. (Scratches stubble.) The last time I was this messed up, it was on a hiking trip in the mountains of Antares-IV. And there wasn't no computer telling me what to do. Look, I'll be happy once this stupid hangover's gone, okay?

Cil-33: (Pounds on door) Hey! Anybody home? When are we gonna start?

Keeble-R-ELF: Oouuuch. Somebody shoot those minxes.

ELF-Helpers: That's the wrong attitude for your public, sir! (They shave and manicure him.) Look in the mirror! That's the face of a winning Borger! A conqueror of planets!

Will-Y-SMT: Should we just bake this traitor soft-batch style, or what?

Keeble-R-ELF: And we char-broil your soil. #\$\$@% off, Earthling. (Checks out notes for speech.) "Welcome to the opening of the 100th Borger King in this star system. I'm sure you could use an all-clone patty right about now, so I'll get right to the point..."

John-Y-RCO: What's that word mean?

Rube-Y-ROD: Soil? Tell you when you're older. Relax, doughboys. I'll read the speech.

ELF-Helpers: Oh, no! He's in line for a promotion if we keep to our schedule!

Scull-Y-FBI: Great. They're from the same planet as PLC.

((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE))

Keeble-R isn't hard to placate; he just wants back to bed, or some more time to wake up. His helpers, however, insist he's getting out there right away. A semi-easy way to compromise is to let the helpers have their way, but implant Keeble-R with a Painful Editor to make sure he doesn't say anything treasonous when forced up there. They just need to extract one.

The ants and slugs are dangerously hungry if left alone, but can be satisfied by some Soylent Red meat pies and Nibble-Its or any of the prepackaged Borger Value Meals inside the factory. Note that some are sized for super-beings like the slugs, while others are for daintier organisms.

((BEGIN TABLE))

WHAT THE ALIENS ORDER

Die Roll Borger Value Meal

1-2 Black Beauty: Three Infrared clones bound end to end in a fifteen-foot hot dog bun, with a dumpster-sized soda (please recycle your container).

3-5 Red Square: A Red covered in cheese and stuck in a sesame-seed bun the width of a hot tub (surrounded by lettuce heads), a clothes hamper full of fries, and a 32-gallon trash can of soda for those long drives home.

6-7 Fillet O'range: Ground up Oranges, baked into golden-brown nuggets the size of pillows, with a 10-gallon drink and a bucket of fries.

8-10 Mellow Yellow: A bowl the size of a kid's swimming pool; the Yellow bits are in the soup. Crackers by request.

11-12 Tossed Green Salad: A Green's limbs tossed in a crispy fresh salad about as wide as a tire, with a 3-liter bottle on the side.

13-16 Blue Cheese: A normal-sized cheeseburger, flame-broiled clone patty with a 20-ounce drink and something that looks like Cold Fun for dessert.

17 Indigo to Go: A cup of warm clone blood (kept under the heat lamps).

18 Eggmick-G-UFN with Violet jelly and coffee.

19 Ultraviolet Meat Pie (one inch long; frosted top).

20 Chocolate chip cookies (small, medium, and oh-my-god-look-out).

((END TABLE))



While the Cils are temporarily happy with the meals, as soon as they're full, they're back on plan A. In half a second, the first eighteen hit on the Troubleshooters, the next eighteen on the slugs, Borger, and ants (who ignore them), and the rest split up, looking for some cute ELF citizen to feed something other than hormone-suppressant-laced-food. But maybe, just maybe, the Troubleshooters will hit on their secret weakness and stop the invulnerable sorority babes from space (I can't believe I just wrote that).

Aichargigers, being related to the bugs, require sugar to survive. However, an overdose temporarily blocks the receptors in their brains for some other behaviors. Thus, if fed chocolate, a Cillia goes into paroxysms of joy for 1D20 rounds and gets a very satisfied look on her face and stops looking for love for 24 hourcycles. Bright clones can leave trails of cookies back to CIG headquarters in order to round up spare Cillias.

Encounter 9.2. A Breach in HUL Sector

Once the curtains close on the opening ceremony, aliens spill into Alpha Complex. Within an hourcycle, not a single sector in the Complex is free of alien presence. Everywhere, the creatures, hop, ooze, scuttle and swarm into creches, through the lines at PLC, into R&D labs, as if Alpha Complex were their private playground.

Does all this activity attract any negative attention, you ask? Does not The Computer in Its all-seeing wisdom detect the sudden upsurge in the Complex's population and recognize the unusual nature of its new tentacular and carapaced inhabitants?

Well, no, actually. The Computer retains its blissful electronic ignorance. It is simply impossible for so many mutants to arrive so quickly, therefore the hundreds of complaint calls must be the result of a single treasonous prankster attempting to scare The Computer. Well, he won't have the satisfaction.

Instead, TC concentrates ruthlessly on small details of daily maintenance, relying on Its soldiers of decency, Internal Security, to track down and apprehend the prank caller. While carefully scrutinizing Alpha Complex's maintenance rosters, however, The Computer noticed a shocking oversight in HUL Sector. Somehow, repairs were allowed to slip for so long that a hole developed in the ceiling, exposing clones to...The Outside.

This oversight was actually engineered by CIG programmers to cover up the dometop Borger King and door through which the aliens are entering. TC's increased scrutiny brought the problem to Its attention, though, and Our Buddy won't allow it to remain uncorrected. Only

minutes before the repairbot is assigned, Deck-R-TRX, the CIG's main programmer, learns of the order and sends an alarm to the other CIGs before perishing messily at the hands of Internal Security. If Alpha Complex is to survive, The Computer cannot learn what's going on in HUL Sector.

Kkkkkkshhht. Your com-units sputter to life. "We've got a breach in HUL Sector," Black Lightning says. You're about to remind the idiot that he planned the breach and that it's his fault that you've already seen a-half-dozen clones eaten by aliens coming through that breach, but he continues. "A security breach. "Deck-R couldn't keep The Computer off our trail, and there's a repairbot heading to HUL Sector right now. If it arrives, all is lost!" His voice cracks with melodrama, and the com unit gives a sympathetic burst of static.

You shut the unit off contemptuously. Any further communications would just be a hindrance. It's up to you to keep this Complex clean. Your spurs jingle as you stride into the sunset, whistling...

No, wait, that was someone else.

You hop into a transbot heading to HUL Sector. Maybe you'll think of something by the time you get there.

Of course, with the sector under construction, the transbot slows to a crawl because of traffic. Smart clones jump out and walk. Troubleshooters who wait face the scene after the repairbot sees the aliens.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Repairbot

Skills: All Ops and Maintenance Skills 5/10, First Aid 4/11, Melee Weapons 3/8

Weapons: Keep reading, Armor ALL2

Speed: Slow, stately roll

The repairbot's chassis resembles a fat, round garbage can, with a dome-shaped top and space to attach 10-20 limbs. Its can spin 360 degrees and is topped with a mining light above a small cluster of sensors. It is equipped with all materials useful for building or repairing, and can synthesize most important compounds with its internal chemistry set. Unfortunately, this particular bot brain used to be inside a docbot, a job which it enjoyed much more than this lowly construction duty. It longs to practice surgery again, and will "accidentally" wound clones in order to perform emergency medical services using its construction equipment. It hopes to prove how good a docbot it is so The Computer will

reassign it. Considering the equipment it has available, the Troubleshooters better hope they have no hangnails.

Repairbot Limbs. If a Troubleshooter attacks the bot, roll randomly for which limb it retaliates with. If it attacks, it tries for something non-lethal like the hammer or drill, saving the chainsaw and jackhammer for post-trauma surgery. The bot acts twice a round.

1. Chainsaw. A standard non-surgical chainsaw. 4I damage.
 2. Jackhammer. 4I damage, and is unaffected by armor less than 50cm thick.
 3. Roll of duct tape. It takes 2 Difficult melee weapons rolls to successfully wrap and immobilize a clone's limbs. When wrapped in duct tape, a clone cannot move or speak and it takes a Ridiculous Strength + brawling roll to break free. A single melee weapons success gets one limb or the clone's mouth, and only takes a Nearly Impossible Strength + brawling roll to rip off.
 4. Spackler. With a single Tough melee weapons roll, the targeted clone is stuck to a wall, requiring a Difficult Strength + brawling roll to get free. A second Tough melee weapons test covers the spackled character in tiles, effectively smothering/immobilizing him unless someone else frees him within the next three rounds.
 5. Power Sander. 2I damage. Any type of armor protects against the first attack. After that, the armor is sanded away, and the clone's skin gets the same treatment.
 6. Glue gun. The hot glue does 1E damage against bare skin, but any type of armor protects against it. However, any character hit with the glue must make a Difficult dodge roll or be stuck in place until someone sands the glue away.
 7. Fiberglass gun. This produces a spray of fiberglass which does 1 box of damage if inhaled. Anyclone caught in the spray is coated in slimy stuff that dries into fiberglass in three rounds. If the clone has not wiped the stuff off by then, their Agility drops by 2 until they can get it removed.
 8. Hammer. 3I damage. On a Tough melee weapons roll, the clone may get nailed to the nearest flat surface, requiring a Tough Strength + brawling roll to pull off.
 9. Drill. 3AP damage.
 10. Electric screwdriver. 3P damage, and may affix the clone to a wall.
- ((END TEXT BOX))

The repairbot is still accustomed to being treated with the fear and respect due a docbot, and has no intention to turn aside if ordered. Especially when it's working for The Computer Itself. Flashy Thingies are pretty useless against it.

If the Troubleshooters destroy the bot, The Computer just sends out another one. In addition, the Battletax suits let TC know immediately who did it, and then they're in even deeper spackle. The best plan is to reprogram the bot to believe that it has already made the repairs; since this is a model 3900NC, an extremely reliable bot brand, The Computer will take its word that the repairs have been made without independent verification. The bot is smart enough to understand that treasonous clones might take advantage of its programming, so getting close enough to fiddle with it takes a Nearly Impossible spurious logic roll, or immobilizing all 10 limbs (perhaps by ordering ten Reds to hang onto them). It takes a Tough docbot O&M roll to successfully reprogram it.

Of course, while the characters are standing near HUL Sector, aliens continually stream past on their way to and from the dometop parking lot. If the bot notices, it immediately wants to investigate these strange-looking mutants, preferably with vivisections (did we mention it used to be in R&D?). It tries to get into HUL Sector to see what's happening, and orders all mutants (no matter how big, dangerous, rich or important) to lie down and become "willing additions to scientific progress." It uploads all findings straight to Alpha Net.

Stopping the mutant traffic is downright impossible. Imagine the surliest rush-hour breakfast-fast-food crowd you've seen, then turn them into hulking flesh-eating aliens.

((((SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Rube-Y-ROD: Solikeyoudon'twanttogointherebecauseliketheholeisleakingtheseweird interferencesandthat'swhyTheComputercan'tcontactyoutotellyoutoletusreprogramyou becausecomunitsaren'tworking. Solikemymanwhattayousay, isitadeal?

Repairbot: What?

Alien #1: Hey, neat. Is that thing for sale?

Scull-Y-FBI: (trying to herd alien back before RB sees it) No, it isn't. I'm afraid we've got a little delay right now, if you wouldn't mind waiting here for a few minutecycles...

Alien #2: Hurry up, buster. You're holding up the line.

Alien #3: Yeah. I thought this was a fast food restaurant. I've been waiting for almost a million nanoseconds already.

Repairbot: (pushing past Will-Y and John-Y) What are these fascinating creatures?

(Begins revving chainsaw absently. Will-Y and John-Y fall back.)

Excuse me, strange mutant, by orders of Docbot 3900NC, please lie down so we can commence internal investigations.

Alien #3: Look, jerk. I've got a 2,000-light-year drive ahead of me. All I want is a Red Square. Hey, there's one! (shoots out fifteen-foot-long sticky tongue, snags passing Red)

Will-Y-SMT: Everybody just calm the *&@* down...

Repairbot: Signs of aberrant mental behavior from subdermal hematoma. Correcting by relieving pressure on the cerebral cortex (starts drilling alien's head).

Ripple-Y-ELN: (flamethrowers whole mess of them) Listen up! We are experiencing slight delays in food service! Take your complaints up with the manager back on the Computer-damned mothership. Got it?! And as for you... (turns to bot) shut up and open your memory card or...

Repairbot: (spackles Ripple-Y to wall) Or what, citizen Ripple-Y? Do you need some cranial pressure relieved, as well?

((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

If the clones range too near the gaping hole in the ceiling, they'd better watch out for the alien ships' anti-gravity drives, or they'll get sucked up onto the dometop, Outside.

Eventually, the Troubleshooters should muddle out some way to keep The Computer ignorant. If they really hose it, the CIGs may be able to get Deck-R-TRX's successor clone activated quickly enough to repair the damage, or just let The Computer find out in a few hourcycles when it checks its memory banks again. The Troubleshooters will take care of that problem next episode.

Encounter 9.3. Collectable Card Brains

As the daycycle progresses, the Troubleshooters run into many strangely behaving bots.

Warbots use their lasers to burn stains off walls. Docbots try to clean all that nasty fluid out of the characters' insides. Cookbots use wet sugar to clean ovens, and vendingbots serve detergent instead of BBB. What's going on?

If the characters don't investigate, they get a call from Black Lightning.

"Attention, all Clones In Gray. The bots of Alpha Complex have been struck by a strange disorder and we believe the alien presence may be responsible."

Go fig.



"Please drop whatever else you're working on, and attend to this problem. We must discover who is causing this unusual behavior and put a stop to it."

Great.

The Clones in Gray made one fatal error when concluding their deal with the aliens. Well, okay, the entire concept was a fatal error, but for this segment of the adventure, their most important mistake was assuming that the creatures would stick to purchasing items to which the CIGs sold them the rights, i.e. dead clones and other discarded garbage. The CIGs had figured that restriction would actually make the alien presence beneficial; they would take away stuff no one was using anyway, and prevent Alpha Complex from wasting energy recycling them.

But once the aliens see what an unguarded treasure trove Alpha Complex is, they won't hold themselves to a single product, and the other species assume the contract only constrains Borger.

One particularly enterprising group from Sirius realized if they took over PLC's Waste Management division, they could redefine what constituted "discarded garbage" and sell it, profiting within the letter of the contract. As it turns out, the Siriuns are from a planet which never developed artificial intelligences (their starships run on vacuum tubes), and they are fascinated with Alpha Complex's bots; strange but apparently useless toys.

The bot brains amaze them. They're small. They're portable. Each one is different, yet they're all compatible. Some are common, some are uncommon, some are rare. What a product. If they sold these back home, they could overturn the entertainment industry as everyone goes crazy trying to collect more and more.

Yes, they're sirius.

When the Siriuns sent a recall order from PLC to discard almost every model of bot brain due to design flaws, Technical Services responded by replacing them with the only type of brain they have in excess -- scrubots. Suddenly, without time for sufficient reprogramming, hundreds of bot bodies are trying to perform scrubot functions without the proper equipment.

Fortunately, scrubot brains are stupid and generally friendly, so an Easy spurious logic roll lets the characters find out that the brain recall order came from PLC, and a quick Alpha Net check shows that it was the SNL branch.

We could describe the Troubleshooters' journey through SNM Sector on the way there, but this is a Nice Family Game™. Just ask Ilsa.

SNL-Sector PLC seems strangely bare, a single story of rooms, all curiously open on the front. In one room, the desk workers are pestered by someone called Lash-R-CKK. In another, someone's testing the Happy Fun Bot.

It's pretty easy to tell which one you're after. In the far right room, a pile of discarded bot brains covers the floor. The desk is manned by one of the strangest aliens you've seen. Although its head looks like a clone's, its body is tiny and quadrupedal, like some of the petbots in DOG Sector. More strange cloneheads are lined up, wallets full of squirming, algaelike bills, buying bot brains by the dozen.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

The Cloneheads

(name tags Ack-R-OYD and Gilda-R-TNR)

Service Group: PLC (Department of Waste Management)

Mutant Power: Appear Normal (a successful Power roll means the victim assumes they and the Clonehead are the same species)

Secret Society: NA

S5 E10 A10 C9 D3 MA3 M9 P9

Macho Bonus: 1

Skills: Dodge 3/13, Fast Talk 6/15, Con 6/15

Equipment: Armor of ALL5, lots of bot brains, mucho money

The Cloneheads are a civilized species (if you were nearly invulnerable, you might be, too) and unfazed by threats. In fact, they are totally uninterested in characters who aren't going to buy anything. Even if attacked, the Cloneheads do not respond until hurt, or until the Troubleshooters become a real nuisance (picking the Cloneheads up and hucking them or something). This is the best deal they've ever gotten, and they're not easily convinced to leave.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

Because of the Cloneheads' complete inattention to physical threats or violence, the Troubleshooters must stop them some other way. Bribing them is difficult, as the Troubleshooters have no alien money, and the Cloneheads are already raking in what they think is the most valuable product in Alpha Complex. Offering them non-monetary rewards such as their own syndicated vidshow or a date with one of the Cils might have a better chance.

The best way around the problem is to convince the Cloneheads that some piece of actual garbage is worth even more than the bot brains. For example, the Troubleshooters might suggest they draw pictures of the bot brains on little cards and convince people to pay just as much money as for the real thing...no, that's too crazy... Other possible alien bestsellers include R&D's short-lived cheese weaponry (see page 47-48 Creatures of the Nightcycle), Hot Fun (can be used in place of petroleum products as cheap fuel), or discarded laser barrels (widely available all over Alpha Complex, especially in the wake of Troubleshooting teams). All such conversations should be roleplayed. The cloneheads are far too intelligent, ornery and generally annoying to shorten your players' agony by letting them roll dice. If the Troubleshooters try to physically remove the aliens, the Cloneheads in Alpha Complex flock to their leaders' protection (gnawing at the clones like wimpy pit bulls). The characters might pull it off if they get other CIGs to back them up, but it'll be tough.

Encounter 9.4. The Neverending Sporey

In respect for your individuality as gamemasters, we at West End have taken great care to make this adventure customizable to all your alien-destroying needs. To extend the book's usefulness, we have included this section to drag out the adventure indefinitely, or rerun it numerous times without it losing appeal.

With the following Alien Name Generation Table, Alien Progenitor Species Table, Alien Motivation Table, and Alien Secret Weakness Table, you can create a different alien for your players to face every time. Whip out those dice, and you too can have hours of tentacle-stomping, slime-slipping, mutantslaughtering fun.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

ALIEN NAME GENERATION TABLE

Roll 1D20/2 for each column and match.

Roll Result Roll Result

1 Altair- 1 -natives

2 Vogue- 2 -ers

3 Kling- 3 -ons

4 Betelgus- 4 -ians

5 Veg- 5 -ans

6 Grab- 6 -oids

7 Bug- 7 -i

8 Micron- 8 -soft

9 Astron- 9 -auts

10 Dracon- 10 -eetles

ALIEN PROGENITOR SPECIES TABLE

Roll 1D20/2 for each column and match

Roll Alien is half... and half... and has...

1 Mushroom Octopus Poisonous Stingers

2 Platypus Sentient Methane Cloud Ichor-dripping Tentacles

3 Chameleon Locomotive Glowing Healing Fingers

4 Yo-yo Jellyfish Really Long Tongue

5 Meercat Washing Machine Crab-like Pincers

6 Blowfish Spitting Cobra Ability To Fart Plasma Into Orbit

7 Bolas Spider Soda Dispenser Acid Blood

8 Pterodactyl Amoeba Ability To Mutate Clone DNA

9 Velociraptor Bunny Rabbit Ability To Reproduce By Budding

10 Yeast Robot Detachable Body Parts

ALIEN MOTIVATION TABLE

1D20 Roll The Aliens Will Destroy Alpha Complex Unless They Get...

1 To suck out clone brains.

2 To lay eggs in clone bodies and have the larvae burst out hungry.

3 Genetic material (Mars Needs Women, starting with Teela-O-MLY or Troubleshooters).

4 Genetic material (Mars Needs Men...ditto).

5 To heat up Alpha Complex and make it hospitable for their kind.

6 True Love (aww... unfortunately, just knowing that word in Alpha Complex is treason).

7 To take clones on a whirlwind tour of their own psyches and help them become selfactualized before dumping them and driving off into space laughing.

8 Alpha Complex's water. And some clones for snacks.

9 To phone home.

10 To stop another alien race before they do irreparable harm to this little planet.

11 Movie deals, a Sixthday morningcycle vidshow, a comic book, theme music, and a Special Edition with Computer-retouched bodies twenty annocycles from now.

12 To talk with marine mammals that died out years ago (whales, manatees, walrus).



-
- 13 To rejuvenate old clones (no real reason why).
 - 14 Your precious bodily fluids (blood, spinal fluid, intracellular stuff, phlegm, pus, zit oil).
 - 15 To eat cats (and the Ultraviolets aren't giving theirs up without a fight).
 - 16 To fix up their starship so they can get home (requiring items well above the Troubleshooters' security clearances: part of the Warbot Mark IV, a socket wrench, duct tape, or a calculator).
 - 17 Experience points (they kill citizens indiscriminately).
 - 18 A worthy opponent (they kill citizens discriminately). Ghads-I-LAH vs. CIGs?
 - 19 To adopt clones as an inferior species in a third-world planet as part of an intergalactic

Big Hive-Mate/Big Sister program which gets them community service credit in their high schools back home.

20 Alpha Complex citizens to stop being violent, ruining their planet, inventing dangerous devices, and littering. Clones would be better off painting, reading Sartre, and learning how to cook good cheese omelettes. If they don't stop making war, the aliens blast 'em.

ALIEN SECRET WEAKNESS TABLE

1D20/2 Roll Alien's Secret Weakness Is

1 Water ("I'm melting! I'm meeeeeeeltiiiiing!") or ultraviolet light ("It burns, Renfield!")

2 Packing kernels. If the alien comes in contact with a large number of Styrofoam packing kernels, their skin clouds over, and they go into a deep hibernative state, allowing them to be shipped anywhere in the universe. They remain in stasis as long as at least

50% of their body is covered in Styrofoam.

3 The word "antidisestablishmentarianism" repeated five times rapidly.

4 An Earthly disease which their immune systems have never had a chance to get used to... like the Bubonic Plague or Ebola. Naturally, if a character manages to get her hands on a vial of this, Alpha Complex will have worse problems than alien parties.

5 Supersonic steel-jacketed lead. This is a common allergy throughout the galaxy.

6 Cold/ice. The alien is from a much warmer planet than Earth, and anything colder than 67 degrees Fahrenheit causes them to freeze, become brittle and shatter into small pieces.

7 RAID/OFF/COMBAT/Other insecticides. The alien will die if it consumes even a small

amount of these substances. The problem is convincing the alien to eat anything without also taking the Troubleshooter attached to it. "Here, Slime-Y, have a slurpee..."

8 Barry Manilow, Lawrence Welk, or Millie-V-NLI. Hearing such music makes the alien's head explode after 1D20 rounds. Warning: may have the same effect on players.

9 Dramatic soliloquies. If the Troubleshooter spouts a sufficient amount of bogus rationalization and macho challenges at the alien, it is cowed and backs down, becoming the Troubleshooter's willing slave and constant companion.

10 Flour, ferrous sulfate, niacin, thiamine, mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid, sugar, corn syrup, water, high-fructose corn syrup, partially hydrogenated cottonseed, soybean or conola oil, beef fat, dextrose, whole eggs, modified corn starch, corn flour, corn syrup solids, mono- and diglycerides, soy lecithin, polysorbate 60, dextrin, calcium caseinate, sodium stearoyl lactylate, wheat gluten, calcium sulfate, natural and artificial flavors, caramel color, sorbic acid, yellow dye #5, and red dye #40. All of these can be found in the obligatory product placement we use to pay for the amazing special effects in this adventure, the Twinkie®, a registered trademark of the almighty Hostess (Interstate Brands) Corporation whose financial might could soak us up like a cheap sponge and whose forgiveness we beg for naming their product in reverential awe. (((END TEXT BOX)))

10.0: Let's Go Through Time, WOLF, Again

SUMMARY

The Clones in Gray realize that the Borger deal was a terrible mistake. To correct it, the Troubleshooters steal an alien space-station-wagon and fly it around the sun to go back in time. Once they reach the destined era last weekcycle, they convince the Clones in Gray not to make the deal, thus preventing the rest of this hose job from happening.

RUNNING IT

After you've beaten the alien cameo appearances to death, Black Lightning calls to tell them to get back to the CIG headquarters. Other personnel will try to stop the alien outbreak; the Troubleshooters are needed for a more urgent mission.

Encounter 10.1. A CIGNificant Difference

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

You're back in that CIG conference room. It seems so long since you first came as innocent Troubleshooters, happy in your ignorance, bereft of the awesome responsibility you now bear. Black Lightning looks older too, and his voice is hoarse and cracked. When he sees you, a hint of the old enthusiasm returns.

"Valiant Troubleshooters," he greets you.

Uh-oh. Compliments.

"Your service to the Clones in Gray and Alpha Complex is exemplary. Above and beyond the call of duty. And now, we have one final task for you to perform. There have been, as you know, unforeseen difficulties with the Borger treaty. Enough so many of us feel that the arrangement should not continue, indeed should never have been made."

This man is a genius.

"It's getting desperate out there. It's all we can do to keep The Computer occupied with Scrubot Appreciation Daycycle rallies. As soon as one of our programmers gets carpal-tunnel and can't write any more, BOOM. So our planning is kind of...desperate."

He showers them with compliments, telling them they're up to the task without saying what it is. When someone starts prying, he eventually relents.

"We want you to go back in time to when the Clones in Gray first made contact with the Borger and keep us from selling out. It's a dangerous, tricky business. You'll have to adjust for the relative position of the earth, avoiding incongruities with past history, carrying only technology appropriate for the time period, and alter your grammar and slang to blend in with the populace. Even the slightest mistake could have dire consequences..."

Black Lightning goes on about this until the Troubleshooters ask him when they're going to.

"Last weekcycle," he admits sheepishly.

The plan is this: with a whole parking lot full of FTL-driven alien ships to choose from, it should be simplicity itself for the Troubleshooters to steal one, fly it into the sun, divert their path at the last minute to whip around it, using the centripetal/fugal forces to increase their speed enough to break the space-time barrier, land in the past and take steps to ensure that the deal with the Borger never happens. This, he assures them, is based on a sound scientific principle he saw on the vid once.

The characters may object to this. Strenuously. Black Lightning uses every means at his disposal to get them to agree: bribing them with promotion promises, begging, saying they're

Alpha Complex's only hope for survival, and finally slow torture by broadcasting Vanilla Lice and Michael Flatworm into their suit transmitters.

If none of these work, try reciting the following speech in a slightly whiny voice, preferably with tears in your eyes.

C'mon guys, it's getting late and I've got work to do tomorrow. If you just whip around the damn sun, we can finally finish this and get some chow. Do you really want to wait another hour while I figure out some other way to end the thing? I mean, I didn't complain about the forty-five minutes you guys spent chatting about TV while I was trying to get the adventure moving, and I let you eat all my cookies and you broke my favorite glass, and I just think you owe it to me to cooperate for once, that's all.

Encounter 10.2. Truly Warped Speed

Once the characters agree, BL fits them with a Com IV unit so they can talk with the CIGs even over immense distances. For the duration of the trip, the CIGs work out of the missin' control booth in the cratered CASA building, away from The Computer's observation. With some spray-on metal, they turn the crater into an enormous radar dish in no time. BL orders the Troubleshooters back to HUL Sector to permanently borrow a craft for the good of Alpha Complex. Use the Dometop Parking Lot map provided in Player Handouts, if needed.

This is a strange sector, with a curved floor and absolutely no buildings. The floor is gray, but the immense ceiling is painted Blue, with a single light placed in its center. That must be the SUN fixture Black Lightning wanted you to fly around. It's awfully bright; Power Services wouldn't be happy with how much electricity this Outdoors place is wasting.

Parked within the bright Yellow lines are dozens of strange-looking bots and...and stuff. That one looks like a pair of salad tongs with a rotor attached.

That one looks like a normal transbot, but only six inches long, with tiny aliens the size of your fingers talking into the fly-through speaker. That one's not even a bot; it's some sort of organic blob transporting passengers in its stomach. You're supposed to steal one of these things?

More importantly, you're supposed to fly it?

Let your imagination go wild; the alien ships can be gigantic cheese graters made out of metal as shiny as a compact disk, lawn mowers with buttons all over their structure or Glinda the Good Witch's bubble. It takes a Normal perception roll to pick out a vehicle they might have a hope of operating.

That one over in the corner! The one you mistook momentarily for the mangled remains of the high-velocity impact of a toaster and soldering iron. Now that you get closer, you see that it looks like it was once an autocar, or something close. It's about the right size to fit six clones, has adjustable leather seats, a big trunk, and controls designed for hands, not chemical secretions, all for the low, low price of free-if-you-can-walk-off-with-it. Whatta bargain.

Some time-and-space travelers get flashy cars like DeLoreans or Birds-O-Prey or something. No, no, no. This vehicle is a Low-Cost Air Limo owned by Kharyons, a bumpy-headed species who know the value of luggage space in a family starship.

A Normal juryrigging roll gets the door open. Failure sets the car's alarm off, but not even aliens pay attention to the things. A quick glance inside makes it clear that the space-station-wagon will be lucky to get off the ground, much less past the sun.

It's a Difficult vulturecraft ops and maintenace roll for the Equipment Guy to get the thing patched together (and probably a Nearly Impossible con to convince his teammates to trust their lives to his technical skills). It takes an hourcycle to make the repairs, and six Earthlings poking around the alien parking lot for that long is bound to get attention. Luckily, the car's owner was accosted by a bunch of Cilly sorority girls and won't be back for a while.

The Borger handing out promo coupons only require a Tough fast talk roll to convince that the clones are from AAA Sector Repairs or something.

"There," the Equipment Officer exclaims with satisfaction, sticking the last wire into place with chewing gum. "It's good to go."

You climb inside, ready to get this over with. Your bags are packed, rear-view mirror adjusted, seats tilted just right, everyone's gone to the bathroom.

You're set. There's just one problem.

You don't have a key. And there's no space for a key. Or any clear way to start the thing.

The first player who suggests looking in the glove compartment is rewarded with a book the size of War and Peace which is titled The Wols Og Rotom Fle Model 9000 Owner's Manual.

Fortunately, the guide is written in ten languages (in 4-point type), one of which is English. The WOLF can be turned on by leather underwear and...

Oh, you meant how to start the engine.

Sorry. Um...chapter 30...here. The WOLF 9000 is voice-controlled, and the Troubleshooters easily find the owner password written on a small piece of paper stuck in the book, "A WOLF is a WOLF, of courf, of courf." Saying this wakes up the WOLF's bot brain.

The WOLF 9000's voice remains calm and unruffled no matter what the circumstances. It is basically obedient, but has a limited set of instructions for flying. Once the Troubleshooters reach the upper atmosphere (remember, roll up the windows) it automatically launches into its Go-Back-In-Time-By-Whipping-Around-The-Sun subroutine, reciting instructions in a soothing voice. Although its lecture resembles the lyrics of a well-known song, the WOLF 9000 translation software does not sing. It recites every word with a calm, deadpan voice.

No ignition. And no key ring.

Only voices will control.

So listen closely to the secret instructions,
and you might reach your goal.

If you want to make your time warp
by whipping around the sun,
then buckle your seat belts,
and you better start calling,
"Let's go through time, WOLF, again."

First pull the switch on the left,
then turn the wheel to the ri-i-i-ght.

The second lever gets flipped
up to a vertical hei-i-i-ght.

Then it's a lift-off thrust,
just like you're driving a pla-a-a-a-ne.

Sing, "Let's go through time, WOLF, again."

Stars whip by us. Close contact would fry us,
so you must listen to what I say.

Choose another direction, trajectory correction.

This improvement is what may
start your timed flip, the Earth-saving time trip.

Stop the Borger from their game.

I'll control your migration, while you're under seda-a-a-a-ation.

Let's go through time, WOLF, again.

This time you lean to the left
and don't hit Mars on the ri-i-i-ght.

Now hold on while we dip,
and head straight for the li-i-i-ight.

And you'll just have to trust
that you aren't insa-a-a-a-ane,

Singing, "Let's go through time, WORF, again."

Cheap Trick: Make the players sit in two rows of chairs; three in front, three in back, with the control panel (Handout #9) in front. See if they follow the WORF's instructions. It has already started flying as it speaks, so any missed instruction deserves a simulated asteroid collision (i.e. balled-up paper wads chucked at their heads). These are Tough Vulturecraft O&M rolls.

At the line "under seda-a-a-a-ation," needles pop out of the seats and inject the Troubleshooters with a soothing sedative to assist their journey into hyperspace. A Nearly Impossible dodge roll lets a character avoid this, otherwise it's philosophic thoughts and psychedelic light shows for them. Nonsedated Troubleshooters come to sudden realization of how suicidal this mission is and have a 1 in 10 chance of trying to jump out the door.

The Troubleshooters are in constant contact with the CIGs at CASA who try to help them through the space travel process, but, well, they're no rocket scientists. In fact, they're barely competent. They're away from their desks when the Troubleshooters try to contact them, send them helpful selfcontradictory instructions designed by committee, and get other notes to them eleven weekcycles late.

But even their irritating voices fade as the Troubleshooters head into the burning globe of The Sun!

As you draw near the sun, your vision starts to blur. The horizon becomes a mess of colored lines, all switching and spinning and rolling like some crazed landscape in THC Sector. The way they all interconnect, clone, it's intense. Its deeper meaning penetrates even into your vid-clouded mind.

There's a white room there, and a guy in a space suit, a pre-burst clone, and even an incredible black monolith Freud-I-ANN would be proud of. But you understand them. They all work together like some cosmic Kub-R-ICK's cube.

Then, in an instant, you're past it, shooting towards Earth with the terrifying velocity of being shot from an R&D Clone Cannon. It looms before you, dramatic music swelling as you pass the space-time barrier! Trailing a rainbow cloud of exhaust, the car plunges through the atmosphere,

and suddenly you see land. Everywhere is covered in Green carpeting, and 20-foot tall scaly aliens with long necks and pointed teeth...

"Ooops," the WOLF says. "Overshot."

The car takes off again, hurtling you through history. Past long-ago days, before The Computer, when people lived in big air ducts in the walls. Then they build creches, and whole sectors. The skies turn gray, and the Green carpet gets replaced with normal, healthy plastic and concrete. Then, at last, Alpha Complex itself is there, citizens gradually changing from an unnatural euphoria of trust and relaxation to the normal state of mandatory smiles and backstabs. But even as you marvel at this tapestry of dramatic tension, you realize that the WOLF isn't going to stop. With a ringing crash, you blow through the dome. All around, alarms blare. "Great Computer," someone screams. "Aliens are invading!"

Damn.

Encounter 10.3. A Brief History of Slime

Since getting executed a week earlier doesn't accomplish much, the Troubleshooters probably want to quiet the witnesses before they attract TC's attention. A decent story (like saying they're flying a top-secret bot for Research and Design) and a Difficult fast talk roll to the Red and Infrared witnesses convinces the crowd. Killing all 12 bystanders may get more attention than falling from the sky, as well as being rather messy.

After that, it's time to start looking for the Clones in Gray. If the players remembered to ask Black Lightning where he was last weekcycle, they get directions to his private creche in VER Sector. If not, they get to hunt down Alpha Complex's most-secret secret society. Since they were blindfolded when taken to the CIG building, there's no quick answer, though they may have learned its location with Deep Probe, or asked one of the all-knowing contacts in NPC Sector. Otherwise, they must get the CIGs' attention, probably by posing as aliens or spreading rumors for the CIGs to investigate. This risks catching TC's allseeing eye as well. Anyone with a Databack who knows a CIG's real name can track him down through Alpha Net. Once they get an audience with Black Lightning (or some other high-up CIG), the clones must convince this bunch of ultracool, ultraimportant, ultraviolet clones to change their minds about a world-affecting (profitable) decision on the advice of a few Yellow Troubleshooters.

Again, if the players were bright and asked Black Lightning for proof to confirm their legitimacy to the past CIGs, this is simple. For the less thoughtful, however, simply pointing out that the Borger have no obligation to abide by the treaty doesn't sway the CIGs. That's logic; if the Clones

in Gray respected logic, they'd have left Alpha Complex as soon as they found there was somewhere else.

Instead, the clones have to manufacture proof that the Borger King is planning to cheat them, give a Ridiculous fast talk, or find something rare and dangerous to bribe them with. Their SIBERware, as a Borger spin-off, will do (volunteers, anybodaaiieeeee?).

Once the Clones in Gray decide against signing the agreement, the Troubleshooters experience a strange sensation as they're beamed aboard the dreadful Borger fleet to answer for their deeds!

11.0: Home Fleet Home

SUMMARY

The Borger King gets mad when the Clones In Gray reject his treaty, and reckons to take Alpha Complex by force. The Borger fleet masses, and the Troubleshooters in Gray sally forth a final time to defeat them in five optional endings of increasing stupidity.

RUNNING IT

Encounter 11.1 Blood in the Borg Room

To break the Earthlings' solidarity, they're separated for personal torture sessions. Drag the players off individually.

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

The world gets shimmery with the sorts of psychedelic colors that you usually only find in the oily surface of a watered-down can of Cheez Fizz. It feels like the blood in your brain is flowing backwards, and then SCHOOOP, it is flowing backwards. Ow. You are in considerable pain.

But the world's colors are inside the lines again, and you figure that's good.

But the room you're in has windows showing a black field with lots of little white dots, and you figure that's bad. You feel the familiar weight of your megadeath weaponry, and that's good. But your teammates aren't here to point slugthrowers at your back...and there are no Computer cameras or multicorders in sight.

Somehow, that isn't comforting.

The rest of the room is disturbingly strange. The carpet is Violet with golden trim. An immense banquet table stretches twenty meters in front of you.

Seated at it are two dozen Borger, pointy-eared cybernetic aliens like Keeble-R and the others in ELF Sector. They're dressed in full court finery; silver body stockings and polyester suits obviously designed for leisure.

One Borger, his face painted Ultraviolet except for red diamonds around his eyes and mouth, grins. "About time you got to the party." He saunters forward. "Your name, please, so I may announce you?"

"Presenting ____-__-__-__, of Alpha Complex," he says grandiosely, giving a sweeping bow. "And now, The Borger are proud to present the Lord of the Fries, the Leader of the Bland, the cultural center of all things pointy-eared, returning to your planet for a limited engagement, the King, Elvish Preshley!"

The Borger give a standing ovation as the wall turns. A paunchy Ultraviolet with rhinestones on his cybernetics and a gold crown bolted to his head sits majestically on a chair atop the hood of a primitive transbot, spray-painted pink over solid gold. At his side is a bucket of mewling little bots.

"Thank you," he says, and speakers built into the table amplify his voice. "Thankyouverremuch. It's good to be here, y'all are wonderful." He looks at you. "I understand you're one of the clones that cut off my little deal, huh?" He looks like he expects you to say something.

Elvish has noticed the quibbling in the CIG ranks and beamed up the characters to tempt them with the dark side of the fork. His deal is simple. He wants an elite group of Earthlings to help his franchise installation. They help select Alpha Complex cuisine to be served to visiting aliens (Hot Fun? That'd make even aliens vomit. Don't they have some nice Red enemies...). In return, he offers a host of things including:

1) Free product and \$4.75 an hour. Not a bad deal considering the free product includes Value Meal toys built with alien technology. Since Borger elves have an intergalactic monopoly on toy construction (ho ho ho), they can give out stockings full of Little Shooty Thingys and computer operating manuals -- raw power in Alpha Complex.

2) If the clones want out of Alpha, they can get royalties on future CIG products to give them a comfortable income. Elvish assigns Harl-U, the painted Ultraviolet Ham Borger, to show what life Outside is like, casually displaying freedom to sleep in late on velvet couches, and eating champagne-soaked strawberries with autobutter monoknives spreading the cream. Even loyal clones, Elvish figures, will come around once they've been assimilated.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))



Elvish Preshley, The Borger King

Mutant Power: Charm

SIBERware: Wired Reflectors, Move-by-Hire, Thermal Plating.

S6 A7 E5 D5 C9 MA7 M8 P9

Skills: Brawl 6/13, Dodge 6/13, Bribery 6/15, Perception 5/13, Projectile Weapons 7/12, Vehicle Weapons 8/13, Autocar O&M 4/11, Vulturecraft/Starship O&M 8/15, Old Reckoning Cultures 8/16, Singin' 10/19, Dancin' 8/15.

Armor: Sequined jumpsuit over reflectors and plating (L3I1), Infrared karate belt, blue suede shoes.

Weapons: Pearl-handled Smith & Wesson Model 29 .44 magnum slugthrower (4P).

Once a fun-loving entertainer, several hundred years of elf-aggrandizement has made Elvish mad with power. However reasonable and amusing he seems, he is an interstellar world conqueror, harvesting people for drive-through convenience. He doesn't even hesitate to sell out his home planet to join a bunch of soulless half-machine elves. If the Troubleshooters are nodding and saying "Sell out Earth to manage my own Pizza Slut? Great! Where do I sign?" Elvish callously shoots an underling for tripping on the carpet. If this universal symbol of The Big Bad Guy doesn't spark recognition in your players, he tosses aluminum cans out the window, throws rare rainforest logs on the fire, and wheels out a 50-kilogram rock of crack in a ten-foot glass pipe and starts puffing. Or he reaches into a bucket of "Colonel's Secret Blend Purritos" and pulls out a piteously mewling kitten. He eats it. (M-m-m, yummy; he's a true bad guy) With his mouth full, he says, "Sho, izzit a deal?"

Cheap Trick: Put on a cardboard crown from a certain fast food restaurant which shall not be named for copyright reasons. Don't forget the voice and the sneer.

Colonel Harl-U-QIN-1, The Ham Borger Helper

Mutant Powers: Precognition, Telepathy, Energy Field, Regeneration, Adrenaline Control, Charm, Machine Empathy, Pyrokinesis, Deep Probe, Polymorphism, Empathy.

SIBERware: Gold ear (see below)

S7 A11 E7 D11 C12 MA8 M11 P11

Macho Bonus: 2 HTH Bonus: 2

Skills: Dodge 10/21, All Chutzpah skills 10/22, Singin' 8/20, Dancin' 9/20, Guitar 8/19, Acting 8/20, Romance Novel Writing 9/20.

Armor: Leather jacket over T-shirt, jeans, and cowboy boots, Anti-Weapon Barrier (provides FAPALL7).

Weapons: 17th-century Italian swept-hilt rapier (3I).

Harl-U is an obnoxious immortal superbeing. You know -- he puts clones on trial for all of humanity's crimes, gets revenge on enemy superbeings 5000 years late, whisks true heroes to the beginning of life on Earth or distant star systems or metaphorical bridges between Good and Evil and asks them to sacrifice themselves to save the world. Harl-U is invulnerable, ageless, and highly supernatural, able to manipulate power that shakes the pillars of heaven, the subatomic permittivity of free space, and the flow of linear time. Well, actually, no.

But he plays one on TV.

Harl-U is an actor (and romance novelist) from Queens. He lives to entertain, on stage, screen, or live at Greaseland. Harl-U is long-lived, and likes to play with younger beings' heads (that is, confuse them). Everything else: the glowing energy barriers, the prismatic teleportation...it's as real as pro wrestling. His gold ear is a receiver for commands issued by the tech booth upstairs. He's invulnerable because the Borger switched the Troubleshooter's weapons with prop guns during the beam-up (they get them back when they leave). Flash those mutant powers and stats at your players. None of it's real. The rapier squirts blood if you squeeze the handle too hard.

Harl-U plays "Good cop" to Elvish's bad. Instead of sneering arrogantly, Harl-U tells the clones what a gravy train the Borger are. But this Ham Borger doesn't get attached to the clones he wines and dines. After all, by next week their planet could be rubble, rubble, rubble.

((((END TEXT BOX)))

((((BEGIN SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Elvish: So I was thinkin' you and some friends might want to join us-

Sam-Y-RYE: What? Join you mutants to butcher Alpha Complex!?

Elvish: Now, now, don't be cruel-

Sam-Y-RYE: This is a bribe, isn't it?

Elvish: She ain't ready to love us tender, Harl. You wanna assimilate the little darlin'?

Harl-U-QIN: Sure thing, King. Sam, baby, you get to choose who we take, y'see. Surely ya got people you need to get rid of?

Sam-Y-RYE: Never! (Harl-U snaps his fingers. Plexiglas shield and glitter fall from ceiling under cover of fog jets and strobe lights, blocking Sam-Y's sword strike.)

Elvish: Pardon me if I ain't all shook up.

Sam-Y-RYE: (Fires blanks. Borger give condescending golf clap.) Fine. I'll listen.

Harl-U-QIN: Tell us who's on your meck list, and they'll be foil-wrapped and under a heat lamp in no time. Just keep those Clones in Gray outta our facial wires, ya know?

Sam-Y-RYE: I don't need your bribes. I carve my own enemies up in the flour of youth!

Harl-U-QIN: So you don't want to quit taking those mandatory pills every morning or eat real meat, or take vacations to scenic planets full of worthy opponents? Elves never gain weight...never get acne...or gas, heart attacks, split ends, turned down for the prom...

Sam-Y-RYE: Heeeeey...

Harl-U-QIN: Elves get magic. Money. Fans. Bestselling series. Plus one to Dexterity!

Borger Chorus: Be one of us...be one of us...

Sam-Y-RYE: (Notices Elvish eating kitten. Knocks Harl-U flat, whips out sword.) Shaddup, freak. You're as bad as those bugs!

Harl-U-QIN: Look! The Computer! (She turns, and he kicks her.)

((((END SAMPLE DIALOGUE)))

Clones who don't agree to join get executed (some things are universal). But before they're led off to the grease fryer, they may learn some info of use to their successor clones back home.

Like how big the alien fleet is (they can see more ships than space) and that it plans to attack and destroy Earth later that afternoon.

Characters who sell out anyway get put to work by the Borger, and find themselves frying burgers for minimum galactic wage with a bunch of pimplefaced (non-Borger) teenagers for the rest of their mercifully short lives. Teach them not to do the moral thing in a spiritually upright and educational game like Paranoia. Hurmph.

If some characters sell out and others don't, let 'em fight each other with some in the Borger fleet and some working for Alpha Complex, or simply activate the betrayers' next clones and have them kill their own predecessors in the ending battle.

Encounter 11.2: The Five Optional Endings

What happens here is up to the gamemaster. In order to suit the needs of your individual campaigns, we've left the adventure unfinished so you can have the pleasure of fleshing it out yourself...

No. Sorry.

We're not gonna make you swallow that load of hooey. If you wanted to make it up yourself, they wouldn't be paying us to do it for you. Try this.

The Troubleshooters have half a daycycle to come up with some brilliant (or at least funny) plan to save the planet before the fleet is in position. If they come up with something sufficiently bizarre, let 'em go for it. ("We fake Alpha Complex's surrender by spelling out UNCLE in half a million cloned kittens!

When they come down for Purritos, we ship-jack 'em!")

If not, the Borger creep closer until The Computer notices them and fires a barrage of nukes. Some ships get wiped out. Fallout kills everything Outdoors for half a continent. The mothership survives.

Ultraviolets soil their underwear.

The Computer tells everyone that the situation is under control, but they should hide under their desks in case of nuclear blasts. Then It closes Its All-Seeing Eye and pretends none of this is happening.

The Clones in Gray stick lasers in the Troubleshooters' ears and calmly and rationally explain that their previous experience with space travel makes them suited to handle this situation, then stick them back in the WORF and blast them into orbit.

The Troubleshooters fight a whole lotta spaceships.

How they fight is the optional part.

The Mind-Wrenchingly Difficult Spaceship Combat System There are a few rules to remember about fighting in zero-gravity vacuum.

1) Anything moving keeps going in that direction until stopped. In other words, triple everything's effective range. Liquids (blood, sweat, beer) form cool spheres in zero-G. They also float into control panels really well.

2) A hull breach or open window sucks all air out. Vacuum makes people explosively decompress (i.e. die) unless they're wearing a pressurized space suit or they make a Ridiculous regeneration roll. (Or if they're with Schwarzenne-G, they automatically heal perfectly when given air, and their eyeballs go back in their sockets...) Plugging up a small leak with a body part does 1 box every 3 rounds.

3) Gunpowder doesn't combust in vacuum and sonic weapons have no air to vibrate. Keeping them in the WOLF or a plastic bag filled with air will be good for one shot. Needlers work just fine. Recoil sends the WOLF hurtling the other way.

4) Anybody not wearing a seat belt gets it up the choccy starfish. Wham. 2I every time the pilot dodges.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

IMPORTANT SPACESHIP STATISTICS

The WOLF 9000

In the trunk, the Troubleshooters find duct tape (seals up cracks in the windows), three bottles of WHANG instant breakfast drink, a bag of screws from a hardware store on Hale-Bopp, a box of chocolates, and an energy pistol.

Speed: Average

Maneuverability: Average (automatic transmission)

Armor: Hollywoodium siding (FALL1, blows up spectacularly)

Weapons: Whatever the clones stick out the window...ramming does 5I.

Pilot: Use Vulturecraft O&M and dodge for the appropriate maneuvers.

Prop Hint: Use the car piece from Monopoly or other toy car. Have everyone say who's sitting in the front, the back, and the trunk.

Borger Maneuverable Assault Craft-10s These are cheap flying saucers with "Buns of Steel" detachable reactive armor on either side. When the saucer gets hit, safety air bags and explosive bolts blow the buns outward, preserving it from armor-piercing/explosive rounds. Instead, the ships are surrounded by inflatable cushions (which strangely resemble bumper-car pads). While this helps with collisions, lasers or atmospheric re-entry grill a de-bunned ship pretty well.

Speed: Fair (lower than WOLF with armor; higher without)

Maneuverability: Fair (pixie-stick-shift; worse than WOLF with armor; equal without)

Armor: Buns of Steel (FAPALL2 for the first shot; L1I2 thereafter)

Weapons: Blasters of Orion II (4E)

Pilot: Elf fighter jock with starship and vehicle weapons at 5/10 each. They don't dodge.

Note that they have Tired Reflexes to let them fight all day.

Prop Hint: Up-end a box of Froot Loops. Stack them three high. Each pile is an elf with a BMAC. When the armor is blown off, eat the outer two loops. Burning BMACs with a lighter when they hit the atmosphere is far too juvenile for this elegant miniatures battle.

Wing Commander Eatee, the Spiel

Borg The leader of the assault on Alpha Complex is a short, hairless, candy-munching alien. Although not originally a Borger, he was adopted into their kinship group many years back. Eatee calls the Troubleshooters on their com units ("Eatee phone clone...") to taunt them ("Eatee own clone home..."), when not concentrating on directing the special effects of the Borger Military-Industrial Complex Light and Magic to make the ship look invulnerable.

Each of the dozens of fighters his bomber can launch holds six BMACs.

If the clones tempt Eatee with candy-coated peanut butter, he chases them mindlessly, though the fry bomber is so huge it crashes and burns in Earth's atmosphere and the Troubleshooters can waste the little bastard like they've wanted to do since they were six years old and got dragged to the stupid movie because everyone loved Eatee...

Or was that just us?

Speed: Bomber: Slow (controlled by bicycle pedals)

Fighters: Fast (greasy lightning)

Maneuverability: Pathetic (both)

Armor: Bomber: MegaCardboard (ALL2)

Fighters: Golden-brown heat shield (FAPALL1)

Weapons: Laser batteries (4L) that keep going and going and going...

Pilot: Bomber: Eatee (skills 8/15...didn't know the cute little dear's got Purple Hearts and Silver Stars for intergalactic assault landings, didja?)

Fighters: Elf fighter jocks with skills of 4/11.

Prop Hint: The bomber's a box of fries. Tape a pair of batteries on the top. The fries hold BMACs by spearing them through the center.

The Borger King's Whupper

Elvish is driving the Whupper, an enormous mothership a quarter the size of the moon, designed to whup an entire planet. The Whupper is made of the invulnerable alien substance Pyrofoam (light, strong, heat-proof and guaranteed to last forever). It's

studded with communications towers, trenches full of laser batteries, rotating scenic restaurants, and escape pods.

Speed: Crawl

Maneuverability: Well...it turns faster than the Earth...

Armor: Pyrofoam (FALL10), individual towers FAPALL2.

Weapons: The whole enchilada (4-5E any given round). If the Borger feel contemptuous, they aim a tractor beam at the Troubleshooters. This is the spaceborne equivalent of a tractor pull. The driver of the captured spacecraft makes a Vulturecraft roll against the vehicle weapons of the gunner to break free. Repeat this for 1-5 rounds while the watching elves drink beer and holler.

Pilot: Elvish: skill 8/15, gunners have skill 5/11.

Prop Hint: Use a styrofoam burger box or ramen noodle bucket. Stick toothpicks in to hang BMAC escape pods.

((END TEXT BOX))

The 1950s Ending or The Gassed Starfighter

Valiantly piling into their station wagon, the Troubleshooters blast confidently into space and rely on their superior reflexes, intelligence, morals and teamwork (blatantly foreshadowed earlier) to defeat the entire Borger fleet single-handedly.

Moral: Nothing can conquer the Clone Spirit. Stay tuned for a sequel.

If the players think fast, there are some low-tech ways for a handful of clones to take out the entire high-calorie fleet. Any garbage they toss out the windows will smash into the Borger at Mach 25, as can carefully maneuvered BMAC shells, globs of treacle, or treasonous teammates. The elves might be distracted by being shown other games/worlds to invade, or the Troubleshooters can foist the Cils off on them and keep the entire race too busy to fight.

The Paranoia Ending or The Charge of The Faster-Than-Light Brigade

The Troubleshooters are shoved into their station wagon, kicking and screaming, and launched off to fight the Borger single-handedly so no one else gets blamed when they screw up.

Hopelessly outnumbered, the clones are caught and killed in amusing ways.

Moral: Don't piss off someone bigger, badder, and better-armed than you. This is the general theme of Paranoia.

Explosive decompression, being left in permanent orbit around the earth, boiling to death from UV-exposure, decapitation when heads are sucked out an accidentally opened window...just

think of all those ways clones can die in a space battle. Anyone who lives spends the rest of their life listening to all 780 Elvis songs over and over until they get mercifully thrown in the deep-fat fryer.

The 1990s Ending or Paid for by Miker-O-SFT

The Troubleshooters, using their vast technical knowledge, take over an alien ship and sneak onto the Borger fleet, where, armed only with their PowerMac™, they insert a virus to crash the aliens' operating system. The fleet perishes in a fiery collision with Special-Y- FEX after falling asleep at the wheel.

Moral: The Age of the Nerd is here. He who has the biggest programs wins. Bow down before your local tech support geek.

The Clones in Gray, relieved of their duties because of the time-traveling trick, have invented an incredibly powerful portable supercomputer and downloaded Our Buddy's most frightening programs into it. Just before launch, Jedgarh-U-VER gives a stirring speech about the power of The Computer to free Alpha Complex from the oppressive yoke of the aliens.

"This," he announces, "is our Independence Cray!"

The Troubleshooters hide in a crowd of Vulture Warrior flybots who give them cover and get near enough to the King's ship to plug the laptop into the (conveniently compatible) Borger computer control system. Without their NoDoze '95 wakefulness program to control their Tired Reflexes, the Borger pilots crash their ships into Special-Y-FEX, who's flying his own bot up to see if he can accept the offer the Troubleshooters stupidly ignored.

The 1980s Ending or ...And I'll Form The Head

The clones get into suits of power armor found in RON Sector and blast the entire fleet into nothingness once they get them working right.

Moral: Individuality is nothing. Teamwork is everything. Testosterone and high technology make us invulnerable. Stay tuned for a TV series.

Citizen Volt-U of the CIGs tells the Troubleshooters that he discovered a crashed starship Outside containing six finely engineered constructibots which he thinks the clones could use now as interstellar combots. The mecha-nized loaders are 18 meters tall with vise-like powered claws, and are equally quick upright or quadrupedal.

((((BEGIN TEXT BOX)))

Constructibots

Speed: High

Maneuverability: Suspiciously catlike

Armor: Unbelievium plating (FAPALL6).

Weapons: Plasma generators (7FE), diamond-coated power claws (7AP)

Pilot: Each constructibot (Yellow, Blue, Green, Black, Red and Pink) requires a warbot operations and maintenance skill to maneuver. A Ridiculous roll allows the pilot to transform into giant feet, arms, a torso, or the head of a 50-meter-tall robot. The combined constructibots' energy forms a blazing force sword (13E) as big as it.

Hint: If you don't get it and your players didn't grow up in the '80s, use another ending.

((END TEXT BOX))

The Shadowgame™ Ending or You Have No Need To Know So Let's Cover It Up

Before the Borger get a chance to attack, they mysteriously change their minds and leave without firing a shot.

TELL IT TO THEM WITH A STRAIGHT FACE

Suddenly, the Clones in Gray stop talking, and for a moment you think your arguments have convinced them not to send you back up there. But even as you watch, the entire Borger fleet pulls a U-turn and disappears into the night sky.

Behind you, someone gasps, and Black Lightning's hand on your shoulder trembles in fear. A tall, dark-haired clone in a white robe strides confidently forward, followed by a smiling Harl-U-QIN. He looks at you with a smug, yet somehow comforting expression. "Greetings," he says. "You may have heard of me. I am Powerf-U-NPC."

Your hearts still. It is he, the great behind-the-scenes manipulator of all that happens in Alpha Complex, the true master of the Web of Intrigue. And you get to meet him face to face.

"I want to thank you," he continues, "for doing my dirty work. See, you've been working for me all along. In fact, nothing you did really matters; it was just a distraction to help me win in my little game against Harl-U-QIN."

He takes a large suitcase out of his pocket, and clicks the lock open. It's filled with plasticreds. "I don't want you to think that I'm ungrateful, so take these for your troubles. But don't try to figure out what really happened. It might be too much for your little brains. There are wheels within wheels here, and you won't find out what they are for at least another few yearcycles, so don't bother trying. I'm not just making it up as I go along. Really." He starts to walk away, then turns.

"Oh, and don't tell anyone what you saw here. I have people everywhere. One word and they'll know it. Then..." he draws a finger across his throat, and snaps at one of the CIGs. "Take them away."

If your players are sick of that approach, they can form Volt-U-RON anyway, kick Powerf-U's butt and squash Harl-U into the ground, just like they've always wanted. Note that an Anti-Weapon Barrier is not set off by a station wagon doing sixty, which the Borger don't consider a weapon. Honk, honk.

Moral: We told you Alpha Complex was Utopia.