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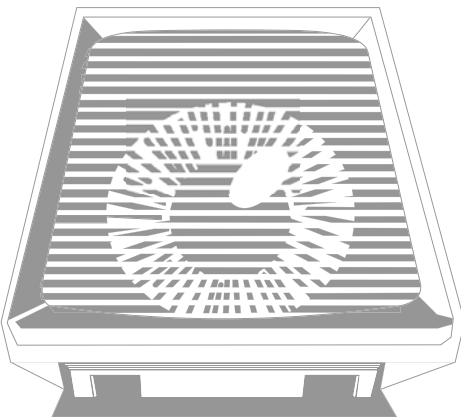
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**WELCOME, CITIZEN, TO ALPHA COMPLEX.
WELCOME TO YEAR 214 OF THE COMPUTER.
WELCOME TO...**

PARA

//Service Pack One//



by **ALLEN VARNEY**

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NOIA

XP



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Based on material published in previous editions of **PARANOIA**: the first edition (published in 1984 by West End Games) and the second edition (published in 1987 by West End Games). None of this material is 'open game content' and none is distributed under any kind of open game license. Eric and Greg own it all, period, end of discussion. That goes for this version, **PARANOIA XP**, as well.

Note on pronoun usage: The Computer suggests any citizen concerned about this game's usage of 'he' for the generic third-person pronoun, instead of 'he or she,' should attend to more important matters, such as serving The Computer with fervent loyalty.

E-mail questions and comments about this game to Mongoose Publishing at sales@mongoosepublishing.com, or write to **PO Box 1018, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 1DG, UNITED KINGDOM**. Visit us on the World Wide Web: www.mongoosepublishing.com.

Published by Mongoose Publishing. Publication **MGP 6630**. ISBN 1-904854-26-5. Published August 2004. **Corrected second printing ('Service Pack 1') December 2004.**

PARANOIA XP — Service Pack 1

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Now commencing *PARANOIA*...

SECURITY CLEARANCE INFRARED— CLEARED FOR ALL CITIZENS

May I be of assistance?

Sure. Why don't you tell me how this roleplaying game works?

I'm sorry, citizen. That information is not available at this time.

Huh? Most games are really eager to teach you the rules.

Not *PARANOIA*. In *PARANOIA* you don't know the rules. You don't know who your enemies are. You don't know how your equipment works. You're never sure why you're doing anything. One thing you do know: Everyone is out to get you.

Ignorance and fear; fear and ignorance. These are your watchwords.

Uhh... The back cover says something about a computer.

In *PARANOIA* you play a Troubleshooter in service to The Computer. Trust The Computer! The Computer is your friend! You are The Computer's trusted agent and protector of Alpha Complex, The Computer's underground city of the far future.

Why am I a Troubleshooter?

You turned in a friend for treason. The Computer had him executed for betraying Alpha Complex. The Computer rewarded you for your loyalty.

Now you root out all traitors and apprehend or execute them. You uncover corruption among The Computer's servants and turn them in to Internal Security. You find trouble, and you shoot it.

What's a 'traitor'?

A traitor is a malevolent human citizen who has betrayed his friend The Computer and seeks to destroy The Computer, Alpha Complex, humanity and life as we know it. You must unmask and destroy all traitors. Watch out! Traitors are everywhere!

Mutants are traitors. These genetic freaks have uncontrollable abilities they selfishly use for their own advancement, rather than to serve Alpha Complex. You must subdue or eliminate them.

Members of **secret societies** are traitors. In organizations unsanctioned by The Computer they conspire irresponsibly to undermine the good order of Alpha Complex. You must destroy them.

By the way... *you* are a mutant, *and* a member of a secret society. You are a traitor.

Wait, I'm a traitor?

That is correct. Your fellow Troubleshooters would be eager to unmask you as a traitor and execute you. You work with many Troubleshooters. They all carry powerful weapons.

Let me get this straight. My job is to hunt and kill traitors. I work with other people who have the same orders. They all want to kill me?

Not quite. They all want to kill *traitors*. They don't know you're a Commie mutant traitor. Yet.

If they find out?

They'll apprehend or kill you, as any right-thinking citizen would. Of course, if you convict them of treason *first*, The Computer will have them executed, and you may survive. Note, though, false accusations of treason are themselves treason.

So I want to prove they're traitors before they can prove I'm a traitor. If I don't, I die?

Precisely. Dead traitors cannot testify to their own innocence, or to your guilt. It is convenient to be the last Troubleshooter on your team left alive.

The good news is, Troubleshooters routinely get shot, stabbed, incinerated, mangled, poisoned, blown to bits, and occasionally stapled, so you have many opportunities to ensure your teammates meet their just end.

Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

...Are you sure this will be fun?

Certainly, citizen! Fun is mandatory. The Computer says so, and The Computer is your friend. Do you doubt The Computer? Doubting The Computer is treason.

Uh! No, certainly not. If The Computer says fun is mandatory, then this certainly will be fun. Only a Commie mutant traitor could believe otherwise.

Excellent! You're getting the idea. As a sign of its trust, The Computer promotes you to Security Clearance RED. Welcome to *PARANOIA*.

Attention, player!

Obtain **brass** and a **pencil**. Obtain **one 20-sided polyhedral die**, available in hobby stores. Obtain **three to six other players**, one of whom will be the Gamemaster (GM) who runs the game.

Whether or not you are familiar with the concept of roleplaying games, read the **Non-example of play** later in this introduction. If you are already familiar with other roleplaying games, also read the **boxed text** titled 'What You Must Forget.'

Now you may begin to play *PARANOIA*. True, you know nothing about the game yet. This is acceptable and even desirable for *PARANOIA*.

If you insist, you may read all of the **Player section**, which begins on page 7 and ends on page 48. It teaches a bit about the *PARANOIA* setting, how to create your Troubleshooter character, and *nothing at all of any importance* about the rules of the game. The Player section section is classified Security Clearance RED. You are now a Troubleshooter with Clearance RED, so you may read this section without fear of execution.

The rest of this book—the **Gamemaster section**, **Sourcebook** and **Mission**—is classified Clearance ULTRAVIOLET. This is above your clearance, so you are not permitted to read it. Only the Gamemaster, the person who runs the game, may read it. If you read any Gamemaster material, or display any knowledge of its contents during play, you are a traitor and subject to summary execution.

Of course, you paid for this nice book and would like to get your money's worth, so naturally you'll read it anyway. Don't tell your Gamemaster you did. Pretend you haven't read it. If he asks, look him straight in the eye, cross your heart, spit over your

shoulder and promise you have *never, ever* read the book and you have no intention of doing so. Of course he will believe you.

By the way—and this is for real—**don't read the mission!** No, really, don't. A mission is a story the Gamemaster will inflict—*run* for your characters. If you know all the plot details and surprises in advance, you'll have less fun when you play.

Attention, Gamemaster!

Oh fortunate one, most trusted of The Computer's servants, you are Clearance ULTRAVIOLET and therefore may read this entire book. Read the Player section first so you know what your players know, then read the rest. You don't have to memorize anything; *PARANOIA* is a game of freewheeling improvisation, and you can revise, upgrade, ditch or bluff about any rule as you go along. Players can't argue with you—they're not allowed to show they know the rules.

The Player section includes rules for creating Troubleshooter characters. However, the first few times you play, we suggest you give your players the pregenerated (ready-made) characters in the Mission section. Photocopy these characters and hand them out to your players before you begin their mission.

The first time you run *PARANOIA*, use the mission provided in this book. This is an unusual game, and by using the mission, you'll see how to do things. Later you'll devise your own missions to delight and torment your players.

Attention, longtime players and Gamemasters!

Citizen: Friend Computer!

The Computer: At your service!

Citizen: Please tell what happened when you Crashed in the *Crash Course Manual*, and how you came back, and what happened to Alpha Base.

The Computer: Your request is senseless. The Computer has never Crashed. There is no such place as Alpha Base. Any statement to the contrary is a rumor. Rumors are treason.

Citizen: But what about the Secret Society Wars, and MegaWhoops, and Reboot Camp?

The Computer: The *PARANOIA* products that refer to these fictitious events have never existed. They are now un-products. You have experienced bizarre hallucinations.

Be reassured! Due to highly advanced engineering and multiply redundant systems, your friend The Computer cannot Crash. It is impossible. The Computer cannot fatal exception error.

[Feedback squeal, followed by a long pause.]

Citizen: Um... Friend Computer?

Computer: [Happy xylophone tune.] Welcome to *PARANOIA* XP. Please press Control-Alt-Delete to log on.

The first edition (1984) and second edition (1987) of *PARANOIA* were, of course, perfect. The Computer says so. This edition is even *more* perfect. Entirely new character creation and rules systems make the game more like what it really is. To improve efficiency and fun, characters from previous editions



INTRODUCTION

CLEARANCE INFRARED

are completely incompatible with the new rules. Other (non-fun) games would offer a character conversion system. In **PARANOIA** XP no conversion is required, because older characters could not possibly have survived this long.

PARANOIA XP re-emphasizes the darkly humorous tone of the game's first edition while retaining the fast-paced, rules-light approach of the second. This edition also offers three play styles, each with its own tone and sometimes slightly different rules.

- ② If you've discussed your fondest memories of **PARANOIA**, did you speak of frenzied firefight fiascos in briefing rooms, elevators and sewers? Multiple deaths in Research & Design before the mission began? Did you use the phrase 'giant radioactive mutant cockroaches'? Of course you did. The *Classic* play style retains these elements.
- ③ Experienced players may also like the more restrained *Straight* style, which gives Troubleshooters a halfway decent chance to survive (gasp!) through several missions.
- ④ To initiate new players into the pleasures of Alpha Complex, try *Zap*, a fast and frantic shoot-em-up where no one gets out alive.

Non-example of play

Nearly every published roleplaying game (RPG) starts with an explanation of how an RPG works. We Famous Game Designers used to skip reading these, until we realized they tell a lot about the designers' philosophy. Many RPGs describe roleplaying as 'It's "let's pretend," but with rules.' Others call it a deeply emotional collaboration in storytelling. Some offer scholarly and arcane discussions of Gamist, Narrativist and Simulationist RPG philosophy. Some indie games even compare roleplaying to laying down tracks in a hot jazz band.

We like all these descriptions. **PARANOIA** is somewhat like all of them, in a non-jazz-band sort

of way, but it's also different. **PARANOIA** is also something of a psychological exercise.

Because of this, we won't tell you how to play, unless you're cleared for it. We won't even show you an example of play for this game. Instead, here's an example from some other game.

PARANOIA is set in a high-tech future underground city of lasers, robots, cloned citizens and an insane Computer. This game has no character classes—no warriors, wizards, priests or rogues—no magic and, aside from the occasional giant radioactive mutant cockroach, no monsters.

Yet, that said, a good way to dramatize the unique nature of **PARANOIA** is to imagine another RPG's familiar dungeon crawl filtered through the paranoid mindset.

If Popular Fantasy RPG™ worked like PARANOIA

Gamemaster: You're in a long dungeon hallway with a dirt floor, stone walls and an arching stone ceiling. There are burning torches in wall sconces every ten feet. You see one door.

Warrior player: What color is the stone?

GM: Sort of orange.

Rogue player: Aah! I'm only Clearance RED! Get me out of here!

Priest player: I'm casting *Mass raise security clearance* to make us all ORANGE. *[Passes note to the GM: 'I'm also casting Subvert to Communism on the warrior.']*

Wizard player: I'm using the Gem of Memory to document the priest's spellcasting. I, uh, may want to study his technique later.

Priest: Of course, of course. *[Looks significantly at the rogue, whom he converted earlier. The rogue nods and passes a note to the GM. The GM rolls a 20-sided die (1d20).]*

GM: All right. You're all ORANGE for the moment and can pass safely down the hallway. Your orders, you recall, were to investigate the door. *[Passes note to warrior: 'You feel a strange, treasonous impulse to overthrow the existing social order and restore power to the people.']*

Warrior [Gulps]: Come, Comra— fellow heroes, let us break down the door!

Wizard: Wait! Did you almost call us 'Comrades'? That's a Commie word!

Priest: Of course he didn't. I heard nothing of the sort.

Rogue: Nor I. Are you leveling false accusations against our leader? That's treason.

Wizard: Don't anybody move! I'm not only leveling accusations, I'm leveling my Wand of Fireballs against all three of these traitors. By the way, I'm recording all this with the Gem of Memory.

GM: When you reach for it, you notice the Gem is missing.

Rogue: Uh-oh! You've lost a valuable magical item. That'll mean a heavy fine at the guildhall.

Wizard: I'm firing a fireball at all of them!

GM [Rolls a 20-sided die]: I'm sorry, it appears your experimental Wand of Fireballs has backfired. In a trice you are immolated in a ball of flame. Fortunately the fire is orange, so at least your charred body hasn't breached its proper security clearance. Scratch one wizard. Your next simulacrum has been dispatched from the guildhall and should arrive shortly.

Wizard: You bastards are gonna pay.

GM: No comments from the currently dead, please. Suddenly the door opens. A huge hobgoblin in leather armor stands there with his broadsword drawn. On his chest you see the mark of a silver hand.

Rogue: I attack him with—

Warrior: Wait! I wave my fingers at him from under my chin.

Priest and rogue: What?

GM: The hobgoblin nods at your recognition signal and lowers his sword. He waves you all inside. Who's going in first?

Warrior, priest and rogue [Pointing at each other]: Him!

...And so on. To repeat, none of the traditional fantasy elements in this example resemble anything in Alpha Complex, the underground city of **PARANOIA**. At this point you know nothing much about Alpha Complex.

Keep it that way. You may live longer.

What you must forget

If you have prior experience with other roleplaying games, this is regrettable but can be overlooked. However, it is mandatory to abandon the following notions, which interfere drastically with the **PARANOIA** experience:

1. **Solidarity among characters or players.** Other (non-fun) RPGs exhort you to do your part in the adventuring party, split the loot equally, avoid internal strife and generally play good little scouts. In **PARANOIA** this trusting behavior will get you killed six times in six minutes. Trust no one, especially your fellow players.
2. **The quest for weapons and loot.** Other games reward your efforts with treasure, cool new powers and ever more damaging attacks. Most powerful weapons in **PARANOIA** are experimental. You'll learn quickly not to trust experimental weaponry. You have a mutant power, but it too is hard to control and prone to backfires. The Computer rewards successful missions with credits, which you can spend on a variety of useful or gratuitous possessions—but only if you're cleared to own them.
3. **Shaping a complex personality.** In other games you can craft a highly individual character of emotional depth, who grows and changes over time in fascinating ways. In **PARANOIA** it is unwise to grow attached to your Troubleshooter, whose lifespan is typically measured in days, if not hours. The Computer prizes conformity; interesting or outlandish behavior is not actually illegal but always suspicious. Instead of plumbing depths of character, experience the game's atmosphere. You'll probably enjoy the game more if you treat your Troubleshooter as a stand-in for your own hopes, schemes and fears.
4. **Comprehensive attributes, skills and combat options.** Many other RPGs have elaborate character creation, movement and combat systems. These games offer a well-designed character a broad range of control in almost any situation. In **PARANOIA** you have no control. The Gamemaster decides all details of movement, combat and the environment. Your character survives entirely at the pleasure of the GM, who shields you from other players so long as you do entertaining things. Entertain or die.

The GM tells you what you see. You say what you want to do. The GM tells you what happens. You don't try to optimize your tactical advantage; instead, you want the best *dramatic* advantage. The most entertaining character wins; put on a good show and Fate will smile on you. You'll enjoy watching the boring characters die like—well, like Troubleshooters. Won't that be fun?

Of course it will. Fun is mandatory.