1. Life In Utopia

Greetings, Citizen!

You are a citizen of the far future. Your home is Alpha Complex.

Humanity has advanced greatly since the bad old days of the 20th Century. There is no war. There is no famine. There is no disease. Alpha Complex is a utopia, run by a benevolent and omniscient computer. The Computer is your friend. The Computer provides for your needs. The Computer ensures that each and every citizen of Alpha Complex is happy.

Failure to be happy is treason. Treason is punishable by summary execution.

You *are* happy — aren't you?

We thought so.

You are a clone. According to legend, humans once reproduced by rutting, like vile animals. This is no longer true. Humans are grown in clone banks by The Computer. There is no longer any need for the messy randomness of love, romance and childbirth. The Computer makes certain that every human is genetically perfect in every respect.

See what love The Computer has for its citizens? The Computer is your friend. Trust The Computer.

Each human is part of a *clone family* of six genetically-identical siblings. This is so that no one is ever lonely. Also, The Computer is well aware of the importance of making back-ups, in case of accidental loss or erasure. The Computer is wise. The Computer is benevolent. The Computer is your friend.

The Computer provides everything for the happy citizens of Alpha Complex. It provides food. It provides shelter. It provides entertainment. It provides challenging and meaningful work. It provides for the spiritual and psychological needs of each of its citizens. It exists to serve you.

But... Alpha Complex is at war. It has been at war for all of recorded history. There is constant danger of infiltration by the enemy. The enemy are the "Commies." Traitorous elements within Alpha Complex, such as mutants and secret societies, assist the Commies. These dangerous elements must be rooted out and destroyed. Enemies are everywhere! Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

Security Clearance

Every citizen of Alpha Complex has a *security clearance*. Your clearance is Red. Security clearances correspond to the electromagnetic spectrum: Beneath you in status are the unwashed masses, the laborers and drones of security clearance Infrared; above you in status are Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet and Ultraviolet. Ultraviolet is the highest status.

It is whispered that there are clearances above Ultraviolet, but rumors are treason.

The Computer determines each citizen's clearance with complete impartiality. Higher clearance means greater responsibility; it also brings benefits — larger quarters, more privacy, a greater choice in food. The needs of all citizens are cared for, but those who sacrifice the most for the sake of society and their fellow beings are rewarded most greatly.

Citizens of higher clearance are more knowledgeable and more capable than you, and have advanced because they have selflessly served the greater good. You should defer to higher-clearance citizens at all times.

Failure to do so is treason.

Citizens are expected to wear clothing of the same color as their security clearance. Infrared citizens wear black. It is said that Ultraviolet citizens (also known as High Programmers) wear white, but you have never seen anyone wearing white. Indeed, you have never seen a white wall or a white piece of equipment because of the security laws. You must wear red at all times.

Failure to do so is treason.

In order to make sure that only citizens of the requisite competence, judgment and reliability have access to restricted areas, Alpha Complex is divided into colored areas.

Citizens may only enter areas of their clearance or lower. You must stay within black (Infrared) and Red areas at all times.

Failure to do so is treason.

The Computer is your friend.

Service Groups

All citizens belong to one of eight *service groups*. Each service group serves an important role in Alpha Complex's bureaucracy. Each has its own particular responsibilities. Each constantly struggles with the others for funding, equipment, and personnel. Sometimes the struggle becomes violent. Characters may obtain special equipment, information or personal influence through their service groups.

Internal Security (IntSec) is responsible for weeding out traitors and Commies and maintaining order. It combines the functions of law officers, secret police, and monitors of political orthodoxy. IntSec is cordially hated and feared by citizens in all other services. Its agents are everywhere.

Technical Services (Tech) maintains robots, vehicles, communications hardware, industrial and production systems, and various electronic and mechanical service systems. In practice Tech Services' and Power Services' responsibilities overlap. Vicious bureaucratic rivalry and infighting develops over which group is best suited to serve The Computer in disputed jurisdictions.

Housing Preservation and Development and Mind Control (HPD & MC) is responsible for primary human services — housekeeping, creche management, education, entertainment, recreation, and retirement management. This is the largest, the least prestigious, and the least politically reliable service group. But as dispensers of propaganda, HPD & MC can sway the emotions of the masses, making it in some ways the most powerful.

The Armed Forces (Army) protect Alpha Complex against external invasion by Commie mutant traitors. They also supplement Internal Security against internal threats. Tough, well-trained, well-equipped members of elite units like the vaunted Vulture Squadrons frequently serve as bodyguards and handle high-priority missions within Alpha Complex.

Production, Logistics and Commissary (PLC) is responsible for agricultural and industrial production and allocation of resources. It prepares food and stores and distributes all consumer goods. PLC is only marginally more prestigious than HPD & MC.

Power Services (Power) maintains the power plants and the primary habitat engineering systems of Alpha Complex — traffic, air, water, and waste. Disputes with Technical Services fuel a bitter rivalry between the two groups.

Research and Design (R&D) develops new technology and equipment for use by The Computer and citizens of Alpha Complex. R&D's bold advances are better known for their imaginative conception than their reliability. The Computer is unrestrained in its enthusiastic support for R&D's visionary projects.

Central Processing Unit (CPU) is the central supervisory and administrative authority of Alpha Complex. An entrenched bureaucracy handles records, regulations, human resource engineering, utopian engineering, justice, and executive operations. Certain CPU agents assigned directly by The Computer to projects of special interest enjoy unparalleled autonomy and discretionary powers.

ALL TROUBLE-SHOOTERS REPORT FOR TERMINATION. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Troubleshooters

All player characters belong to the Troubleshooters, an elite service unit composed of citizens from all service groups. Troubleshooters go wherever The Computer orders, solving whatever problems The Computer wants solved. Being a Troubleshooter is the most dangerous job available to any citizen, but it is also one of the few ways a citizen may rapidly rise to higher status.

If you are lucky and serve The Computer well, you may dream of one day joining the ranks of the High Programmers. But you must beware; the Troubleshooter's job is perilous, and there are traitors everywhere.

Mutant Powers

Your character has a mutant power. This can be a great advantage. This can also be a great danger, since having a mutant power is treason. However, your power may help you stay alive as you try to advance in service to The Computer.

Some citizens are *registered mutants*. A registered mutant is a citizen who learns that, through no fault of his own, he is possessed of a treasonous mutant power, and selflessly confesses his flaw to The Computer. In its wisdom and benevolence, The Computer forgives those who make full confession, and permits such mutants to live. However, The Computer requires registered mutants to wear uniforms with yellow stripes at all times. (Yellow clearance mutants wear a black-bordered yellow stripe.) Registered mutants are not subject to summary execution when they use their powers.

Certain powers are considered so dangerous to The Computer that revealing them results in immediate execution. A character would not reveal such a power to The Computer unless he had a death wish.

Registered mutants are self-acknowledged traitors, but their existence is tolerated by The Computer. Dedicated registered mutants may eventually overcome the stigma of their treason.

Excessive knowledge of the use, functions, and limitations of mutant powers is treasonous. Mutant powers are described in considerable detail on pages 68 through 73. Those pages are classified Ultraviolet. For a player to read those pages would be treason. Not that we can stop you.

The Mutant Power Table is printed on Fold-Out A. It is classified Red. You may read it. It lists the names of the most common mutant powers. Powers which are so treasonous that revealing them to The Computer causes immediate termination are marked with an asterisk (*).

Secret Societies

You belong to a secret society. This can be very exciting. This can also be very dangerous, because being a member of a secret society is treason. However, your secret society may help you advance and provide equipment otherwise unobtainable at your security clearance.

Other citizens may be members of other secret societies. Some of these other secret societies may be bitter enemies of your own. You may have many secret enemies.

Naturally, the doctrines, organization and beliefs of secret societies is restricted information. Excessive knowledge of a secret society implies membership in it, and is punishable by summary execution. You can gain such knowledge by reading the Ultraviolet material on pages 42 through 51. Of course, doing so is treason.

The Secret Society Table is printed on Fold-Out A. It is classified Red, and lists the most common secret societies.

Traitors

Mutants and members of secret societies are traitors. All good citizens should report traitors to The Computer. You are a mutant and a member of a secret society. Good citizens would be quite eager to report you to The Computer. Thanks to The Computer, you will often be surrounded by good citizens.
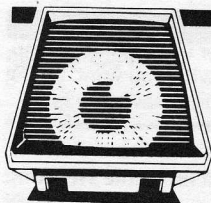
5. Dramatic Tactical Combat

Other roleplaying games have elaborate movement and combat systems reflecting their ancestral wargame heritage. These systems are good for those who enjoy wargames, but they emphasize competition rather than drama, and their complicated rules slow down the action. *Paranoia* uses a ''dramatic tactical system'' — a sort of unsystem to encourage fast and flamboyant action.

The key to the system is total reliance on the gamemaster for the details of movement, combat and environment. You're completely in his hands. You tell him what you want to do, and he'll tell you if you are successful. No counting hexes or phases. No painstaking maneuvering of figures or counters through a complex series of procedures.

The gamemaster tells you what you see. You say what you want to do.

The gamemaster tells you what happens.

In this system the clever gamer does not seek to optimize his tactical advantage over an opponent; he tries to get the best dramatic advantage. The more entertaining tactic will win out over the more deliberate wargaming tactic.

Player: Humph! Stand back, timorous cravens! My character leaps over the barricade into the hail of bullets, sowing grenades like seeds, charging resolutely toward the Commie traitors while chanting ''The Computer is my buddy, I shall not want...''

GM: Bravo! Bravissimo! Well... (rolls thirty times or so for the Commie traitors' automatic weapon attacks, sighs regretfully)

Citizen Atilla-R-HUN-2 displays prudent caution in dealing with possibly dangerous Commie mutant traitor.

they cut you to pieces... (rolls dice again for grenades; brazenly ignores the results) *but* your grenades all miraculously find their marks, the Commie menace is eliminated, you are posthumously awarded the Silver Monitor with Crossed Circuitboards for Bravery, and your next clone receives a brevet promotion. A round of applause, please?

Put on a good show, and Fate will smile on you.

Be boring, and you're dead.
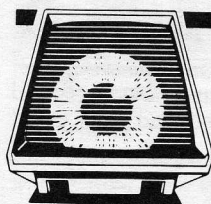
6. Death and Other Untoward Events

So you were boring and you're dead. Now what?

Not to fear! Just because you're dead doesn't mean you stop having fun. As we mentioned before, there are five clones of your character. The Computer took its basic programming lessons to heart, and always makes backups — in this case, six exact copies of each individual. So, if you die, just change the last digit in your name by one.

The Computer delivers your new clone to the site of the action as soon as feasible. Sometimes, if the mission team is a long way from Alpha Complex, that may take a while. Other times, it may take only moments.

Your new clone has the same attributes, skills, credits, mutant powers, secret societies, and so on as your old. True, it is unlikely that identical twins (which is what clones basically are) would have exactly the same interests and bank accounts — but it is a lot simpler this way. And, true, it is odd that, once The Computer has unmasked a mutant, it doesn't realize that his clone siblings must have the same mutation, but there it is. Don't blame us, that's just the way things are in Alpha Complex.

Just because your first clone uses a mutant power doesn't mean that the other players are allowed to execute your second clone. As far as The Computer is concerned, no one is a traitor until proven guilty, and Clone 2 hasn't been *shown* to have a mutant power. Killing him would be treason. Of course, proving that someone's a traitor after he's dead is a lot easier than while he's alive and around to defend himself, but it is in real poor taste to zap somebody's new character the second he arrives on the scene, before he has a chance to get himself into trouble. Such actions will invariably lead to retribution — from gamemaster and other players alike.

What happens if your sixth clone dies? Too bad. Time to make up a new character.
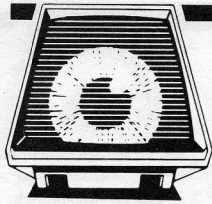
8. Politics, Promotion and Treason

The Rewards of Loyal Service

Serve The Computer! The Computer is your friend! If you are loyal, you will be rewarded.

Of course, it might also be a good idea to serve yourself. And serve your loyal friends so they will serve you. Canny citizens diligently add to their wealth and status through official and unofficial channels whenever possible. Official channels include bonuses, commendations, and promotions through faithful and enthusiastic service to The Computer and Alpha Complex. Unofficial channels include political favors, extortion, graft, underworld connections, clandestine conspiracies, and blackmarket wealth.

In most roleplaying games, characters have two principal goals: **1.** stay alive, and **2.** gain status and power. In *Paranoia* the first goal is likely to require all your attention, at least initially. However, once you catch on to the basic principles of survival in Alpha Complex, your characters can begin to enjoy the benefits of loyal and shrewd service — wealth, status, and power. Best of all, you can do unto others as they would have done unto to you — with weapons of ever-larger muzzle aperture.

IOUs

IOUs are a way of keeping track of favors earned and owed. They are awarded at the gamemaster's discretion when a character has earned the favor of a service group, a secret society, or some other powerful Alpha Complex organization or individual. Each IOU is good only for the organization or individual it has been earned from. (Obviously, PLC wouldn't redeem an IOU earned from the Death Leopard secret society.)

If you have an IOU from an organization or individual, you can use it to demand a favor from them. Tell the gamemaster you're spending your IOU, and make your plea. The gamemaster will tell you whether the request is granted. If it's a treasonous favor, you might want to talk to him in private about it.

IOUs are quite valuable. You won't be awarded one unless you do someone a real service. Don't ask for too much when you cash in an IOU: you'll only get what you want if the group you're asking is able to grant the favor; if the service you did them is of roughly equal value; and it sounds like fun to the GM. Otherwise, you'll be out of luck. Or, the response to your request may be a mixed blessing.
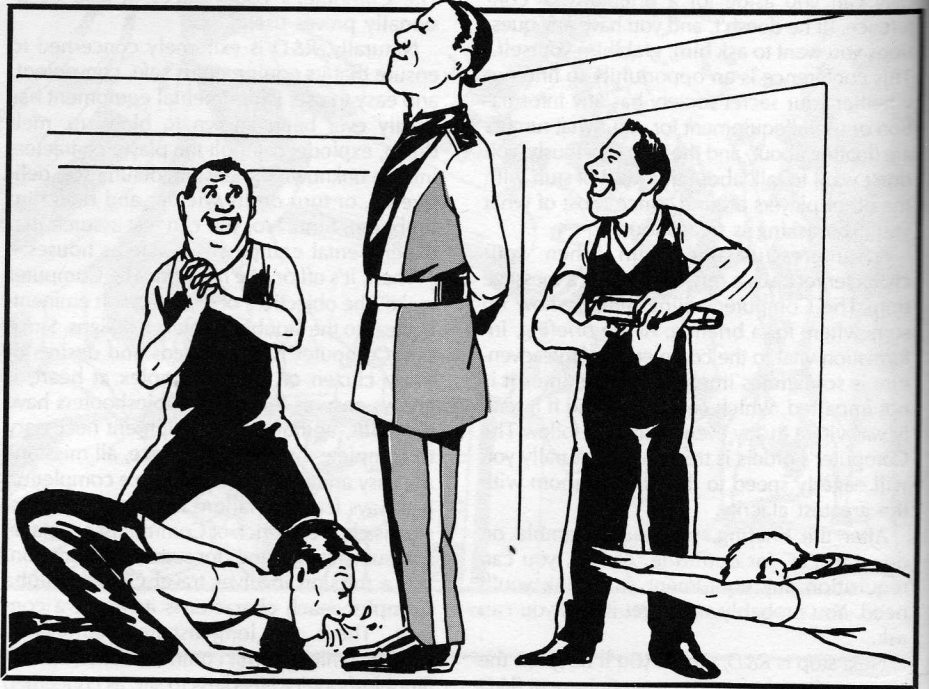
Are you willing to pay . . . The Price of Treason?

Skill Points

Use your skills and you'll probably get better with them. At the end of an adventure, the gamemaster may tell you that you've earned a certain number of skill points. You must immediately spend them to increase skill numbers — just like you spent the 30 points you started with. Sometimes the gamemaster may place restrictions on how you spend your points — he might say, "you can only spend these on agility skills" or something — but if he doesn't, you can spend them on any skills you like.

You *can* increase skills above 12 or 14 — as high as you like. The skill limits only apply to starting characters. Having a skill number greater than 19 may not seem real useful, since a roll of 20 is always a failure, but remember that your gamemaster will sometimes subtract points or even *halve* your skill if you are attempting something real difficult — and half of 26, say, is easier to roll than half of 20.

No, you can't save up skill points. Spend 'em or lose 'em.

Credits

Every citizen has a credit balance — the number of credits he has (or owes) at present. The Computer maintains and stores this information. An updated accounting is always available upon request from The Computer, and is always completely accurate. Always.

The value of the credit is something of a mystery to Alpha Complex economists. The standard of exchange is a secret so carefully guarded that The Computer is rumored not to know it. (Rumors are treason.) Upon one principle all economists agree — the value fluctuates wildly and with no apparent pattern.

Fortunately, citizens are rarely permitted to purchase anything with their credits, so the issue is somewhat academic. Occasionally PLC will have a sale on some over-stocked item (Brunton compasses, drill presses, bits of string, and so forth), but generally The Computer provides — and anything The Computer hasn't provided, you shouldn't be interested in. Now and then esteemed citizens will be offered nice perks (personal autocars, designer jumpsuits, lavish vacations in remote sectors) if they have enough credits to pay for them. And credits are useful for paying fines for offenses like damaging Computer property, vagrancy, and high-sticking.

Troubleshooters are often awarded credit bonuses at the end of an adventure for exemplary performance. A rich reward (1000 credits) is a sign of The Computer's favor. A puny reward (3 credits) is a subtle sign of The Computer's disappointment.

The Computer also offers bounties on the heads of Alpha Complex's most hated enemies — fugitive Troubleshooters, saboteurs, Commie agitators, unregistered mutants, and secret society members. (There is often an informal rivalry among players to see which character can get the highest bounty placed on his head — and to see who can earn it by terminating the vile traitor.)

Since it would be a waste of valuable Computer resources for The Computer to keep track of petty purchases, like the acquisition of a bottle of Bouncy Bubble Beverage or a bag of Cruncheetym Algae Snacks, credit machines are scattered about Alpha Complex. At these machines, you may request up to 100 credits in plasticreds. Plasticreds are round plastic tokens which are the common currency in Alpha Complex. You can also feed plasticreds into a credit machine and credit the sum entered to your Computer account.

Needless to say, plasticreds are commonly used in black market transactions.

Promotion

Naturally, if you perform particularly well, you may expect to be promoted to a higher security clearance. Since money is pretty useless and all goods, respect, trust, and information are rationed purely on the basis of security clearance, this is without any doubt the most important reward you can receive.

The Price of Treason

You wouldn't even think of disappointing The Computer, we're sure. We know you'd never fail to complete a mission, or carelessly allow Computer property to come to harm, or traffic in black market goods, or question a superior's judgment, or misspeak yourself when reporting to The Computer. You were just curious. Sure.

Well, generally, the price of treason is summary execution. But sometimes, in its wisdom, The Computer will refrain from killing you outright. Sometimes it will call for fines, reassignment, drug therapy, personality reconstruction, public censure, or official reprimand.

Lots of actions do not prove treason, but lead to a suspicion of treasonous behavior. The gamemaster keeps track of how much (or little) The Computer trusts you by keeping a treason point total for each character. Everytime you fail to fulfill orders, doubt The Computer, speak or act against The Computer, damage or destroy equipment, use a mutant power, conspire with others, or create suspicion of membership in a secret society, you earn treason points.

The higher your treason point total, the less likely The Computer is to grant you equipment, comply with your requests for information, or believe anything you tell it. Worst of all, if you ever get 20 treason points, you will be terminated.

Luckily, there's a way to reduce your treason point total: perform meritorious service for The Computer. Receiving commendations from your superiors, successfully completing missions, unmasking and executing traitors, and being especially obsequious when talking with The Computer are all likely to do the trick. Getting killed more or less wipes the slate clean for the next clone, too.

TREASON DOES NOT PAY. SERVE THE COMPUTER
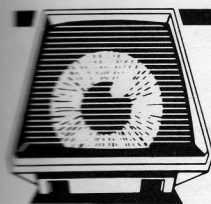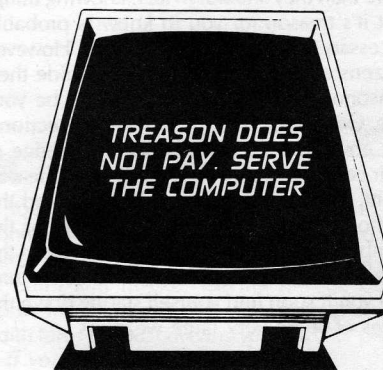
9. *Paranoia* Etiquette

Backstabbing

Most roleplaying games pit player characters against opponents and obstacles posed by the gamemaster. They encourage players to cooperate in the pursuit of a goal.

Paranoia provides opponents and obstacles galore, but it doesn't encourage cooperation. In fact, player characters have every reason to mistrust and fear each other. Personal success is achieved over the bodies of other PCs, and casualties are more often caused by inter-player free-for-alls than by the opposition.

Vicious, deceitful, backstabbing double-dealing is a lot of fun. Remember that everyone else is out to shaft you — and you'll feel a great sense of pleasure when you out-shaft *them* first.

But it's important not to let the paranoid atmosphere of the game leak out into the real world.

Remember! Distrust, deceit, and betrayal among *characters* is all part of the game — but not the way *players* should deal with one another.

Notes and Conferences

Because you'll want to keep the other players in the dark about your activities, you'll often want to communicate with the gamemaster privately. There are two ways to do so: pass him a note, or take him into another room for a private conference.

In a private conference, you can speak and exchange ideas freely. However, you are monopolizing the gamemaster's attention. Do this too much and the other players will resent it. Moreover, if everyone begins asking for frequent private conferences, you'll spend most of your time waiting for the latest conference to end, and *you'll* resent it. Conferences slow things down, so ask for them sparingly.

Note-passing is a more efficient method of secret communication, and doesn't interrupt play. On the other hand, writing a note is slow work, and there's a limit to how much a note can say. Still, whenever feasible, write notes instead of asking for conferences.

Privacy

Many activities that would be unobjectionable in other roleplaying games are bad form in *Paranoia*. For example, looking at another player's character sheet is an unfair way to obtain evidence of treason against him. Eavesdropping on another Troubleshooter while playing in character is fine, but eavesdropping on a private conference between the gamemaster and a player is cheating.

Please respect the privacy of the gamemaster and other players. Ignorance is an important element in the drama of a *Paranoia* adventure. Each player is entitled to the confidentiality of his characters, character records, and player-GM communications.

Ultraviolet Information

Many games divide rules into "Player" information and "Gamemaster" info. So does *Paranoia*. But *Paranoia* depends more than most on keeping the players in the dark. That's why much of this book is classified Ultraviolet.

Only gamemasters are cleared to read the Ultraviolet sections. Naturally, it would be silly to sell someone a game and tell him not to read it, but there are two things we'd like you to do:

1. Don't read the adventure! Only the gamemaster is supposed to do so. Reading it will ruin your enjoyment when you play it. If you do read it, 'fess up to the GM and either don't play that adventure (there's always another time), or try to stop yourself from taking advantage of what you know when you play. Let the other players try to figure out what's going on without the benefit of your superior knowledge.

2. Lots of citizens of Alpha Complex know more than they should. In fact, knowing things that it's treason for you to know is probably necessary if you're going to survive. However, citizens always do their utmost to hide their treasonous knowledge. That should be your rule. Go ahead; read the Ultraviolet sections. But any time you *reveal* your knowledge of their contents during play, you'll earn a treason point. No doubt, even if you didn't read the section, you'd develop a knowledge of the combat system over time — but talk about the details of the system in your first adventure, and you'll soon find yourself staring down the bores of some very large weapons.

New Clones

You're Mod-R-NRT-1, and Fred-Y-LKR blows you away just because you stole his synthochoc ration. The Computer dispatches your next clone. You're still annoyed at Fred-Y, so Mod-R-NRT-2 opens fire...

No! No! Stop it. Yes, Mod-R-NRT-2 has the same personality and abilities as Mod-R-NRT-1, but he is a different person. *You* may still be annoyed at Fred-Y's player, but your *character*, Mod-R-NRT-2, cannot "still" be angry, because he wasn't around when Mod-R-NRT-1 was killed. Mod-R-NRT-2 has no cause to open fire.

If you really want revenge, get it in a more subtle fashion. Keep an eye on Fred-Y and catch him doing something treasonous, or plant evidence on him, or something.

Mod-R-NRT-2 proved to have the mutant power of telekinesis, and was executed for his treason. Mod-R-NRT-3 shows up. Since the players know he has the same power and is therefore a traitor, they open fire...

Wait! Stop! Cut!

Take two.

The *players* may know that Mod-R-NRT-3 has telekinesis, but their *characters* do not. Making every clone identical is a game convenience; it saves a lot of time generating new characters, and is the basis for some cheap jokes. However, the fact that all clones have the same power is not known to the citizens of Alpha Complex, or to The Computer. Just because *you* know that Mod-R-NRT-3 is a traitor does not mean your character does. Act accordingly.

Or... if the players uncover one clone's power, and the gamemaster thinks it is too destructive of the game to give the next clone the same power, he may very well decide, in this special case, to give the next clone a different power. So don't assume that just because the *rules* say all clones have the same power that it's necessarily so.

Paranoia often purposefully blurs the line between the player and his character. However, in many cases, it is important to be aware of the differences, and to not let your feelings control your character's actions — or your character's feelings affect the way you treat the other players. Realize that each clone starts off fresh, and don't carry over one clone's antipathies to the next one. Realize that because one player's character has betrayed yours is no reason to get upset at that player — betrayal is all part of the game.

Keep your role distinct from reality. Failure to do so is treason, and is punishable (for your character) by summary execution, and (for you) by expulsion from the game, in extreme cases.
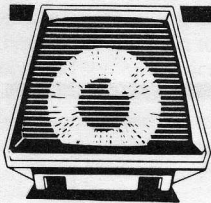
10. Entering the World of *Paranoia*

You can start to play now, if you like. If a gamemaster and other players aren't handy, you can play the solitaire adventure on pages 21 through 24. It will teach you a little more about Alpha Complex, and show you how the game concepts work in practice.

You can also read "Tips for Traitors," pages 25 through 28. It's written by a notable traitor, and contains useful hints for how to survive in the deadly world of *Paranoia*.

You now know how to generate a character, a little about Alpha Complex and The Computer, and enough about the rules to play. Admittedly, you don't know very much, but that is the key to suspense and adventure in *Paranoia*. Life can be very exciting when you don't know who your enemies are. A successful Troubleshooter develops a healthy sense of insecurity.

However, you can't let paranoia paralyze you. You must survive. You must use wit, intuition and daring to rise to higher levels of power and prestige. There you may learn the secrets forbidden by your security clearance.

SECURITY CLEARANCE RED
SECURITY CLEARANCE ORANGE
SECURITY CLEARANCE YELLOW
SECURITY CLEARANCE GREEN
SECURITY CLEARANCE BLUE
SECURITY CLEARANCE INDIGO
SECURITY CLEARANCE VIOLET
ULTRAVIOLET? Beyond? What are they afraid to let you know?

SERVE THE COMPUTER! THE COMPUTER IS YOUR FRIEND.

YOUR FAITHFUL SERVICE WILL BE REWARDED.

BEWARE OF TREASON! THE ENEMY IS EVERYWHERE! YOUR MISSION . . .