



THE SERVICE
PLAYTEST VERSION 0.9

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THE SERVICE

The Role-playing game of espionage
and covert operations in
the Cold War United Kingdom.

By: Lari Assmuth

CONFIDENTIAL

The information given in this document is a playtest version of *The Service*. For more information, please contact:

rocketsurgeongames.com
lari@rocketsurgeongames.com
@LariAssmuth on Twitter

THE SERVICE

Playtest kit version 0.9

Lari Assmuth / rocketsurgeongames.com

WELCOME TO *THE SERVICE*

The Service is a role-playing game that puts you in the role of officers of the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, colloquially known as MI6) during the Cold War.

Within the SIS, there's a department called the UK Station. The UK Station is tasked with sending out so-called Visiting Case Officers to deal with operations around the world that are deemed too risky or sensitive for regular station personnel. You will be playing as such VCOs.

When not in the field, you strive to increase the influence of the UK Station, your home within the SIS, and to manage your personal relationships in the face of the psychological stress that comes from working as a covert operative.

PLAYING THE GAME

The Service is based on Meguey and D. Vincent Baker's *Apocalypse World*, and players familiar with that game will understand the basics of how this game works.

The base ethos also follows the principles of *Apocalypse World* closely: share responsibility and authority, keep your eye on the fiction and play to find out what happens.

The structure of the game has the GM introduce **crises** for the PCs to deal with. These crises can be anything from having a walk-in defector contact a foreign SIS station or the government cutting funding to the UK Station to a family member struggling with a gambling addiction. The PCs will have to manage these crises as best they can, and in many cases that will entail running an **operation** to deal with the crisis.

Operations come in many forms, and the players can decide how best to address the crises while using their characters' strengths. Sometimes operations require charm and deception, sometimes it's better to trust stealthy surveillance. Some ops might call for investigation and research while others are more suited for direct action.

One of the design goals of *The Service* is to allow players to zoom in on the aspects of espionage that is most interesting to them. Play can focus on the power plays at the UK Station, the SIS HQ and Her Majesty's Government but it can also focus on white-knuckle field ops deep in enemy territory. You can also switch it up and play out some things in detail at times while eliding them at others.



THE SETTING

It's the height of the Cold War. The world is divided into competing superpowers, fighting a war of ideology and information.

The United Kingdom, formerly a colonial superpower of its own, has lost much of its influence. The powers that be, however, are determined to hold on to power by any means possible. One of the tools that the political elite wields toward this end is the SIS.

Within the SIS, the UK Station and its Visiting Case Officers are regarded with a mix of awe and distaste by the mainly upper-class bureaucrats and the regular station personnel who often have to live with the fallout of the VCOs operations.

MEDIA TOUCHSTONES

While there are many different kinds of spy fiction, *The Service* is made to emulate a relatively specific genre. The main points of inspiration are the novels of Le Carré and Len Deighton, the ITV show *The Sandbaggers* (1978–1980) and Greg Rucka's comic book pastiche of the show called *Queen and Country*.

Other films or series I would recommend are *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (2011, the 1979 mini-series is also great), *Munich* (2005), *The Bureau (Le Bureau des Légendes)* (2015–), and parts of *The Americans* (2013–2018) and *Spooks (MI-5)* (2002–2011).

All this is to say, the default mode of *The Service* is gritty and non-heroic espionage. It is probably not the best match for James Bond, Jason Bourne or Ethan Hunt.

Games that have been an inspiration include (naturally) *Apocalypse World*, *Night Witches*, *Spione*, *Blades in the Dark*, *Dungeon World*, *MASHED*, *The Sprawl*, *Monsterhearts*, *Cartel*, *Night's Black Agents*, and to some extent the computer games *XCOM* and *Phantom Doctrine*.

THE CHARACTERS

Every player (except the Gamemaster) plays as an officer of the SIS. They are all highly trained spooks, but they are all specialized in different aspects of the job. The **Ace** is the wheelman or pilot, the **Case officer** is the smooth face and manipulator, the **Heavy** is the muscle and the **Special ops officer** specializes in survival and striking where the enemy is most vulnerable. **Lamplighters** are masters of surveillance and covert entry, while the **Researcher** and the **Tech** use their expertise and knowledge to find the answers.

Every character also has a background, a social class they come from in the stratified society of Great Britain, a drive that led them to the secret life, and a personal relationship that offers them solace from the lonely life of a spy.

THE GAMEMASTER

While the other players take the roles of the intelligence officers, the GM will be populating the drab, dreary world of Cold War espionage with haughty government officials, shady contacts and brutal enemies. The GMs job is to introduce trouble in the form of various crises that the players will need to react to.

THE SERVICE

Moves Sheet 1: Basic Moves



Act under pressure

When you **act under pressure**, roll+composed. On a 10+, you do it. On a 7–9 you barely pull it off, but at a cost. There's a complication, a hard bargain or an ugly choice.

Manipulate

When you **have leverage over someone, and use it to manipulate or influence them**, roll+charming. Leverage can be something they need, want, or wish to hide. For NPCs: on a 10+ they agree to do what you want for as long as you hold sway over them. On a 7–9, they do what you want, but there's an immediate cost, you don't get exactly what you hoped for, or someone finds out (+1heat). For PCs: on a 10+ both of these, on a 7–9, you pick one:

- If they do what you want, they mark experience.
- If they refuse, they take 1-stress.

Make mayhem

When you **use violence to harm someone who is fighting back**, roll+hard. On a hit, you deal a wound to your opponent. On a 10+, you take no damage yourself, on a 7–9 you take a wound as long as your opponent can bring their weapon to bear on you.

Murder

When you **use a weapon to assault somebody who's not fighting back, and you can't miss**, you deal a wound to them. If the fiction dictates it, the harm may circumvent armour (AP) or be particularly terrible (deal an extra wound).

Surveil

When you **surveil or assess a situation or person**, roll+craft. On a hit, you gain hold that can be used in the situation to ask the GM questions. Whenever you act on one of the answers, take +1. On a 10+ hold 3, on 7–9 hold 1:

- What is the best way out/way out/way past?
- What should I be on the lookout for?
- What do I notice despite an effort to conceal it?
- Who or what is my biggest threat?
- Who or what is most vulnerable to me?
- How could I influence _____?

Research

When you **research a person, organization, thing, event, place or operation** using an archive, intelligence report or source, roll+brilliant. On a 10+, the GM will tell you something new and interesting about the thing you are analyzing, and answer a follow-up question as well. On a 7–9, the GM will tell you something that is true but incomplete or vague in some way.

Speak language

When you **need to know if you know a language**, roll+brilliant. On a hit, you do. On a 10+, you know it well enough to pass for local, on a 7–9, you only know a smattering, can't pass for local and won't understand complicated subjects.

Aid or interfere

When you **aid or interfere with someone** who's making a roll, roll+their trust in you on their sheet. On a 10+, they take +1 (aid) or -1 (interfere) to their roll, and either you or they can recover 1-stress, your choice. On a 7–9, they take +1 or -1 and you take 1-stress.

When you **aid another player's character**, they take +1trust in you on their sheet.

When you **interfere with another player's character**, they take -1trust in you on their sheet.

Flashback

When you want to **trigger a flashback** of your character doing something earlier that affects your current situation, tell the GM what you want to have done. They will give you a cost of 0, 1 or 2-stress, based on how straight-forward or contrived the proposed action is. If you decide to take it, play out the flashback as a short scene, including any relevant moves you want to have made.

Lead the team

When you **lead your team in action**, declare this intent before you make a move, explain how you do it and take 1-stress. Any willing members of your team are now implicated in the effect of your next move.

End of session

When you **end a session**, every character does this.

- Choose a character that you trust more than you used to and add +1 trust for them on your sheet. If you trust no one more, skip this step. Then choose a character that you trust less than you used to and mark -1 trust for them on your sheet. If you trust no one less, skip this step. If you go up to trust+4 with anyone, ask their player to tell you something new and true about their character, and you both mark XP. Then you reset your trust for them to trust+1. If you go down to trust-3 with anyone, you tell them something that your character thinks of their character, true or false, and only you mark XP. Then you reset your trust in them to -1.
- Did your class background come up and steer the story in an interesting direction? If so, mark XP.
- Did your drive get you into trouble or create dramatic tension? If so, mark XP.

THE SERVICE

Moves Sheet 2: Harm & Stress Moves



Wounds

When you **suffer a wound**, choose one:

- You lose your footing.
- You lose grip of something you're holding.
- You lose track of someone or something you're attending to.
- You miss noticing something important.
- You take 1-stress

When you suffer two wounds, you **go critical**. Mark a trauma and the GM tells you one of the following effects:

- You're out of action: unconscious, incapacitated or severely disoriented.
- Choose 2 from the 7–9 list below.

Wounds are always a big deal. Being wounded means bleeding, broken bones, shock. Being critical means you are bleeding out or have serious internal damage to vital organs. Any wound that is untreated will get worse with time. Critical wounds deteriorate fast, normal wounds slower.

When you **inflict a wound on another player's character**, that character takes -1trust in you on their sheet.

Stress out

When **your character's stress track is filled up**, mark a trauma and take one of the following actions.

- Fight. You lash out physically or verbally.
- Flight. You put as much distance as you quickly can between yourself and the source of stress.
- Freeze. You stand dumbfounded.

While your stress track is filled, you may not voluntarily take stress. If it's dealt to you, mark a wound instead.

Push yourself

When you **push yourself to the limit** while making a move, take 1-stress and you may treat any roll of 6- as a 7–9 result instead.

First aid

When you **perform first aid on a wounded character**, roll+composed. On a 10+ both, on a 7–9, one of these.

- The patient is stabilized, no longer deteriorating.
- The patient is back in the action.

On a miss it's a bloody mess. Your patient takes 1-stress.

Whenever you **stabilize or heal another player's character**, that player takes +1trust in you on their sheet.

Hold yourself together

When you can **take a moment** in a safehouse or other relatively safe place to compose yourself, roll+composed. On a hit, remove 1-stress. On a 10+, if you can talk to somebody about your feelings, you can remove 1 additional stress and you both take +1trust on each other on your sheets.

On a miss, remove 1-stress anyway, but later, when you're not under so much pressure, one of your traumas will pop up to complicate things for you.

THE SERVICE

Moves Sheet 3: Network & Support Moves



Operational support

When you **go through the official channels for support**, roll+UK Station's influence. On a 10+, you get what you want, no problems. On a 7–9, choose one:

- Someone objects to your request. You may have to convince them, do them a favour, go over their head or behind their back to get it.
- A third party hears about it and gains an interest in the operation.
- Bureaucratic red tape. It takes several days to get the proper clearances.
- You can't get exactly what you want, but something similar has been arranged.

On a miss, choose one from the list above, and the GM chooses one more.

Use network

When you **use your assets to provide you assistance**, first name the asset that you are using or declare a new asset, then roll+network for that controllerate. On a hit, they can get you what you need, but it will cost you – money or a service. In addition on a 7–9 choose 1.

- Somebody hears about it. Add +1heat.
- It takes longer than expected.
- It'll cost you extra. A lot of money or a big favour.
- They don't have it exactly, but something similar, or an unreliable or rudimentary version.
- They don't have it, but they know somebody who does.

On a miss, choose one from the list above, and the GM chooses one more.

Scapegoat

When you **sacrifice a named asset** to take the heat off you, they get picked up or killed. You get these two:

- Reduce the heat-clock for the controllerate back to 9:00.
- Everyone on the team who knows what's happening takes 1-stress.

Recruit an asset

When you **try to recruit an NPC as an asset**, you must first have them under your influence, through manipulation or fictional positioning. The GM will then tell you “sure, but” and choose 1 to 3 items from the list below.

- The recruitment takes a significant amount of time.
- It requires a lot of funds or some other resource.
- The asset demands a special favour.
- You have to lean heavily on one of the asset's weaknesses.
- The asset has two flaws.

When the recruitment is done, add 1 to the network rating in the relevant area and write up the NPC as an asset.

Declare an asset

When you **need the help of a previously unnamed asset** in one of your networks, in a controllerate where you have a network rating, do the following:

- Choose a name and a code-name (see lists in appendix)
- Choose a short description
- Choose a flaw

Flaws

Conspicuous: bad at flying under the radar

Evasive: hard to reach, hard to get a straight answer out of

Fabricator: tendency to make up some of their intelligence

Fanatic: 100 % devoted to The Cause

Greedy: wants more of whatever motivates them

Indecisive: can't make up their mind

Naive: innocent and unspoiled

Sleazy: into some unsavoury shit

Troubled: needs help getting their life in order

Unreliable: shows up late, misses meetings

Weak: might break if pushed too hard

Choose a motivating factor (MICE)

Money: They're in it for the cold hard cash

Ideology: They think your side is genuinely better

Coercion: You have something over them

Ego: They are the most important person, you'll see

One last job

When you **bring back a character** who has been retired to safety or disappeared through advancement or trauma, choose one positive thing and one negative. Check them off. If you come back for another job, you can't pick the same ones.

Positives

- You've had time to perfect your art. Choose a new playbook advance
- You still have some of your old friends and contacts. Take +1 to a Network
- You've learned some new tricks. Take a move from another playbook.

Negatives

- You're rusty. Take -1 to any one stat.
- You're not doing so well. Mark a trauma.
- Your old networks have been blown. Take -1 to a Network and lose one of your assets

THE SERVICE

Moves Sheet 4: Station Moves



These moves are available when PCs are at the UK Station, in addition to all the basic moves and the support and network moves.

Many of the station moves involve a bit of time being spent doing them. Characters may not have the time to do everything they wish to do. If they spend too much time on station moves and ignoring ongoing crises, the GM is encouraged to make as hard a move as they like as one or more of the crises worsen.

Personal life

When you **spend time with your personal relationship** roll+hard.

On a 10+ your weakness gets the better of you. You act out one of your weakness effects in a way that sabotages your personal relationship. You lose your connection to that relationship until you can make it better, and can't make this move until you make things right or find a new relationship.

On a 7-9 you manage to keep your demons at bay, and recover 2-stress.

On a miss, you recover all your stress. You manage to act like a normal human being and enjoy a meaningful connection with another person.

Personal project

When you **dedicate time to pursue something not part of your work**, like establishing or maintaining a relationship or accomplishing something meaningful out of the office, tell the GM what you want to do. The GM will tell you "yes, but..." and 1 to 3 of the following:

- It's going to take significant time.
- It's going to take significant effort. The GM can start a count-down clock for the project, and fill out segments as you keep working towards this goal.
- You'll need help. Who can you get to help with this?
- Before you can do this, you need to do ____ first.

Medical care

When you **spend time getting medical care** in a hospital, heal a wound.

Psychological care

When you **spend time in psychotherapy**, reveal something new and interesting about your character to the other players, then remove 2 stress.

Training

When you **spend time in training** describe what it looks like and roll+craft. On a hit, you mark 1 XP. On a 7-9 choose one:

- Start the next op with +1stress
- Take +1heat in the UK or another controllerate

On a miss take 1 XP anyway but choose two from the list above.

Mount an operation

When you **mount an operation to accomplish some task or deal with some crisis**, go through this list and fill out an operation form:

- The aim: what you want to accomplish
- The target: against whom are you acting
- The location: where the operation will take place
- The means: what type of op is it? (see list)
- A code name (see list or just come up with something)

Then, the GM will tell you OK, but...

- Getting clearance will be hard
- Somebody really doesn't want you to do it
- Somebody has their own designs and aims

Debriefing

When you **have been on an operation**, go through this list as a group.

- Who debriefs you?
- What (if anything) do you lie about or leave unsaid?
- Was the op a success? If yes, mark 1 Station XP. If no, was it bad enough to be noticed outside the Station? If yes, lose 1 Station influence.
- Did you resolve the crisis you were attending to? Were there any loose threads? The GM adjusts crisis clocks accordingly.
- Who noticed you? Add +1heat to Controllerates where someone pricks up their ears and adds a note to a dossier. +0heat if you were super careful, +2heat for a total clusterfuck.
- Individually: Did you hurt, deceive or kill somebody and do you feel remorse for it? If yes, take 1-stress and mark 1 XP.

Op types

Asset handling (social)

Debrief or collect intel from asset; recruit; convince or persuade somebody

Sample complications: Asset needs something before they can comply (bringing their family over the wall, for instance), surveillance on the asset, asset is lying or setting up a trap.

Courier (move something or someone)

Extract a defector, agent or officer; mule; deliver a message or piece of intelligence

Sample complications: Security at border/check-point, transport breaks down, weather conditions, different or more cargo than expected.

Direct action (violence)

Assassination; deliver a warning; hostage rescue; kidnapping; sabotage

Sample complications: Bodyguards, bystanders, security systems.

Investigation (research)

Investigate... a murder, a failed op, a leak, a person, a piece of intelligence

Sample complications: Someone in power wants the truth to stay hidden, the investigation leads to unsettling new intel, need to break into a place or recruit smbd to find a key piece of intel.

Surveillance (reconnaissance)

Gather intelligence, Surveillance, Breaking and entering.

Sample complications: Guards, security measures, passers-by.

Sample operation code names

Pick an adjective (optional) and a noun.

Golden, Green, Black, Blue, Red, Early, Sharp, Rolling, Broken, Lost, Rogue, Silent, Steel, Lone, Cold, Just, Plain, Dirty, Harsh, Exalted, Snow, Bleeding

Fox, Hawk, Magpie, Dolphin, Sword, Thunder, Sky, Arrow, Justice, Resolve, Backpack, Waterfall, Star, Archer, Gambit, Demon, Queen, Knight, Master, Saturn, Salesman, Lightning, Boy Scout, Fiddler, Bulldog, Duster, Eye, Widow

When it's all said and done, all successful operations hinge on two things: getting in and getting out. On sea, air or land, you can always count on the ace.

Because of the nature of their work, whether as a commercial or air force pilot, a getaway driver or a gun- or drug runner, most aces have seen their fair share of the world, and made some friends and enemies along the way.

CREATING AN ACE

To create your character, go through this list and follow the instructions.

1. NAME AND PARTICULARS

1 a. Name

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

1 b. Description

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

2. BACKGROUND

Choose some details to detail what your character did before joining the SIS.

2 a. Class

What social class and professional background does your character come from? Choose one or write your own.

2 b. Drive

Why does your character do what they do? Choose or write your own.

2 c. Relationship

Choose and describe your character's personal relationship. Who do they go to for emotional support?

3. MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **Advanced driving techniques**, and choose two more starting moves from the playbook move list.

4. STATS

Choose one of the following stat lines.

Craft+1 Hard=0 Charming+1 Composed+2 Brilliant-1
Craft=0 Hard-1 Charming+2 Composed+2 Brilliant-1
Craft+1 Hard-1 Charming+1 Composed+2 Brilliant-1
Craft=0 Hard+1 Charming+1 Composed+2 Brilliant-1

5. TRUST

Once everyone has created their character, go around and introduce them. Be sure to give their name, their playbook, their background and their description.

Go around once more, and say one, some or all of the following statements about how your character feels about the other characters, and mark the corresponding trust next to their name on your sheet.

• *I once spent a long time with _____ in an exotic location.*

For that character, write trust+2.

• *_____ seems to know their stuff. Together we'll make quite the team.*

For that character, write trust+1.

• *I want _____ to respect me. I'll impress them with my moves.*

For that character, write trust+1.

• *_____ hasn't seen the parts of the world I'm familiar with. I'll show them around.*

For that character, write trust+1.

VEHICLES

Type (choose 1): motorcycle, car, van, lorry, boat, plane, helicopter

Design (choose 1): compact, sports-, racing, utility, recreational, cargo, transport, luxury

Strengths (choose 2): fast, manoeuvrable, offroad, rugged, discreet, armoured, large, flashy, long-range

Weaknesses (choose 1): old & rusty, finicky, complicated, slow, sluggish, loud, cramped

Type (choose 1): motorcycle, car, van, lorry, boat, plane, helicopter

Design (choose 1): compact, sports-, racing, utility, recreational, cargo, transport, luxury

Strengths (choose 2): fast, manoeuvrable, offroad, rugged, discreet, armoured, large, flashy, long-range

Weaknesses (choose 1): old & rusty, finicky, complicated, slow, sluggish, loud, cramped

THE SERVICE

BRITISH PASSPORT



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Ace

PARTICULARS

Name: _____
Joan, Sheila, Janet, Valerie, Eileen
Michael, Brian, William, Roy, Christopher
Brown, Compton, Hughes, Patel, Solanas
Aliases: _____

Description

Face: handsome, striking, sun-tanned, rugged _____
Eyes: friendly, mischievous, curious, unflicking _____
Body: small, wiry, tall, well-defined _____
Dress: flashy, regimental, functional, street style _____

BACKGROUND

Circle or underline one option per category, and write a specific detail about it.

Class

Upper class, middle class, working class, outsider
examples: Air Force officer, Getaway driver, Smuggler

Drive

Adventure, camaraderie, duty, ego, ideology, power

Personal relationship

Family, friend, lover, mentor

TRUST



STATS

Brilliant

Research, Speak lang.

Charming

Manipulate

Composed

Act under pressure

Hard

Make mayhem

Craft

Surveil

Stress

stress out

Wounds

Wounded

Critical

TRAUMAS

Traumas can only be marked once per item. If any item makes you uncomfortable, strike it out. You can ask the GM to substitute a new one, or use Crisis of faith twice.

- ☐ **Hardened.** You get +1hard (max hard+3).
- ☐ **Paranoid.** You get +1craft (max craft+3)
- ☐ **Shaken.** You get -1craft.
- ☐ **Crisis of faith.** Change your drive.
- ☐ **Addiction.** When you indulge your addiction, remove 1-stress. If you do, take +1stress next time you go on an op or return from the field.
- ☐ **Personal crisis.** Lose your personal relationship. You can work to regain it or find a new one as a personal project.
- ☐ **You've had too much.** Quit, retire, disappear or die.

MOVES

☒ **Advanced driving techniques:** when you're driving or piloting a vehicle in a tense or dangerous situation, roll+composed. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7-9 hold 2. Spend your hold to do the following things.

- *Avoid danger from a single source.*
- *Push your vehicle past it's limitations to temporarily gain a new strenght or disregard a weakness.*
- *Maintain control over the vehicle in rough conditions.*
- *Make a move that impresses, frightens or harms somebody.*

On a miss, you swerve, stall or hit something.

Remember, when your vehicle has an applicable strength or you can exploit an opponent's vehicle's weakness, you can gain an advantage over them such as outrunning, overtaking or losing them without using up your hold.

☐ **Grand theft auto:** when you attempt to steal a vehicle, roll+composed. On a hit you're gone in 60 seconds flat. On a 10+ you take +1forward. On a miss, you're noticed and take +1heat, or you have to leave something or somebody behind, your choice.

☐ **You're gonna do WHAT?:** when you perform a reckless manoeuvre, in or out of a vehicle, take +1forward.

GEAR, COVERS, NOTES

☐ **In the pipe, five by five:** when you're in a vehicle and you want to suddenly arrive in a scene, roll+composed. On a hit, you're there. On a 10+ you take +1forward. On a miss, you run into trouble on the way or lead it to where you are going.

☐ **Leaf on the wind:** once per scene, you may take 1-stress to get 1 hold from *advanced driving techniques*. You can do this even if you don't have that move.

☐ **A friend in every port:** you may *declare an asset* that you can use network with even if you have no network rating in that area. When you roll+network in such an area, you roll at-1.

Other moves

IMPROVEMENTS: XP ○○○○○○

- ☐ +1 to Craft (max Craft+2)
- ☐ +1 to Charming (max Charming+2)
- ☐ +1 to Composed (max Composed+3)
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Promoted to Senior officer (see UK Station sheet)

- ☐ +1 to any stat (max +3)
- ☐ Change into another playbook
- ☐ Create a new character to play alongside this one
- ☐ Retire to safety (gain *one last job*-move)

When you mark your fifth XP, erase all marks and choose an advance. After your fifth advance, you can choose from the advanced options.

The basic unit of all HUMINT work is the case officer and their assets. When you need someone to recruit a new agent, to set up a spy network or to approach a potential defector in a hard-target state, you send a case officer.

CREATING A CASE OFFICER

To create your character, go through this list and follow the instructions.

1. NAME AND PARTICULARS

1 a. Name

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

1 b. Description

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

2. BACKGROUND

Choose some details to detail what your character did before joining the SIS.

2 a. Class

What social class and professional background does your character come from? Choose one or write your own.

2 b. Drive

Why does your character do what they do? Choose or write your own.

2 c. Relationship

Choose and describe your character's personal relationship. Who do they go to for emotional support?

3. MOVES

You get all the basic moves. Choose three starting moves from the playbook move list.

4. STATS

Choose one of the following stat lines.

Craft+1 Hard-1 Charming+2 Composed+1 Brilliant=0

Craft+1 Hard+1 Charming+2 Composed+1 Brilliant-2

Craft+1 Hard=0 Charming+2 Composed-1 Brilliant+1

Craft+2 Hard-1 Charming+2 Composed=0 Brilliant-1

5. TRUST

Once everyone has created their character, go around and introduce them. Be sure to give their name, their playbook, their background and their description.

Go around once more, and say one, some or all of the following statements about how your character feels about the other characters, and mark the corresponding trust next to their name on your sheet.

- _____ *once came through the wire for me. I owe them a favour.*

For that character, write trust+2.

- _____ *used one of my assets and left them out to dry.*

For that character, write trust-2.

- _____ *could be a useful ally. I'll find a way to get close to them.*

For that character, write trust+1.

- _____ *is fast-tracked for promotion. I'd better try to get ahead of them unless I want to work for them.*

For that character, write trust-1.

NOTES

THE SERVICE

BRITISH PASSPORT



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Case Officer

PARTICULARS

Name: _____
Mary, Patricia, Elizabeth, Tamsin, Edith
Alan, George, Peter, Edward, Bernard
Taylor, Wright, Turner, Irving, Stuart
Aliases: _____

Description

Face: beautiful, handsome, trustworthy, plain _____
Eyes: friendly, piercing, seductive, tired _____
Body: sensual, overweight, average, slender _____
Dress: fashionable, conservative, nondescript _____

BACKGROUND

Circle or underline one option per category, and write a specific detail about it.

Class

Upper class, middle class, working class, outsider
examples: University degree in languages, Military officer, Fixer

Drive

Adventure, camaraderie, duty, ego, ideology, power

Personal relationship

Family, friend, lover, mentor

TRUST



STATS

Brilliant

Research, Speak lang.

Charming

Manipulate

Composed

Act under pressure

Hard

Make mayhem

Craft

Surveil

Stress

stress out

Wounds

Wounded

Critical

TRAUMAS

Traumas can only be marked once per item. If any item makes you uncomfortable, strike it out. You can ask the GM to substitute a new one, or use Crisis of faith twice.

- ☐ **Hardened.** You get +1hard (max hard+3).
- ☐ **Paranoid.** You get +1craft (max craft+3)
- ☐ **Shaken.** You get -1craft.
- ☐ **Crisis of faith.** Change your drive.
- ☐ **Addiction.** When you indulge your addiction, remove 1-stress. If you do, take +1stress next time you go on an op or return from the field.
- ☐ **Personal crisis.** Lose your personal relationship. You can work to regain it or find a new one as a personal project.
- ☐ **You've had too much.** Quit, retire, disappear or die.

MOVES

☐ **Master manipulator:** when you have time to really put your hooks in somebody and you know which buttons to push, roll+charming. On a 10+ hold 3, on a 7–9 hold 2. They can do the following to reduce your hold over them:

- *Give you something you want*
- *Act as your eyes and ears*
- *Fight to protect you*
- *Do something you tell them to*

For NPCs, while you have hold over them, they can't act against you. For PCs, any time you like you can spend hold to:

- *Cause or heal 1-stress*
- *Give them +1 right now*

On a miss PCs hold 2 over you on the same terms, NPCs notice you manipulating them and act out.

☐ **Smooth talker:** when you *act under pressure* and you're trying to lie, con or otherwise talk your way out of trouble, roll+charming instead of roll+composed.

☐ **Gray man:** when you try to lose a tail, evade surveillance or escape notice, roll+craft. On a 10+, you do it and come away clean. On a 7–9, you can lose them, but you'll have to leave something behind or take something with you, the GM will tell you what. On a miss, they catch you out, the GM says where.

☐ **Team player:** when you *aid or interfere* with somebody, roll+charming instead of roll+bonds.

☐ **Visas in my name:** You start play with 2 covers in controllerates of your choice. Once per session, you may replace a blown cover for free.

☐ **Spymaster:** when you reach out to your assets and roll to *use networks*, choose 1 less option from the list on a hit.

☐ **Judge of character:** when you have time to observe and interact with another person and try to see what makes them tick, roll+charming. On 10+ ask 3, on 7–9 ask 1. On a miss, they get to ask you 1 from the list.

- *What is their biggest weakness?*
- *Who or what do they love most?*
- *What motivates them to do what they do?*
- *How do they feel about their masters/organization/work?*

☐ **Honey trap:** when you have sex with somebody, treat it as if you had just rolled a 10+ on the Judge of character-move, even if you don't have that move.

Other moves

IMPROVEMENTS: XP ○○○○○○

- ☐ +1 to Composed (max Composed+2)
- ☐ +1 to Hard (max Hard+2)
- ☐ +1 to Brilliant (max Brilliant+2)
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Promoted to Senior officer (see UK Station sheet)

- ☐ +1 to any stat (max +3)
- ☐ Change into another playbook
- ☐ Create a new character to play alongside this one
- ☐ Retire to safety (gain *one last job*-move)

When you mark your fifth XP, erase all marks and choose an advance. After your fifth advance, you can choose from the advanced options.

GEAR, COVERS, NOTES

Grunts, goons, soldiers, thugs, muscle. Whatever you call them, these are people with a knack for high-level violence. Often recruited from a military, law enforcement or criminal background, heavies are the blunt instruments that handle the more physical, often unsavoury side of intelligence operations.

CREATING A HEAVY

To create your character, go through this list and follow the instructions.

1. NAME AND PARTICULARS

1 a. Name

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

1 b. Description

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

2. BACKGROUND

Choose some details to detail what your character did before joining the SIS.

2 a. Class

What social class and professional background does your character come from? Choose one or write your own.

2 b. Drive

Why does your character do what they do? Choose or write your own.

2 c. Relationship

Choose and describe your character's personal relationship. Who do they go to for emotional support?

3. MOVES

You get all the basic moves. Choose three starting moves from the playbook move list.

4. STATS

Choose one of the following stat lines.

Craft+1 Hard+2 Charming-1 Composed+1 Brilliant=0

Craft+2 Hard+2 Charming-2 Composed+1 Brilliant-1

Craft=0 Hard+2 Charming-2 Composed+2 Brilliant=0

Craft+2 Hard+2 Charming-2 Composed-1 Brilliant+1

5. TRUST

Once everyone has created their character, go around and introduce them. Be sure to give their name, their playbook, their background and their description.

Go around once more, and say one, some or all of the following statements about how your character feels about the other characters, and mark the corresponding trust next to their name on your sheet.

• *I've seen _____ take a hit and keep on going. I trust them in a pinch.*

For that character, write trust+1.

• *_____ is really smart. I look to them for guidance.*

For that character, write trust+2.

• *_____ is soft. I have no respect for people who can't do what the job demands.*

For that character, write trust-1.

• *I'd like to get to know _____ better. Maybe I'll ask them out for a drink one of these days.*

For that character, write trust+1.

NOTES

THE SERVICE

BRITISH PASSPORT



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Heavy

Specializing in tradecraft, lamplighters are the stealthy masters of surveillance, covert communication techniques and the other skills that are crucial to the espionage trade. When push comes to shove, lamplighters are also experts in breaking and entering, and their ability to move stealthily can make them dangerous assassins as well. Some of these officers may well have picked up their skill sets from less than fully legal activities, others may have been trained in their art by an intelligence service.

CREATING A LAMPLIGHTER

To create your character, go through this list and follow the instructions.

1. NAME AND PARTICULARS

1 a. Name

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

1 b. Description

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

2. BACKGROUND

Choose some details to detail what your character did before joining the SIS.

2 a. Class

What social class and professional background does your character come from? Choose one or write your own.

2 b. Drive

Why does your character do what they do? Choose or write your own.

2 c. Relationship

Choose and describe your character's personal relationship. Who do they go to for emotional support?

3. MOVES

You get all the basic moves. Choose three starting moves from the playbook move list.

4. STATS

Choose one of the following stat lines.

Craft+2 Hard-1 Charming+1 Composed+1 Brilliant=0

Craft+2 Hard+1 Charming-1 Composed+1 Brilliant=0

Craft+2 Hard=0 Charming+1 Composed-1 Brilliant+1

Craft+2 Hard=0 Charming-2 Composed+2 Brilliant+1

5. TRUST

Once everyone has created their character, go around and introduce them. Be sure to give their name, their playbook, their background and their description.

Go around once more, and say one, some or all of the following statements about how your character feels about the other characters, and mark the corresponding trust next to their name on your sheet.

- _____ distrusts me because of something they caught me doing. I'll convince them to forget about it.
For that character, write trust-1.
- I keep a close watch on _____. It seems they are up to something.
For that character, write trust-2.
- I've heard rumours about _____. If they turn out to be true, that might give me a hold over them.
For that character, write trust-1.
- I envy _____ their perfect life. Perhaps one day I'll have what they have.
For that character, write trust+1.

NOTES

THE SERVICE

BRITISH PASSPORT



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Lamplighter

PARTICULARS

Name: _____
Christine, Jaqueline, Joyce, Wendy, Tara
Kenneth, Derek, Malcolm, Graham, John
Smith, Bannen, Harris, Marlowe, Shaw
Aliases: _____

Description

Face: gaunt, pale, bespectacled, furrowed _____
Eyes: suspicious, nervous, piercing, sad _____
Body: small, wiry, tall, athletic _____
Dress: conservative, casual, flashy, functional _____

BACKGROUND

Circle or underline one option per category, and write a specific detail about it.

Class

Upper class, middle class, working class, outsider
examples: Detective, Thief...

Drive

Adventure, camaraderie, duty, ego, ideology, power

Personal relationship

Family, friend, lover, mentor

TRUST



STATS

Brilliant

Research, Speak lang.

Charming

Manipulate

Composed

Act under pressure

Hard

Make mayhem

Craft

Surveil

Stress

stress out

Wounds

Wounded

Critical

TRAUMAS

Traumas can only be marked once per item. If any item makes you uncomfortable, strike it out. You can ask the GM to substitute a new one, or use Crisis of faith twice.

- ☐ **Hardened.** You get +1hard (max hard+3).
- ☐ **Paranoid.** You get +1craft (max craft+3)
- ☐ **Shaken.** You get -1craft.
- ☐ **Crisis of faith.** Change your drive.
- ☐ **Addiction.** When you indulge your addiction, remove 1-stress. If you do, take +1stress next time you go on an op or return from the field.
- ☐ **Personal crisis.** Lose your personal relationship. You can work to regain it or find a new one as a personal project.
- ☐ **You've had too much.** Quit, retire, disappear or die.

MOVES

☐ **Breaking and entering:** when you try to infiltrate or break into a place, roll+craft. On a 10+ choose 2, on a 7-9 choose 1.

- *You discover something valuable or important*
- *You arrive in a superior position*
- *You leave no trace*

On a miss you are caught off guard, confronted, or in a tight spot.

☐ **Surveillance:** when you keep a person or place under extended surveillance, you can roll+craft to *research* them.

☐ **Razor sharp:** you get +1craft (craft+3).

☐ **Light fingers:** when you try to pick someone's pockets or perform some similar sleight of hand, roll+craft. On a hit, you do it and get away clean. On a 7-9, choose one:

- *Your mark notices what's wrong before long.*
- *Somebody else noticed what you did. Who is it?*

On a miss you get caught in the act.

☐ **Escape route:** when you try to make a quick escape, name your escape route and roll+craft. On a 10+, you're gone. On a 7-9 you can get out, but it will cost you. The GM will tell you what. On a miss they've cut you off or you're out of the frying-pan and into the fire.

GEAR, COVERS, NOTES

☐ **Cutthroat:** when you *make mayhem* with an edged weapon, roll+craft instead of roll+hard.

Other moves

IMPROVEMENTS: XP ○○○○○○

- ☐ +1 to Hard (max Hard+2)
- ☐ +1 to Brilliant (max Brilliant+2)
- ☐ +1 to Composed (max Composed+2)
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Promoted to Senior officer (see UK Station sheet)
- ☐ +1 to any stat (max +3)
- ☐ Change into another playbook
- ☐ Create a new character to play alongside this one
- ☐ Retire to safety (gain *one last job*-move)

When you mark your fifth XP, erase all marks and choose an advance. After your fifth advance, you can choose from the advanced options.

Researchers can work wonders in archives and registries, they sift through raw intelligence and possess prodigal knowledge on a wide variety of subjects. Most analysts come from a higher education background with one or more advanced degrees, but some are self-taught or have picked up their knowledge in unconventional ways. All, however, are as intelligent as they are resourceful.

CREATING A RESEARCHER

To create your character, go through this list and follow the instructions.

1. NAME AND PARTICULARS

1 a. Name

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

1 b. Description

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

2. BACKGROUND

Choose some details to detail what your character did before joining the SIS.

2 a. Class

What social class and professional background does your character come from? Choose one or write your own.

2 b. Drive

Why does your character do what they do? Choose or write your own.

2 c. Relationship

Choose and describe your character's personal relationship. Who do they go to for emotional support?

3. MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You get **Expert**, and choose two more starting moves from the playbook move list.

4. STATS

Choose one of the following stat lines.

Craft+1 Hard-1 Charming=0 Composed+1 Brilliant+2

Craft+2 Hard-1 Charming-1 Composed=0 Brilliant+2

Craft+1 Hard=0 Charming+1 Composed-1 Brilliant+2

Craft+1 Hard-2 Charming-1 Composed+2 Brilliant+2

5. TRUST

Once everyone has created their character, go around and introduce them. Be sure to give their name, their playbook, their background and their description.

Go around once more, and say one, some or all of the following statements about how your character feels about the other characters, and mark the corresponding trust next to their name on your sheet.

- *I once screwed over _____ to look good in front of my superiors. I hope I don't have to do it again.*
For that character, write trust-1.
- *I've seen _____'s personnel file and know a secret about them. If need be, I can use it to my advantage.*
For that character, write trust+1.
- *_____ is more intelligent than they let on. I'll see if I can't teach them a thing or two.*
For that character, write trust+1.
- *_____ is clearly an ignorant individual, but I'm sure I can find some use for them.*
For that character, write trust+1.

NOTES

THE SERVICE

BRITISH PASSPORT



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Researcher

PARTICULARS

Name: _____
Anne, Sylvia, Barbara, Judith, Laura
Richard, Geoffrey, Robert, Percy, Duncan
Cuthbert, Aldridge, Martin, Hall, Powell
Aliases: _____

Description

Face: fine, pudgy, pale, homely _____
Eyes: curious, calculating, absent-minded, intense _____
Body: small, flabby, tall, soft, frail _____
Dress: tweedy, threadbare, eccentric, conservative _____

BACKGROUND

Circle or underline one option per category, and write a specific detail about it.

Class

Upper class, middle class, working class, outsider
examples: Academic, military intelligence, journalist...

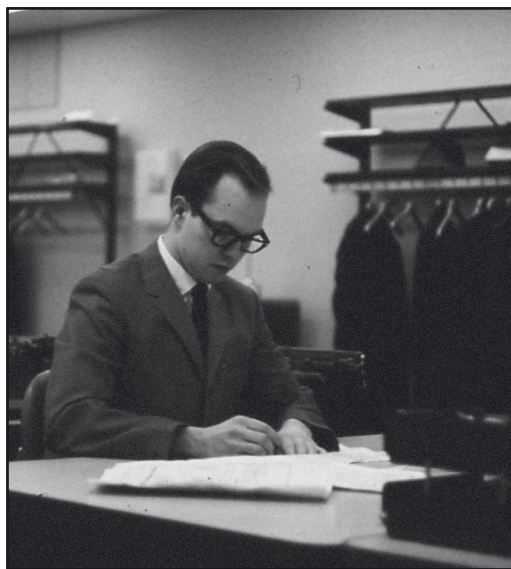
Drive

Adventure, camaraderie, duty, ego, ideology, power

Personal relationship

Family, friend, lover, mentor

TRUST



STATS

Brilliant

Research, Speak lang.

Charming

Manipulate

Composed

Act under pressure

Hard

Make mayhem

Craft

Surveil

Stress

stress out

Wounds

Wounded

Critical

TRAUMAS

Traumas can only be marked once per item. If any item makes you uncomfortable, strike it out. You can ask the GM to substitute a new one, or use Crisis of faith twice.

- ☐ **Hardened.** You get +1hard (max hard+3).
- ☐ **Paranoid.** You get +1craft (max craft+3)
- ☐ **Shaken.** You get -1craft.
- ☐ **Crisis of faith.** Change your drive.
- ☐ **Addiction.** When you indulge your addiction, remove 1-stress. If you do, take +1stress next time you go on an op or return from the field.
- ☐ **Personal crisis.** Lose your personal relationship. You can work to regain it or find a new one as a personal project.
- ☐ **You've had too much.** Quit, retire, disappear or die.

MOVES

☒ **Expert:** you are an expert in two of the seven controllerates the SIS divides the world into. Write them down in your notes. When you want to *re-search* something relating to your area of expertise, you you may do so without access to archives, and you always get one extra question, even on a miss.

☐ **A beautiful mind:** +1 brilliant (+3)

☐ **Classified personnel files:** you have access to classified files about people of interest to the SIS. When you look for information about someone in those files, roll+brilliant. On a 10+, ask three questions from the list, on a 7-9 ask one. For NPC:s, ask the GM, for PC:s ask their player.

- *What part about your background does your character want to hide?*
- *What is your character's source of stability?*
- *What does your character crave more than anything?*
- *What is your character's greatest weakness?*

On a miss the content of the file is above your security clearance or the file has been destroyed or tampered with. You get a glimpse of the answer, or a clue that can lead to further investigation, but the opposition takes notice. Take +1Heat.

☐ **Preternaturally perceptive:** when you *surveil*, roll+brilliant instead of roll+craft.

☐ **Encyclopedic knowledge:** take two extra areas of expertise.

☐ **Inductive reasoning:** you can *research* anything you observe, such as a person, an item or a location, without access to archives or sources.

☐ **Natural linguist:** when you try to *speak languages* in one of your areas of expertise, you automatically succeed as if you've rolled a 10+.

☐ **Brains of the operation:** when you make a plan and assign tasks to the rest of your team, they take +1ongoing while carrying out those tasks, until they roll a miss or deviate from the plan. When the plan has played out, whether it worked or not, mark XP.

Other moves

IMPROVEMENTS: XP ○○○○○○

- ☐ +1 to Charming (max Charming+2)
- ☐ +1 to Craft (max Craft+2)
- ☐ +1 to Composed (max Composed+2)
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Promoted to Senior officer (see UK Station sheet)

- ☐ +1 to any stat (max +3)
- ☐ Change into another playbook
- ☐ Create a new character to play alongside this one
- ☐ Retire to safety (gain *one last job*-move)

When you mark your fifth XP, erase all marks and choose an advance. After your fifth advance, you can choose from the advanced options.

GEAR, COVERS, NOTES

If the heavy is the hammer of the intelligence service, the special operations officer is the scalpel. Direct descendants of the SOE and other commandos, they are experts at performing reconnaissance and sabotage operations behind enemy lines. They are most effective when they can use the element of surprise and perform hit-and-run operations. In a stand-up fight the heavy will have the upper hand, so special ops go to great lengths to avoid a fair fight. Most special ops officers are recruited from the SAS, SBS or similar special forces, but some may have learned their trade in less official organizations or been trained in paramilitary tactics by the SIS.

CREATING A SPECIAL OPS OFFICER

To create your character, go through this list and follow the instructions.

1. NAME AND PARTICULARS

1 a. Name

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

1 b. Description

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

2. BACKGROUND

Choose some details to detail what your character did before joining the SIS.

2 a. Class

What social class and professional background does your character come from? Choose one or write your own.

2 b. Drive

Why does your character do what they do? Choose or write your own.

2 c. Relationship

Choose and describe your character's personal relationship. Who do they go to for emotional support?

3. MOVES

You get all the basic moves. Choose three starting moves from the playbook move list.

4. STATS

Choose one of the following stat lines.

Craft+1 Hard+1 Charming-1 Composed+2 Brilliant=0

Craft+1 Hard=0 Charming+1 Composed+2 Brilliant=0

Craft+2 Hard=0 Charming-1 Composed+2 Brilliant+1

Craft=0 Hard+1 Charming=0 Composed+2 Brilliant+1

5. TRUST

Once everyone has created their character, go around and introduce them. Be sure to give their name, their playbook, their background and their description.

Go around once more, and say one, some or all of the following statements about how your character feels about the other characters, and mark the corresponding trust next to their name on your sheet.

• _____ *got me out of a bad place. I trust them with my life.*

For that character, write trust+2.

• _____ *once compromised an op by giving me bad intel.*

For that character, write trust-2.

• _____ *has hidden reserves. I'll help them reach their full potential.*

For that character, write trust+1.

NOTES

THE SERVICE

BRITISH PASSPORT



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Special
ops officer

Name: _____
Gillian, Pauline, Kathleen, Jennifer, Karen
James, Thomas, Roger, Alexander, Frank
Wood, Evans, Lewis, Manning, O'Connor
Aliases: _____

Face: handsome, sun-tanned, scarred, rugged _____
 Eyes: friendly, suspicious, piercing, thousand yard stare _____
 Body: wiry, tall, athletic, hard _____
 Dress: conservative, fashionable, casual, outdoorsy _____

Circle or underline one option per category, and write a specific detail about it.

Upper class, middle class, working class, outsider
examples: Special forces, guerrilla...

Adventure, camaraderie, duty, ego, ideology, power

Family, friend, lover, mentor

[illegible]

Brilliant
Research, Speak lang.

Charming Manipulate

Composed
Act under pressure

Hard
Make mayhem

Craft Surveil

stress out

Wounds

Wounded	Critical
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14
15	15
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89	89
90	90
91	91
92	92
93	93
94	94
95	95
96	96
97	97
98	98
99	99
100	100

Traumas can only be marked once per item. If any item makes you uncomfortable, strike it out. You can ask the GM to substitute a new one, or use Crisis of faith twice.

- ☐ **Hardened.** You get +1hard (max hard+3).
- ☐ **Paranoid.** You get +1craft (max craft+3)
- ☐ **Shaken.** You get -1craft.
- ☐ **Crisis of faith.** Change your drive.
- ☐ **Addiction.** When you indulge your addiction, remove 1-stress. If you do, take +1stress next time you go on an op or return from the field.
- ☐ **Personal crisis.** Lose your personal relationship. You can work to regain it or find a new one as a personal project.
- ☐ **You've had too much.** Quit, retire, disappear or die.

❑ **Advanced infiltration techniques:** when you're parachuting, scuba diving or fast-roping into a dangerous situation, roll+composed. On a hit, you're in. On a 7-9 choose 1:

- You end up off of the designated drop point.
- Someone takes notice. Take +1heat.
- You lose something valuable.
- You get hurt or exhausted on your way in. Take 1-harm or 1-stress, whichever makes more sense.

On a miss, choose one from the list and the GM chooses another one.

☐ Breaching!: when you burst into a room using surprise, you count as a small unit. If you do it as part of a unit, your unit counts as one category larger than they are.

☐ **Ice water in their veins:** you get +1composed (composed+3).

❑ **Sniper:** when you spend time lining up a shot with a rifle from a hidden position, roll+composed. On a 10+, both of these, on a 7–9 choose one.

- You hit your target dead on, deal an extra wound. Otherwise you have to take what you can get, ignore the high-powered tag if you have it.
- You don't compromise your position. Otherwise, they know where you are.

On a miss you don't have a clear shot, and the enemy is right on your position.

[illegible]

❑ **Who dares wins:** when you attack the enemy using surprise, roll+composed to *make mayhem* instead of roll+hard.

☐ **Not by strength, but by guile:** when you're striking from the cover of darkness, or using hit-and-run tactics, you get 1-armour.

❑ **Escape and evade:** when you try to hide or escape from the enemy, roll+composed. On a 10+ you vanish like a ghost. On a 7–9 you can slip away but if you do it will cost you, the GM will tell you what. On a miss you are caught out, like a deer in the headlights.

[illegible]

- ☐ +1 to Hard (max Hard+2)
- ☐ +1 to Craft (max Craft+2)
- ☐ +1 to Brilliant (max Brilliant+2)
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Promoted to Senior officer (see UK Station sheet)

- ☐ +1 to any stat (max +3)
- ☐ Change into another playbook
- ☐ Create a new character to play alongside this one
- ☐ Retire to safety (gain ***one last job***-move)

When you mark your fifth XP, erase all marks and choose an advance. After your fifth advance, you can choose from the advanced options.

You're the boss.

As the Head of UK Station you have full responsibility for all the ops that your VCOs undertake. In addition, you must juggle inadequate budgets, wrestle with the wheels of bureaucracy and cope with whatever reputation the paper pushers in HQ have decided the UK Station deserves. When necessity demands, it is also not unheard of for the station chief to go out in the field to assist their officers.

I hope you like stress.

CREATING A HEAD OF STATION

To create your character, go through this list and follow the instructions.

1. NAME AND PARTICULARS

1 a. Name

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

1 b. Description

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

2. BACKGROUND

Choose some details to detail what your character did before joining the SIS.

2 a. Class

What social class and professional background does your character come from? Choose one or write your own.

2 b. Drive

Why does your character do what they do? Choose or write your own.

2 c. Relationship

Choose and describe your character's personal relationship. Who do they go to for emotional support?

3. MOVES

You get all the basic moves. You also get the four pre-checked moves in your playbook.

4. STATS

Choose one of the following stat lines.

Craft+1 Hard-1 Charming+1 Composed+2 Brilliant=0

Craft+1 Hard=0 Charming+1 Composed+2 Brilliant-1

Craft=0 Hard+1 Charming-1 Composed+2 Brilliant+1

Craft=0 Hard-1 Charming-1 Composed+2 Brilliant+2

5. TRUST

Once everyone has created their character, go around and introduce them. Be sure to give their name, their playbook, their background and their description.

Go around once more, and say one, some or all of the following statements about how your character feels about the other characters, and mark the corresponding trust next to their name on your sheet.

• _____ is a solid officer, someone I can trust with the most sensitive ops.

For that character, write trust+2.

• I heard troubling rumours about _____. Let's hope there's nothing to them.

For that character, write trust-1.

• _____ is still finding their wings. With the right guidance, they could go far.

For that character, write trust+1.

• _____ has a hard time following orders, I may have to rein them in.

For that character, write trust-1.

NOTES

THE SERVICE

BRITISH PASSPORT



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Head of Station

PARTICULARS

Name: _____
Sandra, Jaqueline, Caroline, Marian, Penelope
Duncan, Gary, Lance, Stewart, Winston
Cox, Gallagher, Humphries, Moody, Turner
Aliases: _____

Description

Face: stern, groomed, homely, scarred _____
Eyes: determined, piercing, calculating, smiling _____
Body: slim, large, plump, small _____
Dress: expensive, conservative, utilitarian, flashy _____

BACKGROUND

Circle or underline one option per category, and write a specific detail about it.

Class

Upper class, middle class, working class, outsider
examples: Career intelligence officer, military officer, diplomat...

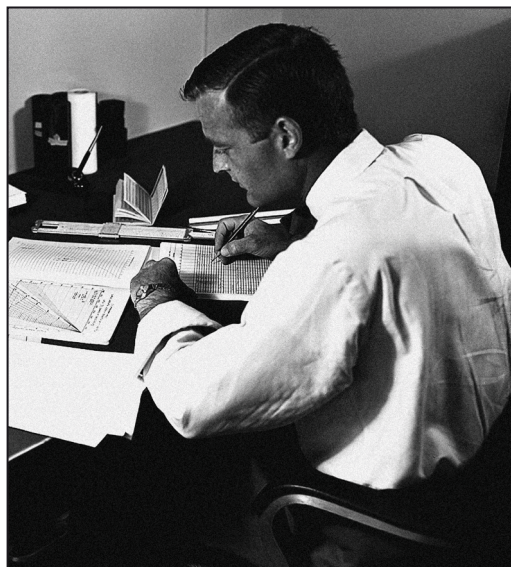
Drive

Adventure, camaraderie, duty, ego, ideology, power

Personal relationship

Family, friend, lover, mentor

TRUST



STATS

Brilliant

Research, Speak lang.

Charming

Manipulate

Composed

Act under pressure

Hard

Make mayhem

Craft

Surveil

Stress

stress out

Wounds

Wounded

Critical

TRAUMAS

Traumas can only be marked once per item. If any item makes you uncomfortable, strike it out. You can ask the GM to substitute a new one, or use Crisis of faith twice.

- ☐ **Hardened.** You get +1hard (max hard+3).
- ☐ **Paranoid.** You get +1craft (max craft+3)
- ☐ **Shaken.** You get -1craft.
- ☐ **Crisis of faith.** Change your drive.
- ☐ **Addiction.** When you indulge your addiction, remove 1-stress. If you do, take +1stress next time you go on an op or return from the field.
- ☐ **Personal crisis.** Lose your personal relationship. You can work to regain it or find a new one as a personal project.
- ☐ **You've had too much.** Quit, retire, disappear or die.

MOVES

☒ **Go through your in-tray:** when you go through the intelligence reports on your desk, roll+influence. On a 10+, you're fully appraised of the situation. Ask 3 of the following questions and the GM will give you straight answers. On a 7-9 ask 1.

- *What crisis are we not aware of yet?*
- *What requires immediate attention?*
- *What risks are associated with a certain crisis?*
- *What about a certain crisis is not what it appears to be?*

On a miss, the GM can bring to bear one of the Station's shortages, advance a crisis or create a new one.

☒ **Run an op:** when you initiate an operation, make the mount an operation move normally, then roll+composed. On a 10+, choose 2, on a 7-9, choose 1.

- *The op is well supported. Choose one piece of operational support that you get without the need to make a move for it.*
- *There are assets in place. Take +1network to the relevant controllerate, and name the asset.*
- *Good intelligence. The GM will give you a relevant piece of intel about the crisis. You can also choose to research it for more details.*

On a miss, choose 1 anyway, but the GM will raise the heat, have a third party get involved, introduce a complication or advance a crisis clock.

GEAR, COVERS, NOTES

☐ **Strategic leadership:** when you give another officer advice or guidance on how to proceed with their mission, they take +1forward as long as they follow your advice or until they roll a miss. After the op you mark XP.

☐ **Visionary:** when an operation you initiated succeeds, the UK Station gains 1 additional XP.

☐ **My door's always open:** when you listen to your officers' worries or complaints and offer some words of encouragement, roll+charming. On a 10+ they take -1stress and +1forward, on a 7-9 they take -1stress. On a miss, they take +1forward but you take +1stress.

Other moves

IMPROVEMENTS: XP ○○○○○○

- ☐ +1 to Composed (max Composed+3)
- ☐ +1 to Charming (max Charming+3)
- ☐ +1 to Brilliant (max Brilliant+3)
- ☐ Choose a new tag for the UK Station
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ New playbook move
- ☐ Move from another playbook
- ☐ Move from another playbook

- ☐ +1 to any stat (max +3)
- ☐ Create a new character to play alongside this one
- ☐ Change into another playbook
- ☐ Retire to safety (gain *one last job*-move)

When you mark your fifth XP, erase all marks and choose an advance. After your fifth advance, you can choose from the advanced options.

In the increasingly high-tech world of espionage, the tech is on point when it comes to electronic surveillance and counter-measures, computer use, demolitions, forgery and a host of other highly specialized skills. An ability to think on one's feet and figuring out improvised solutions on the fly also mean the tech is a valuable asset out in the field.

CREATING A TECH

To create your character, go through this list and follow the instructions.

1. NAME AND PARTICULARS

1 a. Name

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

1 b. Description

Choose from the lists, or make up your own.

2. BACKGROUND

Choose some details to detail what your character did before joining the SIS.

2 a. Class

What social class and professional background does your character come from? Choose one or write your own.

2 b. Drive

Why does your character do what they do? Choose or write your own.

2 c. Relationship

Choose and describe your character's personal relationship. Who do they go to for emotional support?

3. MOVES

You get all the basic moves. Choose three starting moves from the playbook move list.

4. STATS

Choose one of the following stat lines.

Craft+1 Hard-1 Charming=0 Composed+1 Brilliant+2
Craft+1 Hard=0 Charming-1 Composed+1 Brilliant+2
Craft=0 Hard+1 Charming+1 Composed-1 Brilliant+2
Craft+2 Hard-1 Charming-1 Composed=0 Brilliant+2

5. TRUST

Once everyone has created their character, go around and introduce them. Be sure to give their name, their playbook, their background and their description.

Go around once more, and say one, some or all of the following statements about how your character feels about the other characters, and mark the corresponding trust next to their name on your sheet.

- _____ *feels threatened by my tech and know-how. I'll convince them that mine is the way of the future.*

For that character, write trust-1.

- *I helped _____ find dirt on somebody, and they still owe me for it.*

For that character, write trust+1.

- _____ *understands the role of technology in intelligence operations. Together, maybe we can convince the fogies in HQ of it's potential.*

For that character, write trust+2.

GEAR, COVERS, NOTES

THE SERVICE

BRITISH PASSPORT



UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND

The Tech

THE SERVICE

UK Station

Culture
(choose 2)
autonomous, bureaucratic, conservative, war time nostalgia, americophile, counter-cultural, laid back, something else, what? _____

Location
(choose 1 or 2)
modern, run-down, antiquated, central, peripheral, under construction, underground, front organization, maze-like, opulent, something else, what? _____

Shortages
(choose 2)
funds, staff, time, security, technology, reputation, morale, something else, what? _____

Reputation: _____

Improvement

Station XP ○○○○○○

Every time the UK Station marks the fifth Station XP mark, erase all marks and choose 1 of the following:

- +1influence (max influence+3)
- Gain a new station advance
- Remove a shortage
- Add or change a tag or location keyword

Influence
(starts as +0)

Influence

Influence is a measure of the UK Station's standing within the SIS hierarchy, its political clout and the size of its budget.

If the UK Station ever goes to negative influence, the GM creates a crisis to reflect the loss of standing for the UK Station. If the UK Station ever hits -3 influence, it is disbanded and all officers fired or reassigned. You can keep playing, but you'll need to figure out what structure, if any, replaces the UK Station.

Station advances

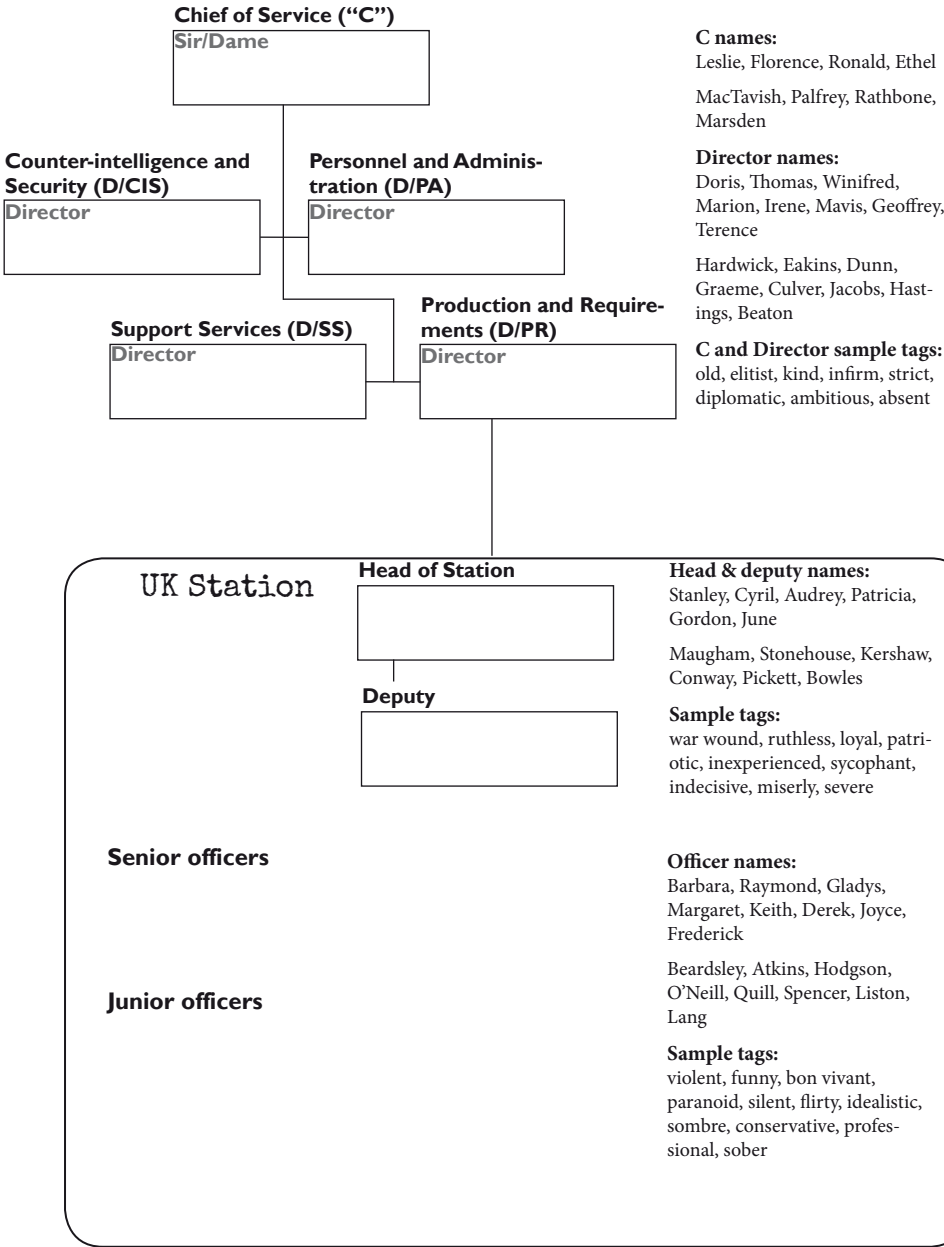
Start with 2 of these.

- ☐ **Extensive archives:** the UK Station archives can be used as a source to *research* all but the most esoteric or secret of subjects.
- ☐ **Front organization:** once per session, take -1heat in one controller-ate.
- ☐ **Special relationship:** The UK Station has a good working relationship with the CIA. You can go to them for *operational support*. They have access to spy satellites, the latest tech and tons of money, but be aware that dealing with the Cousins is a two way street.
- ☐ **Special Projects Team:** the Station has a strike team of special forces soldiers on call (medium unit, 3 harm, 2 armour in tactical gear). Deploy them using the *operational support* move.
- ☐ **Reptile fund:** the PCs always have access to reasonable amounts of cash, no questions asked.
- ☐ **Friends in high places:** once per session, you may call on contacts in the SIS or the government to give you an automatic result of 10+ on an *operational support* move, but you'll owe them.

Creating the UK Station

- Choose tags (2), location tags (1-2), shortages (2) and reputation.
- Write down starting influence.
- Choose 2 station advances.
- Go through the SIS structure and fill in some of the boxes with names and tags. Don't fill them all in, but make sure you get the Head of Station/UK and a few other characters.
- Distribute as many points among Networks as there are player characters or 3, whichever is higher. For every time you add a point of network to a controllerate, also make up an asset by giving them a role and a name. You can use the role suggestions in the list below. When the PCs contact one of the assets you can fill out their asset card with tags and motivations and so on.
- low-level government official
 - fixer
 - smuggler
 - sex worker
 - priest
 - journalist
 - member of emigré organization
 - intellectual
 - scientist
 - military officer
 - intelligence officer
 - secretary

SIS Organizational Chart

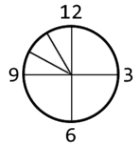


I. Controllerate/UK (C/UK)

Assets



Network



Heat

Opposition & crises

Locations

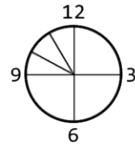
London
Liverpool
Manchester
Belfast
Swansea
Edinburgh
Scottish isles
Welsh hills

2. Controllerate/Western Europe (C/WE)

Assets



Network



Heat

Opposition & crises

Locations

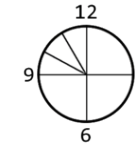
Vienna
Rome
Paris
Geneva
Madrid
Bonn
Helsinki
Amsterdam
Athens
Gibraltar

3. Controllerate/Soviet Union (C/SOV)

Assets



Network



Heat

Opposition & crises

Locations

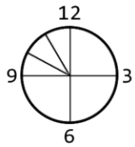
Moscow
Leningrad
Riga
Berlin
Belgrade
Budapest
Prague

4. Controllerate/Middle East (C/ME)

Assets



Network

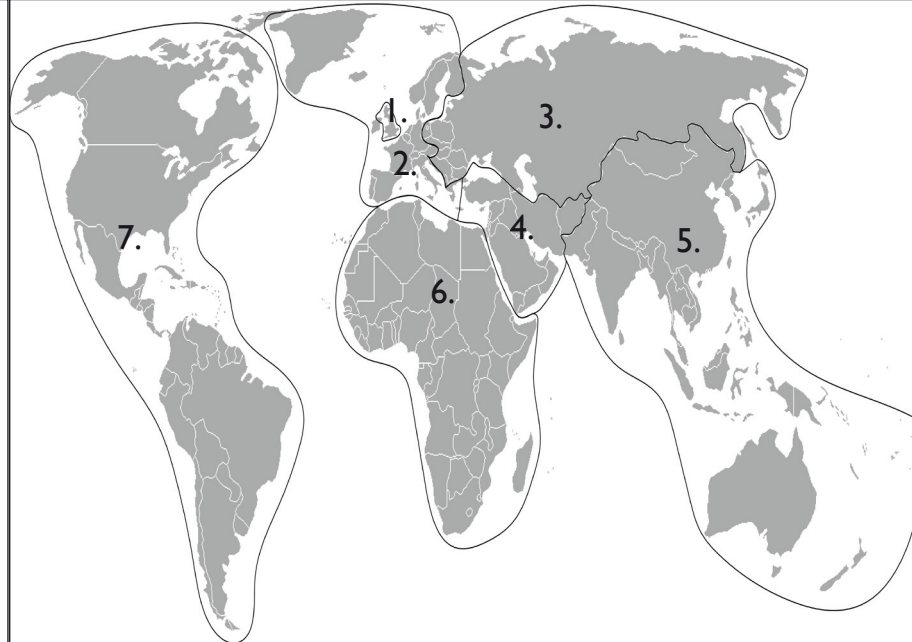


Heat

Opposition & crises

Locations

Jerusalem
Tel Aviv
Amman
Istanbul
Baghdad
Beirut
Tehran
Cyprus
Damascus

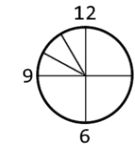


5. Controllerate/Far East (C/FE)

Assets



Network



Heat

Opposition & crises

Locations

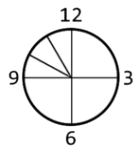
Hong Kong
Beijing
Tokyo
Delhi
Mumbai
Sydney
Vientiane
Saigon
Bangkok

6. Controllerate/Africa (C/AF)

Assets



Network



Heat

Opposition & crises

Locations

Cairo
Tripoli
Pretoria
Cape Town
Dakar
Luanda
Khartoum
Mogadishu
Casablanca
Tangiers

THE SERVICE

Controllerates

Heat

3 Opposition starts noticing something's wrong/prick up their ears

6 Opposition becomes gradually more aware of what's happening (who, what, where or why)

9 Opposition is actively seeking information, looking for ways to get at the team

10 Opposition knows more or less what's going on; covers blown, alarms, threats and/or violence

11 Opposition closes borders, brings in reinforcements etc

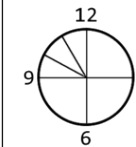
12 Opposition knows exactly where the team is, and come at them with all they've got

7. Controllerate/Western Hemisphere (C/WH)

Assets



Network



Heat

Opposition & crises

Locations

Washington DC
Kingston
Managua
Medellin
Bogota
Managua
Nassau
Mexico City
Havana
New York

THE SERVICE

GM Sheet 1 Agenda, Principles & Moves



Agenda

- Make the stark, drab & dreary world of Cold War espionage seem real.
- Make the players' characters' lives interesting and complicated.
- Play to find out what happens.

Principles

- Fill the world with bureaucracy, intrigue and Cold War paraphernalia.
- Be a fan of the characters.
- Ask questions and build on the answers.
- No cheating, no lying. Be open and generous with the truth.
- Address the characters, not the players.
- Make a move that follows, but never speak its name.
- Name everyone. Make them human.
- Regard every NPC as an expendable asset.
- So many crises to handle, so little time. This is the life of a Visiting Case Officer in the SIS.
- Portray a world of bureaucratic organizations, with changing power dynamics and constant reorganizations.
- Make the organizations that make up the system large, monolithic and resistant to meaningful change.
- Give the characters what they work for, but make sure there are consequences.
- Think offscreen too.
- Sometimes, disclaim decision-making.
- Don't be afraid to use tropes, but make sure to invert them every now and then.

Moves

- Make an operation, opposition or terrain move
- Separate them
- Put someone in a spot
- Announce an off-screen threat
- Announce an approaching threat
- Reveal an unwelcome truth
- Inflict harm as established
- Inflict stress as established
- Raise heat
- Take away their things
- Make them buy
- Activate their things' downside
- Tell them potential consequences & ask
- Offer an opportunity with or without cost
- Turn their move back on them
- Highlight a downside of their background or social class
- Challenge a character's drive
- Highlight a trauma
- After every move: What do you do?

Operations moves

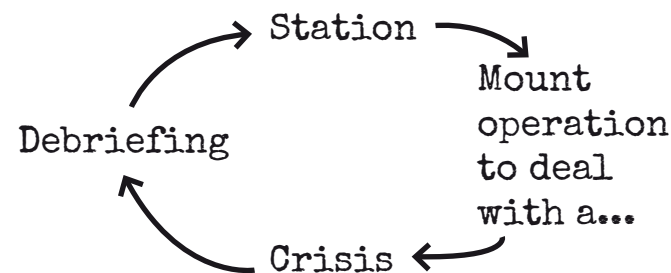
- An objective changes, or a new objective is revealed
- A third party gets involved
- The team's intel turns out to be incomplete
- An NPC turns out to be something else than they seem
- Put them on a clock

Opposition moves

- Put somebody under surveillance
- Present an offer or an ultimatum
- Attempt to control somebody using manipulation, blackmail or threats
- Threaten the UK Station networks, influence or funds
- Make an indirect attack
- Make a direct and violent attack

Terrain moves

- Hide something
- Reveal something
- Block a way
- Open a way
- Make somebody or something lost
- Expose people to the elements
- Fauna encounter
- Sudden weather change



THE SERVICE

GM Sheet 2

Creating a crisis, Opposition & Terrain



Creating a crisis

Figure these out, and write them down on a crisis sheet.

1. What is going on? Describe the crisis. Remember, you don't know what will happen when the PCs get involved. Play to find out.

2. Where is it happening? What controllerate, location, terrain?

3. Who is involved? Which opposition factions have a stake in this? Who are the NPCs of note?

4. Why do you care? How does this come to the PCs attention?

What happens if the crisis isn't dealt with? What are the stakes? Start a clock if need be, and fill in some consequences of increasing severity.

5. Connections. Is the crisis connected to other crises?

Notice that you do not answer the question **how?** The crisis is the problem, coming up with a solution is up to the PCs. Often it will involve them *mounting an operation*.

Opposition

Business

Impulse: make money, consolidate power, get tech

Multinational conglomerates (big oil, big pharma, mining), national businesses (arms industry).

Criminal

Impulse: make money, earn respect, close ranks

Mafia, triads, drug runners, gun runners, small-time thieves

Government

Impulse: gain and hold on to power

Home Office, Foreign Office, Downing Street, foreign branches of government or statesmen

Home front

Impulse: craves love, attention and support, wants time and money

Family, lovers, friends

Intelligence service

Impulse: seek intel, gain influence, build networks, disrupt other services

KGB, GRU, CIA, Mossad

International organizations

Impulse: to regulate, to defend their domain

UN, NATO, Warsaw Pact, EEC, OPEC, UNICEF

Media

Impulse: find and expose the truth in a way that fits their agenda

The BBC, The Daily Mail, The Guardian

Military

Impulse: defend territory or project force

Warsaw Pact national militaries, UK armed forces, third world militia

NGOs

Impulse: defend their agenda, expose, acquire funds, help, believe

Amnesty international, Greenpeace, International Red Cross, Medecins sans frontieres

Security service

Impulse: to control, expose, capture & contain

Stasi, MI5, local police

Terrorists

Impulse: use violence to get attention to your cause

IRA, RAF, PLO, ETA, splinter groups, freelancers

Terrain

Arctic

Impulse: To expose, to freeze, to disorient

Desert

Impulse: To expose, to dry out

Jungle

Impulse: To envelop, to frustrate passage, to decay

Mountains

Impulse: To block passage, to drop somebody or something

Rural

Impulse: To isolate, to preserve normality

Sea

Impulse: To envelop, to drown, to carry with the flow

Urban

Impulse: To conceal, to bustle

Woods

Impulse: To hide, to make somebody lose their way

THE SERVICE

GM Sheet 3 Sample Crises 1

Most of the crises are
courtesy of:
Acronico Meia Noite



Budget cuts

Under political pressure, the SIS is forced to cut spending. How will this affect the UK Station? Can the networks still operate? How long does it last?
Opposition: Government, Media

The party wants, the party gets

A new SIS director, Deputy Chief or C is being appointed with significant political backing. Is this person competent at all? What is their agenda? What is their view on the UK Station? Is it just party politics?
Opposition: Government, Media, (Criminal, Intelligence services)

Jobs for the boys

A new officer joins the UK Station, as a protégé of someone important in the SIS or Foreign Office. Is this person competent at all? What is their agenda? Is it just party politics? How does the team react to this?
Opposition: Government, Media, (Criminal, Intelligence services)

The scandal

A political figure is about to be exposed, revealing an embarrassing or damaging truth about our government or our allies' government. What is the cost of preventing this? Can the team/service live with the bad stench of covering this up?
Opposition: Government, Media, NGOs, Business, Military

Hostile takeover

Whitehall clients want the SIS to help take down foreign competitors of national business interests. What is the business? Who are the interested parties? What are the competitors' weaknesses?
Opposition: Government, Business

One of our own

One of the Service officers or assets turns up dead, either in the UK, in some overseas territory or in a foreign country. What important operation or network is potentially threatened? Is it foul play or could it be natural causes? If it's on home soil, how will MI5/Metropolitan react? Is there a risk of media coverage?
Opposition: Security services, Media

Mole hunt

SIS Counterintelligence suspects someone in the UK Station is a leak. Who are they targeting? What are the connections? How aggressively will they come after the PCs? Is there some truth to their allegations? Will the PCs carry out their own investigation?
Opposition: Intelligence services

Old sins

Criminal connections from the past return to claim their dues from one of your team's PCs. Who are they targeting? What does your team member secretly owe them for? How will this hamper/aid the Service?
Opposition: Criminal

Gold from the past

WWII treasure has surfaced along with a prominent war criminal. This man is a part of your network. Terrorist cells and the Mossad have been alerted and a race for the treasure and the man has ensued. Who will get there first? What will the Terrorists do with the money? Will you protect him or hand him to the Mossad? What will either mean for your network and operations?
Opposition: Terrorists, Intelligence services

International honey trap

A prominent diplomat, businessman or politician has fallen in a vice trap (sex/drugs/gambling). Who is trying to blackmail them and to what end? Can this be exploited by the SIS? How can this be contained?
Opposition: Government, Business, International organisations, Intelligence services, Media

Home front honey trap

Someone from your team or a relative has fallen in a vice trap (sex/drugs/gambling). How will this affect your team? Who are trying to exploit this? How can this be contained?
Opposition: Criminal, Intelligence services, Home front.

Home front crisis

A family member, old friend or lover of a team member is in a deep crisis (psychological breakdown, illness, crisis in a relationships etc.). How will your team member perform under an additional stress source? Will this person or their home front become a liability?
Opposition: Home front

In from the cold

A spy exchange or a walk-in defector exposes an alleged mole during debriefing. Is this person in your team or somewhere else in the service? Can the source be trusted or are you being given chicken feed/false intel?
Opposition: Intelligence services

Offer of service

Someone approaches the SIS to be recruited as an asset. Are they for real or are they setting the team up, either as a trap or as a dangle, an attempt to create a double agent?
Opposition: Intelligence services

Friend or foe?

An agent or a network from an allied country is actively working against UK interests. How can this be contained without creating a diplomatic conflict? Will the government aid or interfere?
Opposition: Intelligence services, Government, Media, Security services (MI5).

Cousins in need

An ally agency/service (UK or foreign) needs the help of the Service officers or networks. This looks like a big opportunity for an exchange of favours. What is it they want done? What can you get in return? What is their hidden agenda?
Opposition: Intelligence services, Criminal, Terrorists

Aid?

A humanitarian crisis opens the opportunity to place operatives in close contact with opposition's recruitable assets or intelligence that has been unreachable thus far. Are you creating a front aid organisation or using an existing one? How good are the logistics to maintain cover? What are the physical/human risks of the operation(s)?
Opposition: Military, NGOs, Government, Intelligence services, Security services, Media, International orgs.

Eye for an eye

A terrorist attack on home soil or on a strategic foreign location shows the debilities of the intelligence community and has the politicians hunting for blood, yours or the terrorists, you choose. How intense will the political pressure get? Do the terrorists have a follow-up planned? Which assets or networks will be at risk of becoming collateral damage during retribution strikes?
Opposition: Terrorists, Government, Military, Media

The coup

There's a coup happening in one of the former colonies or another country where the UK has vested interests. The British embassy needs to be evacuated. What sensitive files or persons can't fall into the wrong hands? What other parties are interested? How long before the embassy is stormed?
Opposition: Military, Security services, Intelligence services, Criminal, Government

THE SERVICE

GM Sheet 4 Sample Crises 2 & First Session



The prodigal exile

Someone that has a claim to be the political head of a foreign country in turmoil is in exile in the UK, but want to return and reclaim their rightful place. How would this help or hinder UK interests abroad? Does the SIS or Foreign Office want to help or hinder them? Do they have enough popular support back home? Do they have a hidden agenda? How hard is it to topple the current regime?

Opposition: Government, Military, Security services, Intelligence services

Memoirs

A former SIS officer living abroad has written a tell-all exposé of the service, and intends to publish it. It needs to be suppressed. Can the author be blackmailed or discredited?

Opposition: NGOs, Media, Government, Security services

Advance warning

A terrorist organization is planning a strike, and the SIS has gotten wind of it. What is the plan for the terrorists (bomb strike, take hostages, attack an airplane or what)? How has this come to the attention of the SIS?

Opposition: Terrorists, Security services

Search and rescue

Someone or some people who are important to the UK or an allied country have gone missing and must be found and rescued. Who is it who's missing? Are they connected to or working for the SIS? Where were they when they went missing? Has the opposition picked them up, or will they, given enough time?

Opposition: Security services, Intelligence services, Government, Business, Terrorists

The traitor

A prominent British official or officer of the SIS has been acting suspiciously in a foreign country. If they are leaking to the opposition or thinking about defecting it would cause a lot of problems. What is their actual agenda? How much time is there before they go over the wall?

Opposition: Government, Intelligence services, Security services

Over the wall

An asset in place in a hostile country claims to have valuable intel, but they can't get it out of the country themselves. Are they legit or is it a trap? Do they insist on defecting, and if so, are they bringing anyone else with them? Do they have the intelligence on them? Are they being watched?

Opposition: Security services



The First Session

Before you get started, present the game to all the players. Quickly go over the setting and what the role of the players is. Discuss how every player shares responsibility and authority in the game, and decide on boundaries for what you are okay with in play. Establish the fact that you can and should pause the action to check in and address problematic issues out of character if someone feels uncomfortable.

Character creation is the first thing you do together. Go through the process, and pay special attention to trust, as it will help you figure out the relationships between the PCs.

After you have characters, make the UK Station together. It's the hub around which the PCs lives turn, so make sure everyone gets a say in what it is like. Choose the descriptive tags and make up some of the key NPCs that populate the Station.

During this time your job as a GM is to ask questions like crazy and build on the answers. Make connections between the PCs and between PCs and NPCs. *Who went to the same school? Who's jealous of somebodys job? Who's sleeping with somebodys husband?*

Don't feel like you should fill everything in or answer all the questions. Leave things to wonder about, then move into the action.

Start in medias res: tell the team that they are dealing with a crisis (you can choose one of the sample crises or make up your own). Ask them what kind of operation they have mounted to deal with the crisis, and then narrate the PCs in the middle of that operation, with something about to go bad. *What do they do?*

Remember to ask questions, make the operation short and simple but with some possible complications. Play to find out what happens.

During the op, give them the option to flashback to do planning and support moves. Be explicit about this possibility.

After the op, do the debriefing move. If you haven't already, write up the crisis and opposition sheets for the crisis and opposing factions the PCs encountered on the op, so you can return to them later if need be.

Give the PCs some time to breathe while in the UK Station, get to know their daily routines and what they do between ops. Play out short scenes with them interacting with their relationships or co-workers, as needed.

When it's time, introduce a new crisis or advance the existing one. Keep it relatively simple, but try to create more crises than the PCs can comfortably deal with. They should be struggling to spin all the plates. Look at the opposition agendas to see what the opposing factions might be up to, be ready to introduce a complication or two and don't forget to throw in complications from the home front either! *Politicians getting cold feet over operations, rival services – or teams within the SIS – edging in over a prize etc.*

THE SERVICE

Operational support 1



How support works

Characters in *The Service* don't have gear of their own. Which is not to say they don't own things, but they don't have their own adventuring gear or personal weapons that they bring on operations. Instead, for each operation, they need to use support to get the tools they need.

There are two kinds of support. There's official support provided by official SIS channels or connected government services, and there's unofficial support that the characters can use their networks to access.

For official support, use the **operational support** move. Using official support carries fewer risks, but there's always the possibility of bureaucratic red tape or rival services or SIS personnel objecting to what the team wants.

When you use networks outside of the official support structure, the appropriate move is **use network**.

Support and gear

Operational

Covers: documents and identities needed to travel across borders and working under cover. See **covers** on the next page.

Drugs: illegal narcotics or other drugs in a large enough quantity to have a significant street value.

Research team: a small team of people who can find and analyze basic intelligence.

Safe house: short-term use of a covert place to stay, one that is unknown to the opposition.

Surveillance team: a small team of operatives that can be used for low risk surveillance work, such as staking out a location or following a person.

Untraceable cash: a large enough sum of money to bribe a government official or pay a small ransom.

Vehicles and travel

Assume that the team always has access to regular commercial travel to locations where that is a possibility.

Boat: use of or purchase of a basic motorboat. For a yacht, assume it's more difficult.

Car: use of or purchase of a car.

Small aircraft: use of a small plane or helicopter. Aircraft are expensive and rare, so expect to jump through some hoops.

Special insertion: covert insertion by parachute, submarine or some similar method.

Intelligence

Detailed maps and surveys: allows accurate navigation.

Files: files with intel on a person, place, organization or event of note. Can be used to **research** that thing.

Recon flight or satellite coverage: gives up-to date information on the terrain.

Tools

These tools and gear kits are usually needed to perform certain actions.

Breaking and entering tools: lockpicks, jimmies, door wedges and other thieves' tools.

Climbing gear: rope, harnesses and other equipment needed to climb vertical surfaces.

Diving gear: full SCUBA kit.

Forgery tools: skilled forgers can use these tools to make forgeries such as passports, official documents or other papers.

First aid kit: bandages, gauze, splints, tourniquets, medicines, IV bags and more needed to care for the sick or wounded.

Radio: a hand-held or backpack radio. The larger it is, the longer the effective range.

Surveillance tools: binoculars, shotgun microphones, bugs, wire-taps and similar equipment.

Survival gear (terrain type): clothes, rations, tent, compass and other basic tools for surviving out in the wild. Different types of terrain require different kinds of gear.

Vehicle repair tools: tools needed to service and repair vehicles in the field.

Armour

Tactical armour: 2-armour. this is serious and obvious armour, consisting of at least a heavy vest and possibly a helmet and other pieces. It is heavy and uncomfortable to wear for extended periods of time.

Undercover armour: 1-armour, concealable. This is a thin vest that can be worn under a shirt and will be unnoticable to a casual observer. However, it is not invisible so most operatives don't use it unless they are expecting to get into a gunfight.



THE SERVICE

Operational support 2



Weapons

Axe or machete: hand, messy, bulky

Club: hand

Cosh: intimate, concealable

Knife: hand, concealable

Syringe: poison, intimate, concealable

Compact pistol: close, loud, concealable

Service pistol: close, loud, high-cap

Magnum revolver: close, loud, messy

Machine pistol: close, loud, auto, high-cap

SMG: close/medium, loud, auto, high-cap

Carbine: medium, loud, auto, high-cap

Assault rifle: medium/far, loud, bulky, auto, high-cap

Battle rifle: high-powered, medium/far, loud, bulky, auto, high-cap

Double-barrelled shotgun: close/medium, reload, loud, messy, shot, bulky

Pump shotgun: close/medium, loud, messy, shot, bulky

Sniper rifle: high-powered, far/extreme, loud, bulky

LMG: high-powered, far, loud, bulky, auto, belt

Frag grenade: high-powered, single-use, close, area, messy, loud

Stun grenade: stun, single-use, close, area, loud

Poisons

Lethal poison: high-powered, either within seconds or hours

Sedative: stun, within seconds

Sodium penthotal: you must *act under pressure* to resist questioning or suggestions while under the influence

Gear tags

Intimate: close enough to kiss.

Hand: within hand's reach.

Close: within the room or across the road. Up to around 10 meters.

Medium: down the street. Up to around 150 meters.

Far: out in the open. Up to around 300 meters.

Extreme: up to and occasionally above 1000 meters.

+bonus: gives a specific bonus when used (+1forward or +1hold to a certain move, for instance).

AP: armour piercing. Ignore any armour when dealing wounds.

stun: causes stun. NPCs can't take any action for an appropriate time (seconds for stun grenades, hours for sedatives), PCs may try to take action, but they are *acting under pressure*.

n-armour: can be used to soak n-wounds suffered.

High-powered: when you inflict a wound with it, inflicts an extra wound.

Poison: harm or effect depends on the poison. Poison effects are always AP.

Loud: using it causes a lot of noise. Everyone in the vicinity hears it and reacts to it.

Messy: it causes a mess. Collateral damage, blood spatter, small fires, chunks of concrete and plaster flying around.

Area: it affects everyone in the immediate area.

Concealable: you can hide it on your person and it won't be seen by casual observers.

Bulky: it's big and unwieldy. If it's a weapon, it's hard to bring to bear on shorter ranges than what it's tagged as.

Shot: it fires a bunch of shot pellets. At close range, +1harm.

Auto: you can fire it in fully automatic. If you do it gains +area and +reload unless it has belt.

Single use: using it consumes it.

Reload: when you use it, you must take a second to reload it after that.

High-capacity: it has a high-capacity magazine. You don't need to reload as often.

Belt: it fires from a belt. You can use it in rapid or auto fire without having to immediately reload.

Unreliable: it breaks down or malfunctions more often.

Finicky: it needs constant care and maintenance.

Covers

To enter a country openly, through border control, and to be able to move around and operate openly within that country, you must have cover. Cover entails at the very least the official documents you need, either forgeries or real papers that have been stolen and possibly doctored to fit the officer. A good cover also gives the officer a cover story, and some reason to be where they are.

If a character's cover is challenged, for instance when going through a border checkpoint, it's usually *acting under pressure*.

When heat in a controllerate goes up, the covers of the team members in that controllerate can get blown. Once heat goes up over 9:00, the covers are considered blown and useless. Trying to use a blown cover is license for the GM to make as hard a move as they like on the character in question.

When a character obtains a new cover identity, reduce heat down to 9:00.



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