

PARANOIA™

Mr Bubbles

Credits

ALLEN VARNEY

Writer/Scapegoat

RICHARD FORD

Editing /Drillbot

TONY EMSON

Interior Illustrations/Treasonous Propaganda

WILL CHAPMAN

Layout/Infrared drone

CHARLOTTE LAW

Proofreader/Intsec goon

DAN GELBER

GREG COSTIKYAN

ERIC GOLDBERG

Original game design & development/

Building committee

THE COMPUTER

Looking after your best interests

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Security Clearance **ULTRAVIOLET** **WARNING:**

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen
of Security Clearance **VIOLET** or lower is treason punishable by
punishable by prolonged disintegration, starting with your toes.

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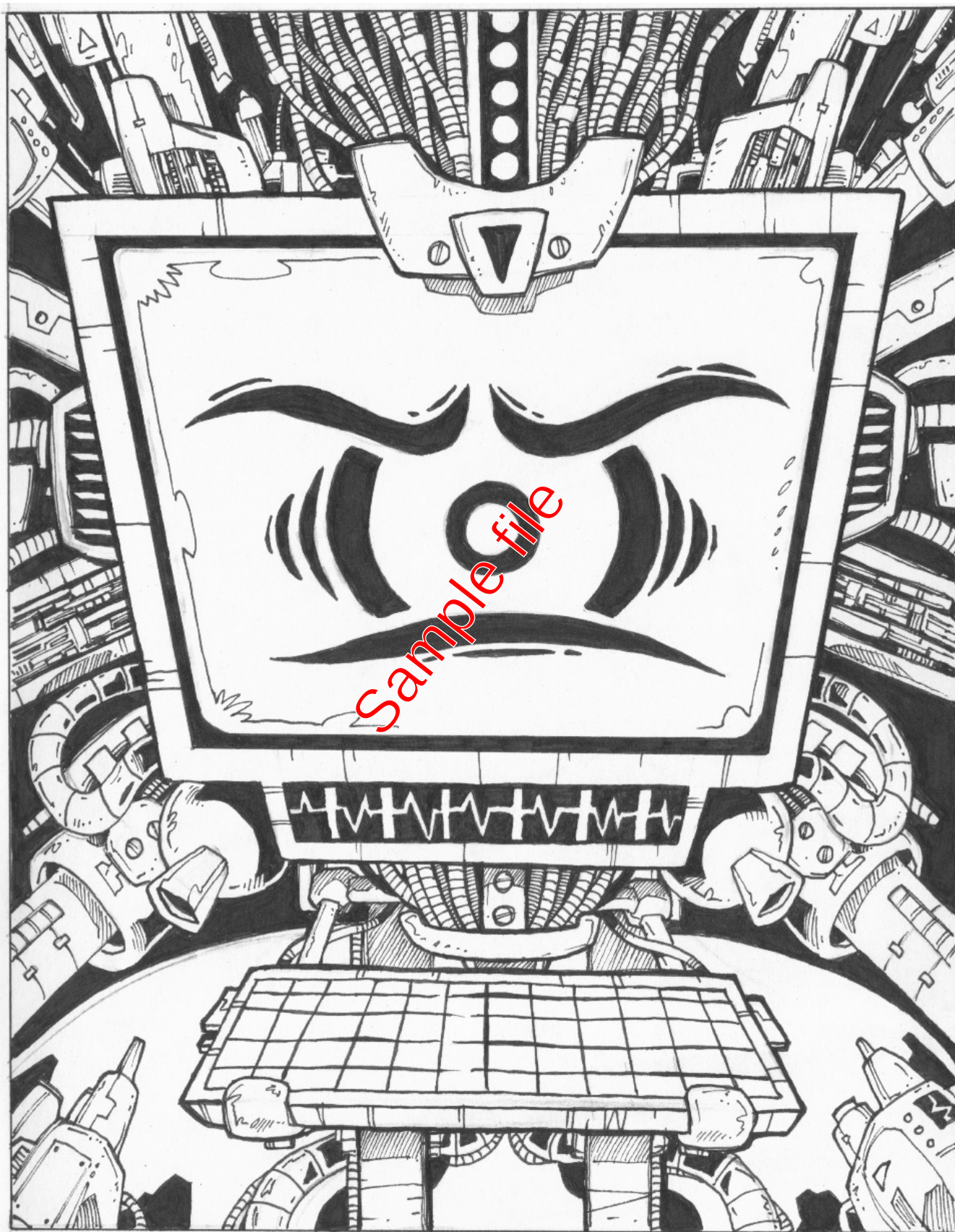
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MISTER BUBBLES

WARNING: ULTRAVIOLET CLEARANCE

Only the Gamemaster in charge of running the mission for everyone else should read this mission. If you intend to be a player, you'll enjoy the game much more if you haven't learned how to avoid all the horrific... uh, spoiled all the fun surprises for yourself.

No, really. Stop reading now and find some other pleasant diversion with which to pass the time. Check out www.Paranoia-Live.net, perhaps. Or television can be awfully nice this time of year.

Okay, now that we've shooed all your players out of the room, here's what you, the Gamemaster, need to do.

Consider the provided characters

On pages 5-8 we provide six pre-made Troubleshooters for use with this mission. Photocopy them, cut them out and give them to the players. If you want you could have your players make their own. Note, though, the six characters included here are designed to heighten potential for conflict, and the mission has some cues specifically tailored for them. If you create new characters, review the mission to determine how these new characters should fit into it.

Each character has two narrow specialties left blank. Players may fill these in before the mission begins or, with your permission, select them when inspiration hits along the way. They each have one tic chosen, so each player starts with 30 Perversity points. However, let players pick out a second tic before the game begins to get 5 more points.

Whether you use these characters or create new ones from scratch, you need to secretly generate Access and Power attribute values for each one. Do not inform the players of their attribute values!

Pre-game preparation

First, read through the whole mission. You don't need to memorise any details; you just want to get a sense of how everything fits together. Start with just the episode summaries; then go back and read each episode in more detail.

Second, review the associated handouts. Note how the characters relate to each other and to the nature of the mission. You'll need to tear out or copy a few things to give to your players during the game. This includes:

- ☞ The pregenerated characters (overleaf), if you are using them.
- ☞ The Mission Alert, which you hand to your players in Episode 1.
- ☞ Several copies (at least six or eight, maybe up to a dozen) of the Spam E-Mail page, cut up into individual pieces. You will be giving each of your players one or more (a lot more) of these during the course of play from Episode 3 on.
- ☞ One or more copies of the Mission Assessment forms cut up into individual pieces, which you hand out among your players at debriefing.

Third, roll and record Power and Access attributes for each character.

Fourth, if you can, get a bunch of poker chips. They really do aid in the tracking and awarding of Perversity.

Mission background

A hacker in the Computer Phreaks secret society, Don-R-PNU-4 (aka 'Alley G8R') has decided he is tired of receiving so much e-mail spam... er, 'unsolicited mandatory sales material'... from independent PLC service firm contractors on his PDC. Not satisfied with merely bouncing the spam back to its originators, he has decided to physically punish the spammers by inserting a bit of viral programming he calls 'Mister Bubbles' into all scrubots in the area. Infected bots now consider spamming unclean and apply their cleaning implements excessively to those responsible... with potentially lethal results.

This is *not* the problem your players' Troubleshooters are supposed to deal with. Their first mission assignment is *supposed* to be a routine investigation of missing reactor materials. However, a small 'incident' with a transbot takes the unwitting team to the wrong place and before they know it, they're on the trail of the rogue scrubots.

Mission summary

Here's a quick rundown of the sections of this mission:



1: That 'new mission' smell

The Troubleshooters receive their very first mission alert and eagerly do their best to report for duty. After a close call at the transbot platform, they're taken to a place that might be their briefing room and discover someone who might be their briefing officer having what appears to be a nervous breakdown. Forced to make the best of it, they learn what little they can about a scrubot-related problem which might be the assignment they're supposed to complete. Then a helpful jackobot escorts them to PLC for outfitting.

2: What the market will bear

Actually, the helpful jackobot escorts them to the nearest IR Market, a not-exactly-legal mall that is equal parts infomercial and flea market. There, dozens of motivated businessmen are waiting to separate the Troubleshooters from whatever credit they still possess, selling them everything from junk souvenirs to spare bot brains to surface-to-air missiles... if the price is right.

3: You'll never eat lunch in this town again

Eventually brought back together again, the team witnesses a scrubot attack on PLC employee Marco-G-BUD. The team (hopefully) leaps to his rescue. But just as it seems they have been thrown back onto the track of their mission, a casting director from HPD&MC shanghai's them to fulfill a service firm service, auditioning for a new season of the reality-vid series *Shooters*. After taking on additional obligations and instructions, they hear about another scrubot attack and either volunteer or are ordered to investigate. About this same time, someone begins bombarding their PDCs with spam messages.

Numberless NPCs

A number of NPCs in the mission have no listed skills or other ratings. In general, if you need to make rolls for these NPCs, assume all their base skills are at 7. They have any common specialty (+4 more) that seems plausible, especially if it makes the situation more interesting. Low-clearance citizens generally have a laser pistol with a barrel or two of the appropriate color, but no armor; high-clearance citizens may pack a backup weapon with more punch and wear a layer of kevlar under their clothes.

4: Crime Scene Incinerators

This latest attack has occurred in a PLC Vat center. The team checks out the murdered shift supervisor and interrogates the scrubot suspect. Fortunately, the victim's office is full of clues. It looks like he was a spammer and some Computer Phreak is taking revenge. In fact, some of the spam the Troubleshooters have started receiving came from this guy. Who will be the scrubots' next victim? Even as they start thinking about Marco-G-BUD, whom they saved at the start of Chapter 3, the spam bombardment steps up.

5: Avengers, dissemble!

Maybe the team should help Marco-G-BUD survive (or not) what will surely be another attack on his person. Marco-G is helping his BLUE Clearance manager review a set of R&D prototypes for possible mainstream release. The Troubleshooters get dragged into the negotiations in a laboratory that turns out even more dangerous than it looks, as a combat-equipped 'WarScrubber' prototype scrubot is activated. Infected with the Mister Bubbles virus, it does its level best to kill Marco-G. It also informs every other scrubot in the area, and a horrific wave of industrial-strength cleaning drops descends on the lab. The Troubleshooters must find a back way out of the deathtrap.

6: Every scrubot my enemy

Whether they save or destroy Marco-G, the spam problem has gotten out of control: The team's own PDCs have been hijacked as spam-senders, and the scrubots now think they are part of the problem as well. A veritable army of scrubots comes after the Troubleshooters, who must flee on Transitions. The team races desperately across the sector to reach the pickup platform.

7: There's no briefing like debriefing

A transbot whisks the Troubleshooters back to Troubleshooter Central, where in a shocking example of rare coincidence they run into none other than virus writer Don-R-PNU-4. After a fairly easy capture and an unexpected sense of closure, the team strides confidently into debriefing... where someone they've never seen before asks them about a mission they've never heard of. Apparently they've been on the wrong assignment all along.

On the bright side, they seem to have earned the eternal gratitude of PLC... or at least, they've ended up on PLC's eternal junk-mail list.

Other play styles

'Mister Bubbles' is intended for Classic-style play but has been designed with some Straight-leaning tendencies (such as non-silly character names). If you want to play the mission Straight, we provide notes in each episode. In general, the Straight strategy is:

- ☞ Shift emphasis from random death to the risk of discovery. Troubleshooters who are constantly faced with imminent vaporization rarely bother to consider the consequences of their instinctive responses. If you reduce the imminent threat of dismemberment, being seen doing something you shouldn't—or not doing something you should—becomes a more pressing concern.
- ☞ Pay closer attention to Tension (Tension attention?), and make it clear when someone has been caught. A guard on monitor duty calls up on the PDC and inquires what's going on. The Computer may be less accessible; PCs have to work through mid-level managers and Internal Security goons. Levy small fines often; make execution rare. Encourage players to deal with treason with accusations instead of assassinations. Anyone who draws a gun on someone else had better be ready to explain why.
- ☞ Replace slapstick with uncomfortable humor. In Classic style, when something goes wrong, everyone laughs—even (especially) the victim—and you move on. In Straight style, when something goes wrong, it can be funny, but someone still has to deal with it. And every second that goes by increases the chances a camera will notice.
- ☞ Pay more attention to money. Charge small amounts—a credit or two—for routine things that the Troubleshooters do, such as using a transbot. They have a lot of money to start with but they'll eagerly flush it away in a snap if they think they won't need it.

You don't need to track expenses for everything, but making your players feel like they might need to keep some cash around—in other words, like their money is real—can add a distinctly Straight tone all by itself.

Playing 'Mister Bubbles' as a Zap-style mission is left as an exercise for the trigger-happy.

Character Portrait

Peter-R-WQR-1

Male PLC Hygiene Officer

Service firm: PowerPatch

Service firm type: Inventory System Updaters

Security clearance: RED

Credits: 903

Tics: Needs to have *exact* counts of things

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Gunther-R: I think we're outnumbered!

Peter-R: Of course we're outnumbered! Why, there must be— wait a second, I'll check. One... Two... Three... Four... *GAAAAAIGH!*

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 09

Con Games 17
Chutzpah 13
Bootlicking 01
Intimidation 01
No Matter How Clean Something Is,
Find One Little Thing Wrong 15

Stealth 09

Disguise 13
Shadowing 01
Next-to-Last One Out of the Room
in a Crisis 15

Violence 05

Energy Weapons 09

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware: 04

Make Noisy Annoying Machines
Even Noisier and More Annoying 10

Software 07

Data Search 11
Financial Systems 11
Bot Programming 01
Vehicle Programming 01
Encode Secret Message
in Otherwise Innocuous Data 13

Wetware 06

Pharmathrapy 10
Biosciences 01

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2 (Violence,
Wetware)

Character Portrait

Gunther-R-BOK-1

Male Armed Forces Loyalty Officer

REGISTERED MUTANT

Service firm: Red Detectors

Service firm type: Threat Assessors

Security clearance: RED

Credits: 440

Tics: Absentmindedly gnaws on things he's holding.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Peter-R: How much ammo do you have left? I need to know exactly.

Gunther-R: *[Speak with a pen in your mouth]* Rr hh rbmt ffr flps mmph.

Peter-R: What?

Gunther-R: *[Take the pen out of your mouth]* I said, I have about four shots left.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 05

Intimidation 09
Bootlicking 01
Shout *Even Louder!!!* 11

Stealth 08

High Alert 12
Sleight of Hand 01

Violence 09

Energy Weapons 13
Projectile Weapons 13
Unarmed Combat 01
Draw and Holster Weapon in Slick-Looking Way 15

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 08

Mechanical Engineering 12
Chemical Engineering 01
Hit It Hard Enough to Make It Work
Once More Before Falling Apart 14

Software 05

Vehicle Programming 09
Financial Systems 01

Wetware 05

Medical 09
Outdoor Life 09
Cloning 01
Induce Vomiting in Self 11

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2 (Stealth,
Software)

Character Portrait

Dexter-R-FCP-1

Male Tech Services Equipment Guy

Service firm: ColorRight

Service firm type: Paint Control

Security clearance: RED

Credits: 478

Tics: Mistakes bots for people and vice versa.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Dexter-R: Ah, here's a handy jackobot to help with the gear.

Hunter-R: What? It's me, Hunter-R!

Dexter-R: Why are you impersonating a bot? Team Leader, I think Hunter-R is insane.

Guardbot: I am sorry, citizen. I do not understand your request. Please restate.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

[No specialties]

Stealth 08

Security Systems 12
Disguise 01
Hear Own Name Being Said by Others 14

Violence 06

Energy Weapons 10
Fine Manipulation 10
Projectile Weapons 01
Pratfall in a Way That Looks Like It Hurt
Worse Than It Did 12

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 09

Habitat Engineering 17
Nuclear Engineering 13
Bot Ops & Maintenance 01
Weapon & Armor Maintenance 01
Make Measurements of Parts
Without Need for Tools 15

Software 09

Bot Programming 13
Data Analysis 01
Convince Guardbot to Seek Other Target 15

Wetware 04

Biosciences 08
Bioweapons 01

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
(Management, Wetware)

Dexter-R-FCP-1

Male Tech Services Equipment Guy

Mutation: Electroshock

Society: Mystics (degree 2);
actually Illuminati (degree 3)

Secret skills: Drug Procurement 06, Meditation
06, Propaganda (Mystics) 06

Background

Maybe it's just because you're a fair bit older than most, but everyone seems so preoccupied with... everything... these days. What is it with these youngsters? They're so... motivated... all the time. They're going to make themselves ill if they try to constantly maintain such a frantic pace. They should learn to relax!

Part of your recent promotion to RED Clearance included training as an Equipment Guy. Hopefully nobody has a weapon malfunction or anything... 'cause that's not really your strong point. Ducts and plumbing, on the other hand: that's right up your alley! Hopefully the team will get lots of ducts and plumbing issued to it.

As for your presence on this team as a representative of Technical Services, you've heard there are some serious problems in the field with equipment not being thoroughly painted in its proper Security Clearance color. Whenever you see places or equipment that have been incorrectly color-labeled, shoot it with the paintball gun issued to you. A follow-up crew will look for the signs you have left and re-paint the designated item appropriately. You have a limited supply of ammunition. Do not misuse it!

Secret Society Instructions

Your contact in the Mystics tells you, 'Whoa, man, if you boil Sandallathon in water and then take it with an Asperquaint chaser, you can see through walls for hours. It's totally safe and legal, too!' He sells you some Sandallathon, but he doesn't have a line on Asperquaint right now. 'Sorry, man. Maybe next weekcycle.'

Your contact in the Illuminati finds this very interesting, and wants you to investigate these drug interactions further, as well as other possible interesting combinations of drugs. The Illuminati will pay up to 100 credits per drug interaction experiment you report on. Also, he warns you that the Qwalitie Standard for hygiene is about to 'change radically' and that you should keep an extra pair of shoes around, 'just in case'.

It occurs to you that taking random drug combinations yourself might not be entirely safe. However, if you get someone else to unwittingly take mixed drugs and then report the effects to you, maybe you can still make a little money...

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(20) Sandallathon/Sleepy-Sleepy tablets
(1) Rolactin/Happy Life tablet (BLUE clearance)
(5) bags TrippleCheeze Cruncheetym (Y)
50 metres of plasticord
Heat-resistant mittens (ORANGE)
Sunglasses (ORANGE)
Psychedelic postcards
Stungun
(2) RED laser barrels
Red canvas backpack

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

Laser pistol body (no barrel)
Red reflec armor
Series 1300 PDC
Basic toolkit
Paintball gun
(2) shots each of red, orange, yellow, green, blue,
indigo and violet paint

Gunther-R-BOK-1

Male Armed Forces Loyalty Officer

REGISTERED MUTANT

Mutation: Matter Eater (REGISTERED)

Society: Pro Tech (degree 1)

Secret skills: R&D Gear Tinkering 10, Jargon 18,
WMD 11

Background

Man oh man, you love gadgets! If it's technological, you can't get enough of it. The more complicated the better! You're a complete sucker for anything with lots of blinking lights or digital readouts. It's a shame the latest new tech-toys always cost so much; you just can't resist spending your money on them. Hopefully your new life as a Troubleshooter will give you more access to the latest fadware. At least, that always seems to be the case on the vidshows.

You don't know much about what a Loyalty Officer does, but the fact that they gave it to you instead of someone from Internal Security suggests there's going to be an Internal Security undercover agent on the team watching you!

As for your presence on this Troubleshooter team, it obviously indicates the mission is expected to come up against heavy combat opposition. Why else would Armed Forces be needed? No doubt your enemies are going to ambush you when you least expect it. The more normal the situation appears, the more alert you're going to have to be! Good thing you've got a backup weapon. Or three.

Secret Society Instructions

Your contact tells you, 'H&MC is working up a promotional contest in conjunction with Technical Services! A small number of bots around Alpha Complex have had a special Golden Pill placed inside of them, worth 5,000 credits, which they will give to randomly-selected citizens on the day of the contest. But if you shake hands with them a certain way, if they have one of the Pills, they'll give it to you now before the contest starts.' She shows you the handshake.

It occurs to you that there are other secret societies, such as the Frankenstein Destroyers, who might discover the existence of the Golden Pills if they damage or destroy any bots. If you see anyone doing such a thing, you should make sure they don't take a Golden Pill (which should be yours!) from the debris.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Bullhorn (with MegaBooster!)
Electric lantern (BLUE clearance, with digital
battery life counter!)
Stopwatch (YELLOW, picosecond accuracy!)
Thermometer (4 different temperature scales!)
Binoculars (ORANGE, with laser rangefinder)
Energy pistol (YELLOW, NuGrid targeting)
(2) Grenades (with piezoelectric pin!)
Sword (variable load balancing!)
(3) RED laser barrels
Red canvas backpack

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

Laser pistol body (no barrel)
Red reflec armor
Series 1300 PDC
Loyalty Notepad (lockable)
Key to Notepad

Peter-R-WQR-1

Male PLC Hygiene Officer

Mutation: Hypersenses

Society: Free Enterprise (degree 3)

Secret skills: Cash Hacking 09, Marketing &
Advertising 09, Forgery 11

Background

You're very believable. You've always got a way to work the system and find another angle—whether that's convincing someone of a lie, finding just the right evidence in the online data logs, or just plain pretending to be someone else and slipping out of the room before it's too late. All of this contributes nicely to the Bottom Line—that is, your long-term monetary outlook. This Troubleshooter work is going to be a terrific stepping-stone on your path to financial independence; look upon everything you encounter as a possible way to make more money. Is it bolted down? If not, maybe you should take it and find a place to sell it. If so, maybe you should unbolt it, then ask the question again.

You've received only basic training as a Hygiene Officer at this point, but you believe you are well-suited for the task. In fact, you hope to eventually define an Ultimate Quantitative Numeric Scale for assessing hygiene—the most rigorous and accurate Alpha Complex has ever seen. Perhaps it could be called the 'Peter-R Scale.'

As an Inventory Supply Checker by training, you understand your presence on this Troubleshooter team obviously indicates the success of the mission will be judged by the thoroughness with which assigned mission equipment is tracked. Clear records of all hardware issued to and utilised by team members will be paramount. If such records are not provided, you'll just have to make them yourself.

Secret Society Instructions

Your contact tells you, 'Several Technical Services are conspiring to engineer a shortage of bot parts in an attempt to drive up repair prices. Nobody but Free Enterprise should overtly manipulate the market like that, so we need to teach them a lesson. Bots will need to be protected from damage for the next few weeks. Don't let your fellow Troubleshooters indiscriminately bang bots around like they normally would. If, however, you do encounter damaged or destroyed bots, collect as many parts as you can to contribute to our secret stockpile. When the shortage hits, we'll flood the market and undersell those Technical Services fools!'

It occurs to you, however, that if you keep the parts for yourself and sell them just as the shortage hits, before Free Enterprise floods the market, you could personally stand to make a small fortune—as long as your Free Enterprise bosses don't find out you're working such a deal on the side.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Sunglasses (ORANGE clearance)
(2) Pyroxidine/Wakey-Wakey tabs
Teela O'Malley pocket mirror
Comb, red
Calculator (INDIGO)
Slide rule (YELLOW)
Crowbar (YELLOW)
Dental floss, 30m
(2) RED laser barrels
Red canvas backpack

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

Laser pistol body (no barrel)
Red reflec armor
Series 1300 PDC
Hygiene Testing Kit
Instant Cleans-O-Spray