CLOAKS & DAGGERS

A ROLE PLAYING GAME BY CRAIG HOUSE

INTRODUCTION

Cloaks and Daggers is role-playing game where the characters take the roles of spies in a spy organization. The players are let loose in a large GR (game runner) made world where they go do anything they want. If the players are at a loss about what to do, then the GR gives them an "involving event" to get things going again.

The players give their characters an "advantage" which is like a class in other role-playing games. They pick from the categories like talent, trait, and possession and then give themselves powers with it. i.e. a 50% chance to make someone believe them.

Combat is handled like this. Characters declare their action, which have a time to complete in seconds. The GR counts off each second and finished actions happen at the end of the seconds. They can pick from a list of actions or use their own. Combat is not intended to be a major part of this game.

A section on spy equipment and tactics is provided to give the players some sense of what they could do as spies. Without it, they would not know what to do more than a normal person off the street would.

I hope you enjoy this role-playing game as much as I have enjoyed making it.

CHARACTER CREATION

FIRST STEPS

    The first thing that happens is that the GR tells the players about their spy organization and what he has decided to have "on record" about the world he has created. If the players do not know anything about the world, what are they supposed to do? Things on record will be discussed later.

    Your character then gets a concept. This is a sum up of your character in one to three words. It is often an adjective then some kind of person. An example would be "eccentric thinker."

    Give your character a name.

    After that, give your character a description. A description is a set of four to eight points about your character. These could be anything about your characters appearance, personality or mannerisms.

    You can then give your character possessions. In this role-playing game what a spy has is gear. Right down any mundane items that a spy might carry like a gun or walkie talkie. Your group has three exceptional things that are not mundane. This could be a computer hacking program or a bomb detector. The players can get loaned out as much spy gear from a later chapter as they want. This will be discussed in another chapter. It is recommended that the players have some kind of weapon.

ADVANTAGES

    An advantage is what gives your character an edge; something that sets him apart. The players think of something there character can be or have under certain categories. They then get advantage powers, which are things the character can use to make some effect happen. Percent chances are often included in advantage powers. The categories are talent, skill, possession, trait, and background. The rules for making advantage powers are different for each category.

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	DESCRIPTION
Skill	Criminology, Espionage	Something the player has learned
Talent	Conman, Rambo	Some natural talent
Possesion	Weapon arsenal	Something the character owns
Trait	Intelligent, Tough	Some trait the character has
Background	Connections, other affliation	A situation not about the character

    To make advantage powers for a skill, think of 5 – 8 specific things the skill could make, plan or otherwise do. Include a percent chance of it working only if there is

uncertainty about what would happen if the character used the advantage power. These are specific things. For instance, a criminologist could know how a person broke in, not analyze a crime scene. Skills are often kinds of training from the spy organization.

To make a talent, think of 3 – 5 things the talent could do. Then each gets a percent chance to happen set by the GR.

To make advantage powers for a possession, simply give specifications for what it can do. For instance, a computer hacking program can get into 90% of computers. Fully describe everything the possession can do. These are almost always some sort of thing issued permanently to the person.

A trait gets three more specific traits. For instance, an intelligent person could be creative, perceptive and imaginative. The player then tries to apply a more specific trait to do something. The GR give a percent chance of the trait working in each situation. The chance is lowered by 20% because traits and talents are often alike. A persuasive person would be able to do more than a con man.

A background gets one perk that he can use as often as he wants. He also gets three uses of his background to get some sort of boon. For instance, someone with connections could always know what is happening in a drug community and might be able to call in a favour. The GR should use his judgement to determine if the person would do such a thing when a favour is asked.

That is all for the character creation process

PLAYING THE GAME

PLAY

The players make all the decisions about where to go and what to do. If the players decide to go anywhere where something interesting will happen, then the GR goes and makes where they go to.

The players spend much of their time uninterrupted talking about what to do. If people try to kill them while they are doing something interesting, then consult combat rules.

Often the GR will have to determine what information the players learn from bugs, discovered files, and other sources of information. First the GR should think about the job of the person, place or thing giving information (e.g. To watch something or to keep records about spending). Then think about what that job would need to discuss. Then the GR sets a number between one and ten that rates how good a source of information the source is. The players then get that many pieces of information about what the source of the information's job is.

If the player can not think of something to do, then the GR creates an involving event that gets the players back in the game.

UNCERTAINTY

Often times what happens is uncertain. Will the store carry what the players want? Will he hit it with his gun?. These questions are resolved by the GR setting a percent chance that it will wok and rolling two ten sided dice to determine it.

COMBAT

Combat begins by tearing off little pieces of paper where the players are, making a five foot ruler on another piece of paper and drawing the places on the sheet. The GR then counts off seconds and completed actions happen at the end of the second. How many most common actions take is listed below. The players can make their own actions and time them. After estimating the fixed time, the GR adds a d2, d3 or d4 or to the total time. The players do not know how long the enemies are going to take to finish an action.

ACTION	TIME
Speaking one sentence	*1 + 1d2 – 1 seconds*
Getting up off ground	*1 + 1d3 seconds*
Getting off chair	*1 + 1d2 – 1 seconds*

Opening door	*1 second*
Using hand held weapon	*1 + 1d4 seconds*
Firing gun	*1 + 1d3 seconds*
Walk four feet	*1 second*
Run seven feet	*1 second*
Drive 20 feet	*1 second*

      The chance of a hand held weapon hitting is always 80% or 1 to 8 on a ten sided die. The chance of a gun hitting is determined by range. The table is given below in number on a ten sided dice

RANGE	CHANCE
Less than 5 feet	9
5 to 8 feet	7
9 to 10 feet	5
11 to 13 feet	3
14 to 16 feet	2
16 to 20 feet	1

      After a hit is scored on a character, a ten sided dice is rolled to determine how injured the character is. If the severity of the characters wounds exceeds one hundred then the character dies. The character also experiences back up time. This time is added to the characters current action. Also the character is slowed by his injuries. The severity and back up time is given on the table below. Beneath that there is the result of injury table.

RESULT	Bare Hands	Sharp	Blunt	gun
1	0 / 1s	5 / 2s	3 / 2s	15 / 2s
2	0 / 1s	9 / 2s	6 / 2s	24 / 2s
3	0 / 2s	13 / 3s	10 / 3s	31 / 2s
4	0 / 2s	18 / 3s	15 / 4s	39 / 2s
5	1 / 1s	25 / 3s	19 / 4s	46 / 2s
6	1 / 2s	32 / 4s	25 / 5s	53 / 3s
7	3 / 2s	40 / 4s	33 / 6s	68 / 3s
8	3 / 2s	65 / 5s	39 / 6s	82 / 4s
9	5 / 3s	85 / 6s	46 / 8s	death
10	8 / 3s	death	55 / 12s	death

RANGE	RESULT
77 -60	Every other action takes one more second
59 – 55	Every action takes one more second
54 – 40	Only walk; walking gets one less foot; every action takes two more seconds
39 – 30	Limp at 2 feet a second, every action takes two more seconds
29 – 18	Crawl at 1 foot second; every action takes three more seconds
17 – 3	Can take action every 7 seconds and takes three more seconds to complete; crawl at 1 foot a second.
3 – 1	completely incapacitated.

SPY EQUIPMENT & TACTICS

EQUIPMENT

Spies employ a large assortment of equipment to perform their mission. Generally, the players can sign out as much spy equipment as they want.

Hidden things that the spies can plant are "bugs" and tracers. A bug needs a van within 3 miles to listen in. Tracers can be anywhere with a computer to interpret information from a GPS satellite. Both are about the size of a drink bottle lid and are naturally black but can be covered with paint to disguise it better. They have a powerful adhesive under them. People generally do not look under furniture often, so they are rarely discovered.

For surveillance, the spies can get video cameras with zoom lens, super powerful zooming telescope, a microphone that can ignore noise that is from a source not pointed at, and tape recorder. A plant can be attached to telephone lines to listen in. A van is often used for surveillance.

For killing people, spies have some equipment. Powerful poisons that can't be detected can be hidden in perfume bottles, ketchup packets and many other containers. 3 shot guns can be concealed in many mundane objects. These guns can get past metal detectors. Bombs of all powers can be hidden in many objects too.

Spies have on hand identification that can get them passed off as FBI agents, police, and inspectors and in just about every organization you can name. A check will result in the name being verified as a member. A spy can get clothes which can disguise them as nearly anything. Spies have automatic door unlockers and break in equipment.

TACTICS

Spies that do not know enough about the situation to do something gather information until they can do something. What can a spy organization do if it only knows the location of an agent?

This usually is begun by planting bugs and tapping the phone lines. The spies listen in for locations, people and information about the organization. It then plants more taps and more bugs until it decides to act. Spies gain access to buildings by pretending to be something phony.

Spies like to kill people secretively. They will offer a poisoned drink or leave a bomb in a suitcase against a wall. They do not burst in shooting.

Spies sometimes send in undercover agents to gather information or sometimes to control an organization with the belief that the person is their superior. Sometimes the spies will pretend to be some other organization or individual person when they deal with an organization.

Another tactic favoured by spies to capture and arrest a member of an organization, then keep the person for questioning. Often, they may arrange a lighter

sentence or even free the person for information. Spies can keep anyone who has not committed a crime for questioning, though they must release the person within 3 days.

MAKING & RUNNING THE GAME

CREATING THE WORLD

The first thing that needs doing is deciding the role of the organization the players belong to. Does it spy on other countries militaries? Does it gather information about threats from drugs and other forms of crime? Perhaps there is a giant spy organization war.

Then create the organization for the players. Give it a name, buildings, people and how it is run and operated.

If the players do not know anything about the world, what can they do? Thus they have an "on file" record. This is simply a list of point notes you make when you have completed your world. (e.g. Gun shipments from Soviets arrive at dock B every wednesdy).

Create 5 – 8 organizations. If the world does not call for organizations, then make something like organizations. The process begins by making organs for the organization. An organ is something the organization is set up to do. For instance, terrorists might have bomb factories or it might recruit. For each organ make 1 – 3 places and 1 or 2 people. Make plenty of organs. Make places and people for how it is run.

Create an event calendar for each organization. Note what they will do in time each month.

RUNNING THE GAME

When the players go somewhere interesting, you must now go draw up a floor plan or a map of what is in the immediate vicinity. If it is a facility, then think about how the place operates as you make the floor plan.

In this game you may often want to keep track of time. How long it takes to fly to another country, and at what time of day do the players approach a building may be useful to keep track of.

When you must give an involving event, try to think of something that will let the players think of things to do.