

PARANOIA[®]

THE HOLE BLAME

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THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK ARE CLASSIFIED ULTRAVIOLET
SERIOUSLY, PLAYERS WILL RUIN ALL THE FUN IF THEY READ THIS



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INTRODUCTION

W A R N I N G

This book is for Ultraviolet clearance **only** and restricted to Gamemasters planning on **running** missions.

An R&D project created a literal black hole in TRK Sector, which of course escaped confinement and grew larger as it gobbled up whatever (or whoever) is in its path. That is why it makes perfect sense for The Computer to send the Troubleshooters after a notorious but small-time thief. Once in TRK Sector, the team finds themselves being re-tasked by Service Groups looking to blame R&D for the catastrophe and steal their budget. The problem? Nobody will acknowledge the black hole's existence – not even The Computer.

The Hole Blame can work as a sequel to the two missions in the *Project Infinite Hole* box set (*Filling an Infinite Hole* and *Hot Box*) or function as a standalone mission. In the latter case, it is recommended that the GM read the other missions for context, although players do not need to have any knowledge of the events therein. Keep them ignorant and enjoy their confused little faces when they realise 'black hole' is not code for a new type of soylent.

Mission Background

Recently, R&D researcher Christof-G-MCV accidentally created a black hole in what came to be known as Project Infinite Hole. After the singularity escaped containment and started increasing in size, the project was considered a failure. Christof-G was terminated and, in his posthumous trial, found mega guilty of negligent terrorism, breaking the laws of physics and not completing form AP303-214EZ 'Request to Endanger All Life as We Know It for Improvements (Minor)'.

His next clone sent a Troubleshooter team to destroy all evidence he could gather on the project, the black hole and any connection to him or R&D (being on your last clone helps focus survival instincts). But it is not like he could simply walk into a CompNode and erase Friend Computer's memory cache. Thankfully, he did not have to. As the black hole grew, it kept destroying The Computer's servers, effectively wiping Friend Computer's memory of its existence ('It' being the black hole, not The Computer itself. A slightly insane Computer is fun. A Computer having an existential crisis, reading Camus and struggling to find meaning in an uncaring universe is less fun and definitely more pretentious). Even when It learned of the black hole again, it soon lost the memory and the cycle started over again.

Because The Computer says the singularity does not exist, all citizens in TRK Sector realised they must not see it either. These daycycles, people carefully walk past the black hole and either adamantly agree there is nothing there (not even a whole lot of nothing) or die a painful, crushing death. This eased the pressure on R&D in general and Christof-G in particular but enemies can be tenacious.

Resources are scarce in Alpha Complex, and R&D uses a lot of them for experiments. The other Service Groups (see page 123 of the *Gamemasters Handbook*) imagined all the stuff they could get if only R&D was shut down for creating some kind of world-ending disaster. That is why the others have begun trying to get The Computer to remember that the black hole exists. They hope this will bring The Computer's wrath down upon R&D, freeing up valuable resources that would be better put to use in generating power, funding the military, producing food or giving Service Group leadership a third home.

Meanwhile, the black hole has been consuming tonnes of matter as it travels through TRK Sector, pulling in furniture, loose items, bots, Infrared citizens and other useless objects. The Computer, having no memory of the black hole, has come to the conclusion that the rash of missing item reports are due to a thief. It has therefore ordered a Troubleshooter team to bring this thief to justice and recover the stolen items.

Does this mean the Troubleshooters will have to arrest a black hole? No but do not tell that to the players.



1. Loot from Above

The mission starts in nearby WCH Sector with the Troubleshooters getting ready for their midday meal. However, make sure the characters already have their Mandatory Bonus Duty.

You are all eating lunch with about 100 other Red-clearance citizens in one of the WCH Sector 'Eat This!' cafeterias, conveniently located right below an elevated transbot track. The loud rumbling and showers of sparks from overhead are considered ambiance.

Right about the time you're trying to decide whether the package on today's lunch is wrong and you CAN believe this isn't organic, a transbot labelled 'R&D Failures DO NOT TEST' passes overhead and crashes into a support beam with a startling CRUNCH, SMASH, KAPOW! After which the entire cafeteria is showered with cargo from the transbot; an assortment of unfamiliar-looking devices, possibly experimental ones. After a moment where everyone looks at the security cameras and then each other, citizens start grabbing the items. Do you?

Ask the players what they want to do. Each Troubleshooter is equipped with their Red jumpsuit and laser pistol, as well as any personal belongings they might have already purchased. Here are the most likely things the players might try:

- **Be loyal and stop citizens from stealing stuff:** Violence + Intimidate, Brains + Psychology or Chutzpah + Charm are some approaches that would work. Failure means the citizen absconds with some loot after showing a very rude gesture to the Troubleshooter.
- **Screw it, I'm stealing stuff:** Brains + Stealth or Chutzpah + Bluff. Success lets a Troubleshooter get away with secretly stealing one item from the R&D Loot Table (at least, they may think they are getting away with it). Give the matching Equipment card to the player from the deck that came with the Project Infinite Hole box set (or the GM can substitute any other item if preferred). Failure means another citizen is recording the Troubleshooter just as they take something. A Computer symbol means The Computer spots the attempted theft and enquires about the guilty Troubleshooter's intentions.