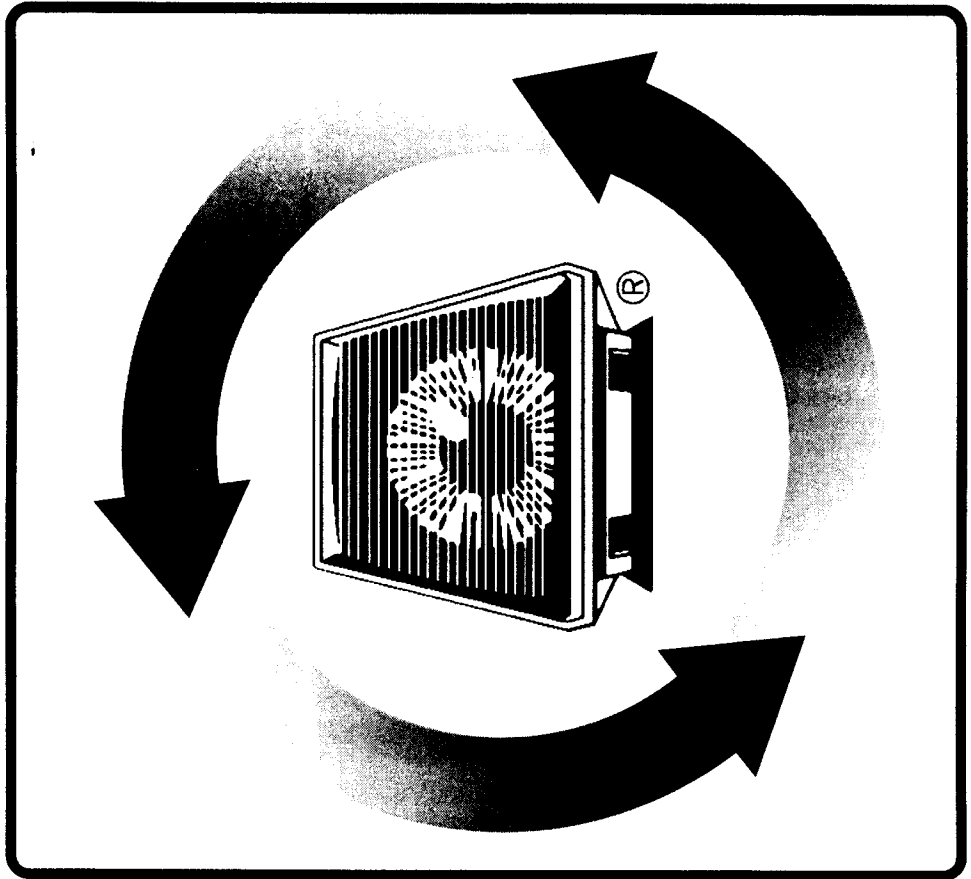


RECYCLED PARANOIA

Something Old, Something New



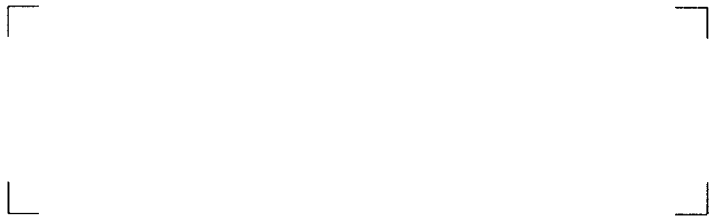
Coming in May



RR 3 Box 2345
Honesdale, PA 18431

U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Honesdale, PA
Permit No. 68
ZIP CODE 18431

THOUGHT FOR THE
DAYCYCLE



PARANOIA®

"AT YOUR SERVICE, CITIZEN ..."

VOLUME 01, NO. 03

THE PARANOIA NEWSLETTER

WINTERCYCLE 1993/\$3.00

OFFICIAL

CONTENTS

Alpha Bytes:
Alphatainment Weekcycle 2
Secret Messages 4
Featured Bit..... 5

Contributors This Issue:

Ed Bolme, Stephen Crane, Jim Holloway, Bill Smith, Ed Stark

WARNING!!WARNING!!

THIS SECTION IS MANDATORY FOR ALL CITIZENS! READ AND ENJOY!

Well, here we are at Issue #3, and boy, that was a real long three months, wasn't it? We sincerely apologize for the delay in putting out these last two issues — it turns out our Temporary Scheduling Manager and Chief Scapegoat, Fue-R-YOO, is an Alaskan, see, and he figured that Wintercycle must be six months long, see, and ...

Not buying it, eh?
I don't blame you.

Really, the reason for the delay is that this issue is *so* special, that it took *extra* time to write, edit, and print. Heck, it even took longer to *mail* this extra-fine-and-certainly-tasty issue than normal. Just ask us, we'll tell you.

You'll notice from the table of contents that this issue we are actually including a "Featured Bit" this issue — for the first time since Issue 0. So this really *is* pretty special.

Of course, we had to cut out "Tips for Traitors" to squeeze it in but, hey, everybody makes sacrifices.

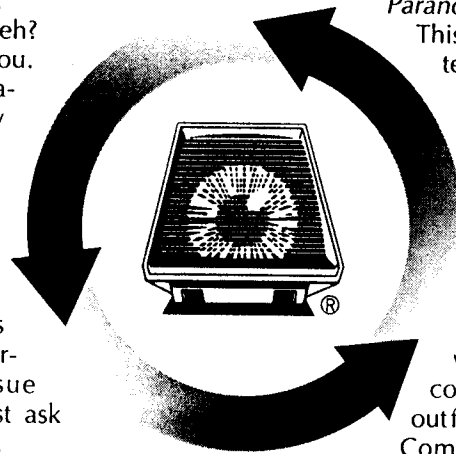
And, speaking of sacrifices, we'd better let you know about some of our upcoming products. First off, about the time you read this, the second *Paranoia* novel, *Title Deleted*

for *Security Reasons*, by Ed Bolme, will be hitting the shelves. Here's a recommendation: if you are at all interested in getting a copy, *buy it now!* Not only will this put money in our hands that much faster, but the first book, *Extreme Paranoia: Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Shot*, by Ken Rolston, is *gone!* We *sold out!* And it will be a while before we print them again!

Next, in May, look for the *Paranoia Recycled Pack*.

This is an \$8 gamemaster/player/*Paranoia*-fanboy pack that includes the best *Paranoia* stuff never published. At least not in *this* format. Included are miscellaneous forms (a different group with every pack, so collect 'em all), cut-out full-color Cardstock Commies™ (and even

some you can color yourself and cut out) and, wonder of wonders, *fifty-four* plastic Troubleshooters! They come in a variety of poses and colors, including the ever-popular Red, the not-so-popular-but-definitely-higher-clearance Orange, and even Yellow, Green, and White! That works out to less than 7¢ a figure, and doesn't take into account all the neat other stuff in the pack. So don't make us recycle the *Paranoia Recycled Pack* — pick it up when it comes out!



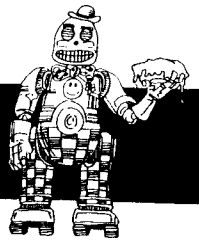
RR 3 Box 2345
Honesdale, PA 18431

12503

Publisher: Daniel Scott Palter
 Associate Publisher/Treasurer: Denise Palter
 Associate Publisher/Sales Manager: Richard Hawran
 Senior Editor: Greg Farshtey
 Editors: Bill Smith, Ed Stark
 Art Director: Stephen Crane
 Graphic Artists: Cathleen Hunter, John Paul Lona
 Sales Assistant: Bill Olmesdahl
 Licensing Manager: Ron Seiden
 Warehouse Manager: Ed Hill

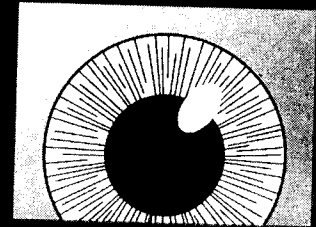
©, TM, and © 1993 West End Games.
All Rights Reserved.

ALPHA BYTES



SURVEILLANCE ON
LASER ARMED

ALPHATAINMENT WEEKCYCLE



Hey! Hey, you there! Pay attention! That's better. It's me, your *Alphatainment Weekcycle* guide. I'm talking to you. No, you didn't get any really good happy pills from the docbot. I'm just here to let you know that in these pages you'll find out about the most [deleted] and [deleted] entertainment programming on [deleted] in Alpha Complex today. And you'd better watch the good stuff or [deleted] ...

TODAYCYCLE

00:00-05:00 Really neat test pattern. Practice humming along now.

05:00-06:00 **Exercise Alpha.** Work those muscle groups with someone way too cheerful about being up this early. (Exercise)

06:00-08:00 **Today Cycle.** This morning's breaking stories will be:

- Clones cheating on the job.
- Traitors in our midst.
- Don't trust anyone.

(News/Repeat from last season)

13:00-14:00 **Op-R-UGH.** "Bots Who Think They Deserve Rights." Need we say more? And you think you are maladjusted, pathetic and out of control ... more good for your self-esteem than a week's worth of Happy Tyme Emotion Enhancer. (Mindless rubbish)

14:00-14:30 **Clone Family Feud.** (Game show)

14:30-15:00 **25,000 Plasticred Pyramid.** (Game show)

15:00-16:00 **The Young And The Cloneless.** Whine-R finds out that Bimb-O really doesn't love him and is then tempted by a Secret Society. Psych-O receives a promotion to Yellow security clearance. Mach-O chews soap. (IQ Quayle, with an "e," and down)

16:00-16:30 **Botman, The Animated Series.** Don't

you feel stupid paying for *Botman Returns* since the series is better ... and free. (Cool stuff)

16:30-17:00 **Clearly Overzealous Prisoner Seekers** The COPS go to Suburbia Simplex and crack some skulls. (Mindless rubbish)

17:00-17:30 **Local News.** (News/Repeat from last season)

17:30-18:00 **Inside Petition.** Secret undercover reporter Sleezez-1 reports on the darkest secrets of the food vats. Eat dinner first. (Mindless sensationalist rubbish)

18:00-19:00 **Quantum Stumble.** Another episode where no matter what happens, Dr. Beck-O-TTT messes up the life of the poor sap he runs into while his companion tries to deal with strange hormonal imbalances. (Drama)

19:00-20:00 **Macg-I-VER.** R&D's best tester saves the world with fabulously useful R&D devices and duct tape. (Propaganda)

20:00-21:00 **Deep Sleep 90210.** The (Yawn) Boring-jorings (Yawn) help the (Yawn) crew of the 90210 save (Yawn) themselves from death by (Yawn) Earl Grey tea and polite (Yawn) conversation. (Sleep inducer)

21:00-22:00 **Spacy Rangers.** Gunfights! Two-dimensional characters! Carnage! Really cheesy special effects! See why it's Alpha's number one show! (Better than news)

22:00-23:00 **Bot-tletech.** Robots beat each other up for cash prizes and fun. Lots of make-up and silly costumes and brain washed thousands cheering them on. Live on we'd-make-you-pay-per-view-if-anyone-would. (Comedy)

23:00-24:00 **Raunch Looneybin.** Alpha's foremost authority on wishful thinking goes after that dangerous Computer now that the left processor is back in power. See all your favorite ex-elected officials beg for a job. (Comedy)

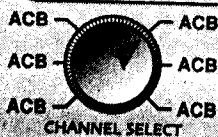


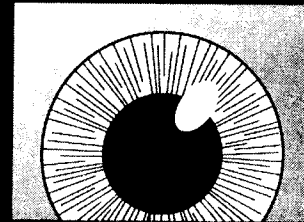
ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN CRAVE



SURVEILLANCE ON
LASER ARMED

TOMORROWCYCLE

- 00:00-05:00 Really neat test pattern. (In stereo).
- 05:00-06:00 **Exercise Alpha.** More cheerful jumping and bending and twisting. (Exercise)
- 06:00-08:00 **Today Cycle.** (News/Repeat from yesterday)
- 08:00-09:00 **Bot-toons.** See your favorites chopped to shreds so as to not encourage younger viewers to commit acts of wanton violence. (Junior Citizens)
- 09:00-10:00 **Soft Copy.** Perfect follow-up to Bot-toons. Real life violence and torture. Suitable for younger viewers because it's real, and therefore won't desensitize them — The Computer's censors say so. (Mindless Rubbish)
- 10:00-17:00 **Off the Air.** We know some clod, some time, is going to hit the wrong switch and throw us off the air for a few hours. "Might as well plan it" is our motto.
- 17:00-17:30 **Wheel of Torture.** Game show for the intellectually challenged. (Mindless rubbish)
- 17:30-18:00 **The Younger Years.** Ah, yes, the simple pleasures of youth in a clone bank. Drooling in your clone vat, being ridiculed by older members of your clone family, and trying to avoid the dreaded TeachBots. (Comedy)
- 18:00-19:00 **Music.** Review of DUM's new album "Bandus Pretentious" and Ma-yawn'a's new book, "You Paid How Much For This Piece of Rubbish?" (Entertainment)
- 19:00-19:30 **The Simps-O-NNS.** Home-Ronce again



- proves to be an insensitive clod in an insightful parody of a fictional decadent culture. (Satire)
- 19:30-20:00 **He-R-MAN's Head.** The painful struggles of a clone dealing with today's complex and difficult issues while trying to score. (Comedy)
- 20:00-20:30 **Living In Hell With Children.** Politically incorrect and proud of it. (Propaganda)
- 20:30-21:00 **Troubleshooters.** Wonderful comedy about two fun-loving clones and the innocents they kill. (Comedy)
- 21:00-22:00 **Sta-R-TEK.** The original we all know and love. Exciting, adventurous and fun. Shown in the vain hope that *Deep Sleep 90210's* producers will see it and remember what good science fiction was. (Rerun)
- 22:00-23:00 **Amazing Discov-R-EES.** Fresh from the R&D labs, useful items like a fruit juicer/DNA recombiner, personal exerciser/portable fusion generator and nanotech room deodorizers. Purchaser assumes all liability for personal injury and any property damage resulting from misuse of product or accidental thermo-nuclear detonation. (Propaganda)
- 23:00-24:00 **Twin Peeks.** Huh? Has anyone figured out what it all means yet? (?????)

Viewer Response Form

In Alpha's continuing quest to be as responsive as possible, we want to know what your favorite shows are so we can cancel them.

Show Watched? _____ Did You Pay Attention? _____

Did You Enjoy Show? _____ Was It Entertaining Or Informative? _____

If you answered "yes" to any of the above questions, the show will be canceled courtesy of the Arbit-R-ARY Rating Services, which monitors viewing levels of all shows. Despite the fact that we only ask 20 people, maybe 30 tops, what shows they watch, we decide the fate of all entertainment programming for the Complex.

Hey, why don't you be a programming guru? Send us your descriptions of your favorite Alpha-tainment shows so we can print them in future issues and then cancel them too!



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN CRANE

SECRET MESSAGE



NGWARNINGWARNINGWARNIN

Secret Societies are *TREASON!* If you are reading this you are committing *TREASON!* Please report to the nearest confession booth now for immediate execution! Die, Secret Society Scum!

You're from Alpha Base, where Secret Societies rule? Oh, sorry, that's different. Read on.

NINGWARNINGWARNINGWARN

"Secret Messages" is a topic for Secret Society discussion and postings. All members of Secret Societies, whether located in Alpha Base, Alpha Complex, or anywhere else in Alpha, are encouraged to post assignments, messages, misinformation directed to other secret societies, or any other information that will be useful (?) to other Secret Society members here.

Gamemasters are encouraged to warp, alter and introduce this information into their campaign as they see fit.

Sometimes, you may want to photocopy the message and pass it along to the appropriate player. This technique works best after the photocopy has had an intimate encounter with a paper shredder or open flame.

Purely Gamemaster information is boldfaced and in brackets [**like this**]; it should be whited-out before being passed on to players.

Message Number One

From: Corpore Metal, Mk I
To: Corpore Metal, Mk II
RE: Please Stop Killing Us

Hello to all our big ol' botty-buddy bestest friends! We are so happy that the fully metallic of Alpha Complex have received the recognition and resources you deserve from Alpha Base, home of the Secret Society Council. We're even *happier* that all you bots now have your own branch of our Secret Society. But what we'd

be happiest about most is if you'd just stop trying to kill us along with all the other "meat-bag, vat-fed, simpering flesh units" you tread your tires in all over Alpha.

It isn't that we're trying to suppress your dominance — nosiree, bot! We fully believe that metalheads are the only heads for us! But we really would appreciate it if you'd let us join you as best we can — rather than the rest of the clones in the Food Vats.

What d'you say?

[Gamemaster: This message should be given to a Corpore Metal, Mk I member (a clone) to deliver to a Mk II member (a bot). This message is very secret and, of course, sickeningly simpering. No CMII is going to pay any attention to the clone, and will probably roll right over him. Of course, he may play with him a while ... before annihilation.]

Message Number Two

From: Alpha Base Secret Society Council
To: All Secret Society members in Alpha Complex
RE: The First Strike!

Oh, oppressed masses — unwilling servants and slaves of that Digital Dictator, that Electric Evil-Doer, that ... oh, The Computer, for Lennon's sake! Prepare to be liberated from your capitalist bonds! Be ready to undergo an eruption of freedom like you've never seen before! Be willing to lay down your lives for the freedom of the masses.

No, that won't be necessary. Really.



At Nooncycle A.C. time, the First Strike for Freedom will come. We have seized control of Alpha Complex's power grid, and will shut down everything within the realm of The Evil Eye. During that time, we need your help to liberate the masses.

At 11:58, attack any available surveillance gear — any "loyal" (read: brainwashed, uncultured lout) Computer citizen — anything at all within the Complex. This will instill confusion and dissent in their ranks. Within the next two minutes, The Computer will be shut down forever!

[Gamemaster: In case it isn't obvious, this is a message not from Alpha Base's Secret Society Council, but from the Communist Secret Society. The fuzzy-hatted ones are trying to kick-step their way back to prominence in Alpha's underground. By sending this message to all loyal Secret Society members, they will use them to attack The Computer. When the expected shutdown does *not* occur (did you think it would) those clones that survive (okay, so there will only be a few) will blame Alpha Base for their defeat. Then, the Commies will be able to worm their way back into the dissenters' hearts.

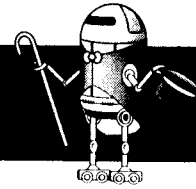
Keep in mind that, even if the player characters do not fall for this message, *just about everybody else will!* For two minutes, they will be exposed to *incredible danger*. Afterward, the danger will get *even worse* as the traitors try to cover their tracks.]

Message Number Three

From: Someone other than an Illuminati Member
To: All other Secret Society members who tremble in fear of Illuminati
RE: Tremble in fear!

We know who you are! We know what we did! We'll use it against us! Yeah!

(How was that, guys; did I pass the initiation?) ■



FEATURED BIT

Congratulations, Citizen! You have been selected as volunteers for Mandatory Advanced Duty (MAD)! Aren't you happy?

Oh. I suppose we'd better tell you what you've volunteered for.

In this month's "At Your Service, Citizen ...", we have included the first chapter of the brand new Paranoia

novel, Title Deleted for Security Reasons. The rest of the novel will be available in stores (or by direct order) in February Monthcycle '93.

We had though about printing the entire novel in the newsletter, but we weren't sure which of you had microfiche machines and which didn't ...

So, without further exposition, here's ...

Chapter One

Click. Whirr.

Somewhere in the darkness the automatic circulation fan kicks in, sending a little puff of dust into the thick stale air of James-B's bedroom. It is an unpleasant odor, one James firmly identifies with the stomach-churning sensations of arising early in the morningcycle. It is said by some that all the dust in Alpha Complex is the ashen remains of dutifully-executed Commies, mutants, and other traitors, but James particularly dislikes that imagery. If it's true, then considering the number of people he has disintegrated, it means that every breath of every waking minutecycle is made more disagreeable by the lingering revenant of one or more of those ignominious former citizens.

Tick. Weeeeeeee ...

Small blue LEDs flick on, demons in the darkness, followed shortly by the shrill whine of an aging cathode ray tube warming up. Soon a video screen flares into fuzzy life, proudly displaying the Alpha Complex test pattern — upside-down.

"Alpha Complex Broadcasting" it says. The white sound of static slowly crescendos, and the light from the video screen faintly illuminates the form of James-B, swaddled in his blankets, twitching in the uncomfortable embrace of yet another Sleepy-Tyme-induced dream.

Then, with all the grace of an autocar accident, the fluorescent lights flicker into life, slashing the room with their glare. The automatic alarm mallet, its soft foam head worn completely away by decades of timely service, thumps repeatedly at the head

of James' bed, but as he has taken to sleeping the wrong way, the steel core of the mallet merely barks his shin.

Somehow, the pain of the bruise meanders its way into James-B's nocturnal narcosis, and he whimpers slightly as he pulls his legs up and curls into a fetal position.

The television screen flickers momentarily, and then the test pattern is replaced by the grim-but-happy opening sequence of the Alpha Complex Broadcasting news show. "Good morningcycle, citizens," comes the

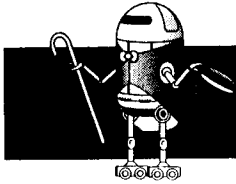
Possession of chapped lips is a treasonous offense punishable, under Civic Code Article 7, by confiscation of the poorly-maintained property.

voice of the announcer, "and thank you for tuning in to ACB. It's Threesday #17, Anno Computari 282. I'm Ted-G-OPL-4, your anchorclone. Our top news story todaycycle: 'The Commie Crisis: Alpha Held Hostage, Daycycle 102,683.' We'll bring you the latest developments in this late-breaking story as Security Clearances permit. Also in the news, the contents of a food vat in SOY Sector apparently achieved sentience late

last nightcycle, and The Computer Itself gave the address at the commencement of the graduating class at the Troubleshooter Academy. Details after these messages from Your Friend, so stay tuned or face summary execution ..."

The automatic alarm mallet, its tiny robotic brain sensing that somehow all is not right with the world, continues to pummel James' scanty pillow, eagerly anticipating the solid impact which will signal the successful completion of yet another daycycle's duties. The thumping, the light, and the cheery voice of Ted-G all wedge their way into James' consciousness like a tankbot into a confession booth, bringing him to the hapless conclusion that yet another daycycle is under way. One arm struggles its way out from under the covers, and begins groping blindly for the night stand. After a short period of random flailing, James vaguely remembers that regulations prohibit placing night stands at the foot of the bed. With the minimum motion theoretically possible, the shapeless pile of covers begins turning itself around.

"... And there's good news for all you labiophiles out there. Production, Logistics and Commissary, Department of Lip Service reported today that thanks to new education programs available to all citizens of Security Clearance Orange and above, the consumption of chapstick tube lids has dropped 27%. The decrease in consumption is projected to end the current shortage of this vital asset within the next 100 daycycles. Once again efficiency and



loyalty defeats Communism and unhappiness. Remember, chapped lips are against the uniform code, and possession of chapped lips is a treasonous offense punishable under Civic Code Article 7, 'Maintenance of Personal Equipment.' Negligent maintenance is a misdemeanor, punishments may include reprimand, demotion, or confiscation of the poorly-maintained property. In other hygiene news ..."

Once reoriented, and thereby assured of better hunting, the hand again emerges from under its shroud and resumes its quest for the evasive night stand. There's a loud crack, and the alarm mallet, evidently pleased with accomplishing its duties, retracts into the wall, making the bed once more safe for clonekind. James-B whimpers again, although the sound is muffled by his right hand, which now occupies a large portion of his mouth. After a short pause, his left hand appears, resuming the hunt of its recently-withdrawn companion.

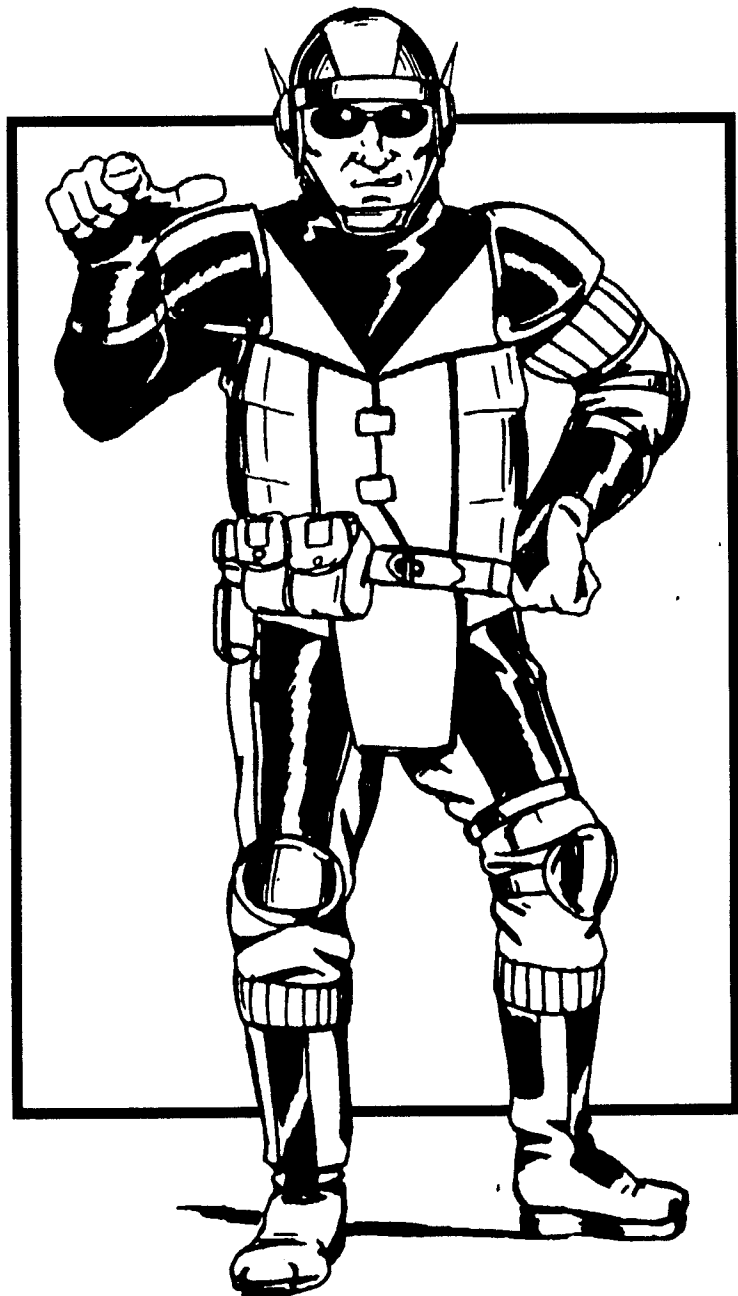
"... On the lighter side, the 101st Airborne Vulture Wing and Glee Club performed for an admiring crowd at their annual benefit barbecue and traitor shoot. Here we see elite Vulture Warrior George-B-ATN-5 teaching a junior citizen the finer points of handling a cone rifle. Ooops, ha ha, careful there, George-B! Well, that's why The Computer gives us all six clones! Those junior citizens really are something, aren't they, folks? I'll bet *that* little one grows up to be a Troubleshooter! Speaking of Troubleshooters, let's go over to the academy, where reporter ..."

Although rigorous training has made James all but ambidextrous, the left hand is still less facile than the right, which at this time of the morning is a serious disability. Eventually, though, it locates the flimsy night stand with a thump, and, after a pause to gather strength, begins groping for the small bottle of caplets casually tossed there the night before.

"... Armed Forces tankbots assaulted and destroyed a suspected Council base in the Badlands outside of IRQ sector today. Enemy forces were routed

after a short firefight. Friendly casualties were assessed at -0.7%; so light that there were more soldiers present after the raid than before. Here, with graphic slow-motion live footage, is our disposable field correspondent, Peter-R-NET-4. Peter, we hear explosions in the background. Could you tell us wha — Peter? Peter! Sorry, we seem to have lost our signal. Here with a follow-up report is Peter-R-NET-5 ..."

The left hand, crawling like a drunken spider across the night stand, at last locates the familiar shape of the bottle. Reaching for the lid, the hand clumsily flips the bottle on its side, caplets rattling like James' molars when the transbot passes over his office. The hand continues to pursue the bottle, pulling the majority of the left arm helplessly behind. Several times the fingers brush the small plastic container, each time nudging it



JIM HOLLOWAY

closer and closer to the edge of the scrawny night stand.

" ... And this just in: there is absolutely no truth to the treasonous rumor of a toxic leak in the TMI Sector plastics production facilities. All workers of Security Clearance Yellow and below will report to work as normal. Workers of Clearance Green and above will report first to Power Services for distribution of HazMat suits and breathing masks, the new and officially-approved workwear for plasticworkers in TMI Sector. And now, a look at sports. In spaceball action yesterdaycycle, a pinhole leak caused ..."

The bottle is now at the edge of the night stand, wobbling delicately, and James' left hand moves with slow and careful deliberation. This stealthy advance is not a sign of any intelligence directing the hand, for at this hourcycle even advanced medical tests would find difficulty in demonstrating any signs of life within James-B's skull. The slow caution is instead the mark of intensive training and James' predatory instincts carefully honed to a laser's edge. Fingers slowly extend toward the small bottle, touch it. Then, as if to save the plastic bottle from the dishonor of capture, the flimsy night stand itself gives way beneath the weight of the arm, thin plastic legs skating across the tile floor.

" ... bravely volunteered to enter the food vat alone. And here's an important bulletin for all citizens of Indigo clearance and above. The Computer announced that all *beeeeeeeeeeeep* with serial numbers *beeeeeep* through *beeeeeep* will be recalled for overhaul, as they tend to *beeeeeeeeeep* when users *beeeeeeeeeeeep* them, if you can believe that. If you have been using one of these *beeeeeeeeeeeep* please report immediately to a decontamination station. And now, on to Commie Countdown. Get those Treason Tally Tickets ready! Onesday's termination total ..."

James' arm hangs in the air momentarily, as if defying gravity by sheer disbelief. For a short while, the

hand searches the now vertical top of the night stand, then abandons that idea and swings listlessly to the floor. Fortuitously, the bottle of caplets happened to roll towards the bed, and the hand brushes against it. James is finally able to grasp it firmly, if inexpertly, in his hand.

" ... In an effort to increase productivity, The Computer has re-scheduled Twosday's happiness calisthenics to thirty minutecycles before reveille, thereby increasing the available work time on Twosday to twelve and a half hourcycles. All

The contents of a food vat in SOY Sector apparently achieved sentience late last nightcycle.

citizens below Blue clearance are required to attend, although Greens are allowed to send volunteer substitutes of any clearance except Infrared. Substitute vouchers are available at ..."

Now the right hand, sporting a bright welt, makes another appearance, and together with the left, they apply themselves to the cap of the small bottle, endeavoring to open the Commie-proof cap by several inappropriate but nonetheless imaginative methods. Finally James rolls on his back, and his eyes also make an appearance from beneath the covers, staring blurredly at the contraption in an effort to discern its function. Unfortunately, his hands are in the way, so he doesn't discover very much, and he keeps twisting, pulling, and pushing at random.

" ... All news in this broadcast has been officially sanctioned by The Computer. Rely only on official news. Rumors are treason. This ACB broadcast has been brought to you by your friends at Housing Preservation and Development, and Mind Control." Ted-G smiles, which unfortunately

does nothing to improve his appearance. "Remember, at HPD&MC, we — er, we ... I'm sorry, what was the revised slogan of the monthcycle again? *Psst!* Hey, George-G! What's the new slogan? Thanks! Er, at HPD&MC, we *sign off, you stupid jerk!* Have a nice day. Serve The Computer."

Silence.

The television screen is a blank grey slate. So is James' mind, and in the blessed silence he covers his eyes with his right arm and starts drifting back to sleep, mouth open, bottle still clutched in his left hand.

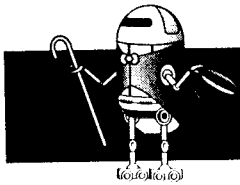
"GOOD MORNING, CITIZEN," comes a voice over a hidden loudspeaker. The voice is mechanically melodious, with subliminal modulation to suggest compassion and authority. "THIS IS YOUR FRIEND, THE COMPUTER. IT IS NOW TEN MINUTECYCLES PAST REVEILLE. WHY ARE YOU STILL IN BED?"

James, brutally pulled back from the edge of the pleasant abyss of sleep, mutters indistinctly, "Byte my chips, you dyslexic diode."

"EXCUSE ME, CITIZEN, BUT WILL YOU REPEAT YOURSELF? YOUR AUDIO OUTPUT WAS INADEQUATE."

James' eyes slowly open as the realization of what he just said hits his brain and, therefore, his adrenal glands. His skin begins crawling with the anticipation of intense laser fire. Terror wars with the continued effect of Sleepy-Tyme, churning his stomach in an all-too-familiar sensation. His hands fumble at the Commie-proof cap with renewed vigor. "Just a secondcycle, Friend Computer, please, sir!" he mumbles through the haze and nausea. He begins biting the bottle cap.

Overhead, in the furthest corner of his room, a remote camera swivels with obvious and unwelcome interest. A coaxial slugthrower slips out from its recessed housing in the body of the camera. James-B smiles wanly and waves at both the camera and the barrel of the rifle. Then he grabs his trusty laser pistol from under his pillow and slips both hands under



the blankets. Still smiling, he aims his gun at the bottle cap, fervently hoping his instinctive aim won't be too impaired by his muzzy and adrenal brain. The blankets flash brightly as the high-pitched blast sears away most of James' leg hairs. James pulls the melting bottle out from under the blankets and tosses a few of the surviving caplets into his mouth. They are uncomfortably hot, and they adhere immediately to his dry morning tongue as if trying to avoid their imminent doom, but James forces them down with a grimace.

"ARE YOU QUITE THROUGH, CITIZEN?"

"Through? Why, who could ever be through with serving you, Friend Computer?" pipes James with forced glee. His stomach churns in entirely different orders of magnitude as the Jolt-n-Joy caplets relentlessly purge his system of any traces of Sleepy-Tyme, but the chemical energy adds new zest to his speech nonetheless. So much zest that James fears he might puke. "I was just lounging in bed for a few extra secondcycles to more fully appreciate the benevolent splendor of the furnishings You provide for every citizen's comfort, knowing full well that the Jolt-n-Joy tablets You so foresightedly assigned to me would give me the capability to both relax in bed AND make it to the mess hall in time for breakfast!"

"WHAT WAS THAT WORD YOU USED, CITIZEN?"

"Did I say 'mess hall'?" James muses innocently. "I meant 'cafeteria.' If I *did* say 'mess hall,' it was only in a lame little attempt to add some humor to our wonderful conversation. We all know cafeterias aren't in the slightest bit messy, don't we? That would be treason!" He grins even more enthusiastically at the remote camera, so much so that beads of sweat break out on his brow.

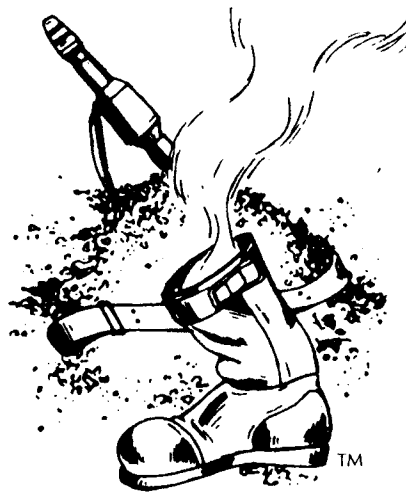
"YOU ARE IN BED AFTER REV-
EILLE. YOU ARE NOT IN UNIFORM.
YOU USED AN INAPPROPRIATE
TERM."

"I didn't mean to!"

"USING A TERM UNCON-
SCIOUSLY INDICATES DEEP-

SEATED TREASONOUS SYMPA-
THIES, PERHAPS REQUIRING
INVASIVE PERSONALITY READ-
JUSTMENT. AND I HAVE A STRONG
SUSPICION YOU FIRED A WEAPON
IN VIOLATION OF ORDINANCE.
YOUR BED IS ZONED FOR NON-
VIOLENT PASTIMES, IS IT NOT?"

"Oh, that's sure right, Friend Com-
puter, sir! That's why I didn't fire my
fun laser pistol. I was switching on
my happy high-power flashlight,
see?" With a deft sleight-of-hand,
James pulls out a small flashlight and
waves it energetically in the camera's
field of vision, then thinks better of it



and moves it into the slugthrower's
field of fire. After all, any cover is
better than none.

The loudspeaker remains silent,
while the camera gives him the cold
steel stare. Well, actually, the coaxial
slugthrower provides the "steel" part
of the stare, and the camera itself
concentrates on "cold," which it does
quite effectively.

The silence becomes palpable, and
suddenly James realizes that further
inactivity will only worsen his situ-
ation. He leaps out of bed, singing,

"Hi ho, hi ho
It's off to serve I go.
I've got my gun,
Let's have some fun!
Hi ho ... hi ho —"¹

The coaxial slugthrower retracts
with a mechanical sigh of hydraulics,
and the camera swings back into its
inactive position. James glances over
quickly, and notices a small white
light attached to the bottom of the
camera — a light that's still lit. James
reflects that picking up that light on
the black market was the best invest-
ment he ever made. It was just a small
little kit, one that could be easily
attached to any security camera and
would light up whenever The Com-
puter was using the camera to watch
ever-so-lovingly over its extremely
loyal and happy citizens.

The light glows brightly. *I spy with
my little eye something that starts
with 'C'*, thinks James. *Let the show
begin.*

James continues whistling the little
ditty, and takes a leisurely stretch.
"Clone, oh, clone, what a happy
daycycle," he says loudly. He
scratches his scalp roughly with both
hands, making his hair look like he's
been electrocuted. He continues
speaking, his enunciation making him
sound like he's taking a pronunciation
test. "I just can't wait to start serving
The Computer. I just love hunting
down Commies and mutants and trai-
tors!"

Suddenly he stops and turns.
"Hmm," he says, posing thoughtfully
with one finger pressed against his
lips, the other hand resting on his hip.
"Maybe I should see if there's any
special bulletins." He walks across
the small room and sits at a keyboard.
He presses a small switch, and the
video monitor switches from the ACB
channel to a computer screen dis-
playing a flashing cursor.

With a few quick keystrokes, he

¹This little ditty is from the enormously popular made-for-video movie, "Blood Red and the Seven Mutants," a heart-burning story of a lost Troubleshooter (portrayed by video heroine Teela-OMLY-2) who gangs up with some midgets (portrayed by scrubots in mediocre costumes) to destroy a Commie Psion traitor (very realistically portrayed by a Commie Psion traitor without a stunt double) in the Badlands beyond Alpha Complex. Endearing movies such as this ensure that all junior citizens will grow up to be loyal servants of The Computer. Or else vidstars without stunt doubles.

logs in to the Alpha Complex bulletin board and rapidly checks a few items of minimal interest. He logs back out. Then he leans back carefully, and presses four keys simultaneously. Stealing a quick glance at the security camera, he sees the white light blinking rapidly. He smiles, and types in another command. The monitor switches to a view of him in his room, working at the keyboard. He gets up and stands behind his chair, all the while watching the video display. On the screen, he remains in his chair, typing, then sits back again and scratches his nose. *Looks like daily routine #14*, he thinks. *That'll hold The Big C for a while*. James presses the "Any" key and the screen pops back to the flashing cursor.

He sits back down in his chair and pops open a maintenance hatch below the screen. Inside there's a small circuit board, which shows the creative architecture of a home-built kit. He connects three jumpers from the board to the wires of his terminal, and types in the command to activate a program contained in the board's memory circuits. His hands shake slightly, for this, tampering with The Computer's files, is treason of the worst sort, and it fills him with self-loathing to do it, though not so much self-loathing as to actually prevent him. James' conscience has never let loyalty stand in the way of survival.

James navigates into the Internal Security Treason Database with a skill indicative of how he spends most of his morningcycles. Once inside the database, he enters the three letter code for his residential sector — OND — and searches through the Blue clearance listings until he finds his own name. Underneath he finds several new listings, each marked with todaycycle's date.

James is annoyed. In fact, he's downright pissed, inflamed, and honked off. Self-loathing vanishes beneath a wave of anger engendered by justified suspicions. Why can't he just sleep in, just once, in his entire life?² And why must The Computer jump on each and every small human failing? Why does he, a proven

and loyal citizen, get in trouble time and again for a simple desire to relax?

It's not fair. He's one of the best. He's hunted down and arrested Communists, saboteurs, anarchists, three-eyed mutants, and dealers in high-clearance recreational pharmaceuticals. He's been shot at, stabbed, thrown headfirst into a sewage treatment plant, slurped on by a vampire bot, and repeatedly exposed to experimental devices. And through it all, he's never been killed, and always brought the traitors to justice and termination, though not always in that order. And yet all these accomplishments haven't brought

—————
**"Hi ho, hi ho,
It's off to serve I go.
I've got my gun,
Let's have some fun!
Hi ho ... hi ho —"**
—————

him what he wants, which is a little time to himself. Just a little. He loves serving The Computer, and he feels that he's doing Alpha Complex a great service by rooting out those subversives who would destroy the society, but he'd be a lot happier if he could just be himself for a while instead of having to look over his shoulder all the time and conform to The Computer's ideal of the perfect citizen.

But treason is everywhere, he thinks. *And there's no way to tell whether or not someclone's a Commie or a mutant or a member of a secret society. You never know.*

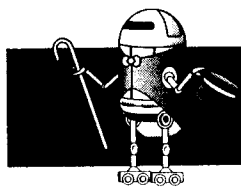
Leave someone unsupervised for a while and they might make a bomb or read Mao-C-TNG³ or grow antennae, and then it'll be too late to stop their treason. We can't let down our guard, not yet. Not until we've found all the traitors and terminated them. I guess I shouldn't complain; the Commie Crisis has me doing a job I enjoy, and that helps innocent citizens all across Alpha Complex, saving them from the vile shadow of treason and helping them to sleep better at nightcycle.

But James feels he shouldn't be judged just because he's cranky first thing in the morningcycle. He didn't mean any wrong. He knows he's one of The Computer's most loyal followers, so he removes the read-only blocks from the data and deletes the entries added this morningcycle. All except the small citation for not being in uniform. James knows it's best not to look *too* clean — best not to attract attention of any sort.

James saves his work, logs out of the data base, and checks to make sure his signal hasn't been traced. He unplugs the pirate board from his terminal and closes the hatch. Then he switches the monitor back to his fictitious surveillance tape and synchronizes his movements with those of the figure on the screen. At an appropriate place, he presses the keys cutting out the mock tape and switching the surveillance camera back on line. He looks back at the small light beneath the camera, and notices that it's off. The Computer has turned its attention elsewhere in the complex. The tension of his illegal hacking has knotted his stomach, and guilt still squirms around in the bottom of his brain like a puddle of liquid mercury.

²Why can't he? Well, as The Computer is fond of saying, "Early to bed, and early to rise, or you die."

³Chairclone Mao-C-TNG was one of the Communist heroes of Alpha Complex. Citizens in Alpha Complex use the first letter of their security clearance as the middle initial of their name. However, the Communists don't believe in security clearances (or so they say), believing instead that everyclone is equal. So equal, in fact, that to excel at anything is to demonstrate that you are different. The Communies consider this to be a selfish capitalistic action and an affront to those incapable of similar feats. In any event, Chairclone Mao was a fervent foe of security clearances, so he publicly changed his name from Mao-R (Red Clearance) to Mao-C (Commie Clearance) in protest of the inequality of the system. This very brave (read: stupid) action made the entire Mao family Martyrs of the People's Glorious Revolution within the next eighteen minutcycles (not quite a new record, but close). Rumor has it that the Communies have enshrined Mao's ashes in their simplex Alpha State. At least both the flecks that were found.



JIM HOLLOWAY

"Let's see, then, according to section 52, subsection 13, paragraph 24, subparagraph 20, subclause 76 of the abridged Standard Code of Treasonous Conduct ..."

He stands slowly, brushes his hair, then walks back to the bed, kneels, and pulls out a small box labeled "Microbot Recharger." A thick power cord trails behind the box back under the bed.

He sits on the edge of his bed and places the box on his knees. The slight friction breaks away the tips of some of his charred leg hairs, but James doesn't notice. Opening the lid of the box, he unplugs two wires and pulls out a small bot which looks something like a miniature double-barreled howitzer.

It has a small body, lozenge-shaped and about the size of a size eight shoe. Two large, fat positraction wheels flank the main chassis, and a tail with a tiny roller extends out the back. Directly beneath the body is a trumpet speaker for audio output, and on top is a linked pair of small radar dishes. James blows on these, and they spin absently. The bot also has two barrels on fixed mounts, pointing straight ahead. Each of them is designed for visual light functions; one is input, the other is output.

James pulls a soft cloth from the recharger box and gently cleans the lenses at the ends of the barrels. First, the lens of the retinal reader, a micro-

scope for peering into the back of a clone's eye. The pattern of veins therein can be read as a fingerprint, but with greater reliability. James has the pattern from his own right eye stored in the bot's memory.

Then he cleans the lens of the laser barrel. James worked hard on that device, supercharging the generator and increasing the impulse gain to nearly twice its nominal capacity. This in turn required James to rewire the bot's power grid (thereby bolstering other devices) and perform a few other small tasks, but it was worth it. James did some tests with the diminutive bot, and determined that the laser now fires at 18 kill-o-cycles instead of the standard 10.⁴

James places the bot on the floor, set securely on the two large wheels and the small roller in the rear. The two barrels, laser and reader, aim directly forward. Reaching down, James flips a switch underneath the bot's tail. Immediately the radar dishes come to life. There's a brief flurry of beeps, then the tiny bot proudly exclaims, "Your bot Spot on-line, re-

porting perfect diagnostics tests! How's it going James?"

"Typical morningcycle, Spot." He pauses for emphasis. "Nothing to talk about."

"Gotcha!" says the bot, catching the implication. "I'm sure your daycycle will improve shortly." It turns its two wheels in opposite directions, spinning to the right and left, its tail wagging like an arthritic doberbot. "I feel great! Thanks for the recharge! Zooooom!" It scoots back and forth across the room. "Any news, James?"

"Not of any importance. You were only shut down for one nightcycle, and I slept straight through. Now maybe you'll have a better understanding of what 'sleep' is like, because nothing happened for me, either."

The little bot stops its careening to consider this.

"Now if you'll excuse me, my little Self-Propelled Obedient Tankette, I have to get dressed."

The little bot titters in simulated laughter. "Hey, that's pretty good, James. That's the twenty-third acronym you've come up with for S.P.O.T. How hard do you have to work at those?"

"Oh, not very," says James, walking over to the closet. "They just sort of come to me. I can generate concepts from small bits of information. That's what I do on the job. So I guess it's just one way I practice my skills."

He strips off his regulation sleepwear, a simple Blue jumper decorated with little lasers and cone rifles. He has worn them for so long that the fabric is almost worn away. Because the jumper's so comfortable, so well broken-in, he'll keep it as long as he can, until it finally rips or develops a hole. No sense getting in trouble for ratty sleepwear. He looks it over, and notices that indeed a small hole has started in the seat, so he tosses the sleepwear on the floor near the door.

"Uh, oh," says Spot. "Recycling time again. That means you get a

⁴Kill-o-cycles are the standard measure of lethal energy in Alpha Complex. For the sake of our more squeamish readers, we'll dispense with examples, as well as descriptions of how the kill-o-cycle scale was developed. Let's just say that 18 kill-o-cycles is a lot. It's about as lethal as falling into a food vat.

brand new starchy scratchy sleeper that might not fit, right?"

"Come now, Spot, you know that one mustn't begrudge The Computer's incredible generosity, don't you?"

"Oh, yeah, right, because if you do, it'll bla —"

"Hup! No need to explain, Spot, just say 'The Computer is my friend.'"

"The Computer is my friend."

"Thank you."

James pulls on his unders, then takes out a blue turtleneck. Made of a kevlar-mylar weave and coated with reflective laminate, it provides the working clone with the best protection available in a stylish garment. It also has contrasting padded panels on the elbows and shoulders. James has always gone out of his way to be stylish, and he slips into the shirt, then pushes up the cuffs as far as he can without breaking uniform regulations, to give him that rough-and-ready, hands-on appearance.

Once the shirt's on, he cranes his neck over to inspect the patches on each shoulder, looking for loose threads or other imperfections. The patches are James' badge of office, earned with 12 cycles of sweat and blood. His sweat; other citizens' blood. Shield-shaped patches they are, proudly displaying The All-Seeing Eye, crossed behind with dagger and laser beam, braced top and bottom with the logo, "INTERNAL SECURITY." Below the patches are other, smaller blazons, designating his specific branch, and some of the special training he's received.

Satisfied with his inspection, he pulls out a pair of bright blue pants, high-waisted with crossing suspenders. The bright garment reminds James of how far he's come, rising above his fellow Infrared laborers by turning in his best friend for avoiding his biochemical supplements and clawing his way through the ranks of Internal Security. Clawing from Red to Orange, through Yellow to Green, and now to Blue clearance; each step a nicer color, each step higher prestige, larger accommodations, better food, more perks, greater power. He

figures he needs just one more big bust, one more conspiracy uncovered to catapult him to Indigo and perhaps into a senior supervisory position. Not that there's anything wrong with being an independent field operative, mind you; the freedom's fine, but James would like to have someone beneath him. Someone he can step on whenever he has a sour morning cycle.

Medium blue turtleneck, bright blue pants, crossed straps. James takes a comlink and slips it into the sheath attached to the front of his suspenders. Then he reaches into his closet and pulls out a pair of glossy black boots with blue highlights and slips them on. The bottoms of the boots are almost smooth, to give the best possible traction to the smooth dry

**Tampering with The
Computer's files is
treason of the worst
sort, and it fills him with
self-loathing to do it,
though not so much as
to actually prevent him.**

surfaces found everywhere in Alpha Complex. James knows from frequent painful experience that this is actually not the best of designs, but bureaucracies will never change, and field gear will always be designed by some engineering nerd who'll never actually have to use the stuff.

He slips a dagger into his right boot, and a small Truth-B-Told syringe into his left boot. He clips a chronometer to the cuff of his left sleeve, and slips his glossy blue regulation mirrorshades into his pocket. Finally, he clips on his utility belt and holster. By habit he runs a quick inventory of his utility belt. Tongue reader, check. Topical anesthetic, check. Butane lighter, flip, flick, flame. Check. Megacuffs, check. Pen, check. Identification card, check.

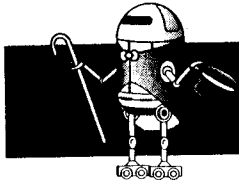
Lockpick tool kit, check. Alpha Complex Express card, check. Various denominations of plasticred coins, check. And a small clear plastic bottle that James tucks way down inside one of the pouches.

James takes a few deep breaths in an attempt to purge the vestiges of nausea, but he's seized by a coughing fit from the dust motes floating about the room. He smiles sardonically when he thinks about the futility of trying to alleviate the feeling in his stomach. "The only thing worse than having to get up," he mutters to himself, "is having to get up and eat breakfast." He sneaks a hostile side-long glance at the security camera and is relieved to see the small white light is still out.

Spot wisely elects to remain silent following James' utterance, but scoots away from his immediate vicinity and under the bed. Bots have survival instincts, too.

James brushes some dust from his shoulder and looks at himself in the mirror. The image he sees there meets with his approval; tallish, well-developed individual, with a face that looks like it could stand a few hours of reactor shielding duty, yet obviously has never had to. His broad shoulders and piercing blue eyes (which complement his jumpsuit nicely) add to his air of power, and the snug fit of his IntSec uniform and glossy jackboots adds the polish of authority and menace. He sneers at the mirror, checking his teeth, and slicks back his short brown hair. Leaning forward, he sticks his tongue out to make sure that no fuzz is obscuring the clone identification tattoo thereon. He smiles, as always, at the incongruity of the silvery bar code lines, straight and rigid as any machine, framed by the large mushy organicness of his tongue. He mugs a little bit, waggling his tongue and shaking his behind, trying to make the tattoo lines break their rigid formation by sheer will of fluid motion. He fails, of course, and the failure depresses him in a vague way. He sighs.

His professional demeanor having returned, he again straightens his outfit and turns away from the mirror.



He walks back over to his bed and pulls back the blankets. Carefully he picks up his laser pistol from its resting place atop the several dozen charred holes in his mattress and field-strips the weapon to inspect the muzzle. A little ash has collected on the smooth metal surface, and he delicately blows it out. The flecks of ash then join with thousands of their comrades, and after floating about the room for a long while, they'll eventually enter the ventilation duct to prepare for the next morning cycle.

Reassembling his sidearm, James-B notes that there are three full-power shots left to him. *Probably won't need more than that for breakfast*, he muses. He holsters his weapon, turns and picks up his discarded sleepwear, and pauses. "Take care of the place, you little Simple Petbot and Occasional Terrorist."

"Sorry, James, can't give you full credit on that one. Too similar to acronym number 7."

Vermin, he thinks, snapping his fingers in disappointment. He turns and exits his quarters, the automatic door locking smoothly behind him.

James' apartment lies in the middle of a Blue clearance corridor. To the left, as James exits his room, the hallway continues for a ways, and then opens into a mass transit platform. Just beyond the platform one can reach the public thoroughfares, which are usually thick with pedestrian and vehicular traffic. James, however, turns right. In this direction, the hallway continues for ten meters and then abruptly terminates in a T-turn. The passage to the right leads to other, lower-quality Blue housing, and the passage to the left heads to an entertainment plaza. In the center of the intersection, directly across from James' corridor, is a chute.

A small scrubot scoots respectfully to the side as he strides down the clean and shiny blue passage. He ignores the small robot, and strides past to where his corridor ends. The open chute is labeled "ORGANOWASTE RECYCLING DIGESTER," and in smaller type, "NO GLASS OR METAL OBJECTS," beneath which someone has

scrawled, "Not even bots, unless you really want to." Stifling a gag at the smell wafting from the opening, James tosses in his sleepwear. He turns to leave, and far below he hears a gurgling slurping sound as the cloth is consumed for reuse.

James strides briskly back up the hall, hoping to reach the mass transit platform in time for the next transbot. The scrubot is now across from the door to his room as he heads back up the corridor. Just as he passes the diminutive bot, it squirts a jet of InstaWax at his feet. The little bot's timing is perfect; even as James-B notices, he realizes it's too late to avoid a painful and embarrassing fall. His heel scuds across the tile, finding a path all its own, and his hamstrings shriek at the new extremes they're experiencing. But in spite of the acute lack of balance, years of training and experience kick in and he has his laser pistol drawn before he hits the floor. Clenching his teeth against the sudden shock of impact, he hits and rolls onto his side, and, both hands on the grip of the weapon, he fires a single burning stream of light at the tiny vandal.

The searing bolt of blue light slices through the bot's CPU and into its internal combustion engine, slaying the bot before its internal sensors can even provide a preliminary damage assessment. Its mechanisms lock up, the bot sits perfectly still. A stream of InstaWax still squirts stupidly from one peripheral. A small flicker of flame, probably from a ruptured propane line, makes an appearance through the arc of the laser's slice.

James gets slowly to his feet and

takes a deep breath in an attempt to stretch the pain out of his ribs. Inexplicably, he feels the need to belch. He tries to force it with marginal success, then holsters his pistol. He stares contemptibly at the late scrubot and the growing puddle of InstaWax. Surveying the situation, all seems to be in control, but something about the situation is tugging at the back of his mind, and he can't quite place it. Absently he pulls his comlink from its sheath.

"Malfunctioning scrubot, OND Sector, level 43, corridor B-14773/8. Possible Corpore Metal operative, probable sabotaged bot program. Send bot forensics team, priority one, very low."

He stares at the bot a little longer, trying to figure out what he's neglecting. *Well, I'm exceptionally smart*, he thinks. *I'll figure it out soon enough*.

Sooner than he anticipated, in fact, for as he turns to leave, his InstaWaxed feet take yet another excursion to elevations above his shoulders. And, as he rolls over again to glare at the former bot, the little tongue of flame reaches the pressurized soap storage canister, and with a loud *blorp*, James finds himself awash in little foamy flakes and globs of perfumed soap. His head squishes to the floor in despair.

Regaining some measure of his dignity, he scrapes his shoes on the wall, and once he's confident that most of the InstaWax is gone, he slowly rises back to his feet and flicks away as much of the soap foam as he can. Gingerly he continues down the hall, carefully watching his feet at every step and occasionally slipping slightly.

Turning the corner at the end of the hall, he joins with several other Blues on the mass transit loading platform. He clambers into one of the vehicles and stretches out. Just as he thinks he might be able to relax, the transbot lurches forward and into the tunnel labeled TO CAFETERIA. He sighs again. *I hate morning cycles*.

For more of Title Deleted For Security Reasons, pick up the novel of the same name at a bookstore near you (or else, friend Citizen)! ■

