



Welcome to Jackobot Heaven

Issue 6 - GM Advice

Letter From A High Programmer

Tabletop RPGs have usually been dependent on the Human GM, in charge of the “game” that players participate in. There’s been some attempts to move away from this traditional format - roleplaying board games (where the “rules” of the board game serve as the ‘de facto’ GM), computer RPGs (where Friend Computer serves as your GM), GMless games (where each player is given some ‘power’ over the game fiction, obviating the need for a single GM to manage everything) and GM Emulators (where you can ask arbitrary questions to an oracle and get a response that you can then interpret to continue the storyline). Still, when people think of RPGs, they think of the traditional Human GM. Humans just like interacting with other humans - who would have thought?

Until the day when we finally figure out how to automate tabletop gaming entirely, we still operate under the traditional approach - we need human GMs to help run our PARANOIA games. But these human GMs, being only human, needs some advice and assistance in order to maximize the enjoyment of everyone at the table. This newsletter gives advice to both newbies and veterans - teaching GMs the basics of building PARANOIA missions, and then how to string together those missions into a memorable campaign.

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Paranoia Community Links - [Discord](#)

There is no letter from the editor this week.

Contents

How To Be A Newbie GM	3
Theoretical Jibber-Jabber	8
How to run debriefing (properly)	17
Creating a Paranoia Campaign	19


How To Be A Newbie GM

5127 (content recovered from [this reddit post](#))

There are strange ambitious citizens among us! Low experienced or just people who has never been Gmed (or have an (evil) plans to Gm some Paranoia missions). Such trai... people likes to create one-shot threads on PLN forum titled 'help, over here' or 'need some advises'. You know, they like name it in the way internet community hates. (Non-fun forums have special rule about aforesaid titles and pure newbie have no access to forum, have been banned for ever and have no reply at all, so they are stalking around till they find another related forum and situation will repeat... yea, let's return to our conversation). These strange ambitious people want to run a Paranoia mission. However, this will be their first time, so they have a basket of questions.

People have similar questions. You know, PLN forum is full of abovementioned titles, so we (NAW – Newbie Article Writers) as helpful and wise citizens could not pass through without noticing that fact. Or not? Anyway, this article will try to help you. (In case you are the one who searches some help. And in case you are the lazy one who appreciate his\her time and think it is not worth registering or even entering the PLN forum. Hm, lyrical digression is over. Sorry, again.)

What frequently asked questions people who want terminate these bastards to Gm? The most popular are:



- What kind of resources I need to Gm a game?

- Should I look for rulebooks?

- What mission I should try first?

- How to put the first mission together?

What kind of resources I need to run a game?

It is obviously that you need some players. The second thing is a mission you want to run. Prepare pencils and 20-sided die, pile of the sheets. That's enough. (Every Gm has his\her preferable style of running a game, saying nothing each mission might require some special stuff like forms to fill, poker chips to award the players, dirty dishes to punish players.)

We are playing games to have a fun. Remember 'the golden rule': never let the rules interfere with something that's going to be entertaining for the players. Your first question to yourself should always be 'what would be the fun choice'?

Should I look for rulebooks?

Short answer is no. Buying Paranoia rulebook is mandatory, but there are some 'buts'. Our gurus say it is not necessary. Books present to you tons of pretty shiny tables, character generation rules, mutation list, secret society close view, unhistory materials, Alpha Complex life overview, service firms and so on.

The main idea is 'if you understand Paranoia setting, you can run a game under any rules', or even under no rules at all. How it might be? UV citizens, not depending on owning rulebook or not, have several viewpoints. One high programmers group runs a completely made up system for Paranoia. Another group runs games using a slightly modified version of the Ghostbusters RPG 2nd ed. rules. The third follows its own path declaring 'if you make me laugh, you live, if you're boring, you die. Simple.'

You do not need to worry about not knowing the rules. You are supposed to know them, but how would players sniff it up? If they would, terminate them on sight. Players are NOT supposed to show they even know the rules.

Please, do not read this as I am assuring you not getting the rulebook. Gms do know the rules. They just choose to ignore them. (Because some truth are best left unspoken).

What mission I should try first?

Where do I start? Every Gm meets this question. We have a wonderful source of inspiration also known as logs. This stenography of missions we has played you can find on PLN forum (<http://www.paranoia-live.net/forum/viewtopic.php?t=2092>).

Mr. Bubbles in the PARANOIA core book is good for first-timers. You might find handy 'Nyuk nyuk nyuk' * from Crash Priority supplement, 'Me and My Shadow Mark 4' from Flashbacks. Crash Priority also has 'The Stealth Train' and 'Patch Job' as simple missions.

* 'Nyuk nyuk nyuk' is a Zap mission. Many and many UV are not ever suggest to run Zap missions as the first. It probably'd give you the wrong angle on running the game. That's your choice, anyway.

How to put the first mission together?

When you run your very first mission, its scenario should be fairly simple. Make some notes beforehand. Do not try doing everything at once. It is better to ignore many things: Mandatory Bonus Duty and service service. It is better to concentrate your mind on another things. It becomes more interesting if you introduce an inter-team conflict. Secret Society missions are perfect for titling the game towards inter-player mayhem. Make sure you dangle a carrot-some reward from SecSoc for success.

No need to overload mission with details and rules. The Gm is always right. Do not worry about making 'mistakes'. The rules are classified and your players can't call you out on them.


If you are lacking in confidence the answer is prepwork. Though, some Gms do not bother doing more than a basic outline and starting points. That's the moot point. All depends on your mentality, psychical attributes and other pschy... stuff.

Remember it is YOU who generate the characters and SecSoc missions. Secret society missions have to be incredible complicit one with another. You know, if you have some difficulties with treason, try our lovely gag when most of the party is killed and everyone knows who did it. They should play enough good (showing OOC's knowledge is treason) to handle with it. Fun! Hope you haven't forgot already that the goal in any Paranoia mission is to make the player themselves the greatest threat they face.

Copyrights and copyleft: This article is more a compilation than an actual article. I use many quotes from the original PLN forum's citizens. Reading the text and reading the forum discussions is not the same. I hope Gms who was looking for some advises and help found them here. Still if you have any questions, do not hesitate and post 'em on PLN forum.

The final note. Here it is the list of the original authors whose thoughts and words I used in the article (aka 'Credits'): Dystopian Rhetoric, Allen Varney, Fierari-U-PNX-1, Biggles, Jazzer, Mike-V-LEM, Elle-R-KNO, Aratos, Allandaros, Moto42, Big Evil, Xai, Bee-R-CAN, Fr8monkey, Silent, Zild, Grov-R-LER, Max, elderdan, Fool, Costin-U-MOR-6, Pad-R-AIC, Kwil, tRANIS-B-URN-1, Nettle.

Thank you.



Theoretical Jibber-Jabber

El-R-KIN (content recovered from [this reddit post](#))

Theoretical Jibber-Jabber, part 1: Conceiving a one-shot

DISCLAIMER: What I'm about to write in the following post(s), as well as anything I'll be saying during the workshop, are my own personal views, opinions and preferences. It's not 'the right way', or 'how it's obviously being done'. There is no 'right way' to do any of those things. Treat them, along with anything else you'll learn during the workshop, only as friendly advices.

Now, some information on conceiving a mission.

A Paranoia one-shot is a game that lasts a single session (anywhere from 3-6 hours), with only a little preparation, and is not a part of some greater story arc.

Paranoia one-shots are very easy to design. Running them is the more difficult part.

To quickly design a Paranoia one-shot, you have to come up with the following:

Crisis(Central crisis, actually. There are usually plenty of non-central ones to go around):
Something that's wrong with the Complex. It can be something as minor and ordinary as a

malfunctioning elevator or a homicidal bot, or as major as an army of ninjas overrunning the complex. For the Classic playstyle, try to keep the crisis somewhat plausible. The ninjas, for example, are more suitable for ZAP games. A single ninja, though, if tied firmly enough to the game world (a frankenstein guardbot wrapped in the clothes of his infrared victims?), might work.

Mission: A troubleshooting mission. It can be directly related to the crisis ('quell the INFRARED food riots'), or, more likely, loosely related ('lecture the INFRAREDS in mess hall 3 about the virtues of oral hygiene.'). This may or may not include some or all of the individual secret society missions.

Conflict: Some way in which the crisis and the mission will inevitably clash. A conflict is not necessarily a climax, but rather a condition that will produce a climax of some sort.

The variations that can be made on this skeletal model are endless. For example, is the mission Computer-sanctioned, or is it a ploy? Will the troubleshooters be informed on their actual mission, or will the briefing be watered down (for their safety, of course)? Are any NPCs trying to resolve or take advantage of the crisis?

Asking few of these and similar questions can enrich your game. Don't overdo it, though. Creating too many details will limit you and confuse your players.

Here are a few examples from games that were previously run online.

Example 1 (was run by Fieari-U-PNX)

Crisis: The Computer, in an attempt to save valuable processing time, decided to reroute some of his functions (mainly those concerned with handling those pesky humans) to one of those stupid AI programs.

Mission: The troubleshooters are assigned to guard the AI's mainframe from harm. Some of them are instructed by their secret societies to protect it, some are instructed to destroy it, and some to steal it.

Conflict: A troubleshooter will sooner or later set a plan to destroy/steal the mainframe in motion. Some will support this plan, and others will attempt to foil it.

Example 2 (was run by Takyn-U-RUN)

Crisis: There's a huge, living cube of jello somewhere in the complex.

Mission: Kill or capture a subdivision of the Sierra Club who are trying to escape to the outdoors. In actuality, the troubleshooters were simply told to go to sector so-and-so and kill a bunch of commies.

Conflict: The cube is nesting directly above the Sierra Club base. When the clubbers try to drill a hole through the ceiling, the cube drops from above. And it's hungry. Troublesooter meat is juicy and tender.

Example 3 (was run by Yours Truly)



Crisis: An INFRARED vat-worker accidentally got hold of a valuable MacGuffin.

Mission: Secure an INFRARED mess hall. Be on the lookout for something suspicious. Certain PCs are instructed by their secret societies to acquire the MacGuffin.

Conflict: The 'something suspicious' turns out to be another secret society who's interested in acquiring the MacGuffin themselves. The INFRARED is having his lunch at the mess hall when they send in a strike team. Troubleshooters are caught in the middle.

A good combination of Crisis, Mission and Conflict is the kind that makes you cackle when you think about it.

You are required to think up a Crisis, a Mission and a Conflict before the Workshop. In the beginning of the session, we'll share and discuss your mission concepts. From one of these concepts, we'll create the mission which you'll be taking turns at running.

Theoretical Jibber-Jabber, part 2: Online game structure

Paranoia games are highly-structured. While the mission structure appears in the rulebooks of all editions, I would like to focus on the structure of online game sessions, and mainly on the differences between them and the standard structure.


Any of these stages, except for the first and last ones, can be skipped, tweaked, or moved to another place. Each has its complications, and in the session, you'll be learning how to handle each.

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- **Pre-Game Chat:** This might look trivial to you. You start the server early to allow players to register, some of them show up, and you chat a little until all the player slots are filled or it's time to start the game. While it IS trivial, it shouldn't be underestimated. It gives you a chance to get to know your players. This is incredibly important, because (and what I'm about to say now is important, so I'll write it in bold letters) The GM's main job is to make sure that everyone, including himself (or herself), will have a good time.

As you run more and more games (especially if you run them on the same day of the week, on more or less the same hours), you'll slowly get yourself a steady player base. Each player is different. Each enjoys different things, and dislikes other things. Each has his strengths and weaknesses. Knowing your players will allow you to create games they'll enjoy better, capitalize on their strengths, and use their weaknesses to hose them.

In the very likely case that there are newbies in your group, the pre-game chat is an excellent opportunity to get them in the mood with a few casual in-character conversations with friend Computer, or any other Alpha Complex character. And, last but not least, Paranoia-live is a community, and, I'm glad to say, a very warm one. Casual chatter reminds everyone that we're all here basically to have fun, though we do have pretty perverse means of doing it.

As I've said, this stage is pretty trivial. Don't give it a second thought, but try not to skip it, either.

- **Kicker:** Usually after an announcement from the GM, the curtain is raised, the OOC chatter stops, and the actual game begins. The term 'Kicker' is taken from Ron Edwards' Sorcerer. It's the GM's first post in-character. It should not only describe where the characters are, and what they are doing, and provide flavor text to get the players in the proper paranoid mood. It should also force (or at least encourage) the players to act immediately.
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The Kicker is probably the longest message you'll be writing throughout the game. Feel free to make it as descriptive as you feel is necessary. To prevent downtime, you'd better write it down in advance.


Here's a sample Kicker:


'Another workcycle of dull and repetitive work is finally over. You're all sitting together in the communal Rec Hall, enjoying your Mandatory Recreational Enjoyment Hour. Several armed Internal Security guards are standing in the corners of the room, making sure you're all watching the prime-time reality vids, and enjoying every second of it. Right now, Jason-R is talking with Amy-R about something. Your attention begins to drift elsewhere, when suddenly, a loud beep is heard, and the words 'MANDATORY EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT MOMENT' blink on the top of the vidscreen. The IntSec troops smile and load their weapons.

This is a very simple Kicker. The players are expected to try to appear emotionally involved, the IntSec will probably be satisfied (unless someone does something really stupid), and then the mission alert will arrive. Or, if I want to create some healthy tension, I can decide that whatever the PCs do, the IntSec want to shoot them anyhow. The mission alert is the deus ex-machina that saves them on the last moment.

Longer kickers can be used to introduce the crisis: If the crisis is a malfunction in the air conditioning systems, the Kicker might be the characters noticing it's getting colder and colder, and then politely asked to requisition some winter clothing in PLC, lest they freeze to death.

A Kicker scene can take anywhere between several seconds to 15 minutes. Longer kickers are, of course, possible, and may take up the entire session, but they're not recommended. Not by me, at least.




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- **Mission Alert:** Unless you have the time or a good reason to pre-script in advance a different kind of mission alert, you should probably use the standard one - The Computer calls the PCs to briefing, and usually also provides a briefing room.
 - **Wandering:** This stage is crucial if there are newbies in your group. If the PCs are expected to show up at a certain location to receive their briefing, it's a common trope to have the room number censored, have the room not appear on the map, has a huge, gaping chasm in front of it, or any other such event that'll give the players some time to show resourcefulness. It's in this stage that newbies learn that the game isn't about waiting for obvious hints from the GM in order to progress. Don't think in advance on how, exactly, should they arrive at the briefing room. If a PC comes up with something proactive enough, let it succeed. For more experienced players, you can devise ever more devious deathtraps that'll stand between them and the briefing room. If this stage is taking too long (15-20 minutes), herd the players into the briefing room, or just kill everyone who didn't arrive yet, and have them respawn inside the briefing room.
 - **Briefing:** On tabletop sessions, the briefing is usually conducted by a panel. Since controlling many NPCs in JParanoia is harder, there's usually only once briefing officer, or two, at most.
 - **Secret Society Briefings:** The secret society missions can be simply written on the character sheets, but handling them through PMs, even though it's a daunting task, has the advantage of making the players more involved, and thus more committed to the individual mission. Briefing the characters mid-games is also a great way to destroy alliances between players. This stage of play, however, can be practically played at any time, though it's usually best to get over with it before the mission proper begins.
 - **Outfitting:** Arriving at outfitting can be an ordeal of its own, but if you've taken your players through the Wandering stage, they're probably eager for the real mission by now. The XP edition introduces the concepts of outfitting through C-Bay or the Infrared market, but if credits don't take a major place in your game (more on this, perhaps, in a future Workshop), the PLC bureaucratic hell usually works better. Feel free to prove me wrong on this one.
 - **Service Service:** The good ol' R&D equipment testing is probably the easiest to improvise on the spot, but other services, if used cleverly, can have a greater effect on the game. The service service should not be a completely separate mission, but rather something
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that makes the official mission (or all individual missions) harder. Being asked by the Armed Forces to transport barrels of explosives is a good example.

- **The Mission:** The mission includes taking the party through several locations (the scene of travelling from one location to another can be considered a location on its own). Each should have its challenges, such as corrupt IntSec guards, unhelpful bots, structural hazards and who knows what else. Even if this challenge is just leaving the players alone and see what they come up with can turn out to be quite a challenge. If the players are getting bored with a challenge, skip it. You can always use it again in another game. The purpose of this stage is mainly to increase the tension and hostility between the players, and to introduce them to the Crisis. This is usually the longest part of every game, but keep in mind that it's not always the case.
- **Climax:** Not to be confused with Conflict (which can be introduced anywhere, though it's usually introduced either just before the climax, sometimes during the climax, or during debriefing), the climax is the most adrenaline-pumping part of the game. It may be triggered internally, by giving players conflicting personal goals and having one of them set a great plan in motion that the others discover in time to prevent - if they can. Or, especially if you're running out of time, or have some great stuff to unleash at your players, it may be triggered externally, by sending in a third party that forces the players to act in some way or another. A climax can come in the form of a firefight, a chase scene (after or away from the mission's objective), a heated debate, or anything else you can think of. In order not to lose track of the frantic action, the climax can be handled through combat rounds, asking every player to PM you their next move, or just asking them to post in an orderly fashion.

Note, though, that while triggering an external conflict, you should make sure that most of the hostility comes from the players. The external intervention is something that forces them to act against each other, or gives them an opportunity to sacrifice their teammates while trying to save themselves. A climax can be resolved entirely through the PCs, or by a deus ex machina.

- **Debriefing:** Like the briefing, having a debriefing panel is not a very good idea (unless the speakers speak one at a time). Now the PCs are commended, or, more often, scolded,
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and are given a chance to start throwing accusations against each other. After giving them the chance to throw wild accusations all over the place (increasing the level of hostility), order them to speak one at a time. After all, you're only human.

- **Outcomes:** Paranoia is a competitive game, and such, it usually has winners or losers, either formal or informal. A thing to keep in mind is that the rewards for good players aren't necessarily in-character rewards, as much as they are memorable moments and bragging rights. An extremely gory death of an enemy during the climax can be as good a reward as a promotion. Still, be sure to hand out proper (or intentionally and ballantly improper) rewards and punishments to both the players and the characters.
- **Post-Game Chat:** This is just as important as the pre-game chat. Be sure to share input with the players. Show them what sorts of behaviors did you enjoy, and ask them to let you know what did they like and dislike during the game. Better pay attention, but still treat their views as individual, subjective opinions.

How to run debriefing (properly)


Allen Varney (content recovered from [this reddit post](#))

Probably each Gamemaster runs debriefing in his own way, but here is a workable default template:

1. The entire team reports to the designated debriefing location, where the designated debriefing officer(s), typically the same high-clearance individual(s) who gave the team the original mission briefing, congratulate and/or condemn them for their performance. They take the Communication & Recording Officer's recordings and may take time out to review them. They may ask questions of the team leader and other team members (often the Loyalty Officer and the Communications & Recording Officer) about mission findings, untoward property destruction, etc.
2. The debriefing officer sends each team member into a confession booth or other isolated location, where The Computer or the officer quizzes the individual PC on salient mission points. The interrogation always includes inquiries about signs of treason or misconduct among the PC's teammates, and about inconsistencies between offered explanations and physical evidence.

Depending on circumstances and plausibility, this may be an opportune time for an individual PC's secret society to contact him and give him an IOU or other reward, or bust him down a couple of degrees.

3. The debriefing officer calls the entire team back together and offers his judgment of their overall and individual performance. He singles out individuals for approbation or condemnation, and he assigns rewards or punishments. If you wish, you can game this like a combat, using the



Treason codes and the Universal Hostility System. Clearance changes are assigned on the spot and take effect IMMEDIATELY.

This is a good spot for the Gamemaster to hand out skill increases and other mechanical changes, too. Not that it will matter, because...

4. Did I mention the PCs still have their weapons? Somewhere in Step 3, they typically draw and start firing.

For excellent examples of Classic-style debriefings, see the many missions reprinted in PARANOIA Flashbacks. There are also some good debriefing scenes in Crash Priority.

Creating a Paranoia Campaign


Silent (“original” content)

Many PARANOIA “missions” are actually mini-campaigns of their own, with individual missions and debriefings that are “loosely connected” together by a plot of some kind. Therefore, to create your own campaign, all you really have to do is to come up with a “loosely connected” plot of some kind, and then make sure to refer back to those connections when running your missions. Volia, a campaign!

You can also make the campaign more compelling by having players see the same recurring elements - the same NPCs, the same sectors, the same bots, etc. This ensures that players are attached to the world in some shape or form.

In a STRAIGHT campaign, the players may be able run the same characters for more than one session...but if the characters do wind up getting themselves erased, simply allow them to generate new characters and get themselves plugged right back into the campaign. Let them carry over the knowledge they gained from their previous lives (though state that their knowledge is based on treasonous ‘rumors’)

Otherwise, you can run a CLASSIC campaign, where every session, the players run all new characters. Characters are free to run wild and engage in wacky shenanigans, but they are also restrained by the fact that they know their actions have consequences for the next session as



well. In this type of campaign, the greater emphasis is on the overall plot, with the characters themselves being less important.

PARANOIA campaigns tends to be fairly episodic (with campaigns really being a series of “one-shots” that are stitched together), so I consulted *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer RPG* (which also operates on an episodic basis) for ideas on how to properly run an episodic campaign (and in fact, most of what follows are cribbed from my notes on *Buffy*). Here’s a good way to think about PARANOIA campaigns, straight from *Buffy*:

The Series (Long-Running Campaign With Several Seasons) - The Season (Single, Short Campaign with Several Missions) - The Mission

Every “Troubleshooter mission” has their own localized plot.

Every “Troubleshooter mission” tends to belong to a loosely-connected plot (a “Season”). This is generally seen as a PARANOIA campaign. Common elements are shared within the season (examples: villians, sectors, etc.). Most “officially published” PARANOIA missions tends to be Seasons (for a good example, look at “Yellow-Clearance Black Box Blues”...you’re not going to complete all that content within 3 hours; it’s going to take at least 3 Troubleshooter missions).

A “Season”, however, can also belong to a own loosely-connected plot (a “Series”) as well. Common elements are shared within a Series (example: clone families).

Plots, whether on a Mission/Season/Series level, are forward-driven. The characters’ past does not really matter (the characters are little more than vessels to allow the players to explore the setting), what matters is what they do right now. Even when they get erased, unmourned and unloved, their actions impact the game world.

In many cases, it’s like an OSR campaign, where characters are disposable, but the world is living.

Buffy The Vampire Slayer also mentions some “special” episodes/missions that might need some planning as well:

The Series Premiere: First few missions in the series is important as it allows everyone to meet the starting “clone families”, which can set the tone for the rest of the series. The first few missions should be about revealing the “shocking discoveries”, getting them out of the way so that both players and characters understand how life in the Complex is supposed to work. You don’t have to reveal your cards now, but you can hint at what is going to happen next, to encourage players to tune in next week.

The Season Finale - All good things must come to an end...you cannot string characters off forever with a loosely-connected plot. “Season Finales” end all major plots and subplots of the Season, providing a pseudo- closure to the player. Season Finales tend to have the following elements:

- Price of Victory - Victories are not without costs. Can the players pay them?
- This Time, It’s Personal - Players really do care about the outcome of this Season.
- And Life Goes On - Characters (and the world) ultimately gets impacted by the experience. You may be tempted to hit the reset button and return back to the boring old status quo, and maybe that might be the best outcome, but usually, see you can ensure that the Season does ultimately matters.

The Season Premiere - Time to start up a new loosely-connected plot! This new Season can start shortly after the previous Season, but it’s probably better to let some “down time” pass (allowing players to modify their characters or to create brand new ones). The new Season should pick up any loose ends from the previous Season, and turns them into new Plots and Subplots to be handed in this Season. (Do this enough, and you get the illusion of player agency, and illusions matters!)

You can carry over any surviving enemies from the last Season, while also referencing the consequences of players’ actions (and how it makes their lives more interesting). You also have a chance to fix any issues you encounter in the previous Season while potentially changing the

tone of the new Season - making it more serious/Straight, more slapstick/Zap, or keeping it at the status quo of Classic. New players may join at the start of the Season, while other players may leave (essentially, a Season Premiere is a good point for players to embark and dis-embark.) Players who stay for multiple seasons will soon get an intuitive grasp of your GMing style and will better adapt to their “roles” within the complex.

Finally, I’ll propose a method to **quickly generate a PARANOIA campaign** of your own. It is based on the [10-Minute Plot Generation](#) approach, as proposed by Lsenjov. As a brief summary, Lsenjov’s generation approach is as follows:

1. Create three to five “normal” factions. The “normal” factions may hate each other (criminals versus police, for instance), but they are at an “equilibrium” state, and society is more or less stable.
2. Turn one of those “normal” factions into a “destabilizing” faction, trying to undermine the “status quo” for their own purposes. This creates a situation that is at “dis-equilibrium”, forcing the factions to engage in actions to try to create a new “equilibrium”.
3. Come up with a Troubleshooting mission relating to the disruption of the status quo, with different factions figuring out how to stabilize the situation and create a new “equilibrium” that is favorable to themselves.
4. After the Troubleshooters make a mess of the situation, look at what the players accomplished - see what factions benefitted and which ones got hurt. Then come up with a mission based on the consequences of the previous mission. Repeat until it’s time to finish the campaign with a new “equilibrium” being established. (You’re essentially creating a feedback loop - the players react to the world, and the world reacts to the players.)

Of course, you’ll need some help with Step 1 and Step 2. I built a PARANOIA Campaign Generator to help automate the process. You can look at [the source code](#) or run the program using [repl.it](#) . However, I’ll also write out the process here in case you want to run the generator “offline”.

First, pick three “cliques” from this list (most cliques were inspired by *High Programmer* and the *P17 rulebook*, though some cliques I came up with on my own). A “clique” is an informal alliance

of ULTRAVIOLETS, working together for a common purpose. Since each ULTRAVIOLET have their own “program groups” that have infiltrated the various secret societies within the complex, cliques also (indirectly) include the secret societies of Alpha Complex. Cliques therefore serve as the overarching factions that can drive a campaign.

- Name = "Gatzmann Society", Description = "A pro-Old Reckoning preservation society that seeks to establish antique collections and interpret the Gatzmann Archives (the major existing source of knowledge about the OR). Generally motivated by emotions and sentimental values over practicality."
- Name = "Epicureans", Description = "An alliance of hedonistic Ultraviolets, intent on acquiring as much pleasure as possible and abusing their position as leaders of Alpha Complex for their own petty desires. Fine food, harems, drugs; all of these are in the average Epicurean lifestyle. They are focused on fulfilling their decadent lifestyles think the other Cliques are taking life *way* too seriously."
- Name = "Tillinghast's", Description = "The 'old guard' that defined the civic traditions of Alpha Complex's elite, regulating the behavior of ULTRAVIOLETS to promote decency, self-respect, and cultural refinement. Easily the most powerful clique in the Complex, boasting several influential and powerful members. They are currently focused on defending the status quo."
- Name = "Reform Party", Description = "An union of 'genuine social reformers inspired by Humanist rhetoric' and 'ambitious youngsters who conspire to overthrow the entrenched ruling class and take over'. They call themselves the “loyal opposition”, and are the oldest extant Clique in Alpha Complex. They are currently seeking to overthrow the status quo."
- Name = "The Gang", Description = "A clique that believes in 'radical transformation' - creating a hivemind that can coordinate their actions efficiently to better solve Alpha Complex's many problems. They conduct legal and illegal experiments with mind control, cybernetic augmentation, and AGI. Generally motivated by reason as opposed to concerns about free will and petty emotions."
- Name = "Bug Hunters", Description = "ULTRAVIOLETS who take their job of programming The Computer and fixing its many bugs a bit *too* seriously, following in the footsteps of

JCN (a mega-corporation that was rumored to have built Alpha Complex and The Computer) and the original High Programmer, Gelber-Prime. Currently hunting down the 'Gelber Open Issue List', a list that declares all the open bugs in The Computer. They tend to provide 'support' for the other Cliques in Alpha Complex, helping them with their various bug fixes."

- Name = "Complex Laser Association", Description = "Paranoid citizens and their cronies who believe (rightly?) that the entire Complex has been subverted by traitors. They aim to make Alpha Complex 'loyal' by conducting a Grand Purge, even if said Grand Purge means exterminating 99% of all citizens in Alpha Complex. They tend to be the Complex's 'moral guardians', for lack of a better word."
- Name = "The Interpreters", Description = "Freethinkers who are inspired by Sierra Club rhetoric to focus on expanding Alpha Complex into the Outdoors. Their rhetoric claims to be about 'enlightening the savages', but really it's all about gaining more power and supplies to better fight against all the other cliques. They tend to have a skeptical eye towards the other cliques' isolationist policies."
- Name = "The Inner Party", Description = "Sadists who believe that the purpose of absolute power is to be able to torture other citizens without impunity. Their goal is to make Alpha Complex as dystopian and miserable as possible, sometimes even funding rebel movements so that they can have fun cracking down on them later. Their almost-fanatical dedication to their cause alienates them from other ULTRAVIOLETs, who share a bit more empathy with the masses."
- Name = "VEM", Description = "The Voluntary Extinction Movement believes in a world without any sapients (humans, machines, or computers), believing that it is better to choose oblivion than to let sapients live in a shallow grave like Alpha Complex. Most members aim for causing a gradual death through sabotage of the cloning vats, though a few extremists have also considered using anti-matter WMDs and bioweapons. Despite how sympathetic their propaganda may be, most ULTRAVIOLETs tend to prefer breathing more."
- Name = "The Collaborators", Description = "These traitors have sold themselves out to another Complex, under the impression that Complex's Computer might be saner than our Complex's Computer. (Is it? Who knows?) They are attempting to covertly subvert this Complex and incorporate it into the for the glory of the other Complex. The other

ULTRAVIOLETS don't really like this clique, as they don't really like losing their political power to outsiders."

Second, pick a plot outline and flesh it out enough so that you have a Destabilizing Faction that has undermined the current Equilibrium, which ultimately brings the Troubleshooters in to "resolve" the situation. Generally, you can find a good plot outline from the [Big List of RPG Plots](#), but here are the ones that I coded in my generator.

- Hidden Base: {0} currently rules the strategic sector of {SECTOR_NAME} with an iron fist, but {1} was able to successfully build a secret base, by which they launch periodic attacks. {1} is also receiving temporary aid from {2}, who wants to use the periodic raids as a way to weaken {0}. {0} is now resorting to desperate measures to restore order in {3}, and have issued a mission alert for Troubleshooters.
- Better Late Than Never: {0} used to rule the strategic sector of {SECTOR_NAME} with an iron fist. However, {1} successfully conducted a terrorist attack in {3}, utterly destroying the sector. {0} wants revenge, and have issued a mission alert for Troubleshooters. {2}, meanwhile, is trying to launch their own attack on {3}, hoping to take over the sector and rebuild it in their own image.
- Breaking and Entering: {0} currently rules the strategic sector of {SECTOR_NAME} and boasts ownership of numerous WMDs. However, both {1} and {2} plan on stealing the WMDs for themselves. They have each issued their own mission alert for Troubleshooters, asking them to 'liberate' some valuable equipment.
- Delver's Delight: {0} have just discovered the existence of a secret passageway to the Underplex/Outdoors within the strategic sector of {SECTOR_NAME}. {0} already secured the treasure-laden ruins with their own military troops. However, {1} and {2} got wind of this secret passageway and want to also loot the ruins for themselves. They have each issued their own mission alert for Troubleshooters.
- Elementary: A high-ranking official working for {0} was assassinated in the strategic sector of {SECTOR_NAME}. {0} blames {1} for the attack and is preparing to conduct retaliatory assassinations. However, {1} claims to be 'innocent', and that they are being

framed by {2} (who secretly wants a war between {0} and {1}). To clear their name, {1} took the drastic step of issuing a mission alert for Troubleshooters.

- Score One For the Home Team (inspired by *Vapors Don't Shoot Back*): Every year, a few eccentric High Programming cliques participate in the Tournament - 'a complex, dangerous contest that is completely hidden from The Computer (they hope)'. The winner of the Tournament gain huge prestige within the elite circles of ULTRAVIOLET High Society, which can be used to help secure more political power. The latest version of the Tournament involve pitting Troubleshooter teams against each other in semi-covert gladiator matches disguised as routine Troubleshooting missions in {SECTOR_NAME}. {0} is the reigning champion Clique, but {1} and {2} are also big contenders and are willing to do whatever it takes to win the gold.

Once you have your factions and your plot outline, you now have enough detail to start creating your initial mission (or even better, to modify an existing mission - get rid of its "loosely connected plot" and substitute in *your* "loosely connected plot").