

DENIABLE

A GAME OF UNWITTING SPIES
TEMPTED BY EASY MONEY.



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PLAY TEST GANG

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DEDICATION

To our amazing wives, who love us no matter what misadventures we have, or grand plans we screw up

INTRODUCTION

Jolly Good! The lights were off. George tip-toed through the door, gently muffling the sound of the latch slipping into place with his fingers. He hoped Ethel was in bed, asleep already. He desperately needed to get to the bathroom and rinse the pig's blood from his cuffs. Then that stupid mutt, Fifi, growled and started worrying his ankle. "Shh... shut it!" [Kick!] "Whimper."

*From a shadow in the corner of the room came a cold, hard voice. "And just **WHERE** have **YOU** been, you miserable excuse for a man?"*



A GAME OF UNWITTING SPIES TEMPTED BY EASY MONEY

Deniable is a story-telling game designed for small gaming groups. Three to four players is best, including *The Director* (a.k.a. the Game Master). Deniable is about decidedly average British people coerced into participating in “operations of national importance” by a shadowy espionage organisation. The object of the game is to tell interesting stories about people put in situations for which they are *not at all prepared*.

The concept of *playing to find out what happens* is of prime importance in Deniable. The Director should not plan ahead: each story should unfold in the moment. The Director should not even define The Organisation the players are working for until multiple sessions have been played. This allows for The Organisation to fit the events rather than the Director having to fit the events to The Organisation. Plus this sense of the unknown adds to the paranoia.



ONLY FOR THE BRITS?

Deniable has been written as a homage to great British TV serials, but it also plays perfectly well in other spy settings. For example, you could run a game set in 1960's America, with Black Panthers, dirty hippies, and sneaky Feds. Or 50's era KGB, Reds under the bed, where you get to play the Reds in the form of sleeper agents! You can download "Treatments" - where the story is reimagined in a new setting (like *Homeland* and *Life on Mars*) - from www.storyweaver.com, and be a spy from any ~~error~~ era.

Deniable tips its hat to those wonderfully wicked British TV espionage series such as *Spy* and *Spooks*. Each game of Deniable involves everyone collaborating to create episodes of satirical, darkly humorous (or just grim) British-style TV shows.

Deniable also borrows its structure from TV shows, including the roles the gamers play. There are three roles in Deniable: *The Director*, the *protagonists* (often called Player Characters or PCs in other roleplaying games), and the *extras* (aka Non-Player Characters or NPCs). The Director and protagonist roles are separate in Deniable. However, unlike other roleplaying games, everyone plays extras, not just The Director. In fact, adding new temporary extras is a great way to accommodate drop-in players, or players in excess of the main cast of protagonists.

The sorts of scenes that play out for the protagonists in Deniable range from scenes about the need to hide their double lives from friends and family, to them having to make questionable moral choices during a mission. A protagonist will often ask themselves: "Just who am I working for, anyway?"

Unlike many storygames, the characters of Deniable are far from heroic and do not necessarily know each other before the game begins. They are small people, with small lives and petty vices. A big part of the fun of Deniable is *discovering how these people's mundane little lives clash with big secrets*.

Playing out the protagonists' desperate struggles to juggle these two very different worlds is half the fun of Deniable. Even better, *the nature of the secretive jobs demanded of them will escalate*, pushing them into ever more dubious situations. It is no surprise that the protagonists are going to become seriously stressed, and they will need their mandated group therapy sessions after each job.

HOW MANY PLAYERS?

Deniable plays best with 3-4 people. As the majority of scenes involve only one protagonist, screen time is a little more scarce than in many other games where you never split the party. This is why everybody plays extras.

INFLUENCES

Spy
Scott & Baily
Outnumbered
Wire in the Blood
Spooks
'Allo 'Allo
Danger Mouse
The Avengers
Snatch
Lock, Stock &
Two Smoking Barrels
A Fish Called Wanda

Man From Uncle
Get Smart
Stripes
The Americans
Homeland
La Femme Nikita
Bourne Identity
Austin Powers
Dangerman
The Prisoner
Hostages
Revenge





THE DIRECTOR, THE CAST & THE EXTRAS

THE DIRECTOR

The Director takes on the role of “the world” and many of the incidental characters (known as extras) with which the protagonists interact. The Director is the coordinator of the action, which like TV, is framed in scenes. There is only one Director in a game of Deniable.

THE CAST

Everyone else involved in a game of Deniable is a *player*. Like stage actors, each player takes on the roles of a major protagonist in the story. They guide their protagonist through situations set up by the Director, but also embellish their portrayal of the protagonist’s life as a (very) amateur agent. The player should treat their protagonist as a vehicle for drama and story: not as a personal avatar that is just themselves in different clothing. Personal avatarism will, in our experience, ruin the game. Revel in both success and failure. Play someone who looks and thinks differently from yourself... and mess with their life!

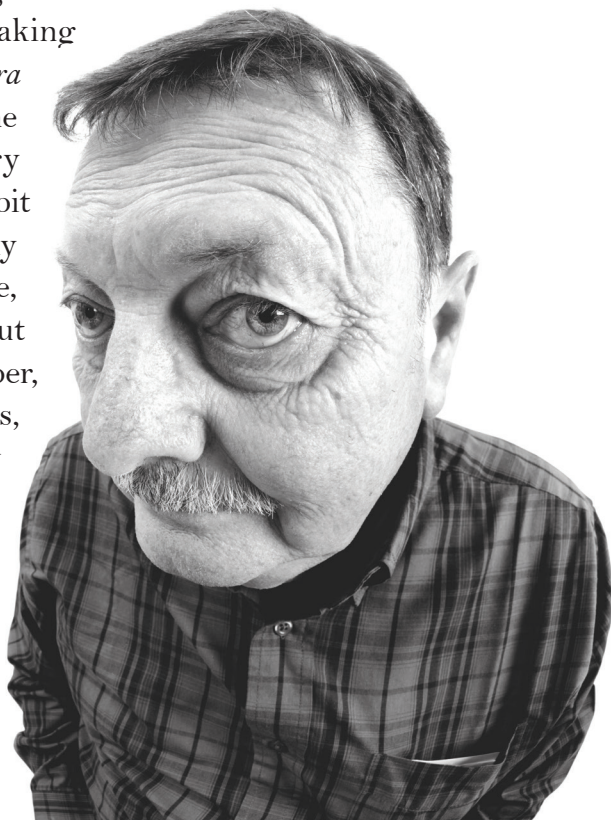
EXTRAS

The players and Director also take on the task of playing extras. These include other protagonists' family members, friends, love interests and incidental folk such as shopkeepers, bartenders, police, and the like. These roles are assigned by The Director. This is done so that multiple players are in every scene and so that the Director does not hold conversations with themself too often.

TEMPORARY EXTRAS

A guest player may take on the role of an extra (much like a guest star in a TV series). This temporary extra can be anything from an old friend from out of town, to a new villain, an old flame, or a rival. Adding an extra can be a great cure to the problem of a particular protagonist not getting as much screen time as the other players, either by putting the extra

in their lives, or making them play an *extra* extra in someone else's life. Temporary extras have a habit of shining brightly for a single episode, then burning out tragically. Remember, temporary extras, like guest stars, only exist to play off the regular cast of protagonists. They can be *lots* of fun to play.



Fully Sick

"So Da," said George, as he plonked a pint down in front of his father, "just why did you sell up outa' the ol' folks' village? I mean, I thought you was right pucker in there, what with that ol' widow an' all. What's her name again?"

"Misty? Nah, boy. She was just... whadda they call it these days... ah... a friend with a benefit," replied the old man, taking a sip. He screwed up his face, then reached over to the pack of peanuts. "Nothing to write home about, though. Not like ya ol' mum, bless her." A far away look crossed his gaze as he absently tore open the foil packet. "Garwd... now in her day, she had a great set o..."

"Ah, yes. Thanks Da," said George, cutting him off quickly and unconsciously straightening his tie. "So why are you here? What's going on?"

"What? Oh. Yes. Well, boy, guess now's as good a time as any to tell ya." Again, the old man stopped, thinking to himself for a moment, then absent-mindedly tipped a handful of nuts into his beer. "Well... see. You know that inheritance you've always said you didn't want?"

"Da! Stop it! I don't care!" But, of course, George did.

"Well, looks like you'll be gettin' it a lot sooner than ya thought. The bloody cancer's back, innit."

George felt a little bit of his soul die, but at the same time, he thought of the mint condition Princess Diana Memorial plate he'd seen on Ebay.

SQUEEZE THE LIFE OUT OF YOUR CHARACTERS

Deniable is undeniably - and plays best as - a theatrical-style storygame. Your characters aren't just played, they are acted. Deniable works best when everyone acts the part: so speak in your protagonist's and extras' voices and call the other characters by name. This is not the type of game that can be played by sitting back and only speaking in third person as you may do in some of the more traditional roleplaying games. When you act the part, you are getting the best out of Deniable... you create an emotional bond with the characters, the story and the unfolding drama.

Don't say:

Harry goes to the pub and asks Bonn for the job's payment.

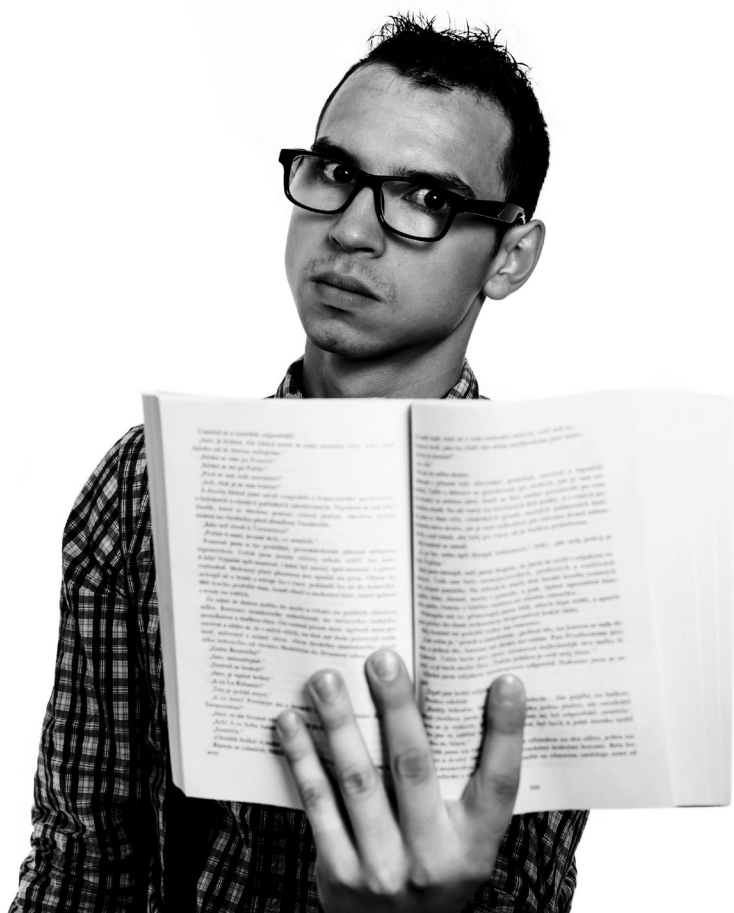
Do say:

I walk in the pub and sit down next to Bonn. I sniff and think: 'Well, don't this place just stink o' sadness and broken dreams?' Then I say, "Allo Bonny me old chum, by my reckoning, you geezers owe me a green monkey and no mistake."



A SET OF PROCEDURES

The Deniable rulebook is set out in the order that you need to do things to play ASAP. In a pinch, you could read the rules with your group as you set up, skimming each section, and then immediately begin playing. We understand that your gaming time is precious and want to take up as little of it as possible with learning to play. By carrying out the instructions given in each section in order, you can start playing promptly. Tally-ho!



THE SETUP

CHOOSE THE MODE

Choosing the *mode* is the first step of any game for a very good reason. Everything you do after this point will be affected by this decision. The decision should be taken as a group, as it has a big effect on play.

BLACK HUMOUR.

-or-

SERIOUS STUFF.

Although Deniable is designed as a game of (very) dark satire, it can also be played more seriously. We call these two modes of play *Black Humour* and *Serious Stuff*. Once the mode is decided, it should not be changed without stopping the game and discussing it. Even then, you might want to start again or decide to play the game in the alternate mode next time, rather than changing mid-game. *The difference between the two modes is that great.*

CHOOSE THE DIRECTOR

One of the players present should be nominated or volunteer to be The Director. The role of The Director in Deniable is much easier than in many other roleplaying games. *The Director is not allowed to prepare a plot* (yes, that is a rule!). Instead, the broad details of missions may be rolled from the supplied tables (see Director's Dossier, page 70). Remember, everybody assists with playing extras and inserting new plot ideas. This means the responsibility for creating good content is shared with the entire gaming group. Deniable is a great vehicle for

learning to run games both for The Director, who has less input than in other games, and for the players, who have a lot more input than in other games.

WHY EXTRAS?

Playing extras brings everybody into the game, even when their protagonist is not in a scene. It allows for the protagonist to be off, living their lives, blissfully ignorant of the havoc being caused elsewhere.

Also, it is our hope that running extras in Deniable might help previously reluctant Directors (and GMs and MC's as well) to have a go at the rewarding role of running games.

THE BIG RED BUTTON

The Big Red Button is a device (a card, a token, a piece of paper or a special die, etc) that can be 'pressed' by any player, including The Director, to interrupt the action when they feel the need. This is not just during scenes. It can be at any time at all, even during protagonist creation.



When someone ‘presses’ the Big Red Button, the action stops.

The Big Red Button is intended for those times when people are uncomfortable with what is going on, or think the themes of the game have gone off track. It is not simply a device to end scenes. It’s a safety valve. Please don’t abuse it.

On a more serious note, a Serious Stuff game of Deniable has the potential to create distress for a player. *Any time a player feels distressed by what is going on in the game, they should feel free to press the Big Red Button.* They can then either use the technique of “fade to black” on certain goings on with the scene, or end the scene entirely.

WHY A BIG RED BUTTON?

If you’ve ever watched Murphy’s Law, you’ll know why we want a Big Red Button.

We are all here to have fun. The Big Red Button can ensure that no humans or animals are hurt in the playing of this game.

* The Big Red Button has been adapted from John Stavropoulos’ X-Card idea. It’s awesome. Thanks John!

CREATE THE CAST

To create the cast, each player will need a *Dossier* (character sheet) . Deniable is not a complex game so this can be nothing more than a sheet of blank paper. You can download a blank Dossier for your protagonist from the StoryWeaver Games website; however a piece of paper or a shared electronic document can work just as well. We've played this game online, and the default Dossier in Google Docs works just fine.

FAMILY

Deniable is about average characters with bosses, families and friends affecting their lives. This is why we have taken an important decision out of the players' hands:

You can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family.

Players will randomly allocate themselves a family and important others: The old adage that you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family is an important thematic element in Deniable. In fact, it is so important it is done **BEFORE** you determine anything else about your protagonist, including their gender, age or name!

When creating your protagonist, you should make two copies of each Dossier (The Director can write one of them if you like). One is for the player and one is for The Director. This gives The Director a quick reference sheet that they can jot notes on and reference during play.

Here's the procedure.

ROLL DICE

The Director asks each player to roll two six-sided dice to determine their protagonist's family situation. The first die is applied to the vertical column of the *Family Chart*, the second the horizontal. For example, a four and a six results in *Unmarried* and *in several relationships*. This protagonist is in lots of trouble! The *Family Chart* is on page 18.

LOOK UP THE FAMILY

The player announces their dice results and The Director tells them their family situation by referring to the *Family Chart* and elaborating. The results are designed to be interpreted loosely; this allows for players who roll identical results to have protagonists with fairly different family situations. The Director nominates the number of children a protagonist has if the table doesn't specify, but it is a good idea to keep it small - too many characters starts to get unwieldy.

AGE AND GENDER

The player notes down their protagonist's family situation on their Dossier just as it appears on the table separated by a comma. eg. *Single, In several relationships*. They then negotiate with The Director as to their age and sex before both parties note this new information.



FAMILY CHART

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Married	with dog	and is a bigamist	with a strange lodger	with foster kids	with only child	with 5 kids to feed!
2. Remarried	with new partners kids	with own kids	with both new partner's and own kids	a few too many times	but sneaking it with the ex	with ex's dog
3. Divorced	single parent	with unwanted custody	seeking custody	with estranged teenager	with benefits?	and hiding from the ex.
4. Unmarried	still looking for The One	on the pull	with kids	in a relationship with a large age gap	and in more than one relationship	on again and off again.
5. Engaged	to an already married person	to a long time sweet heart	almost: waiting to pop the question	sort of...	and living together	but having second thoughts
6. It's Complicated	no, really, it is.	Caregiver	Just a friend	Living with Mum	Taking care of Granddad	Halfway house with dodgy ex-con best friend

THE DIRECTOR CHOOSES

The Director chooses a role from the protagonist's family and records it on their Dossier, along with a name, a line about the extra's personality, and the name of the real life TV or movie actor who could play this character. Picking a real life actor really helps to create an extra who seems more real and consistent. For example: *Wife, Suzanne, total cow surrounded by reprehensible people, like Anna Gun (playing Skyler White).*

The Director now dictates what they have written to the player who will take on the extra, and the player whose family is being created records the same information.

ASSIGN EXTRAS TO THE CAST

The Director then decides who will play any other family roles by choosing from the other players. This time the player selected to play the extra chooses a name, a personality and an actor, and then dictates this information to the player whose family member they are portraying.

HIGH-TECH TIP

If you are playing online, or use tablets at the table, share a Doc detailing all of the protagonists' and extras' details so that everyone can edit and view the cast as the game progresses. Visit the StoryWeaver web site for a link to a sample shared document.

Also, during the process of developing the family, the player will determine their protagonist's gender and their age and should record these. There is no difference mechanically between males and females in Deniable regardless of age. Who knows why The Organisation chooses who they choose.

Unless there is a *Big Red Button* type problem, players are not to block content from others. We are (hopefully) playing to stretch our acting ability and not to play the same old characters we always play. If a difficult situation comes up here, things should be put to a table vote with the Director breaking ties.

A NOTE ON GENDER AND SEXUALITY

StoryWeaver supports "The Message." This game is open to all humans, no matter their gender or orientation. Don't forget, Ethel could be a partner called Ethan or Josh could choose to play Josephine.



PLAYING FAMILY MEMBERS

As a family member player, it is your job to be a fan of the associated protagonist. This doesn't mean you make life easy for them. In fact, it often means the opposite. You should create interesting, and depending on the play mode, humorous situations for them during family scenes. Unlike many other games, players are going to spend quite a bit of time playing extras, so they should treat them with almost the same care and attention they give their main protagonist.

EXAMPLE: CREATING A FAMILY & EXTRAS

Rubbing his hands together, Josh agrees with The Director that the partner, Ethel, is one of those people who treats their dog, Fifi, like a child. Fifi has her own place at the dinner table and designer doggie clothes that match Ethel's. Fifi, however, gives Josh's protagonist the total Shih Tzus. The Director decides that playing Fifi would be fun mainly because she wants Josh's friend Jeanette to play Ethel. She records on her copy of the Dossier the following: Wife, treats dog like a child, [actor], Jeanette.

Because the wife is such a great concept, Josh declares that his protagonist is male, and late middle-aged to boot. Josh, The Director and the other players can (and should) all pitch in and help to define the character's situation.

Jeanette, keeping in the mode of Black Humour and following Josh's lead on his protagonist's age, declares that Ethel's devotion to the dog is due to her husband being impotent and unable to give her a child. The Director adds that his impotence stems from a deep

seated feelings of inadequacy, since he has been glossed over for promotion in favour of people half his age on a number of occasions - even at the age of 50. Oh dear!

“Oh Dear” is exactly the type of protagonist you want in a Black Humour game of Deniable.

As you can see from this, Josh’s protagonist is based heavily on his family situation.

Scenes that include family members can be some of the most poignant in serious mode and most funny in black humour mode, and should not be glossed over in favour of other types of scenes.



Tea Time

George sat at the old dining suite with the laminated table and orange padded chairs. Opposite, his wife was staring daggers at him, he knew. But he didn't give her the satisfaction by returning her gorgon-like gaze. Instead, he peered at the greasy abomination on his plate and gently poked it with his fork. He swore it twitched.

It was his father who broke the silence. "Cheer up, boy. It won't kill ya! Not like what I got. Oh, an' it's a heck of a lot better than what we got in Korea, let me tell you..."

As his father began to recount youthful hardships yet again, George's mind drifted off, blocking out the old man's ramblings and the sickly smell of Ethel's cooking... he'd still not had the opportunity to open up the envelope the stranger had given him, along with the strict instructions that it only be opened when he was sure he was alone. "What would they demand this time?" George wondered.

DEVELOP THE DOSSIER

Next, each player needs to flesh out their protagonist's Dossier. This is a collection of personal information that defines a protagonist and fleshes out their role and place in the world.

Here's the procedure:

CHOOSE TRAITS

There are three traits for each protagonist: their *day job*, their *hobby* and their *vice*. Remember, these must be mundane. No extreme-sport athletes, crack marksmen or dirt-bike racers!

Trait	Suggestions
Day Job:	Bank Clerk, brickie's labourer, car salesman, etc.
Hobby:	Trainspotting, model aircraft, Warhammer 40K (heh), amateur artist, fishing, etc.
Vice:	Always down the local, gambling, clubbing, anger issues, etc.

These three traits help the player to further develop their protagonist's situation and personality. Traits should be truly mundane, and even then players should not choose karate or hunting as a hobby. It is in the players' best interests to create detailed and evocative situations out of these traits. Doing so embeds them in the emergent fiction and creates more material for The Director. If someone is having trouble creating traits, everyone should pitch in. In fact protagonist creation is something that is best done as a group.

Our advice is to "let go" of control and allow the other players to help define your protagonist. Letting other people assist you in not sticking with the same old types of characters will expand your range. Part of the fun of roleplaying, especially a character-driven game like Deniable, is playing quirky, flawed, somewhat broken people. Of course, make sure you clear all of your choices with The Director.

By this time, Josh has decided that his protagonist is a male in his early 50's. Josh declares that his protagonist's job is a textile salesman. The Director asks what sort of textiles, and Josh states that he sells inexpensive but functional ladies undergarments - not lingerie, mind you, but time-tested and functional British unmentionables. His job, Josh continues, is to take samples to major stores and get restocking orders (pun not intended). The protagonist is an old-school salesman, having worked for United English Undergarment Importers for close to 30 years. Although he has never really made it big in sales, he has not been bad enough to fire. In fact, he's more or less ignored by his employers' HR department. He's just... "there."

Josh then decides that his protagonist's hobby is collecting and repainting Royal Doulton china plates. This is partly because his wife, Ethel, simply loves Royal Doulton: painting over them gives an outlet to his malignant vindictive streak. Oh dear! It seems that the protagonist and his wife have more than a few relationship problems.

As a fan of this developing protagonist, Jeanette will play up the aspects of his and Ethel's relationship that Josh has highlighted. Jeanette should take the notes she needs in order to be able to do this.

Finally, Josh declares that his protagonist's vice is stealing the Royal Doulton plates that he repaints. Indeed, he hides his hobby from the world. Jeanette suggests that Josh's protagonist paints anarchistic, punk-inspired slogans on the expensive china. Josh thinks that's a great idea. Yes, this guy is just one big ball

of simmering, anti-social rage! The Director adds that perhaps Josh's protagonist steals both from the department stores where he sells his undergarments, and occasionally from his wife's own collection. This way, he gets back at all the people he most detests.

Dear, oh dear, oh dear. How perfect!

CHOOSE ABILITIES

There are four abilities in Deniable; *deft*, *social*, *tough*, and *sly*. Each of these will be scored by associating them with a specific type of die - the higher the die, the better the score. Note that you are actually assigning the die to each of these abilities that you will roll whenever the ability is used. Starting protagonists are given a d4, two d6s and a d8 for their attributes. Thus, players assign the d8 to the ability in which they are quite good, the d4 to the ability in which they are a below par, and d6s to each of the remaining two abilities.

Abilities	(Assign D8, D6, D6, D4)
Deft:	Dextrous, agile, smooth. Most trades and professions use this ability.
Social:	Polite, socially savvy, orator, writer.
Tough:	Strong, enduring, hard core, resilient.
Sly:	Sneaky, light fingered, hard to detect, manipulate.

These stats mean what you'd think they mean. It is up to the player and Director to negotiate which ability will be rolled in a given situation. The Director has the final say.

EXAMPLE: CHOOSING ABILITIES

Josh decides his protagonist is sly (he is a petty thief after all!) but not particularly social, which is probably why he has never been a high-flier in sales. Thus, he assigns a d8 to sly and a d4 to social. He then assigns a d6 to deft (painting plates takes a steady hand) and tough (he's been an underwear salesman for 30 years).



CRED

Cred is a representation of each protagonist's worth to the shadowy Organisation that is employing them for "missions of national importance." The more missions a protagonist completes and the more effective a protagonist is for the Organisation, the greater their Cred. Of course, becoming more "valuable" to The Organisation may not always be in the protagonist's best interest, but that's just part of the fun!

Mechanically, Cred is Deniable's narrative and mechanical currency. It is used by the players to influence events. Players may elect to spend Cred after any roll and it has a big impact on the result. This is described in more detail in: "Using Cred to Boost Results" on page 39.

Cred is not an unlimited resource: The Organisation is on a budget after all. Each player's protagonist starts the game with 3 Cred. Note this down on the character's Dossier (character sheet). In play, Cred changes and should be tracked with coins, glass beads or some other type of token. The score on the sheet should only be adjusted between episodes.

To refresh Cred, a player needs to attend a *group therapy* session (really a debriefing of sorts). A group therapy session is a particular type of scene which is one part counselling session and one part critique. It is the only way a protagonist can guarantee future support from The Organisation. A protagonist will always replenish their Cred at the end of a group therapy scene.

During group therapy sessions, a protagonist has the opportunity to increase their Cred. Based on the roleplay during Therapy, and the results of the mission, The Director may choose to increase any or all of the protagonists' starting Cred by 1.

STRESS

Stress is a measure of how much mental, psychological, social and even physical duress a player's protagonist is under. It is measured from 0 (no stress) to 6 (a total meltdown). Happy, healthy and well-adjusted people have a stress level of 0. Unfortunately, there seem to be few people with no stress in the world of Deniable. People who are facing a rough patch would be stress 1, which is the stress level at which all protagonists start.

During game sessions, the protagonists will accumulate stress. Since stress changes frequently, an easy way to keep track of a protagonist's stress is to place a six-sided dice on the protagonist Dossier with the current stress level facing upwards.

CRED & STRESS AT A GLANCE

Cred = Protagonist's experience and value to The Organisation.

Stress = Protagonist's on-screen tension (how close they are to breaking point and being written out).

*The Stress system has been adapted from Graham Walmsley's Chthulhu Dark sanity system. It's a great game. Play it!



AT LAST, A NAME

Only after the protagonist has been fleshed out do we give it a name. This is because we want the name to be evocative of the protagonist: yes, it's typecasting, but it works well! Players may name their protagonist anything they wish, but common names are more... well... common.

EXAMPLE: CHOOSING A NAME

Josh decides to call his protagonist George Smithers-bee. This name was chosen because it sounds typically British and is marginally pretentious.

CANON

Canon refers to any notes about your characters that you may wish to record. Any interesting information that is revealed about the characters (both the protagonists and the extras) during the game should be noted under the canon section of the protagonist's Dossier. You can add canon as soon as you start the game, such as your place of residence or work, appearance, etc. Once written down, these details may be used in the story and will evolve along with the protagonists.

EXAMPLE: CANON

Josh notes that George lives in a semi-detached, spotless house that perpetually smells of dog. He has a locked garden shed where he goes to escape. And paint. His wife Ethel thinks he keeps dirty magazines in there...

Let's now have a look at George's Dossier:

Deniable

FILE nO.

Date Activated
dd. mm. yy.

FIELD AGENT DOSSIER

FAMILY or KNOWN ACQUAINTANCES.

WHO.

DETAILS.

Ethel: Wife. Nagging. Played by Jeanette. Ethel wanted a baby, but settled for a dog. Barely tolerates George.

Fifi: Spoiled dog. Played by Director. Fifi and Josh have a strained relationship: Josh sort of likes the dog, but won't show it to spite Ethel.

Played by me: Sammy. Jeanette's moocher boyfriend. Bit of a chav. (Actor is Arthur Darvill)

DAY JOB.

Salesman - United English Undergarment Importers Pty Ltd.

HOBBY.

Collecting Royal Doulton plates. Repaints them with punk images.

VICE.

Thief: steals Royal Doulton plates for repainting.

ADDITIONAL TRAITS.

DEFT.

d6

SOCIAL.

d4

TOUGH.

d6

SLY.

d8

CRED.

2

2

STRESS

1

Hon. Given

Middle

Family

Mr

George

B

Smithersbee

Lives in small, clean inner city semi. House always smells of dog. Has a locked garden shed where he paints stolen plates, and perhaps stores some magazines. Dad has terminal cancer, but is still a playa.

FAMILY

TRAITS

ATTRIBUTES

NAME

CANON

PLAYING THE GAME



STRUCTURE OF A GAME

Each episode of Deniable is played as a series of scenes. Each scene has a primary protagonist: the “lead” person of interest for the scene. The Director decides who gets a scene, and when, and of what type. The Director is also encouraged to solicit the players’ ideas for who gets what scene and of what type. At the very least, players should be able to request a slice of life scene at least once during each episode.

There are seven distinct types of scenes in Deniable:

Scene Type	Narrative Purpose
Introduction:	Sets up their personal situation for the episode.
Drop:	Instructions are given.
Mission:	Attempts are made to carry out the instructions.
Chase:	A race towards or away from an objective.
Slice of Life:	Interacting with family and friends to build drama.
Montage:	Short vignette to rapidly drive the story.
Group Therapy:	The wrap-up or epilogue.

Each type of scene is discussed in detail, starting page 54.

In practice, it's usually a good idea to get each protagonist's Introduction Scenes out early in the episode. If you wish, you might like to play a protagonist's introduction and their drop scene before the next protagonist comes into play. It can be fun to play one slice of life scene and then flashback to another slice of life scene during a mission. Mix it up a bit.

However, the final group therapy scene is always the last scene of each episode. Note that all of the protagonists are involved in the group therapy scene even if their missions weren't part of the same operation. Or were they? This scene is super-important for getting the protagonists together and having them interact off-mission. It rounds up the story. Also, in Serious Stuff mode, where difficult subject matter might be raised in the game, this scene is important as a debrief for the players.

Of vital importance to Deniable is the concept of cutting scenes. Sometimes, the outcome of a scene is obvious, even though the scene isn't complete. If you are in this situation, The Director should yell "cut," and move on. This keeps the pacing high, just like TV. Using good pacing, an episode of Deniable with a Director and two players takes as little as ninety minutes.



GETTING RESULTS

When a situation arises that presents a risk to a protagonist, dice are rolled to determine the outcome. These risks range from convincing your boss to give you the day off, to sneaking past the bouncer at a club entrance. From throwing a punch, to fast talking your way out of trouble with a gang of skinheads. If two protagonists are in a situation, they may both need to roll. The fiction that has emerged from play, thus far, should make this choice for you.

Dice rolls are *only* made when an action takes place in the fiction and when the outcomes of success or failure create an interesting narrative. By *in the fiction*, we mean that the player should be describing exactly what the protagonist is doing or saying. If no fiction exists to justify a dice roll, there is no need to make a roll, and the conversation should continue.

It is quite possible that the results of one dice roll almost immediately trigger another. This is perfect; indeed it is expected. A little bit of trouble for our budding spies can easily become rather more complex very quickly.

Deniable uses *two dice added together* to adjudicate outcomes. The two dice to roll are a d6 (a six-sided die) and the dice assigned to the most appropriate *ability* suggested by the protagonist's action. Keep in mind that The Director has the final say on what is the most appropriate ability. In most cases the player's description of how their protagonist is seeking to resolve the situation will make the selection fairly easy. To recap:

CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE ABILITY

Attribute	Use when
-----------	----------

Deft:	Being physically or mentally dextrous, agile, or professionally cool.
-------	---

Social:	Ingratiating yourself, making friends, seducing, being socially savvy, giving speeches, writing, arguing your case.
---------	---

Tough:	Performing acts of physical endurance or strength, resisting pain, or not backing down from threats. Keep on keepin' on.
--------	--

Sly:	Sneaking past people, picking pockets, hiding, manipulating others through cunning, telling porky pies.
------	---

* The way that abilities work in Deniable is adapted from D. Vincent Baker's *Apocalypse World*, which has been a huge influence on the development of this game. Get it!



The two dice are rolled and added together to determine the *result*. There are four *results* in Deniable and they detailed below:

DICE ROLL RESULTS		
Dice Total	Result	Outcomes
10+	Bloody brilliant!	A resounding success that might harm an enemy, extract information, allowing the protagonist to remain hidden, sneak in, etc. Generally, things are going swimmingly well... for the moment.
7-9	Can't complain	The protagonist succeeds, but in addition, The Director can offer the the player a worse outcome, a hard bargain or an ugly choice to go along with their success. Note that this is still a success and the protagonist should get what they want, but at a cost.
3-6	Bit of a balls-up	The Director (who is a fan of the protagonists) can make as hard a move as they like. Refer to The Director's Moves List.
2	A complete cock-up!	As per bit of a balls-up, but this result cannot be boosted with Cred.

George is walking home from the pub, thinking about the buxom lass behind the bar, and mentally kicking himself. He'd tried to impress her - God only knew why. He'd only succeeded in spending half of the advance he'd received for the upcoming job. And made himself look like a creepy, middle-aged git in the processes. Which, of course, he knows he is.

As he slouches onwards through the light rain, a tattered blue and black van - a '65 Volkswagen by the looks of it - screeches to a stop beside him. The side door slides open and two young thugs leap out. One has a stocking over his face; the other has an opaque plastic shopping bag over his. The former looks mean and the latter a tad dizzy.

"Git in da van, or I'll bust an ass in yo' cap!" shouts the first thug, as the second makes a clumsy, somewhat visually-impaired grab at Geroge.

Josh decides that George is having none of this, and will attempt to flee his would-be kidnappers. He describes George pretending to fall and then coming up with a handful of mud to throw as a distraction. He then plans to run straight past them and across the street.

The Director decides this is a Tough roll (as this will involve a little bit of biff). The player rolls two d6 for a total of 7, which results in "Can't Complain." The Director offers the player a hard choice: either George gets dragged into the van, but some nosy parker witnesses the abduction and calls the police, OR George gets away, but is injured in the process, taking 1 point of stress. Josh decides that it will be interesting to see where the kidnapping takes George, so he opts for the first choice.

USING CRED TO BOOST RESULTS

A player may elect to spend a point of Cred after a roll to give a boost to their protagonist's result.

A roll boosted by Cred improves by one level. Thus, a *bit of a balls-up*, becomes *can't complain*, and *can't complain* becomes *bloody brilliant!* However, if a roll is a *complete cock-up* (snake eyes), the result cannot be boosted: it is always a *complete cock-up*. Spending Cred here has no effect.

To use Cred, the player needs to bring an “unexpected benefit” into the narration. This may be that the shadowy Organisation has given them something, such as equipment or training “off screen” which is revealed only now. Or it could be something from their family, friends, work life, or even a vice. Essentially, players have to justify this new advantage.

EXAMPLE: JUSTIFYING CRED USE

If a player is told to be on the look out for a man in a green hat, and suddenly 23 men in green hats turned up, the player could use Cred by narrating that The Organisation sends them a photo via their mobile phone at the last minute:

“Bloody ‘ell. It’s like a St Patrick’s day parade down ‘ere! Oi, me phone’s beeping. Ah, an MMS! I hate those... costs me a bomb! Even if I don’t want ‘em! Bloody spam shite if ya’ ask me. Gotta figure out how to turn them off. Ooohhh.. that’s weird. It in’t got no number... hey, a phota! Who’s this dodgy looking bloke, then? Ere! Does ‘e look like one of them green-’atted gits or wot?”

Cred is only refreshed at the end of an episode. Furthermore, Cred may occasionally be raised at the end of a successful mission: see *Group Therapy* on page 48.

EXAMPLE: BOOSTING WITH CRED

After the kidnapping, George finds himself naked and tied to a chair in an abandoned warehouse. He's alone. Even after calling out for ten minutes, nobody responds. "What the bloody hell is going on?" he wonders. Being tied up like this will mean he can't get to the pickup point as per his instructions that morning.

Josh declares, "I'll attempt to break my bonds and escape!"

The Director counters by saying, "Nope, you are securely tied to the chair and there is no way you'll get loose. You're not some muscle bound commando, after all!"

Josh responds, "Well, can I stay in the chair, but still move... sort of shuffle along?"

The Director thinks this is a good look, and so tells the player to make a roll using Deft. A roll of two d6 results in a total of 8, which is a "Can't Complain" result. However, the player decides to upgrade that result to "Bloody Brilliant" by spending a point of Cred. This means the action will go completely George's way.

For the narrative, Josh says, “So we cut the scene to me - George - still naked and tied to a chair, sort of bent over and scurrying down a road. I see headlights coming down the road towards me and I jump up and down and shouts, ‘Stop! Hey stop!’

Josh is using the chance encounter of a car to justify the Cred boost.

The car pulls up and the driver gets out. He’s a family man, looking very puzzled and concerned. His wife gasps in shock and leans to the back of the car and covers her daughter’s now very wide eyes.

“Ehhemmm... ah... I’m in a wee spot of bother my good man. The, um, football team, um yes, football team, left me like this as a joke. It’s my, um, birthday, see? Say, I don’t suppose you could untie me and drop me off home, could you?”

RECOVERING CRED

A protagonist’s Cred is reset to its maximum at the start of each episode.



STRESS

Stress is a measure of how emotionally, mentally or physically “damaged” a protagonist is. More accurately, it represents the protagonist’s proximity to being written out of the episode or even the entire series. The more stress a protagonist has, the more likely it is they will fly off the handle, or do things that seem like a good idea at the time... or just die painfully. When a protagonist’s stress reaches 6, they are written out of the episode in *Black Humour*, or out of the entire series in *Serious Stuff*. Yes, stress management is important!

Normal people in the world of *Deniable* have no stress and little cause to increase it. A *Deniable* protagonist is usually somewhat unstable to begin with and therefore their stress starts at 1. To display and track stress, you can place a d6 next to each player’s protagonist Dossier showing their current stress.





GAINING STRESS

Just like real life, there are many ways to gain stress in *Deniable*. When the protagonist is emotionally, mentally, or physically damaged, the Director assesses whether the specific situation is enough to trigger a *Stress* roll. Veteran spies who have seen it all may not need to roll, whereas less experienced agents may need to roll to undertake relatively simple espionage-related tasks. Unfortunately, most of the protagonists are far from veterans, and indeed are far from competent.

To make a Stress Check, the player rolls a *d6*. If the result is equal to or less than their protagonist's current stress, no change is made to their current stress. If they roll over their current stress, increase their stress by one.

If a player proposes a morally questionable course of action for their protagonist, the Director may trigger a *Moral Dilemma*. Either the protagonist may continue with their reprehensible action and suffer stress, or they can withdraw their action and suffer no stress, but then have find an alternative course of action (which may not always be the most expedient). This

represents the protagonist's conscience getting in the way of the mission.

The Director has two options when triggering a Moral Dilemma. In relatively minor circumstances, they should *ask for a roll* rather than *inflicting* stress. In more extreme circumstances, they should just inflict stress. An example for a rolling situation would be standing by whilst someone is tortured. An example of an inflicting situation would be playing the part of the torturer.

MORAL DILEMMAS

The following are in order of severity.

For these, you only ever need to roll once, if you pass the roll (you jaded individual, you).

- * Causing someone you don't know to get hurt
- * Cheating on a loved one
- * Stealing from someone less fortunate, or that you know
- * Framing someone for a crime
- * Beating someone up
- * Petty larceny

For these, the stress is automatically inflicted.

- * Grand larceny
- * Leaving someone to die or to suffer serious injury
- * Kidnapping
- * Murdering someone
- * Torturing someone

NARRATIVE IMPACT OF STRESS

Whenever a protagonist increases their stress, the player to the right (not including The Director) should tell them how the new stress level affects them narratively. The protagonist's player may call for a vote on this, with The Director having final say to ensure that it is reasonable. What is reasonable will vary at each table and by whether you are playing Serious Stuff or Black Humour.

Players and The Director are encouraged to bring the protagonists' stress into the narrative. Playing these negative aspects are as much (sometimes more!) fun than playing the more positive traits. For example, the average schmuck poisoned with a neurotoxin and offered the antidote only if they perform a criminal action is a classic trope. Another stress trope is the salary-man spiralling (falling down) towards a violent mental breakdown due to the pressures of modern life.

REDUCING STRESS

In Black Humor games, reducing stress is accomplished by engaging in slice of life scenes. At the end of these scenes, the protagonist player can ask those at the table whether they are allowed to reduce stress. The table should vote yes if they feel that the scene was well acted or the issue was sufficiently addressed (not necessarily solved).

Note: this is deliberately abstract. Home scenes can be stressful. Consider this is a metagame reward for participation.

However, in Serious Stuff mode, Stress never goes down due to slice of life scenes. It can only be reduced by spending permanent Cred 1 for 1. In Serious Stuff mode, protagonists' lives are nasty, short and brutal.

Tamy - a protagonist played by Jeanette - has suffered a broken arm after falling off the back of a motorcycle. She is on level 3 stress and has an arm in a sling. Earlier in the game, Jeanette had revealed Tamy's goal for the episode was to find herself and Rajia a new place to stay: her current public housing flat is a real dive and full of vermin... and rats too. She sets Tamy's next slice of life scene in a hospital carpark and narrates that she has been healed.

After pitching her scene and getting The Director's approval, Jeanette says: "So there I am, waiting outside the grungy old hospital building, in the cold evening with the rest of the smokers. Rajia [my flatmate and best friend] pulls up in her old, clapped-out mini."

Rajia (played by The Director) says: "Hey dummy! Get in, I'll take ya home and make ya' a cuppa tea. An' I'm signin yer' cast!"

Tamy: "Sorry to dissappoint ya luv, no cast." I wiggle my fingers at her from the sling my arm is in. "Looks like I just have to rest it up a bit. Doc says it should heal OK, as long as I don't play no tennis. But I'll take you up on that cuppa. Oh, did a package arrive for me?" (She is hoping for payment from The Organisation for the recent job, so she can put a rental deposit on a new apartment.)

Rajia: "The one with the clock in it? I put it in ya room."

Tamy: I give her my friendly-frowny-face. "Clock? Did you open my mail again?"

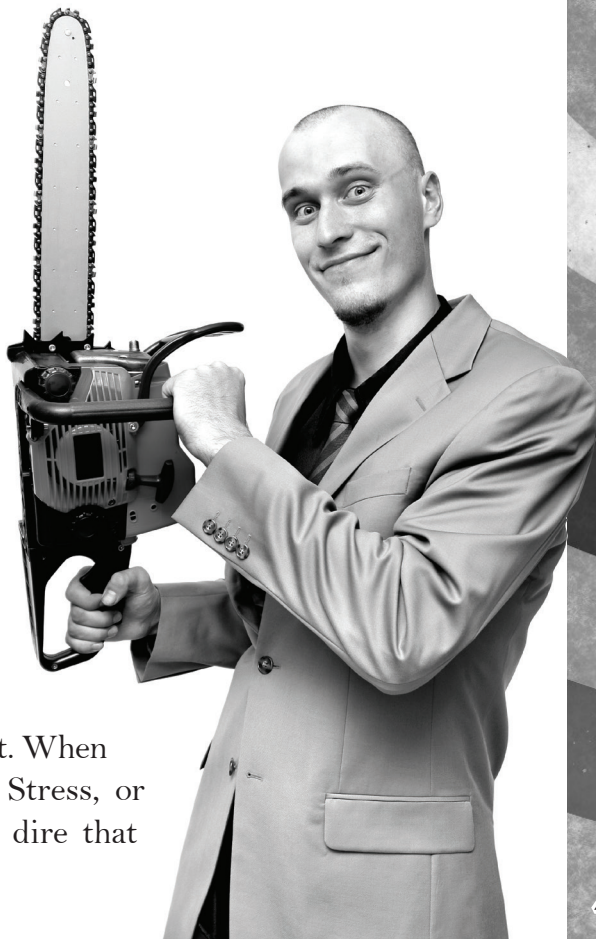
Rajia: "Nah, silly. It was ticking..."

Thus, we can see that Jeanette's narrative explains that Tamy's injury was less serious than previously thought and was easily fixed up by the wonderful people of the NHS. Her Stress drops to 2 (the promise of a cup of tea will do that). Of course, now there might be a bomb waiting for her at home... or perhaps now there is no home for her to return to at all. That's one way to get new flat.

BEING WRITTEN OUT

When a protagonist reaches 6 Stress, they are "written out" of the episode (in a Black Humour game) or out of the entire series (in a Serious Stuff game). The protagonist is unable to continue in their normal life. Of course, the player still gets to control extras in the game, but their protagonist is no longer available. The Director might want to give them a Guest Star to play or have them make a replacement protagonist.

However, there is a way to avoid being written out. When a protagonist reaches 6 Stress, or when the situation is so dire that



it's clear a protagonist is about to die horribly, the player may permanently reduce their maximum Cred to 2 and their stress is immediately reduced to 4. The bad stuff still happens, but the scene immediately ends. Later in the episode (much later, if The Director is feeling cruel), the protagonist will get a special slice of life OR mission scene, where they awaken in a facility of The Director's choosing. Examples include The Organisation's private mental health retreat, a public hospital, a criminal's friend's vet's surgery, a police cell, a kennel, etc. The protagonist has miraculously been snatched from the clutches of death or certain ruin... but by whom and to what end?

GROUP THERAPY

The last scene for each episode is group therapy. In this scene, The Director takes on the role of a somewhat sinister therapist. It's the time when the protagonists can gain standing within the eyes of The Organisation and gain experience (+Cred).

The scene should be heavily role-played, with each protagonist expressing their triumphs and tribulations as the therapist flips between critiquing their performance on the mission (and occasionally their home life) and offering "helpful" therapeutic advice.

The therapist should always be described as scribbling notes, or perhaps mumbling snippets of less than complimentary commentary or pseudo-medical mumbo-jumbo into a dictaphone. The players are being evaluated, and if they want those Cred points, they need to sell The Organisation on their mission performance.

If The Director feels that a protagonist has been successful in their mission, or has exhibited “something special” that may be of value to The Organisation in the future, the protagonist is rewarded with a point of permanent Cred. Not every player in Deniable is going to get the same rewards and praise. It’s not even always going to be fair. Directors, let this happen. Be deliberately and randomly fickle. Let the protagonists be jealous of each other and think that there was more going on behind the scenes than they thought.

HOW CRED IS EARNED

- * Completing missions.
- * Sacrificing for The Organisation.
- * Doing the job at great personal danger or expense.
- * Doing something in a clever fashion.
- * Anything else The Director deems appropriate. The Director may want to reward spectacular, funny or interesting failed mission attempts in a Black Humour game.

ADVANCEMENT

Before or during a protagonist's scene, they may permanently reduce their Cred by 1 and call for a training or resources *montage*. This montage is played out to justify their permanent acquisition of a new *trait*: specifically a skill or piece of equipment. Whilst The Organisation might give out equipment for missions periodically, it has no mechanical effect on play. However, **new traits paid for in Cred provides a single die step up** (i.e. D8-->D10) on any roll where they can reasonably be used. The player should record their new trait on their Dossier.

The Director has complete control and veto power on when a trait can be applied for a dice step up.

EXAMPLES: TRAINING & RESOURCES

- Working out at the Boxing Club/Dojo. *"Unexplainable black eye?"*
- Reading through big books on obscure subjects. *"Where have you been?"*
- Studying "chemistry." *"What is that smell, Sir? Your neighbours have complained!"*
- The Royal Pistol Club. *"So expensive!"*
- First aid classes. *"Naught be a flesh wound. You'll be fine!"*
- The London Private Private Eye School Pty Ltd. *"Tuition at odd hours with crazy people!"*
- Reads "Stalking for Dummies."

CREATING A SCENE

Like a TV show, each episode (a single game session) should be considered a self-contained story, which fits within a story arc that runs for a season: six episodes, just like a real British show. As the series progresses, so too will the protagonist's lives and standing within the shadowy Organisation. As the missions given to the protagonists become more morally questionable throughout the season, the protagonists' personal lives will become increasingly complicated.



Each episode of Deniable is played as a collection of scenes. We find that scenes are best set by thinking in terms of how they would look and sound, just like in a TV show.

EXAMPLE: A SCENE

The sound of rotor blades beats overhead as the camera scans Geroge's back garden below. As we zoom into the helicopter, the noise intensifies and we can see that there is a zip line attached to a harness around George, who is cradling a terrified Fifi in his arms. A close up of the dog shows it to be totally traumatised - as usual. The sound of the blades fades out to be replaced with the sound of George's nervous breathing and hammering heartbeat.

In the distance, he can see Ethel getting off the No. 2 bus. He has to get back into the house before she walks in the front door! She can never find out that Fifi escaped! We see a close up of George's face, his eyes closing as he is pushed out of the helicopter. George disappears as he plummets out of the shot. What a day! He did the job, but the extra mayhem caused by his little dog hunt is going to cost him a dearly in terms of The Organisation's good books... and those prize-winning roses he just landed on are going to be a thorn in his side for sure!"

Every scene will include at least one of the protagonists and frequently, members of their family and related extras. Unlike many other storygames, the player characters will not always be together. In fact, particularly in early episodes, this will be a rarity. The protagonists are not always a team. In the first

episode, they probably do not know each other, and even if they did, they would not necessarily like each other.

There is no need at all to make “compatible” characters as in many other games. That said, in mission scenes, several main characters may come together, or more likely be coordinated individually by the shadowy Organisation to some common end that only The Director can fathom. In fact, it is only through missions and subsequent group therapy sessions that the protagonists will get to know each other over time.

In terms of play, Deniable allows for this “splitting of the party” by giving the role of protagonists’ family members and extras to other players. This means that even if a player’s protagonist is not in a scene, they will still be immersed in the role-playing. Thus, taking on the role of incidental characters (extras) is not just a sideline activity of Deniable, it is an important part of creating the drama!

By carefully setting and cutting scenes, the director can have a significant effect on the direction and feel of a session, and just as importantly it’s length. Scenes can be started with the protagonists in the middle of a situation and can be cut before the action is fully resolved. Setting and cutting scenes for maximum effect in minimum time can be particularly important in a convention game or when time is short. We find that it is best to complete an episode of Deniable - with 3 - 4 people - in a single two hour sitting. Careful scene framing makes this possible, while still granting each player adequate screen time.

The Director may occasionally choose to pass off scene creation to another player completely. This is often a good idea when the scene involves interaction between a major extra played by someone other than The Director and a protagonist. This also saves time as long as the player knows what they want.

TYPES OF SCENES

There are five types of scenes that will be played as required in an episode of Deniable:

INTRODUCTION SCENES (USUALLY 1 PER PLAYER)

In these scenes, the focus is on the protagonist's personality and situation. The scene gives us a glimpse of the protagonist's manner and also sets up a personal situation or dilemma for the episode. It might include family or their job, and will set up some sort of difficulty related to one or both of these.

Narrative Purpose: In terms of narrative, this scene should also set the protagonist's motivation for the episode: will they overcome or embrace their vice, get their relationship on a better footing, come to terms with their past, etc?

Who Sets the Scene: The Director sets the location (negotiation and suggestions allowed). The players set the mood and their motivation for the episode through what their protagonist does and says.



SLICE OF LIFE SCENES

In these scenes, protagonists go about their daily lives, desperately trying to solve their personal and family issues while the demands of their “missions” get in the way. These scenes are, on the surface, about the mundane things in life; the trivial squabbles we blow out of all proportion and the soul-crushing humiliations that don’t really matter at all. Add a pinch of mysterious mission objectives to this mix of pettiness, and you have a recipe for drama. Slice of Life can also include scenes where The Organisation pays off the protagonists, and can also be about what the protagonists do with their new (and unexplainable) wads of cash or illicit equipment.

After slice of life scene has concluded, a protagonist has an opportunity to reduce their stress level. The Director may call for a vote if the protagonist has acted well and engaged in the motivations they set up in their Introduction scene, or if they have driven the story in a new and interesting direction. All players vote and if agreed, the protagonist’s stress is reduced by one point (minimum 0).

Narrative Purpose: Make the protagonists’ mundane lives interesting so that they matter to the other players and protagonists.

Who Sets the Scene: Players other than the current protagonist via brainstorming. The Director has the final say.

DROP SCENES

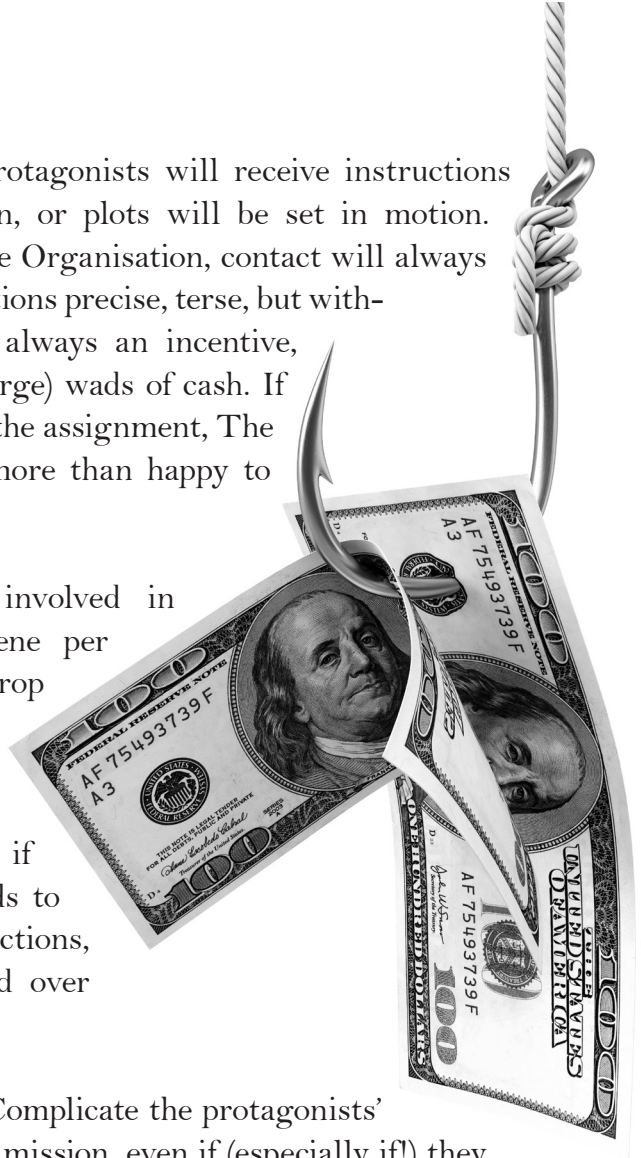
In these scenes, the protagonists will receive instructions from The Organisation, or plots will be set in motion. When dealing with The Organisation, contact will always be guarded and instructions precise, terse, but without context. There is always an incentive, usually (increasingly large) wads of cash. If the protagonist resists the assignment, The Organisation will be more than happy to use blackmail.

Each protagonist is involved in at least one drop scene per episode, or shares a drop scene in certain cases.

It is possible that multiple drop scenes might be appropriate if The Organisation needs to give additional instructions, retract orders, or hand over special equipment.

Narrative Purpose: Complicate the protagonists' lives and set them on a mission, even if (especially if!) they do not fully understand it.

Who Sets the Scene: The Director.



EXAMPLE: THE DROP

Trent is working hard as the manager at a Games Workshed store in a local shopping centre. It's a tough job for a tough man. He has to keep an eye on all the grottlings lest they try to pilfer the shelves of gamer crack. And he has to keep answering all their inane questions. Why can't they just all shut up and let him paint?

The Director informs Trent that a "mother" walks in with a "kid." She tells the "kid" in a relatively loud voice to choose anything from the store and she will pay for it. Trent watches as the "kid" wanders around and picks up a few blister packs before coming to the counter. He hands over the merchandise, two hundred quid, and a envelope and says, "I hope this covers it, eh' guv. And I'll come back tomorrow and pay as much again when the job is done. Got me?" Then the "kid" promptly turns and leaves the store, "mother" in tow.

Trent looks at the money, and then calls out, "Hey, you still owe me forty quid!" Only then does he realize the merchandise has been left on the counter and there is a note and pack of photos inside the envelope.

IMPORTANT NOTE

A player who refuses a mission and elects not to engage with the game in the spirit in which it is written will suffer a stress point for every instance in which they do this. This represents The Organisation meddling in the protagonist's life until they toe the line. If necessary, The Organisation will start tearing a protagonist's life apart.

MISSION SCENES

In these scenes, the protagonists get firmly involved in their missions. Sometimes more than one protagonist will be in a mission scene, and at other times a protagonist will be working independently. However, The Organisation is coordinating the action. Sometimes, The Organisation has extra people there just in case someone screws up and they need a backup play... or a scapegoat.

During missions, a protagonist's stress may increase as they encounter mental, emotional and even physical hardship.

Narrative Purpose: Create tension in the protagonists' lives.

Who Sets the Scene: The Director.





CHASE SCENES

Not every episode has a chase scene, but when they do occur, they can be full of tension, humour and action. A chase scene may be a protagonist chasing a target, or the protagonist being chased. Or it could be the protagonist chasing someone while themselves being chased! A chase can also be used for other purposes, such as escaping a collapsing building, or a charge of wild bulls, or attempting to defuse a bomb on a timer.

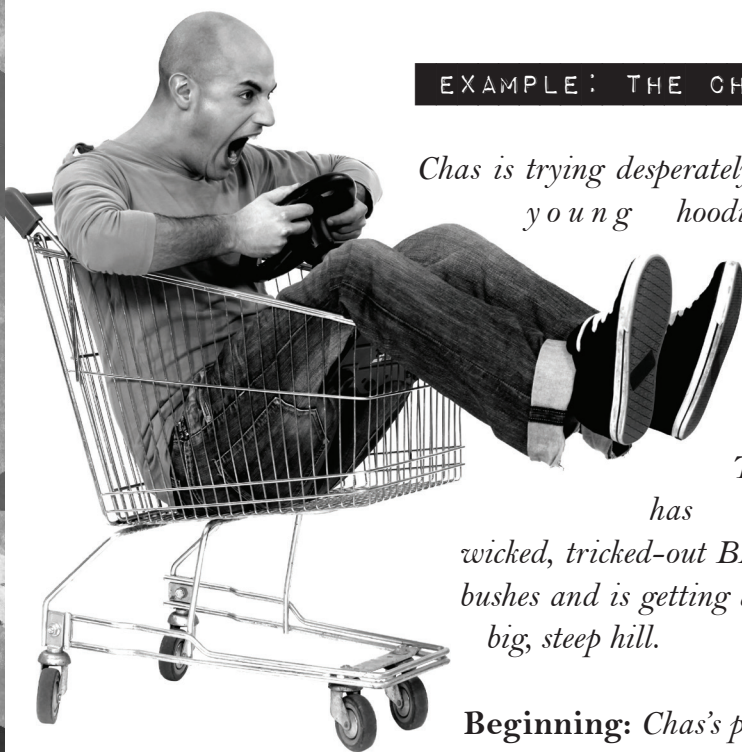
Chase scenes are played out like mini-stories: with a *beginning*, a *middle* and an *end*. At each point, there is a dice roll needed to determine how well the protagonist is doing. At the *beginning* of a chase scene, the means by which the protagonist will try to achieve their goal is set up. In the *middle*, a complication or hazard must be overcome. The *end* is where we find out whether or not the goal is achieved.

Note: Chase scenes can eat up Cred at an alarming rate, and should only be used for really important scenes!

Narrative Purpose: Protagonists attempt to deal with impending danger, or take advantage of a fleeting opportunity.

Who Sets the Scene: The Director.

EXAMPLE: THE CHASE



Chas is trying desperately to catch the young hoodie who has nicked the briefcase containing the mission resources. The hoodie has pulled his wicked, tricked-out BMX from the bushes and is getting away down a big, steep hill.

Beginning: *Chas's player asks the Director if there are any other bikes nearby. The Director (grinning like a dog with a new bone) says no, but there is a hipster on an electric scooter. Chas's player decides to try and knock the hipster off his scooter. Let's hope he doesn't know Hipster Fu. Chas's player rolls at this point using tough and gets a "bit of a balls up" (a 6).*

Chas's player spends a point of Cred to boost the result to "can't complain" (7-9). The Director narrates the poor hipster falling off the scooter and crashing into a trolley collection bay, breaking his designer glasses. Chas jumps on the scooter and hurtles after the hoodie with the hipster now in hot pursuit on the back of a pilfered shopping trolley (Director's move in response to the 7-9).

Middle: *The camera zooms in on a road sign that says "Construction Ahead. Detour Left." The BMX hoodie keeps on hurtling down the hill and Chas, who has little in the way of brakes being that he is on a scooter, keeps gathering speed. The Director points out that shopping trolleys have no*

brakes at all and that the trolley will hit him if he doesn't do something about it. Chas's player says Chas will try to swerve out of the way. The Director calls for a Deft roll. Chas's player gets a "complete cockup" (snake eyes). As a player is not allowed to use Cred on a "complete cockup," The Director narrates the trolley slamming into the back of the scooter and rules that Chas falls off the scooter and straight into the main basket of the trolley! Holding on with one hand, the hipster starts slapping Chas on the head and cursing as the trolley gathers more and more speed.

End: *Chas and the hipster are gaining on the biker who has (wisely) started applying the brakes as he approaches the construction site. There is a truck with its trailer and vehicle ramp facing them that the hoodie has chosen to head for and into which the trolley will crash. The Director calls for a tough roll to hold on and resist damage from the crash. Chas's player rolls a total of 10 and gets a "bloody brilliant" result. The Director narrates the trolley crashing into the back of the truck, Chas clinging on for dear life and the poor hipster flying over the truck and landing on the hoodie. Hilarity ensues.*

The last scene is Chas "casually" picking up the briefcase and making a "quiet" exit.



MONTAGE SCENES

These scenes are simply a short set of vignettes of background events that drive the story. There is no interaction between the protagonists. The events unfold around, or because of, a protagonist. The description of events is simply narrated by the player. Classic examples of montages include: arming oneself, shopping for mission supplies (generally hardware stores), paying off snitches and getting the buzz from the street, Googling for clues, setting up booby traps, and spreading rumors. These scenes allow a player to take over the story and set new directions.

Narrative Purposes: Characters prepare for, or further complicate, their lives and potentially the lives of others. Speeds up the story telling.

Who Sets the Scene: The Player and Director by negotiation.

USING MONTAGES

A montage is a powerful tool when playing time is short. It can conserve a lot of time whilst telling a considerable amount of story.

GROUP THERAPY SCENES

After each mission, the protagonists are “encouraged” to attend a mandated and pre-paid group therapy session. This session is part mission debrief, part performance evaluation, part indoctrination (manipulation) for future missions, and part “stress management.”

Note that in the topsy-turvy world of Deniable, stressful Slice of Life scenes reduce stress and Counselling Sessions don't. It's not possible to de-stress in a performance evaluation.

All protagonists are present in this scene: their interactions may be as acrimonious, confused and cynical as the players' feel appropriate for their protagonists. However, violence will not be tolerated, unless otherwise pre-mandated disposal has been authorised. The muscle-bound figures who stand almost imperceptibly in the shadows, waiting with syringes, will ensure order.

In keeping with The Organisation's secretive practices, these sessions will take place at odd hours and in random places that would normally be considered "safe" community spaces. For example: churches, public halls, hotel function rooms, or even private clubs, brothels, etc. In all cases, these locations have been fitted out with cameras and monitoring systems, and there is always an air of insecurity. The therapist will normally (but not always) be the same person, but often disguised to fit in with the local surroundings: a priest, a business person, a cleaner, etc. You can throw players off by occasionally using an abandoned or secluded location instead.



The Director always takes on the role of the Therapist, who uses secret video and CCTV footage of the protagonists' lives and from the mission to comment upon and rate each protagonist's performance. Vague threats of releasing incriminating footage may also be made if a protagonist gets too upset and threatens to stop working for The Organisation...

At the end of the group therapy session, The Director may award Cred to protagonists which The Organisations found useful. However Cred may only be awarded to a protagonist who has *interacted with their vice during* the episode: either embracing it or struggling against it for dramatic effect. Thus, therapy sessions are also where players get their "experience points." (More Cred!)

You will notice that these sessions provide a great episode summary and wrap-up. This is intentional. The Director can also use this time to write next session's "Previously on Deniable" introduction if they wish.

In multi-session games, it can be a great part of the experience if The Director jots or types notes while playing the role of the therapist during group therapy scenes. The players may assume that the therapist is writing notes about the mental state of their protagonists. (It helps to nod a lot and say, "Hmmm... how did that make you feel?") These notes can then be read at the beginning of the next episode. It can be fun to read these in the voice of one of the extras or a protagonist, just like on TV series openings.

FIELD OPS: ADVICE FOR NEW ASSETS



BASIC TRAINING

As a new player of Deniable, all you need to understand is that you already know how to play. You know how to play because you have watched a gadzillion hours of TV drama. Deniable emulates TV to the greatest degree that it can.

The second thing you need to know is that it is OK to take your time when creating the story *content* in Deniable. All players should give each other sufficient time and space to make their mark on the story, and you need to try not to interrupt slower and/or newer players if possible. We have found that fully involving all players, even at the cost of a few delays, makes for a better game overall.

Third, everyone is a better storyteller than they think they are. Even you! Most often, the obvious course of action for your protagonist is the best course of action, and makes for the best stories.



There are no mistakes in Deniable other than the ones you want your characters to make! If you want to take something back or change something, ask The Director. They may say “yes,” or they may say “yes but...”

Deniable is not a competition; it’s more like a jazz session with everyone collaborating. Be liberal with your praise of each other and of the protagonists’ antics. Excitement breeds excitement!

TIPS FOR PLAYING

- * Visualise your character as being in a TV show.
- * Take your time, and give time to the other players.
- * The obvious course of action is often the best course of action.
- * Make your character human by having them make mistakes.
- * Collaborate, don’t compete.
- * Take on suggestions with good grace.
- * Don’t block other people’s content.

FAILURE IS AN OPTION

The objective of Deniable is not to complete the mission... though this is not to say that it won't happen. The only objective is to tell an engaging story and to make your time in the spotlight memorable.

Play your scenes intensely, emotionally and realistically and *treat your character like a stolen car* (Thanks, Avery McDaldno). Your character is not you. You should play to put your protagonist in difficult and dramatic situations, not to try to win.

Likewise, it is absolutely fine for your protagonists and extras to mess with the other player's characters. Not in order to beat them, but to make each of their stories more interesting. Remember: you are a fan of the other protagonists and hopefully (still) a friend to the other players too!

MORE TIPS FOR PLAYING

- * Your character is not your own. It belongs to the story.
- * Be a fan of the protagonists and make their lives interesting.
- * Achieving the mission objective is not winning.
- * Winning is telling a good story that everyone talks about later.
- * Communicate in play so that you are still friends after the game.

PLAYING EXTRAS

Playing extras is one of the most important jobs in Deniable regardless of your role (Director or player). You should infuse every extra with personality so that they inhabit memorable scenes without overshadowing the protagonists.

Feel free to give them voices and quirks that help define their personalities, but keep in mind that anything you build should be there to enhance the extra's relationship with the protagonists in the scene. This applies whether The Director has asked you to take on the role of a beat cop at a moment's notice or whether you are playing someone's long-suffering spouse.

Extras have their own agendas, biases and vices. When playing an extra, you should apply these to the scene as appropriate. Extras can add complications, red herrings, and other plot elements. Remember, you should play extras genuinely and let them influence a scene, whilst keeping in mind who the stars of the show are: the protagonists.

EVEN MORE TIPS FOR PLAYING

- * Play extras in support of the protagonist's story lines and developing plot.
- * Extras can add colour and interest to the scenes, without overshadowing the protagonists.
- * Extras are people. They have their own agendas, biases and vices. Play them as people, not cardboard cutouts.

TOP SECRET EYES ONLY: DIRECTOR'S DOSSIER

Just like the Director of a TV series, your job as The Director is more complex than that of the players, but the satisfaction of bringing the world of Deniable to life is yours in return for that work. Your job is to set events in motion for the players and to keep things interesting and unpredictable, while moving the story to a satisfying (though not always happy) conclusion.



THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

The most important questions The Director can ask players:

“What do you do?”

“How does [the protagonist] feel?”

These questions can be used at any time to drive the story, coax actions from players, allow events to snowball, to clarify intent, and a thousand other uses. “How does [the protagonist] feel” is important because it puts players in their character’s heads.

SHAPING SCENES WITH MOVES

A good way to think about scenes is that they consist of a conversation between the players, punctuated by *moves*. Put simply, a move is any action performed by a player that impacts the story and where both failure and success have interesting outcomes.

A player makes a move by satisfying the requirements in the fiction. That is, the players respond to the situations set up by The Director and the other players (playing the extras) by stating what their characters say and do. That’s a move. If their actions have an uncertain outcome, dice are rolled.

The Director has two types of moves: *soft moves* and *hard moves*.

DIRECTOR'S CHEAT SHEET

- * When in doubt, make a soft move, and ask the players "What do you do?"
- * If it is not addressed, make a hard move from the list.
- * If nobody is doing anything, make a move.
- * If the players look to you to do something, make a move.
- * Cut scenes early and cut them often.
- * If a scene has resolved or isn't going anywhere CUT IT!



SOFT MOVES

A soft move is a foreshadowing of something to come. It is a description of what *may* happen next. The players are expected to respond to soft moves by taking action to influence the future outcome.

EXAMPLE: A SOFT MOVE

George is walking down a dark and narrow alley between two run-down buildings...

Director: At the far end of the alley, a group of three skinheads appear and begin striding slowly, almost too casually, towards you. Their sullen faces, wild, twitchy eyes and sneers can barely be made out in the dim lamplight from the street behind you. Or maybe that's just the trick of the light? Maybe they are just passing through... [This is the soft move, suggesting a future, possible consequences.]

Josh: Screw them. Freakin' punks. Think they own this damn city. I keep on walking. [This is the protagonist's reaction to the potential future.]

HARD MOVES

A hard move is irrevocable and means something is happening right now in the fiction. Often, a hard move leads to other moves.

EXAMPLE: A HARD MOVE

Director: You and the punks come face to face, about half way down the alley. It's dark here. You hear a metallic "click" and just make out the glint of silver in the moonlight. "Oi, that's the ol' geezer. Git 'im!" [This is still a soft move, because being stabbed is still in the (very near) future and the Director wants to see how Josh/George reacts.]

Josh: Oh crap. I throw my briefcase at the one in front to distract him and try run like hell back the other way.

Director: OK, you are trying to escape. It sounds like you are using your Sly. Roll a d8 and a d6.

Josh: I got a 2 and a 3. That's "a bit of a balls-up!"

Director: Do you want to increase that by spending a point of Cred?

Josh: No, I've only got one point left!

Director: Right, the punk in front gets a briefcase in the face. But the case seems to just bounce off all the metal studs embossing his big, ugly mug! As the case falls to the ground, spilling out pantaloons samples, you feel hands grab you with an iron-like grip.

The big guy in front draws the pocketknife blade up to your nose, and you feel it just start to slice into the soft tissue of your left nostril. You take a point of a

Stress. [This is the hard move.] Now the conversation continues. “Ere, ol’ man. Got a message for you. Stop being such a twat to Azure, OK?! Or next time I’ll cut your piggy nose right off!”

Josh: “What? Who? What the hell is Azure?”



MOVES SUMMARY

The Director's moves are as follows:

- Separate people or things.
- Bring people or things together.
- Put someone in a high-stakes situation.
- Force a Stress Check.
- Deal Stress.
- Preview off-screen badness (future or past).
- Take away or show them the weaknesses of their things.
- Threaten the wellbeing and safety of their loved ones.
- Give them a difficult decision to make.
- Tell them the possible consequences and ask...

BUST A MOVE, INNIT WOT!

You may think that this list of moves is constraining. It isn't. Having these moves in front of you as you play the role of The Director will inspire creativity rather than constraining it. Trust us. Trust The Organisation. Trust no one else.

AGENDA

- Keep the characters guessing and on edge.
- Play to find out what happens.
- Push the players up against their own moral compass.
- Family often interferes.



PRINCIPLES

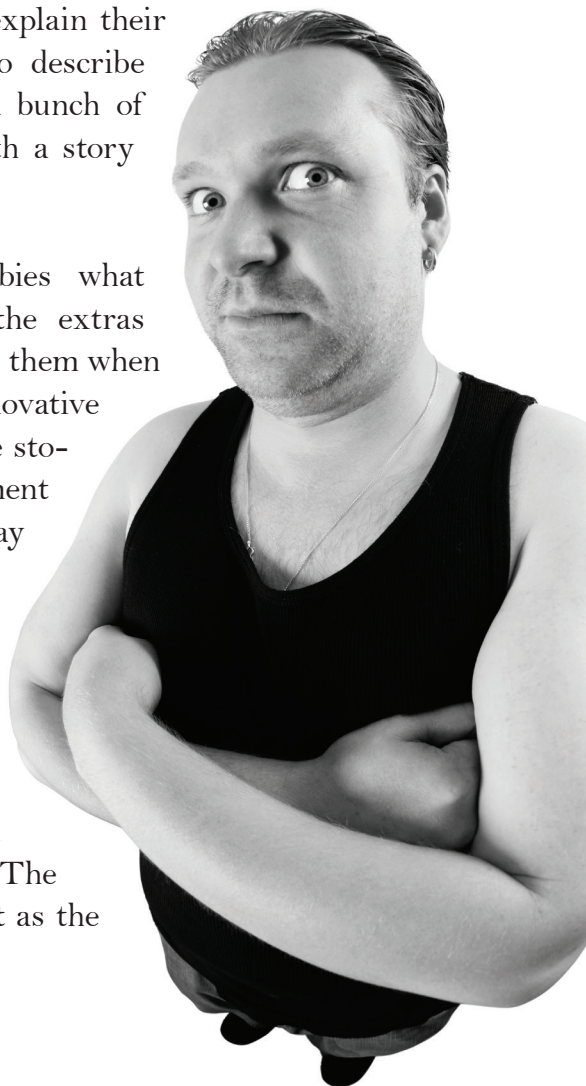
- Make the world exude paranoia, secrecy, misconception, obsession, and ruthlessness.
- Create interesting dilemmas and people, but keep the plot simple.
- Address yourself to the characters, not the players.
- Name everyone, thereby making them real people.
- Ask provocative questions and build on the answers.
- Respond with challenging circumstances and occasional rewards.
- Be a fan of the protagonists.
- Think off-screen too and feel free to make moves when appropriate in the future, present and past.
- Sometimes, reflect a question back upon a player.

* This section was adapted from D. Vincent Baker's exceptional *Apocalypse World*. Buy it. The Organisation insists.

INTRODUCING NEWBIES TO DENIABLE

Deniable plays brilliantly with experienced storygamers. However, people who have never played a roleplaying game may be a little bit timid. Often, newbies will hang back and not wish to “make a mistake.” Making mistakes is exactly what we want them to do! As The Director, it is up to you to encourage new players to participate fully. A good way to explain their role in the game is to describe it as “jamming with a bunch of jazz musicians, but with a story instead of music.”

Always ask the newbies what their protagonist or the extras are doing. Congratulate them when they add something innovative - or even cliché - to the story! Positive reinforcement is essential. If they say they don't quite “get the rules,” let them know that it's OK... that it's YOUR job as The Director to know the rules. In short, keep them engaged in the story. The rest will work itself out as the game unfolds.



CUTTING SCENES

Cutting Scenes effectively is essential for a good game of Deniable. Cutting a scene can be done after it has resolved, or before, to leave it on a cliffhanger. This is the one job that The Director has, that the players have no control over. Players may suggest cutting a scene, but this happens when The Director says it does. Cutting scenes keeps the excitement high and makes the best use of game time. Moving away from the action and then coming back to it is a common TV technique.

CUT HARD. CUT OFTEN.

Cutting scenes early and using montages can really help when time is short for gaming.



CREATING EPISODES

Many roleplaying games are plot-driven; epic tales of good versus evil, sagas of heroes, and grand voyages. These are wonderful: we love their rich world settings, complex story lines, and histories. However, Deniable is all about character-driven stories, not plot or setting-driven stories. In fact, the plots - the missions - are just a supporting framework that allows the protagonists to shine, foibles and all.

The best games of Deniable have pretty thin plots. Plots you could write on the back of a postage stamp. In crayon. There is no need for The Director to create complex histories, maps of locations, or richly detailed, pre-defined NPCs and traps. Instead, the bulk of the setup for each story is generated during the introduction scenes, where the issues for the episode are laid out for each protagonist. Trust us, the players will create their own complexity and twists and turns for themselves and each other!

However, The Director does need to have a basic mission plot for each episode. These can be generated by rolling two six-sided dice for each on the *Mission Charts*.

We encourage Directors to make use of The Mission Charts and stick with any reasonable results. Doing so helps to generate stories that might not otherwise exist and also creates a little extra challenge. Of course, if The Director is not happy with the rolls, they are free to re-roll any and all, or simply do whatever the hell they want. After all, they are The Director.

Armed with plot elements, The Director can set to work making the protagonists' lives very, very interesting indeed.

MISSION DOSSIER CHARTS



THE INITIAL CONTACT

The way the drop is made.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Mysterious stranger	Femme fatale	Letter drop	Existing extra	Nervous stranger	Encrypted text message
2	Child with a message	Foreign emissary	The guy next door	The girl next door	Activist	Voices in your head
3	Suave businessman	Voice on phone	Hacker	A favor for a friend	Stoner	Shopping centre screen
4	Chav	Arrow with message attached	A "friend" calls in a debt	A ghost from the past	Barista	Strange images on the telly
5	Gang of chavs	Internet link or email	Family member	Change room	Carrier pigeon	The smoking man
6	Message planted	Exploding USB	A bleeding heart story	Toilet stall	A blind man	The Old Bill

THE OBJECTIVE

The Organisation's goals for the episode.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Personal revenge	Prove your innocence	Prove the innocence of a "friend"	Plant evidence	Destroy evidence	Retrieve evidence
2	Stop a hit	Scandalise	Seduce someone	Corrupt someone	Secure the hostage	Rescue the hostage
3	Participate in a hit	Steal something	Turn someone	Find someone	Hide someone	Sabotage something
4	Stop revenge	Protect something	Delay something	Injure someone	Teach someone a lesson	Replace something
5	Delay someone	Deliver Something	Escort someone	"Prove" something	Frame someone	Expose someone
6	Protect someone	Intercept something	Plant a device	Find a device	Destroy something	Reveal a plot

A LOCATION

Where part of the episode takes place.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Art Gallery	Circus	Hospital	Government department	Military base	University
2	Shopping mall	Countryside	On a plane	On a train	Foreign embassy	Lab
3	Under a bridge	Country estate	Casino	Castle	Underworld	Bank
4	Airport	Docks	Fun park	Hotel	Convention	Highrise
5	Council estate	Pub	Nightclub	Cruise liner	Cubicle farm	Factory
6	Warehouse	Playground	Secret Gov't facility	Restaurant	Underground	Race track

A COMPLICATION

A twist in the plot!

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Wrong target	Mistaken identity	Twins?	Mistaken I.D.	Love intervenes	Blackmail
2	Wrong location	Foreign powers	Local police	Scotland Yard	Enemy within	Betrayal
3	Timing	Unexpected resistance	Setup	Innocents in the way	Timebomb	Administrative problem
4	Followed	Interpol	Family	Friendly fire	It's a trap!	Cash dries up
5	Watched	Bad equipment	Cover compromised	Temptation	Leak	Drugged
6	Competing players	No-show	Someone eliminated	Someone non compliant	Someone not alone	All clear?

AN ANTAGONIST

Need not be the main "target" and in fact doesn't need to be knowingly working against the protagonists. Sometimes, they are just in the wrong place at the wrong time.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Politician	Celebrity	Media baron	Neo-Nazies	Ambassador	Doctor
2	Spy	Wise-guy	Assassin	Cold War throw-back	Traitor	Scientist
3	Local "businessman"	Serial killer	Criminal cabal	Terrorist cell	Reporter	Activists
4	Private detective	Criminal mastermind	Drug lord	Hacker	Religious leader	Professor
5	Innocent	Corporate interests	Sport star	Whistleblower	Fraudster	Police
6	Existing extra	Sleeper agent	Extremists	Fugitive	Community paragon	Union leader



EXAMPLE

The Initial Contact: Dice 1 & 3 = Letter drop

The Objective: Dice 2 & 4 = Corrupt someone

The Location: Dice 5 & 5 = Cubicle farm

The Complication: Dice 4 & 1 = Followed

An Antagonist: Dice 3 & 2 = Serial killer

Armed with the above, The Director can set up the action with a mysterious letter containing a wad of cash, a battered wedding ring (from a murder victim, who is not known by the player), a sealed envelope and instructions as follows:

“Take the enclosed letter to the person sitting in call centre booth 215 in the Hokes Sales offices, tomorrow at 10:15 exactly. You are to wait until they have read the letter, and then hand them the ring and say, ‘Here is all the proof you need.’ Then walk away.”

Unfortunately, the person being contacted is a serial killer. The note being handed to him (or her) reads: “We know where your skeletons are buried. You work for us now. Instructions will follow. Do not deviate.”

The protagonist(s) delivering the letter will be followed by the serial killer, possibly to their home. Evil hilarity and disaster ensues.

SERIES STRUCTURE

A classic British TV structure is the six-episode season, and we find that this works perfectly well for playing Deniable. The three-part mini-series is another option. When you pitch a game of Deniable to your players, the series length should be the first item of discussion as this tells you how fast the stories should be played.

THE PILOT

The Pilot episode of Deniable *must be improvised*. This is a rule. This rule is in place so that the game is built around the protagonists. At first, we are interested in the protagonists' lives and relationships, with the mission (or missions) in the background. It is likely that the protagonists do not know each other and may only first encounter each other during the pilot, or even as late as the first group therapy scene.

The protagonists' first missions should be simple. It is mostly about them being tempted by easy money... or blackmail, or threats or need for revenge or whatever other motives fit the game and the protagonists' personalities.

By the way, sometimes the pilot episode can feel a bit disjointed and stilted. That's OK! So do pilot episodes of most TV shows. Remember, all of the threads established in the pilot create the beautiful tapestry to follow.

Players think it's awesome when they "work out" the plot. Let them feel clever!

THE BUILD-UP

As the episodes and missions roll on, there will be more extras, places and relationships. The Director needs to keep a careful eye on what is going on in order to keep the story coherent and to look for places where seemingly unrelated threads may tie together. It's important that The Director records all of the people and relationships to keep the game flowing smoothly.

A good way to do this is to create something akin to a “police investigation display board” or a simple mind-map of the relationships and events in the game. These can be updated during each episode, so that the most important details are captured. Referring to these also helps The Director see new connections between disparate events and people, and thus create new twists and turns. Nothing is more fun than The Director introducing a shocking revelation!

THE SEASON FINALE

Ask players if they want a second season. You can leave it as a cliffhanger, or wrap everything up... or leave a cliffhanger, and then cancel the show. Or do a reboot!

By the end of the series, the protagonists still may not know who they are working for, although the players will probably start to get some idea of how bad or good The Organisation is. The details are up to you: just remember that as things get more complex, the players and protagonists will start to speculate. Keep an ear out, as these speculations can be easily stolen and implemented by you in the game. Players think it's awesome when they believe they have worked out the plot... even though you just stole it from them! If it works for you, let them have it. You can also add a slice of life scene at the very end as an epilogue: always a great way to wrap up the series!

DENIABLE WALK-THROUGH

The following pages present a walk-through of three episodes of Deniable. This walk-through outlines the separate but increasingly interconnected lives of three awful protagonists. The protagonists did not start out as terrible people (well they sort of did), but by the end of the series, their true natures were revealed. Perfect!

DEVELOPING THE CAST

The series starts, as all do, with the creation of the protagonists and their families. In the pilot, you can see brief descriptions for each character in the cast. Of particular interest is the way in which the players create a connection between Thomas (the sleazy ex-doctor) and Tim (the obsessive web designer) through the extra Candy. This link brings dramatic tension and humour to the series, and makes Candy a pivotal extra.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW...

Create connections between the protagonists via
their family and friends.

In contrast, there is almost no initial connection between Fergal (the slow-witted drug dealer) and the other two protagonists.

In fact, Fergal manages to avoid interacting with any of the protagonists until the first group therapy session. And even then he is not particularly engaged. It is Fergal's relationship with his son, Badger, which shines through during the series.

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

Contrast the types of relationships to build texture to your story. Create people you love, and people you love to hate.

Badger and Fergal's relationship is the "innocent goodness" that highlights the "cynical badness" of the others' in the series. The childlike questions and unexpected wisdom spouted by Badger made him one of the most memorable characters in the series – definitely worth a BAFTA.

THE PILOT

The opening scene of the pilot is a montage of a murder scene, narrated by The Director. The Organisation wishes to cover up this crime and calls upon the services of the three protagonists in an almost ad-hoc manner. Thomas: to make a murder appear to be suicide. Tim: to collect the evidence (he just happened to be close to the scene at the time). And finally Fergal, to provide a getaway vehicle (like Tim, he was in the wrong place at the right time).

The plot of the pilot is thin, and mission scenes short. The majority of the screen time is acting out slice of life scenes: namely the relationship between Badger and his hopeless father, and the seedy drama unfolding around Candy, Thomas and Tim.

K.I.S.S. ON THE FIRST DATE

Pilot episodes are thin on plot, thick on character.

It is at this point that misogyny begins to rear its ugly head as a theme in the episode: which is not surprising given Thomas' lecherous nature, and Tim effectively being a stalker. The danger here is that Candy might become simply a "caricature" as opposed to a more fully realised character. Luckily, the player running candy realises that he could inject real pathos into the situation by representing Candy as far more complex than just the "party girl" she was first described as. This dramatically illustrates why extras should be treated with as much care and attention as protagonists. The more believable and complex they are, the more room there is for drama, pathos and surprising situations.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE MATTER TOO

Create memorable, realistic extras who will steer the drama in surprising directions.

This episode also demonstrates the need to spend Cred. When Tim is arrested by the police, he tries to talk his way out of the situation. His first roll is a bit of a balls up, so he spends Cred to get a more positive result, and narrates the organisation sending in a fake detective (who then becomes a recurring extra). Of course, the entire situation is stressful (lying to the police) and so Tim rolls for, and indeed increases, his stress by 1.

LIFE IS A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

Put the protagonists in tough situations. Make them stressed. Make them spend Cred. Get The Organisation involved in the story.

EPISODE 1: PILOT



INTRODUCTION

Thomas trying to set up a "date" with Candy via a mobile phone app: Cheat-Book.

THOMAS BOTHOM-BROWN

Married with a daughter. Medical Doctor put to pasture at Uni. Can't keep his pants on.

Margo: Thomas' current wife. 27 yrs old. Finishing up her medical degree.

Jeannie: Daughter of Thomas. Suspects he's cheating on new wife. Likes her. Hates her Dad.

OPENING SCENE

1 Train tracks. Lower long yards. A man running away from someone. Scared. A figure comes into view and shoots him in the back! MURDER!

TIM WINCHESTER

Girlfriend, it's complicated. Infatuated with Candy his highschool crush. Web Designer by day. Model train enthusiast by night. Will do anything to impress Candy.

Candy: "Girl-friend" of Tim. Party girl, Does not think of Tim "like that." Takes advantage of him continually.



4 DROP

At Uni, a well-dressed stranger asks Thomas to help with a situation: cover up shooting by train tracks. Having been deregistered for an incident, Thomas has not been adverse to "helping out" with dubious medical situations in the past.



3 INTRODUCTION

Custody court appearance goes badly for Fergal because he is broke with "no real job." Decides to sell drugs from his ice-cream truck to get extra cash. That will make things better.

FERGAL MOORE

Divorced, denied access, to son. Needs cash. Drug dealer.

Badger: Seven-year old son. Loves his Dad. Cute. Curious.

Debbie: Ex-wife. Has new boyfriend, Steve. Hates Fergal with a passion.

6 DROP

Fergal texted: "Pick up the man in a blue and white paisley shirt (Tim) and bring him to 34 Tyler Street. We can help with your Badger problem."

2 INTRODUCTION & DROP

Tim is watching trains. He witnesses the murder. Called by Org. Told to fetch gun from crime scene and dispose by handing it to person in a green hat. Is 50 quid in it. Wanders down to tracks to look at body.

"Cool! A gun would make me look like an awesome gangsta for Cindy! I'll take it."

7 MISSION

Tim sees cop, panics and runs for it. Gets text from Organisation to hitch a ride with the Ice-Cream van.

Roll stress

17 THERAPY

THOMAS

Of course, I performed perfectly well. Yes, indeed. Piece of cake, as it where. Thinking of which, do you have any tea? Thank you. Discretion? That's my middle name. Am I available for another mission? Absolutely! Anything for Queen and Country, my dear.

FERGAL

Why didn't I pick him up? Because he was being chased by the bloody police, that's why! Last thing I need is to get involved with the cops! I gotta' think about little Badger, here... What? His mum's looking for him? Badger, did you tell your mum you was coming to visit me?

5 MISSION

Thomas digs out bullet. Drives railroad rebar through wound (with help).

"How do I make this look like suicide? How about getting a body that's not been bloody-well shot in the back!"

Roll stress

8 MISSION

Fergal passes a guy (Tim) being chased by cops. Decides to drive somewhere - anywhere - else instead.

11 SLICE OF LIFE

Badger shows up unexpectedly in Fergal's van:
"Dad, why do you live in the van?"
"Well son, it's close to work."
"Mum says it's 'cause you're a loser."
"Mum says it's 'cause you're a loser."
"Ah. Never mind that. She's just tired, is all. What do you think?"
"I think your van needs Wi-Fi."



Introduce new extra, Lianne, Chinese friend of Candy. A little naive and ruthlessly manipulated by Candy.

9 MISSION

Tim is caught by cops. Arrested for possession of illegal firearm. Organisation sends in fake detective, who "confirms" gun is a toy and releases Tim with a "warning."

Spend Cred. Roll stress

TIM

What! No! I didn't do anything!
That sailor? Don't know anything about him. Never saw him before!
That's NOT my car! No. No. That's NOT me. I didn't do that. You can't prove it!
What... wait.... you can? What would I do to keep it quiet? Um, what do want me to do?

+ 1 Cred

10 SLICE OF LIFE

Paid a wad of cash. Decides to spend it on a "date" with Candy. Attempts to impress her by requesting a meeting at an expensive hotel.



12 SLICE OF LIFE

Thomas goes to hotel, but is followed by his daughter, Jeanne, who confronts him in his room (before Candy arrives).

"I know you are cheating on Mum!"
"No! No I'm not! And besides, technically she's not your mother..."

13 MONTAGE

Meanwhile... Candy gets payment from Cheatbook and decides to go to a fancy nightclub prior to meeting Thomas. She goes with her best friend Lianne. Outside the club, they buy "Ice-Cream" from Fergal's van.

Candy gets wasted. Sends Lianne to Thomas' hotel in her place.

14 SLICE OF LIFE

Fast talking as Lianne shows up to room dressed in French maid's outfit and runs into Jeannie.

"She's here to clean the room! Hire HER for WHAT?! Don't be silly. You know I don't even LIKE foreigners!"

Reduce stress

15 SLICE OF LIFE

Candy calls Tim at 3am. She's "drunk" and needs a ride home. When Tim arrives, he finds her with an African-American sailor. She is in the back, getting a little too friendly...

Instead of dropping Candy and her friend at a hotel, he delivers the sailor to a neo-nazi clubhouse. Drives off with a passed-out Candy in the back seat...

Reduce stress

16 MONTAGE

Following morning news reports that a US sailor was beaten to death in what appears to be a racially motivated attack. The police are investigating.



Big Red Button Pushed

A little later in the episode, Tim picks up a very drunk Candy from a party and her “friend.” Because Tim was directly engaging in his desire for a relationship with Candy, he reduces his stress level by 1. However, this scene is also confronting: it is the perfect storm of misogyny and racism. The big red button is pushed, and the camera turns its gaze from the unfolding events... to Tim’s vindictive response.

FADE TO BLACK

Use the Big Red Button to keep the story moving if things get a little too grim.

Finally, the episode ends with the group therapy. Thomas fully embraces The Organisation’s suspect activities and crow’s his accomplishments. Fergal is clueless (and deliberately played so by his player). Tim denies everything in a panicked attempt to avoid any responsibility in the sailor’s murder.

EPISODE 2 - THE BUILD-UP

In the mid-season build-up, the story takes on a new twist. It picks up on one of the themes introduced in the pilot episode and becomes focused on racism: specifically framed as foreign agitation of the white supremacist movement in Britain. After unintentionally facilitating a racially-motivated murder, Tim is ruthlessly used by The Organisation to get close to both the neo-Nazis within London, as well as to a group of American white supremacists.

MAKE MOUNTAINS OUT OF MOLEHILLS

Take small cues from previous episodes, and blow them up into major plots in later episodes!

Because the issue of racism has become a major mission objective, it naturally seeps into all of the other protagonists' lives. For example, when Thomas fetches the milk during his introduction scene, he completely dismisses his neighbours' outrage at his casual and clueless racism. One of the interesting traits of British TV is its willingness to jump into controversial topics and use humour to explore serious social and political issues. Certainly, this episode does just that!

SKEWER SOCIETY... WITH RESPECT

British TV often explores taboos and social issues using humour. Use the Big Red Button to get the balance right for your gaming group.

In this scene, we also see examples of stress for both physical damage and psychological shock. Fergal rolls for and suffers physical stress during his fight at Tim's house. Later, Fergal, Tim and Thomas all have a point of stress inflicted upon them for their role in the killing and disposal of a skinhead.

MAKE A MESS

Be liberal with stress, but mix it up.

The interplay between the protagonists is far greater in build-up scenes, in part because they have been previously introduced, but mainly because their lives are intertwining within the evolving narrative.

NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS

As the game goes on, the protagonists' lives become increasingly intertwined.

EPISODE 2: BUILD-UP

4 INTRODUCTION

Thomas fetching milk from front porch, wondering if he'll get another job soon. Because he needs the cash to try and set up another date with Candy. Waves to neighbour.

"Hello Allan!"

"The name's Ahjay. I keep telling you that, you f&%king racist d&%head!"

"Yes. Yes. Beautiful day to be British, wot?"

9

DROP

TV Interrupt: Medical emergency. Get to 32 Durban Lane, Lower East. NOW.

18

MONTAGE

Morning newspaper:
Mr Whippy Saves Lady
Cops From Nazi Horde



1 OPENING SCENE

Tim hears retching from his room and goes to check on Candy, who he put to bed. She is very hungover. No memory of previous night. She is not exactly thrilled to be in Tim's bed, until she realises "nothing happened." Is almost touched by his compassion, until he tries to be "gangsta" for her.

2 SLICE OF LIFE

Tim leaves house to find neo-nazis painting a swastika on a neighbours' fence. Asks them what they are doing. Respond they are painting the sigils on the house of the patriot who saved a white girl.



6 DROP

Fergal texted: We've placed a suitcase in your van. Take it to 32 Durban Lane and give it to a man in a blue and white paisley shirt.

5 INTRODUCTION

Fergal getting breakfast for Badger at McDonald's drive through. Unfortunately, van does not fit, and Fergal accidentally rips off the yellow M sign when exiting. "Sorry son, I gotta' take you back to your mum."

"But I don't like it there. Steve smells funny."

3

INTRODUCTION & DROP

Tim is texted. Told to befriend the skinheads at his house.

"Hang on? Last night? No. That's MY car.... I just park my car in Kashif's drive 'cause he lost his license. Me? A hero to my people? Well, if you say so. Kashif? Yeah, he's a Pakistani, why?"

7 SLICE OF LIFE

Fergal pulled over by police for having a large yellow M perched on the van. Badger is cute and policewoman lets Fergal off... but offers to have coffee with him. Budding romance. Policewoman offers to take Badger home to mum, to avoid any custody troubles.

"Um... can I have your number?"

"Oh Dad! Everyone knows her number! It's 999."

8 MISSION

Skinheads drag Kashif out of home and beat him up for "daring to live next to a true leader of the movement!" Tim runs inside to hide. Fergal arrives and intervenes. Accidentally causes serious injury to skinheads.

Roll stress

19 THERAPY THOMAS

Thomas: Well, I got you the photo, didn't I? So what some hooligan died. They do that all the time, you know. Poor breeding if you ask me. And I should know. I'm a doctor. What? Technically I'm not? Well, if you want to split hairs I guess...

FERGAL

Fergal: I saved two police officers!!! Oh, yeah. I did kill someone. But that was self defence. Sort of. I feel really bad about that. The publicity? Hey, the Telegraph says I'm a hero. Surely that's good for the Organisation, isn't it?

15

CHASE

Fergal selling ice-cream outside a rave when Badger shows up. Fergal tells a teary Badger that he will need to drive him home. But runs smack into a violent race riot. Tries to escape by driving way too fast. Spots two police officers fleeing their burning patrol car and being chased by skinheads. Badger opens back door and the officers just manage to scramble inside as bricks and bottles rain down.

"Hey Dad! Guess who it is! It's that nice police lady you said you really like, and her friend. Hey Miss Jones, you're not going to take me back to my mum are you? She's mean to me. Can I stay with Dad? Plllllleeeeeaaase!"

17 SLICE OF LIFE

Thomas messages Candy via CheatBook. LuvDoc83: "Want to meet tonight? Bring your friend if you want."

16

SLICE OF LIFE

Tim intercepts message using Tim's spyware. Does the Texan's spyware. Does not know who LuvDoc83 is... yet.

13 MISSION

Tim and Thomas arrive at the lounge. Meeting with five rich and powerful American businessmen. They like how Tim works. They also want to expand their White Power movement to the UK. The Texan gives Tim crates of military-grade weapons and a briefcase full of cash.

Thomas snaps a pic with his mobile, but is noticed doing so by "security."

"Let's start some civil disobedience. Stir up the unwashed masses. Start a riot. That way those damn Libtards will have no choice but to put immigration back on the agenda."

Fergal left the suitcase of surveillance equipment at Tim's house after using it to beat up the skinheads... and Tim "forgets" to give the kit to Thomas.

10 MISSION

Thomas shows up and gets Tim to help put bleeding Skinheads in van. One dies on way to hospital. Disposal of body in garbage skip. Hardcore! Decides that Tim will drive remaining skinhead back to the neo-nazi clubhouse.

Inflict stress

14 MONTAGE

Tim uses his web master skills to create a racially-charged social media storm. Arranges for neo-nazis to march at same time and place as ethnic pride march. Tries to blame it on the worldwide hacking group: Incogneato.

SLICE OF LIFE

Tim unpacks the crates in his shed at home. Lots of heavy weapons and high-tech equipment.

12 DROP

Thomas gets Cheatbook message: Tim will give you a suitcase of surveillance equipment. Go with him. Bug the Texan. Protect your cover.

11 DROP

Tim arrives at neo-nazi clubhouse and is heralded as Grand Wizard of the Movement. Texted by "The Texan" and asked to come to an exclusive mens' lounge that evening.

"Just ask for The Texan."

TIM

Hang on. I thought you wanted me to get in good with them? No. I have no idea what happened to that skinhead. No! I did NOT cause the riot. That was Incognito. No. I didn't get any guns. I deny everything. (Cindy will be well stoked when she sees my hardcore gangsta stash! No? Mmm...)

+ 1 Cred



In this episode, the benefits of failure and incompetence are also demonstrated. Tim does not give the surveillance equipment to Thomas, but instead uses it to bug Candy's apartment. (Yes, Tim is an awful person!) The result is that Thomas is exposed to the foreign agitators, a loose thread that is explored in a later episode.

FAILURE IS FABULOUS

Failure and incompetence are good: they leave loose ends to be explored in future episodes.

Fergal's budding romance with a police officer (which is ironic, given how much he tried to avoid police in the first episode!) is a great example of how slice of life scenes can set the scene for future drama. In this episode, the drama unfolds during the chase scene, with Badger and Fergal almost accidentally rescuing Officer Jones and her partner from neo-Nazi rioters.

SYNCHRONICITY IS PLANNED

Use slice of life scenes to develop hooks and complications for future scenes.

THE FINALE

Even with a quick glance of the walkthrough charts, it is clear that the Finale is packed with mission scenes. This is the episode where secrets are revealed and plots come together in an explosive, drama-charged climax!

The episode starts with a quick exploration of Fergal's changed social status: both the impact of his romantic fortunes, and his fame. However, his happy situation quickly turns to chaos when

he's sent to Tim's with a suitcase, that later turns out to be a bomb.

EVERYTHING IN LIFE HAS A COST

Look for ways to mix good fortune with disaster.

In the season finale, any threads left hanging in previous episodes are (mostly) tied up. For example, when Tim was successful in creating a race-riot and blaming it the hacking group Incogneato, he opened a can of worms. Likewise, Thomas's cover was blown in the previous episode, and so the white supremacists bring in a hitman.

In a very clever bit of narrative engineering, the players bring these two threads together, and delve even more deeply into the issue of racism, to create a wonderful plot twist. The tables are turned on the white supremacists, and we get an explosive finale – literally!

COINCIDENTS ARE RARELY
COINCIDENTAL

Combine multiple loose ends to create surprising plot twists.

EPISODE 3: SEASON FINALE

2 SLICE OF LIFE

Tim is at his computer when a message appears. You blamed us. Now we'll get you back. Incognito takes no prisoners. All the lights go out.



5 DROP

Text from the Texan: You've got a mole in your outfit. Let's meet. Same place. Come alone. Second text comes in: Gonna whack-a-mole? TrolzLorD watch-ing U. LOL. BTW. You got no license now.

8 DROP

Cop car pulls over Tim. It's the fake detective. "Those bugs we gave you and Thomas. They were for the Texan, not your girlfriend. Fix it."

10 MISSION

Fergal gets text that someone is photographing house. Message is read out loud (Badger set that up). Skinheads leap into action. Start beating up photographer. Several neighbours join the fray. More neo-nazis show up!

1 OPENING SCENE

INTRODUCTION

Morning after the riot. Fergal falls out of a bed. Is somewhat dazed. Spent night with Officer Jones... and a friend. A horde of journalists are outside, wanting an interview with the "Mr Whippy Hero." Badger sends them off. "Hey kid. Is your father in there? What do you think about him being a hero?" "Sorry. I think you want Miss Jones, next door..."

4 DROP

An old lady delivers a briefcase to Fergal while he's selling ice-cream outside a school. Take this to 32 Durban Lane, go inside and await futher instructions. Note: Fergal's van followed by clapped out mini.

7 MISSION

Fergal arrives at Tim's house, to find it covered in neo-nazi symbols. The door is open. Goes inside to find two skinheads drinking beer and watching TV. "Who're you?" "I'm Fergal, Tim's friend. He here?" "Nah. We just minding his place. Gotta' protect the big boss, eh? What's in the case?"

11 MONTAGE

Police (including Officer Jones) show up to join the stree fight.

12 DROP

Telephone in house rings: "Things are out of control. We cannot let the weapons get into the hands of the terrorists. Open the briefcase [Fergal does that immediately] if it looks like they have access to the cache. You'll have 60 seconds to exit."

3 INTRODUCTION

Thomas tells Margo he'll be late home as he has term papers to grade. Really, he's made a booking in a hotel to meet Candy. Jeannie overhears. This is her chance to catch him in the act!

6 DROP

A barrister gives Thomas a napkin with instructions to go to 32 Durban Lane at 3:45pm and wait outside. If anyone shows up, text 2555-2812 with details.

9 MISSION

Thomas arrives at Tim's house. See's Fergal's van outside. A strange man with a camera gets out of a mini and approaches the house... starts taking photos. Thomas texts details as requested.

21 THERAPY THOMAS

Thomas: I was superb. Did exactly what I was told. A perfect mission, as always.

+ 1 Cred

FERGAL

Fergal: What the heck just happened? You guys trying to kill me?

+ 1 Cred

22 EPILOGUE

SLICE OF LIFE

Counts money... then messages CheatBook: Lianne, baby? Want to meet up? Bring the maid's outfit!

SLICE OF LIFE

In family court. Editor of Telegraph acting as character witness for "hero" dad. Does not go well when it's discovered the editor hacked the phone of Debbie...

15

MISSION

Tim meets with the Texan. This time, he's got a huge, dangerous looking dude with him: Mr Smith. He's a top assassin. Instructs Tim to use Mr Smith to trackdown and eliminate the mole: Thomas.

MISSION

Realising he's already triggered the bomb, Fergal decides it best to throw it away. He runs outside to toss it into the neighbour's yard. He trips and the case bounces off the fence and onto the roof of Tim's shed. Officer Jones shows up, grabs Fergal and they run to safety as the shed and remaining munitions detonate in slow mo.

Roll stress

14

SLICE OF LIFE

Tim meets Cindy just as she is getting ready to leave for lunch with a friend. Tries to impress her by showing her his collection of guns (a big pile of them he's been carrying in a black bag.) Cindy is terrified. But excited. But mostly terrified.

Reduce stress



13

SLICE OF LIFE

Candy messages Thomas, asks if meeting can be brought forward to lunch? Thomas quietly leaves the scene of the street brawl and heads to hotel. Is walking to room when someone comes up behind him and injects him with a sedative!

TIM

Well, that worked out for the best, didn't it? And I got this new guy working for me.

+ 1 Cred

SLICE OF LIFE

In dark. Playing with trains... camera pans out. We are viewing Tim from the screen of TrolzLord. On another screen is Thomas on CheatBook. Another screen Fergal... and we pan back to see LOTS of other people... TO BE CONTINUED!

16 MISSION

Tim goes to McDonalds to get coffee for him and Mr Smith. Tim finds his bank accounts have been emptied. Conversation as to why Smith, himself an African American, is working for a KKK Grand Wizard. Smith was found and raised by the Texan.

"He raised me. I owe him my life."

"I am his son. He's the master."

"I thought that went out of style in your country in 1865? Don't you want to have your own life?"

"I try not to think like that."

"Hey. before we go kill that mole, want to help me out with a small job... I need to track down a hacker."

"I know someone who can help."

17 MISSION

Tim & Smith arrive at a shabby warehouse. Smith introduces Tim to Abby, a freelance hacker. Tim offers to pay her with the high-tech hardware given to him by the Texan. Abby pin-points the location the Incogneato hacker, aka TrolzLord, but is hacked back!

"Sh*t! This guy is hardcore. He reversed the polarity of my TOR firewall to insert a self-replicating virus in my core CPU! Who the hell did you pl\$-off? The NSA?"

18 MISSION

Tim and Smith arrive at home of TrolzLord. Smith bursts in, to find a 12 year old boy, wetting himself in terror. Tim sends Smith back to car. Gets TrolzLord to hack phone of Thomas to fetch picture of the Texan and identify him. Then has kid hack to find out who Texan and his associates are. Sends them a meeting invite to the neo-nazi clubhouse.

Inflict Stress

20 SLICE OF LIFE

Thomas wakes up, naked and tied to a chair. Mr Smith smiles at him...

"Now I got conflicting instructions. My old boss told me to bury you. My new boss said to warn you off Candy. So... you an old-fashioned guy or a new-age guy?"

Reduce stress

"Done! I tell ya, that Doctor guy is a bit of a sleeze. Calls himself LuvDoc83!"

"He what? Can you track him? Or would you prefer I send Mr Smith back in?"

Roll stress

TREATMENTS

Sometimes when a certain (North American) country comes across television from foreign countries that they like, they will remake it rather than just televising the original (for some weird reason). Like all fine British series, Deniable works perfectly well as a remake... or in TV jargon, it is given a new *treatment*. In TV terminology, the *Treatment* is a high-level summary of the series, to the producers - in this case, your players. Each treatment consists of:

Mode:	“Serious Stuff” or “Black Humour.”
Location:	Where the action takes place. e.g. London, New York, Soviet Russia, Rome, Midsommer, Victoria Australia, Wild West.
Period:	When the action takes place. e.g.: contemporary, 70’s or 60’s, mid 1890’s or even the future!
Genre:	What the series is about. e.g. espionage, crime & heists, revenge, police drama, true conspiracy (cults, supernatural or alien abductions).
The Pitch:	An overview of what the series is about. e.g. “Unwitting spies tempted by easy money,” “Gritty post 9/11 cop drama,” “Amatuer detectives in a sleepy town with far too many murders for its own good.”
Rule Hacks:	Any changes to the rules. In some settings, Cred is interpreted differently, protagonists may be far more competent, giving them more Cred and potentially additional traits. Group therapy scenes are also commonly reworked.

This core rulebook assumes that the treatment is:

Mode:	Black Humour.
Location:	London.
Period:	Contemporary.
Genre:	Espionage.
The Pitch:	Unwitting spies tempted by easy money.
Therapy:	A paranoid scrabble to gain the Organisation's approval.
Rule Hacks:	None. This is the core rule base line.

The reasons we've chosen this Treatment for the core rules is that it simply rocks! If you are going to run a game of Deniable off the cuff, this Treatment is replete with material to explore. It works extremely well, with both novice and experienced gamers. Also, it's so much fun, you'll have your friends laughing until they cry.

But the core roles of Deniable are just a beginning! To explore the myriad of other options, we've created additional Treatments for Deniable. These can be downloaded from www.storyweaver.com or RPGNow.com. We also encourage you to create and share your own Treatments. And if you send your Treatments to us (and after we've played it in an age appropriate setting!), we'll even put them up on the StoryWeaver web site for others to enjoy.

We hope you enjoy playing Deniable and all the treatments as much as we enjoyed creating and testing the game for you!

Deniable

FILE nO.

Date Activated

dd. mm. yy.

FIELD AGENT DOSSIER

FAMILY or KNOWN ACQUAINTANCES.

WHO.

DETAILS.

FAMILY

TRAITS

DAY JOB.

HOBBY.

VICE.

ADDITIONAL TRAITS.

ATTRIBUTES

DEFT.

☐

SOCIAL.

☐

TOUGH.

☐

SLY.

☐

CRED.

☐☐

STRESS

☐

NAME

Hon. Given

Middle

Family

CANON

Deniable is a darkly satirical “story game” game designed for small gaming groups. It tips its hat to those wonderfully wicked British TV espionage series such as *Spy* and *Spooks*.

It is about decidedly average English people coerced into participating in ‘operations of national importance’ by a shadowy espionage Organisation .

“Those bugs we gave you... they were for the Texan, not to spy on your girlfriend. Fix it!”

“Take this to 32 Durban Lane, go inside and await futher instructions.”

“How do I make this look like suicide? How about getting a body that’s not bloody-well been shot in the back!”

*“Um... can I have your number?”
“Oh Dad! Everyone knows her number! It’s 999.”*

If you are looking for a game that revels in the lives of little people caught up in big events, of small drama made into epics, then this is the game for you. We guarantee you’ll be laughing until you cry in no time at all.

“What the heck just happened? You guys trying to kill me?”

