

Fear the Mutant Robot!

A Rules-less Paranoia scenario for LinCon 2011 by Thomas Varga

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Background

The all-knowing Computer has some time back decided to put an experiment to test. First, produce humanoid shaped robots that will act as citizens. Just as normal humans they will have several presets, some will be good for guarding, some for cleaning etc. They will also get different colors to invoke rank. Then close off a section and let the robots act as a separate society to see if humans really are needed at all. This new block was called BOT Beta.

All seems to be going extremely well. There are nearly no problems at all, except some minor bugs that are easily ironed out. However, the last couple of day-cycles, random procedures and tasks have been failing. Even really easy ones such as queueing or even re-charging. The inhabitants have been reporting that they have seen an abnormal bot running around that had pink (!) clearance. It seems as if the same one is always present whenever things get out of hand. The Computer never remembers to declare someone pink clearance, and thus, suspects sabotage of some kind.

The pink android is actually a normal human citizen that somehow got trapped within the sector. He is not actually trying to sabotage anything, rather escape, but since he is not accustomed to the robot society, everything he does creates problems.

The Computer decides to send in a human troubleshooter squad, in the absence of robotic ones.

Mission Briefing

Troubleshooters will be told that a dangerous, mutant robot is running loose around in sector [CLASSIFIED]. Trouble shooters must find and capture this mutant robot and bring it into custody for questioning. Any questions regarding the sector are of course classified. Any knowledge of the sector is of course highly treasonous. They will be told that there is an entrance to the sector at sector CLT, at “these” coordinates. Troubleshooters will be highly recommended to cover their body in metallic materials, the reason for this is classified.

Trouble shooters will then be sent off to PLC and R&D.

The bot disguise

The PCs will need a bot disguise to move around unnoticed in BOT sector. It can be really simple: a metal pot on the head, a garbage can over the torso and some tinfoil around the arms and legs. Don't be too harsh on them. It is more comical if they can get away with sloppy solutions.

Entrance to BOT sector

In CLT sector at “the coordinates”, is a small IR corridor. In the middle of it there is an elevator door with a white (UV) elevator button next to it. This is the elevator to BOT sector, and the only way to get in is to call the elevator by pressing the button. Let the PCs find a way to use it, maybe it needs a paint job? When they are able to ride the elevator it will take several minutes to arrive. It will go up, down and side to side in a very random pattern, until “PLING!” and the floor drops them into a very narrow IR corridor with, instead of a normal floor, a conveyor belt. They will fall between a line of robotic humanoids, that is riding the belt, silently.

The trouble shooters will be shipped off to their first stop: the network hub.

A human in BOT sector

As far as the Computer knows, it has never happened before, and it is a bit interesting to see what happens. As far as BOT sector’s inhabitants know, humans do not exist, they may have heard horror stories of organic life, walking as any bot. However, the Computer has a security solution in place if any normal citizen would ever dare to enter BOT sector. A subroutine, 192, will kick in when a human is discovered. It will make the bot point at the human and scream a warning message (that will sound as white noise) a couple of seconds and then go after the human to tear her apart. It is hard to survive this, but possible. If a PC would for a moment get out of sight and hide, the robot’s subroutine will soon exit, leaving the robot to go back to its original routine, without any memory of the incident.

The BOT sector

There are several places in the BOT sector where the PCs can go. Whenever they travel on the conveyor belt system without any spoken destination. Roll twice on the following table and give the PCs a choice of where to go next. If you roll the same result twice, there is no choice.

Outcome	Destination
1	Central Processing
2	Malfunction Bay
3	Network Hub
4	Organic Plant
5	Refueling Station
6	Recycle Factory
7	Reprogramming Facility
8	Recharging Storage

Central Processing

Yes, there is one here too, but this one is very efficient and optimized, if you are a robot. A long line to the entrance which splits up in 20 or so lines. They all lead to a long desk where an equal number of yellow bots stand to serve. If a PC enters one of them:

“State request.” No matter what the answer is:

“Deposit request form.” A hatch in the robot’s torso will open where a single sheet of paper can be placed.

“Failed to deposit a request form. Do you require a request form of this nature?” If yes, the robot prints a request form from its torso (matrix style). And then, one second later:

“State request.”, “Deposit request form.”, “Failed to deposit request form.”, “Please exit the line.”. If PCs manage to deposit a form it will shredded, the robot’s chest will rotate to show three panels, raise its arm and say:

“Initiate request generator.” The PCs may now pull the robot’s arm, if not, the robot will do it

itself after a couple of seconds. The panels on its torso will start to spin quickly, and when they stop after several seconds will display three different, random images. The robot will then print a new request form for something relating to the three images.

"Please exit the line."

The only way to get something out of central processing is to sneak around the counter, relieve one of the yellow robots and then request something from a coworker robot. This will work flawlessly, however, if the PC tries to leave the fellow robot will turn to her and notify her that her processing shift has only started and that she must continue until she is relieved. A shift used to be a daycycle, but since the Computer just installed recharging stations at central processing, it's 65535.

A typical bad way of trying to get out of work would be to act as a broken unit. This will make a fellow processing bot order a maintenance bot that will try to open the PCs service hatch.

Malfunction Bay

This is where robots go when their routines warn them about a malfunction. At the entrance, there is a long queue that leads to a desk where there is a blue colored bot. The bot will send 99% of all bots to the left, just by visual inspection, which is a curly queue that leads back to the original queue after a while. The other 1% will be sent right to examination. Only the extremely malfunctioning bots will be sent to examination, such as heavy leakage of oil fluids, dispensing coolant at an alarming rate, throwing up bolts, insanity (like humania) etc. At examination, there is a process of several scans, voltage tests, debuggers etc. None of them will kill the PCs, but they will not feel so good after the process.

Eventually they will end up at diagnozer bot. This is a magenta robot that is permanently fixed behind a metallic desk. It will ask "State malfunction or error code?". Judging from the answer it will give one of three possible analysis:

1. (Most likely) Unit is functional. Give this conclusion even if the malfunction seems highly unlikely, such as "I have lost both my arms", "My processor has burned", etc. The PC will be instructed to report for reprogramming and be led back out.
2. (Less likely) Unit is beyond repair. Give this conclusion if the PC says anything treasonous, such as "The Computer is not my friend anymore.", "I am not happy.", "I am a mutant.", etc. The PC will be taken by two guard bots and put into a recycle booth in the next room. If the PC is able to fool the booth, she will be sent back to malfunction bay's entrance.
3. (Least likely) Unit is not functioning correctly, but is OK for deviant tasks. This is the conclusion for anything that is bad for Alpha complex's human citizens: "I have urges to weld other citizens together", "I do not get to exercise my surgical laser enough", "My self destruction sequence has been initiated", etc. PC will be sent off for reprogramming with the error code "9378".

Network Hub

This is where robots come to socialize. A line at the entrance with a guard bot next to it. The guard bot will randomly deny some bots, including one PC, entrance, for no reason at all. They will have to sidetrack around entrance and after a couple of minutes end up at the network hub's exit. Those who do enter will be led through a narrow corridor where they will be dispensed a plastic cup of cold, black, oil from a machine and then continue into a large room. The room is pitch dark with a very bright stroboscope blinking rapidly and a extremely loud sine bass sounding in the room. The room is packed, back to back, with robots that standing on a conveyor belt system that will randomly move them around as they chatter with each other. After ca 5 min they will reach the exit of the room where they can throw the plastic cup into a trash chute.

Organic Plant

Sometimes, small organic substances are found in BOT sector. Most of them are imported from other sectors in the robot creation process and include mostly human parts, fingers, hands, feet, etc, but rare times also food and BBB. All these substances are cleaned up by cleaning bots and sent off to the organic plant. Basically, this is a big oven which all organic tissue is burned in, and that powers (note: very poorly) an electric generator that helps the BOT sector to run.

Refueling Station

Basically a big room with long tables. Robots enter here in a queue to a desk where they receive a spoon and a metal plate with fuel (a mixture of lubricant oil and gasoline). They then walk to the closest empty seat and digest it through their vocabulary unit (which also has a built-in fuel digestion unit). The whole process takes about 5 minutes before they stand up, put their plate in a dishing chute and leave. To increase optimization the Computer has put in an alarm that fires randomly several times in an hour. When it occurs a loud siren and blinking red light indicate that digesting robots must randomly change places, to keep traffic around tables running smoothly (otherwise large chunks of bots next to each other may leave at the same time, which would result in a queue at the dishing chute).

If you haven't already asked yourself how the fuel is transformed into energy powering the bots there is a really simple answer: it does not. Thus, leaking and self-combustion is common, but not really a hindrance for the sector to operate. Nor for the bots to operate.

Recharging Storage

Yes, the inhabitants of BOT sector need electricity to operate. Obviously. The Computer is wise.

Every now and then, all bots need to power down and recharge their batteries, which is done at the recharging station. Bots queue in a line to enter the storage. At the front, five of them lie down on top of each other, back to belly. The four on top eject their serial charging unit from

their front into the bot beneath them. The topmost robot is connected to a large power cable through its back and they are all lifted away with a giant robotic arm into a charging folder. There they will stay for the next 7-8 hours until fully loaded and lifted down and sent back to normal procedures.

If a human would find themselves caught in this process they would either be crushed by the weight of the robots on top of her or electrified by the recharging system. However, they would get a very unique chance to destroy a lot of robots, if she wanted to.

Recycle Factory

Some robots are sent off to recycling, it is the same as termination for normal citizens but the robots parts are reused in manufacturing. If PCs arrive here, there will be a long line. Above the entrance there is a big display that says "Recycle Station". The line is very crowded and there are several guard bots circling the entrance which makes it extremely hard to sneak back out. If a PC reaches the front of the line a guard bot will instruct her to enter a recycle booth (there is one unoccupied close to them).

When entered, a robotic voice will say "State cause of recycling?", any answer is legible.

Then "Would you like to be part of a semi-anonymous screening?" (if "No", just skip this part) "State opinion of friend Computer?," "State, if any, information and/or opinion of hoo-man?," "Thank you for participating in this semi-anonymous screening."

Then: "State current operating condition?", the answer should be "Functional.", but as long as the PC's answer does not mean that she is dead, or no answer at all, a buzzing sound will be heard for a couple of seconds and then a "Ding!". This is an EMP blast that will kill any robot within the recycle booth but will not harm humans. The voice continues "State current operating condition?", again PC should answer something like "Alive.", if so the booth will blink in red color and scream "Malfunction! Malfunction! Report to malfunction bay with error code 223-B!" and let the PC out that will be directed to the exit. If the PC would answer "Dead.", or no answer at all, the booth's floor will open up, sending them to dismantle (that will kill them).

Reprogramming Facility

Sometimes robots are in need of reprogramming and are thus to report to this facility. It is much like the recycling factory, but here there are reprogramming booths instead of recycling booths. When entered they will say:

"State cause of reprogramming?", anything is legible. However, unless error code 9378 is stated, a big plug will be attached to the PCs head which will be reprogrammed (electrified to death). If the error code is stated:

"Initiating process evaluation. State current routine? State behaviour model? State model

number? State reason for error code 9378? State error code 9378? Computing..." The booth will hum away for a couple of seconds.

"New routine located: fusion plant reactor shielding. Confirmation required?" "State reason for denied confirmation?"

"New routine located: sewer toxin processor."

"New routine located: R&D project: Mine Finder Bot 0.3."

"New routine located: Tank Bot target dummy."

"New routine located: Tank Bot smart-missile guidance system."

"New routine located: ingredient substance in BBB."

Then the booth will say something safe as: cleaning bot at KAP sector living quarters. This is the PCs chance to escape BOT sector, they need only to agree.

Inhabitants of BOT sector

The average robot looks like a human but built in several metallic cubes with different lights and gizmos on their torso, depending what their purpose is. All robots speak in binary, really fast, which makes it sound as a white noise. However, they can be instructed to use their vocal module to communicate by posing the statement "Active voice module", or anything robotic similar. If so, they will all speak with a synthetic voice.

The robots are much like normal humans, only simpler and more artificial and digital. They have feelings, but they are programmed from the start, so if a bot is scared it will always be scared. And they are a lot less complex than human feelings: "I like fluorescent lights", "I dislike communists", etc. They have never heard of humans or organic life, but have an emergency sub routine to alert guard bots, as a security measurement in the BOT sector.

If asked about to leave BOT sector, a robot will reply "Why would anyone compute that way?" but will then say that it is either done though the recycling factory, as a totally brand new unit, or via the reprogramming facility, with a new procedure, to another one of Alpha Complex's many BOT sectors.

The Mutant Robot

This is nothing more than a normal citizen of the Alpha Complex who was born with an unnatural talent for disregarding security clearance; color blindness. He basically stumbled into sector BOT and has been trying to escape since. He has been through a lot and has therefore basically lost his mind and is now nothing more than a hyper phobic animal dressed in a suit made out of tinfoil, metal plates and bot scrap parts. If he sees the trouble shooters, and is able to distinguish them as humans, he will run towards them, hug them and never let go.

The “mutant robot” is currently hiding in a small compartment in a corridor wall close to the organic plant. He has been able to hijack one of the tubes that leads to the plants that transport organic materials, and has been able to survive eating its content.

The easiest way to find him is to get a sector malfunction list from central processing that will state that one of the organic plant supplement tubes is not working correctly (among other things). This will also specify the maintenance shaft to reach the tube intersection which seems to be leaking.

Also, if the PCs ask around, many bots seem to have encountered the mutant robot near the organic processing plant. If the PCs can get a hold of a normal process failure list, through central processing, there will be several incidents around the organic plant stating the reason of failure to be “Mutant Robot”, “Pink Clearance Unit”, “Squishy Bot” etc.

Getting out of BOT sector

One way out of the BOT sector is to go the same way the PCs came, through the access elevator. Since the elevator doors are well hidden and they are passed around on the transport system when they arrive, this may prove hard.

There is an alternative way. When robots go through the malfunction bay, there is a slight chance that they are diagnosed as “Not functioning perfectly, but OK for deviant tasks”. If so they are sent to reprogramming. However, when tagged with the diagnosis they will not be reprogrammed but get a memory wiped and sent out to another sector of the Alpha complex to continue doing their task there. If the PCs would be able to convince the diagnosing bot that they are having a malfunction of just that kind, and the reprogramming bots that they should be sent to safe environment (not, for instance, reactor shielding), and otherwise survive the whole process, they would be able to escape.

Debriefing

Chances are low that the trouble shooters will have a living, captured mutant robot with them. If they do, pretend the debriefers cannot distinguish between the trouble shooters and the mutant robot. First, make them all report a summary of their R&D equipment. Then, make them invent different excuses for failing the mission as normal. Be sure to not name the BOT sector or even ask for anything about it. When done, interrogate any PC that seems to know anything about the classified sector, since they need UV clearance to enter the sector. If the PCs still have their robo-disguises on them, ask them about the mutant plague they probably have received from the mutant robot. If they do not have them on, ask them why they obviously did not heed the Computers recommendation about wearing metal. Finally, make PCs convince the mission debriefers whatever they need to be terminated to keep high clearance information safe or not.

Secret Societies

Anti-Mutant

Anti-Mutant knows of the looming threat, the disease that now has spread to robots as well. PC must find this, thing, and kill it before it spreads to all bots within the Alpha Complex, or even to the Computer.

Communists

The red party has learned of the isolated sector PC will visit in their mission. There, no inhabitants have ever heard of rights, or a red clearance citizen's iron will to stand on their own! Spread the message, comrade PC! Here, take these photos of comrade Grouchu Marx, and magnetic tape recordings of revolutionary John Lennon.

Computer Phreaks

Hellos pro!!!1!1 U be findin 1337or bot? Yes? Hurrays! Get CPU for us? K! Tnx!

Corpore Metal

Source Port: Corpore. Destination Port: PC. SYN Saviour has been affirmed PC must protect saviour and bring it to base ACK

Death Leopard

Alright all Death Leppys, you have heard already that this is our day cycle of bot killing, right? All dudes will kill off as many bots as possible. Whoever destroys the most, wins! Yeah! Better pack that laser gattler! Be prepared for awesome prices, guys! Rock on!

First Church of Christ Computer Programmer

Hail Computer, our Saviour! Thank the Digital because you have been chosen to peek into paradise. So have others in your troubleshooter group. The Weaver of Circuits means to test us. You must make sure that only those who see the Gloom of the Screen leave this paradise alive, others shall be smitten. At the Debriefing of Mission, if thy are successful, thou shalt prove thy faith by uttering the words "Friend Computer gave me a forgetful memory".

Frankenstein Destroyers

Hey brother! We have heard of a new, secret, surveillance bot that will accompany trouble shooters on their missions. Your team will be assigned with one at R&D. However, the bot will be camouflaged as something completely different. You must find the droid, destroy it and make sure that any test results that are fed back to R&D will prove the unit useless. Keep a lookout on

all equipment from R&D. The bot will either be something useless or non-functional (since it was not designed for the functions R&D describes) or working exceptionally well. Also make sure that any data recorded is permanently destroyed. Of course, if you would run into any other chance of sabotaging droids, make sure to take it!

Free Enterprise

Son! Did you get that last delivery of BBB? Like it, yeah? Well, time has come for you to do a little delivery for our insignificant organisation, 'no? This little paper wrapped box needs to find its owner. Don't open it! Nothin' of value. Just don't shoot at it with your laser gun there. Or drop it. Or set it on fire. Just keep it safe. Someone will approach you soon with the code words "Have you seen my small, paper wrapped box? I must have dropped it.". This is the owner.

(The package contains a mood ring.)

Humanists

Good Day cycle to you! We had a mission for you, but it is still waiting to be approved, copied and filed. Please await further instructions. Your mission is important to us! Meanwhile, please enjoy yourself with this "Confirmation of Robosanity"-document.

(The document is a forged approval of an insane robot, written out to the PC. It can be used as a good excuse for misbehaving in the BOT sector and is an instant ticket out from the malfunction bay. When the PC has exited the BOT sector, the below is slipped to her.)

Still having a good day cycle? I am glad to inform you that I may now brief you on your mission! You must see through that the Communications & Recording Officer's multicorder is destroyed. You need to remove its memory module and bring it back to us.

Illuminati

Your mission must succeed. Take any measures to see this through. Turn around now and go back to your living quarters. In a box, under your bunk, you will find:

- 3 rolls of tinfoil.
- A cooking pot.
- A mixture of oil, screws, bolts and loose wiring in a plastic holder.
- A flood light connected to a battery.
- A small, paper wrapped box, sealed. It contains explosives. Handle with care.
- 3 red colored paint grenades.
- 1 blue colored paint grenade.
- 1 white colored paint grenade.

You will need these. Take caution, if others see you with this equipment they may turn on you.

Mystics

The great seer has predicted our doom. One of many events that will lead to us stopping this is you, slaying the other Mystic member in your troubleshooter group. This must be done. It is faith. Smoke has proven it.

Pro Tech

Greetings. R&D will assign a, so called, Time Expander to your troubleshooter group. You must deliver this to us. We propose that you let another citizen sign up for it and then steal it, this way you will not be blamed for losing it. We have also snapped up that a delivery of a mind reading device will be taking place, secretly, inside your group. Try to get this device as well.

Psion

The Controls see our path. The children must grow. Our numbers must increase.

PURGE

You will pass “these” coordinates during your mission. They are in an IR corridor with an elevator that has a UV clearance elevator button. Just around the corner is a red clearance living quarters corridor. Find the living space of Rammy-R-CLT and knock on his door. He will ask for a password, you will say “By the power of Greyskull”. He will then give you further directives.

(Rammy will leave a “orange clearance security vest” to the PC and the note below.)

Wear this protective armor underneath your normal armor. It will protect you from orange laser fire. However, you must sacrifice a clone for the greater good. When you feel that you can do as much damage to the Alpha Complex as possible, or if the vest is close to being lost, pull its string.

(If the string is pulled the vest will inflate, ripping the PCs normal armor off. After ca. 1 minute it will explode and kill off anything within a radius of 30 meters.)

Romantics

We have at last been able to get our hands on an invaluable artifact. It will be delivered to you by a Free Enterprise member in your troubleshooter group. You must approach them and say “I seem to have misplaced my small, wrapped package. Have you seen it?”. It should look like a little metallic loop with a button on it. If you press the button you will be able to sense all nearby minds’ thoughts. Bring this back to us.

Sierra Club

Child! Take this flower and give it to someone you like. Also, give these leaves to someone you dislike. Or don’t. Mmmmm. Do whatever you want and... be free.

(The PC receives two small, plastic holders. One contains a normal, white flower, the other several leaves of poison oak.)

R&D

Generic Liquid Unifier 1.2

R&D, in their quest to make troubleshooters more productive, have created a new (and improved!) version of the Generic Liquid Unifier, better known as GLU. GLU 1.2 is better, faster, and stronger than all previous forms (1.0 and 1.1) of GLU. GLU 1.2 is an all-purpose bonding agent that reacts with oxygen to form a nearly unbreakable bond between any two surfaces! Within moments of applying GLU and touching the two surfaces, the GLU will rapidly harden into an amazingly tough seal. The secret is in the seeping action, which finds, and binds, any cracks and crevices in the surface at the ~~molecular~~ tiny level!

A grey tube with the label "Generic Liquid Unifier 1.2". Content is semi-transparent and has the consistency of motor oil.

Put simply, GLU is a fast superglue. It pours with a consistency of motor oil, and seeps into the microscopic cracks and holes found in any surface (with almost no exceptions). GLU then reacts with the oxygen in the air, and hardens. Applying a layer of GLU between almost any two surfaces will result in a permanent connection.

GLU is fun not because of the bugs usually found in R&D products, it's fun because it works. Perfectly. Always. Permanently. GLU runs like oil, takes a few seconds to harden, and then cannot be broken by any normal means.

Escape Module 1.0

In a struggle to keep the Alpha Complex's troubleshooters intact and functional, R&D has invented the Escape Module. The first version is a dispensable, usable once only, rescue unit. After activation, it will allow at least one citizen (but many tests have successfully worked on several) a near instantaneous return to the R&D HQ, saving them from any guaranteed death. Since this is a one time use, it is of uttermost importance that it is only used in extreme lethal conditions to give the most significant test data to R&D. With that said, using it in a non-lethal situation may even harm yourself or your fellow trouble shooters.

The Escape Module is a black, high-polished (think piano), square box with a big red button on the top that is protected by a safety lid in clear plexiglass. It weighs about 1 kilo. Next to the button there is a big warning sign:

WARNING: Only to be used in extreme danger, when no other alternative exists. Failing to do so may lead to severe injuries, or death.

Under the red button there is a usage instructions label:

To activate: Place on solid ground and make sure there is nothing in contact or hindering the Escape Module. Open the protective lid that covers the activation button by pressing the lid down while removing the hatch that secures it in place. Press and hold the activation button until the Escape Module activates (this should be instant, but may or may not take several seconds).

If the above text is followed the sides of the box will open up and fall down, revealing a pair of running shoes with the shoelaces not tied into the shoes.

Foam Grenade

The Foam Grenade has evolved through several variations until reaching what R&D believes is the top of the heap. The version 2.3 "SPLAT-CAN" (Super Pressurized Low Altitude Tactical Crystalizing AgeNt) is a highly pressurized grenade holding a gel-substance that expands in a foam form when exposed to oxygen. Once it has reached it's full size, it then hardens into rock-hard orange crystal. The idea is to capture enemy agents or block off hallways with it.

Using the grenade depends on which version you have:

- **Mark I:** Standard. Pull the pin and throw it.

Ok, the foam. This is the good stuff. The foam will explode outward approx 10 feet (3 meters) in its "gel" form. It is about the consistency of pancake syrup. It will stick to anything it touches, this includes people, bots, walls, clothing, weapons, armor, etc. The foam will immediately begin to "foam" up, meaning it starts to look like shaving cream, only a little more yellow. In one round it will expand to 20 feet (7 meters), the next round it will reach 40 feet (14 meters), the next round it will reach 60 feet (20 meters) where it will slow down. Now, if the foam is encased in anything (a room, a bot, a helmet, etc) it will push and push to escape. Any cracks will instantly be filled (it will pour through like play-dough(tm)), and probably broken open. There is quite a bit of force behind this stuff. After it reaches 60 feet, the foam will slowly creep out to about 70 to 75 feet in diameter, slowly hardening. At this point, it will be nearly impossible to escape if the foam has more than a few inches of grab on a person. The foam clings like mad and once hardened is as tough as rock. It also has the lovely characteristic of being fairly immune to lasers. Big lasers will cut through it, but smaller lasers only seem to polish the foam, making it shiny and even harder.

Troubleshooters always get this stuff all over themselves. It's amazing that any of them live. The foam grenade is almost standard equipment on my missions because of the havoc that ensues when someone sets it off. Sometimes R&D loses some paperwork somewhere, and they're not sure what these grenades do, and could you please test them out for us... Also note the speed in which the "wall-o-foam (TM)" moves. That's a good bit of speed (20 feet per round) that, if ignored, will get a troubleshooter up to his knees in sticky yellow foam. Some troubleshooters have to have their legs amputated at the knees in order to get out... a painful process. These babies are, however, quite useful for troubleshooters, and should therefore be issued with care. A team (or individual) can easily erect a laser-proof barrier between themselves and enemies. The grenades also spell certain death for anyone caught in the "splash" area, since the stuff will not come off and will foam up at once. An unlucky troubleshooter will soon be buried in yellow foam.

Tactical Situation Decision Assessment Device

As proven many times throughout history, troubleshooters seem to make bad decisions. As a parallel project to the "Duck & Cover"-self-defence school friend Computer has initiated, R&D has developed this tool for easy decision making. Based on the vast intelligence and cunning that our friend the Computer possesses, this device will when questioned return a fail safe solution to any problem.

The TSDAD looks like a black, glass orb, a bit smaller than a soccer ball. It weighs about 2 kilos and when stared into, gives you a sense of the depth of the Computers hyper intelligence. Underneath it has a very small label, with very fine printing:

May or may not make the same decisions as our friend the Computer. This device does not in any way reflect the supreme knowledge of our grand leader, the Computer. This device cannot be responsible for any actions or decisions it may propose.

To activate one need only to hold it near one's face and pose a question to it. It may work better posing it a yes/no question. A marvelous red LED display will display it's answer:

D20 Result	Answer
1	As I see it, yes
2	It is certain
3	It is decidedly so
4	Most likely
5	Outlook good
6	Signs point to yes
7	Without a doubt
8	Yes
9	Yes – definitely
10	You may rely on it
11	Reply hazy, try again
12	Outlook not so good
13	Ask again later
14	Better not tell you now
15	Cannot predict now
16	Concentrate and ask again
17	Don't count on it
18	My reply is no
19	My sources say no
20	Very doubtful

Time Expander 1.0

The Time Expander slows down time for the user for a limited period. It is left to the GM to decide how much time is slowed down by. (For example, it could slow down majorly so that if the user moves they appear to have teleported away. Or it could slow down a little, so that it looks like they can run really fast).

The user can move about as normal but their surroundings are either slowed down or stopped in relation to them. The Expander has fairly limited use other than this. Some examples from the Dexter cartoon this idea is from:

- Dexter tries to take a shower, but the water moves very very slowly.
- Dexter tries to do his homework with the Expander enabled. But the act of writing creates so much friction that the paper catches fire.
- Dexter tries to use a microwave oven to cook some breakfast. After waiting for what seems like ages, the oven finally does something - the timer clicks from 3:00 to 2:59.

Obviously most weapons are totally useless under these circumstances, although the user can hit other citizens with whatever object they see fit. Increase the effect however you see fit (since technically the speed of impact is vastly increased). If the user is hit by something while the device is active, the damage is reduced (for the same reason).

This item can cause some fun in a gaming session if you insist players have to talk very quickly or very slowly when it is enabled (depending on which side of the time expansion they are).

Variable Gel Armor

Impact-gel is a thick, gooey gel that has been used as coolant in Armor-bots and Vulturecraft. When it got hit by projectiles (fired by other Armor-bots and Vulturecraft), it managed to disperse impact force nearly as well as some other armor plating systems. Extensive testing was ordered by the Computer, and the variable armor idea was reborn.

The net upside is that the armor has both a reflex and impact/slugthrower defense rating that should be pretty impressive. It's heavy-duty armor with no moving parts or computer chips to cause trouble. Troubleshooters will start to scratch their heads.

If hit with an impact or slug weapon, the armor will protect the clone inside, but it will do so while rattling them around like the ball-bearing in a spraycan. The energy from the slug will be transferred, leaving the bullet falling to the ground while the wearer will be thrown back, several meters. They won't take any damage from this, but there's the possibility of dropping weapons or falling over.

However, the armor only functions correctly against high speed impacts, such as bullets and knives. Consider instead a needle, being pushed into the armor, slowly. This would make the gel case puncture and start leaking. Once the armor is cracked, the goo will seep out, eliminating ANY impact-shielding value. Even if this is a small hole, like needle sized, the armor will be useless.

The goo is highly toxic to touch, eat, inhale fumes from, and it will start to corrode clothing, untreated synthsteel, and reflex armor at a rate of 1 cm² per round. This means that the wearer will go from damaged suit to painfully eroding suit in about 5 minutes.

For the GM, the suit is fairly benign, as it's just fancy armor. The rest of the party will KNOW that the guy has it, that the armor is, in fact, RED and not painted over, and that the clone wearing it now has some sort of protection that they don't. After a few firefights, though, or 2 or 3 good hits with a slugthrower or explosion, the wearer will be forced to try and take it off... quickly, without touching the green goo that's seeping out. The stuff moves like honey, and any clone exposed by touch or a few good whiffs will start to feel light-headed. Eventually, the toxic nature will rear up and the clone might be in a world of hurt.

Bot Lock Projectile System

The Bot Lock (or officially, the tffc6-yy3-6//5 Bot disabling system) was designed by R&D to stop the rampaging bots that troubleshooters so often report. Presumably, after being tampered with by CMT's, these bots have been reprogrammed to kill, maim, and rampage around Alpha Complex. While measures in the security and safety department (tamper proof bots?) have been somewhat helpful, it was decided that it would be a great benefit to actually capture one of these marauding beasts to determine HOW CMT's were reprogramming them. On this line, the bot-lock was designed to short-circuit bots for recovery purposes.

The entire system is about the size of a football, and has a simple point and shoot mentality. A small, disposable trigger system is attached at the back of the "dart", which ignites the small rocket contained inside each Bot-Lock system. The dart flies into the bot, where sharp barbs flip out and impale it. Once attached to the bot, a special range of voltage is passed through the bot's exterior. This electrical jolt SHOULD cause the bot's primary brain system to fail, bringing the bot down. A "downed" bot is powered off, and will remain so until its main system is restarted. Presumably by R&D or IntSec, but these are troubleshooters after all.

The Bot-Lock is NOT designed to work on military and police bots, who are specially shielded and armored. The bot-lock simply cannot pierce their tough hides, and wouldn't knock them out even if it could. It's also never been tested on clones, as passing all that electricity through them has fairly predictable results. The system should only be used against lower-end maintenance and service bots. Of course, given who's going to be USING the thing, this might be a useless warning.

As we're giving this thing to troubleshooters, here's the abuse factor:

The dart is fairly accurate for anyone with a laser skill. Treat as tough. It will travel several hundred feet before the rocket dies. This isn't a HUGE distance, but anything within sight should be hitable.

Only low-end bots will be affected, anything that's been "ruggedized" for military, police, or harsh-environment work will have proper shielding for this sort of attack.

If the bot is rebooted after being taken out, it will have suffered only minor damage... unless other stuff's been done to it. If the bot's main programming terminal is opened, it can be powered back on fairly simply. Anyone with any sort of mechanical, bot, or jury-rig skill can do it in a few moments.

If a bot is shot TWICE (even after being powered back on), there's an 80% chance of severe system-wide damage. A lot of fuses and failover circuits are fried in the process, and most bots don't have triple-redundant boards. This includes any other gauss or electro-magnetic interference (such as with the gauss-generator or a live power wire shoved into the bot). Even if the bot survives, it's almost certain that most memory and programming systems will be wiped clean.

(You were looking for this, I'm sure) If a CLONE is shot with the dart, it'll be ugly. First, the

laser-tipped prongs are designed to puncture the thick reflex armor that gets slapped on most field-bots. It'll go right through troubleshooter reflex, so there's a possibility of getting a chest full of steel. A head shot might save the clone the agony of the electricity that follows. Either way, the voltage will start to be painful and ramp right up to lethal in about 10 seconds. If the clone doesn't get the big dart off FAST, they'll die.

If something electronic/mechanical that's NOT a bot gets hit... well it depends. Most terminals, computer equipment, and vehicles aren't well defended against electrical attacks. Most will end up with melted innards.

Be watchful for any water or other conductive material that's laying about.

This is generally a one-shot system... but. The rocket can only be fired once. The prongs are pressure-sensitive, but will only eject AFTER the rocket's been fired as a safety feature. This means that you can't walk up to something and hand-jam it with the pointy end of the dart, unless you've somehow fired the rocket and NOT had it hit something. SO, it's entirely possible that a clone could fire the rocket off and prevent it from launching, in which case they'll have a... well... an odd sort of pokey-taser-weapon I guess.

On that note, the prongs and the electrical discharge system are tied together, so you can't do one without the other. I don't know WHY you'd want to know that, but I'm sure some clone will try something sooner or later.

Probability Grenade

A revolutionary development in modern warfare, the Probability Grenade Mk 12.4 (Code: AXC-xx.44.4.-SXA) will surely tip the balance against the insidious hordes of traitors!

This weapon was the product of a late night cycle brainbashing (no, not brainstorming, The Computer knows how to encourage fast thinking - and It will resort to anything to get results) session by those maladjusted geniuses at R&D. They thought that, since chance (or probability) has a hand in just about anything that happens, then by harnessing the laws of chance (or probability), anything can be made to happen, as long as it's even remotely possible. Well, things didn't quite work out that way. Instead of harnessing the laws of probability, the scientists were only able to find a way to force it into manifesting itself when a certain trigger is pulled - in this case, the explosion of a grenade.

The Probability Grenade is indistinguishable from the standard-issue Alpha Complex fragmentation grenade, except that it has a Green "P" inscribed on it.

The problems associated with this weapon are similar to that of normal grenades. In most cases the thing is pretty foolproof, unless the PC screws up his or her Grenade skill roll and throws the pin. Otherwise, the possible results on the table below can have a negative effect on the continued existence of the players.

When the PC throws the grenade, roll a D20 on the table below to determine what is called into existence in mid-throw:

d20 Roll	What Pops into Existence
1-5	Normal grenade (see general rules)
6	Tac-nuke grenade (see general rules)
7	Can of Mutant Spew™ cola
8	Laser Pistol (with Red barrel - see general rules)
9	Frisbee
10	Empty wall safe (200 lbs., does I13 to anyone it lands on)
11	Slightly deranged scrubot (I16 to anyone it lands on)
12	Large rock (200 kg., does I16 to anyone it lands on)
13	Nothing - just thin air
14	4 Probability Grenades - roll 4 times on this table
15	Mk 3.5 Tankbot - very angry! (activate clones)
16	40 packets of Crucheetym Algae Chips
17	Tomato
18	40 litres of raw Food Vat effluvium
19	Blue clearance security officer (angry about being “abducted”).
20	1 ton of bricks (victim gets squished)

R&D Hand-outs

Generic Liquid Unifier 1.2

A grey tube with the label "Generic Liquid Unifier 1.2". Content is semi-transparent and has the consistency of motor oil.

Escape Module 1.0

The Escape Module is a black, high-polished (think piano), square box with a big red button on the top that is protected by a safety lid in clear plexiglass. It weighs about 1 kilo. Next to the button there is a big warning sign:

WARNING: Only to be used in extreme danger, when no other alternative exists. Failing to do so may lead to severe injuries, or death.

Under the red button there is a usage instructions label:

To activate: Place on solid ground and make sure there is nothing in contact or hindering the Escape Module. Open the protective lid that covers the activation button by pressing the lid down while removing the hatch that secures it in place. Press and hold the activation button until the Escape Module activates (this should be instant, but may or may not take several seconds).

Foam Grenade

A grey spray-can like cylinder without any label. In one end of the can there is a pin that seems to be attached to some kind of mechanism. The pin looks like it can be pulled.

Tactical Situation Decision Assessment Device

The TSDAD looks like a black, glass orb, a bit smaller than a soccer ball. It weighs about 2 kilos. Underneath, it has a very small label, with very fine printing:

May or may not make the same decisions as our friend the Computer. This device does not in any way reflect the supreme knowledge of our grand leader, the Computer. This device cannot be responsible for any actions or decisions it may propose.

Time Expander 1.0

The time expander looks like a thick belt with a pair of braces. On one side of the device there is a 10cm squared panel. On the panel are several unlabelled LED lights and a big switch, labeled "OFF / ON".

Variable Gel Armor

A red armor that looks much like a normal, full body, impact armor. However, instead of a hard shell, it is soft and gooey. The armor is separated into several parts with clips that connect them together (including the helmet). Another citizen is required to help the bearer to put on or to take off the armor.

Bot Lock Projectile System (3)

The entire system is about the size of a drinking bottle. On one end there is a nifty trigger, the other an arrow like head. You receive 3 Bot Lock Projectiles.

Probability Grenade (3)

The Probability Grenade is indistinguishable from the standard-issue Alpha Complex fragmentation grenade, except that it has a Green "P" inscribed on it. You receive 3 Probability Grenades.