

STAND OFF!

Pressure... it's something we all deal with. Sometimes it drives us insane. Sometimes it drives us to succeed. In Stand Off! it drives us to kill.

What this game is about.

This game is about tension, pressure, stress all boiled down into a single, high-impact event. Set in the 1980's at the height of the Cold War, the players and their characters are slammed into a high-stakes situation where the tension mounts with each passing second. The object of the game is very simple: Live!

What the characters do.

The characters in this game are all Soviet super-spies stationed in and around the Texas research facilities during the 1980's. The Soviet Union was beginning to collapse and Premier Gorbachev ordered that the secret American plans for the U.S. Star Wars program to be stolen at any costs. Anyone who retrieved this information would be handsomely rewarded. The characters in this game are highly trained, crack spies who are the best the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have to offer. There was no doubt at the Kremlin that this group of spies would accomplish their mission. They were the nonpareil. Until something went wrong. The game begins where it went wrong.

What the players do.

The players in Stand Off! must take on the persona of their character. You are the spy you play. To begin, each player will be given a stack of tokens. These tokens are the currency the players use to add Facts to the Situation. Players take turns adding Facts hopefully convincing the other players that they are not at fault for what went wrong. The Moderator (or GM) for Stand Off! ensures that the tension level is constantly on the rise, and that the pressure put on the players and characters is intense and tangible.

The Situation.

As mentioned previously, all the characters are top-notch spies from the Soviet Republic. They were in America to infiltrate and steal valuable U.S. research material, but something went wrong. The only way to get the vital intelligence was to break into the research facility, hack the computers, and download the files. All went fine until somehow an alarm was set off. The guards were alerted, shots were fired, and the intrepid Soviet

agents barely made it back to their base of operations. Someone had to trip the alarm, but who? And more importantly, why? This is how the game begins.

The Set-up.

The game starts with each player being dealt a Spy Card. On the back of the Spy Card is a personality. This is the type of character that the player will portray for the game. The personality types are very loose and include "The Vixen," "The Psycho," and the "Communist Fanatic." They are only an arrow that points in the direction of how the character will act and react. It's up to the players to bring them to life.

After the Spy Cards are dealt, the Moderator selects a number of "No Fault" cards equal to the number of other players. Then he adds one "At Fault" card to the batch, shuffles them, and then deals them out face down. The players then look at the cards. Make sure you keep them face down. If you get the At Fault card it means that your character is the one who caused the alarm to go off.

Lastly, everyone is given a Gun card. The triangle at the top of the card denotes the direction in which the gun is pointed.

After the Spy Cards, Fault Cards, and Gun Cards are dealt, everyone creates a name and a brief history for their character. The Moderator should allow no more than 15 minutes for such activities. The name of the characters should begin with "Comrade _____." Be sure to spice up your character's personality and always keep in mind that you are an elite spy from the U.S.S.R. After the players are done, they each put their character's name on a slip of paper and put the slip in a hat. Each player then draws a name (if it's your own character's name, put it back and draw again). The name you draw is the character your character is aiming at with his gun.

That's right. The game begins with all the characters pointing a gun at each other. Something went wrong with the operation. No one knows for sure who is at fault. Is there a traitor in the midst? Is someone a clumsy screw-up that is going to cost The Revolution an important victory? It's up to the characters to find out, shoot the bastard, and report back to his superiors.

You can't trust anyone. All of the members are from disparate parts of the Soviet Republic. No one knew any of the other members before the operation began. And now,

the U.S. authorities are alerted, and there are only minutes left before the FBI shows up. You must find the traitor and kill him before you are caught.

Starting Play.

Before play begins, each player except the Moderator is given a number of tokens (they look like circles with a sickle and hammer on them) equal to twice the total number of players plus one. So if there are six total players (including the Moderator) then each player would receive 13 tokens. If there are only four total players then each player (except the Moderator) receives 9 tokens.

Each player then rolls 2d6. The player with the lowest roll gets to go first.

Playing the Game.

Starting with the player who rolled the lowest, each player takes turns adding in "Facts" or "Lies" to the Situation. If you go back and read the Situation from above, you realize that it's fairly vague. Details about the complex the spies infiltrated, what kind of alarm went off, how or why it went off, the true nature of the guards' reactions, and how everyone made their escape are left totally blank. It is an empty canvass on which all the players will paint the story of what happened and how.

In Stand Off! a Fact is something that will remain true for the rest of the game. It is something that the spy wants to establish happened while on the operation. When a player introduces a Fact, unless it is overridden at that moment, it is the truth as far as the game is considered. To enter a Fact into play, a player must announce that he is doing so and spend one token. As soon as he has spent his token and it is placed in the pot, another player may "override" that Fact by first announcing their intention to do so and then spending three tokens. The player who is overriding then enters in whatever new Fact he desires, and what he says now becomes the truth as far as the game is concerned.

Examples of acceptable Facts are: "I was watching the door to the mainframe cluster" or "I shot one of the guards" or "I ran through the woods to get away, look my boots are muddy."

Players may also enter Lies into the game. A Lie costs no tokens to add. Like a Fact, any player may override a Lie. However, the cost to override a Lie is only two tokens instead of three. Keep in mind, though, that if a Lie is not overridden it must be treated as a Fact

for the rest of the game. Also, another player can “corroborate” a Lie if they wish. Simply by putting a token in the pot and announcing that they concur with what the other player has just said, the Lie then becomes a Fact and will be treated as such for the rest of the game. It should be obvious that any player who adds a Lie to the game is taking a risk and putting his character in a certain degree of danger of being caught. Examples of acceptable Lies are: “I saw you (another player-character) talking to someone in the third story window” or “I was nowhere near the laboratory when the alarms went off” or “I’m too slow to have made it down the hall and back before you guys got there.” A good Lie should sound like a good Fact.

Once the first player has added his Fact or Lie (and no one has overridden it) into the game, play passes on to the person the first player is pointing their gun at. It will then be their turn to add a Fact or Lie. Once they do, then it passes to the person they’re pointing at and so on. Important: You may only introduce Facts and Lies about yourself or the person you are pointing your gun at. You are pointing your gun at that person for a reason! You must establish that reason and convince your comrades that the character you suspect truly is the one at fault. Also, there is a gun pointed at you. You have to establish that you aren’t at fault and that no one should be pointing a gun at you. Anyone else besides yourself and the person you suspect are of no consequences to you personally at the moment. You are worried about your survival and about impressing the superiors back in Moscow. In the back of your mind, you know that whoever fingers the traitor is assured of a promotion from the Pullet Bureau.

Players may also “interrupt” play. Interrupting play is important. At some point in the game it is probable that you won’t have anyone pointing a gun at you. If that is the case, then play will never pass to you. So, you will have to “interrupt” the normal flow and take over. To accomplish this, you must first announce your intention to do so. Then you have a choice to make. You may pay three tokens into the pot *or* you can Cock your gun. You may only Cock your gun once. Doing so also announces to the other players that you are very serious about the person you are pointing at and are even to the point of being ready to shoot him. Cocking your gun costs no tokens.

Most of the time in Stand Off! the players will lose tokens as they act. However, there are also a few actions that give the players extra tokens. First, a player may change the target of his gun to another player. To change the target of your gun, you must announce you are doing so on your turn. After changing the position of your Gun Card, take a token

from the pot and add it to your stack. You may then proceed to add Facts and Lies as normal. Players may also gain a token if they reveal their Personality Card to the other players. Again, you may only do so on your turn to narrate, and afterwards you may add a Fact or Lie as normal. Lastly, a player may gain a token by lowering his gun. This means he is not pointing it at anybody. Play still passes to the last person he was pointing his gun at until he picks a new person to target. A player may only choose one of these options outlined in this paragraph once during his turn. A player may never pass.

The Moderator's job in Stand Off! is to make sure that tension is always on the rise. One of the ways to do this is by adding Complications Cards to the game. Complication Cards are plot twists that raise the stakes of what is happening between the players. To play a Complication Card, a Moderator must spend three tokens. However, a Moderator does not begin with any tokens. Instead, he accumulates them through the play of the other players. Each time a player adds a Lie to the game, the Moderator gains a token. Each time a player Cocks his gun, the Moderator gains a token. Each time a player changes the target of his gun or lowers his gun, the Moderator gains a token. Each time a player overrides a Fact submitted by another player, the Moderator gains a token.

When the Moderator is ready to play a Complication Card, he must first announce he is doing so. This may come at any time during any player's turn. After announcing, he must pay the three tokens. Next he reveals the Card. It is then up to the players to deal with whatever situation arises out of the Complication. Moderators are encouraged to make Complication Cards of their own (using the blank ones provided) to suit the play styles of their group, but some of the examples in this book include: "A bomb is through a window," "Your superiors show up to check on your progress," "The FBI surrounds the outside your hide-out," or "The lights suddenly go out." After the Complication Card is revealed and its ramifications sorted out, play returns to the player whose turn was interrupted by the Moderator.

The Moderator may employ other strategies to increase tension. He may institute a time limit for a player's turn (we suggest though that it not be any less than 60 seconds). He may add any of his chips to the chip total of any of the other players. Once a Complication Card is played, he may at any time increase the effect of the complication. For instance, if the FBI is outside, perhaps they riddle the hideout with bullets wounding one of the characters. The only restriction is that the Moderator may not directly kill a character. It is up to the players to decide who lives and dies. As the Moderator, you are

charged with making the tension palatable to the players. They must *feel* the pressure that their characters are under. Stand Off! will only work if it invokes a tangible, emotional response from the players.

If you are not the Moderator, you have quite a bit to do during the game. While the other players are taking their turns, you need to be thinking about your strategy. Do you try to implicate the person you are currently pointing at, or do you join one of your comrades in indicting someone else? Will you seem more or less credible if you do? If you received the "At Fault" card do you try to cast suspicion on all the other players, or do you vehemently insist on your own innocence? Or instead, do you try to remain low-key so they almost forget about you? The strategic opportunities are wide open, however they all require that you pay close attention to the other players and the Facts and Lies they add. At any moment you could seize on something they add to the game and reverse the whole train of thought that everyone had previously been operating under. Stand Off! is an intense game that require intense participation.

The Endgame.

The endgame of Stand Off! is the peak of the tension and stress of the game. All of the pressure comes to a head and the players must make a snap decision- to kill or not to kill. This is the payoff for all the play in Stand Off! The players all along have been trying to influence, coerce, parlay, and out-wit their fellow comrades into A) thinking they are not at fault and B) someone else is. Eventually one of the players will run out of tokens, and that's where the fun hits its climax.

When a player runs out of tokens, he must make an instant decision: does he pull the trigger or does he drop his gun? The moment he spends his last token, the player must declare what he is going to do. If he decides not to shoot, he drops his gun and freezes. If he shoots, things get serious.

When a player wants to fire his gun, he must roll 2d6. If the roll is 8 or less, (i.e. 2-8) he successfully shoots and kills his target. HOWEVER, his target still has a chance to pull *his* trigger. If he chooses to do so, he announces it, rolls, and then play proceeds to the next person. If he chooses not to, he drops his gun and play still passes on. Either way, if he was hit by the gunshot, he dies. Play bounces from person to person according to the normal rules of how play passes from player to player. Once a shot has been fired, the only actions the players may take are: "I shoot!" or "I drop my gun." Moderators, if you

wish, give the players only 5 seconds to make the decision. Slam a book on the table and cry out, "You've been shot! Whataya do?" Crank up the tension... especially here!

After all players have had a chance to go, the surviving players (if any) may choose to continue the game. If they do not, then all Spy Cards and Fault Cards are revealed. Remember the object of the game is twofold- survive and nail the traitor. You want to be the person who killed the guy who was At Fault, and it is possible that no one was At Fault. Think of this as a high stakes version of the classic board game Clue.

If you were the player who shot the traitor, you are honored (weather you are dead or alive) at a ceremony in the Kremlin (which should be run by the Moderator and given all the embellishments necessary to reward a proper hero) and given a place in the historic annals of the Great Communist Revolution. If you shot someone who was not the traitor, you are branded a traitor, burned, and held up as the vilest of cancers on the Communist movement.

At any time a player may pull his trigger- especially if he feels he has fingered the person who botched the operation. He simply has to push all his tokens into the pot and announce what he is doing. This is part of what makes Stand Off! so tense, you never know when that bullet is going to come rocketing out of a gun right at you.

Closing Remarks.

Stand Off! really is about using your wits and taking chances with your character's life. For almost the entire game a gun will be pointed right at you. It's possible that there will be players who insist you are the guilty party when in reality you are not. How will you deal with that? Can you handle someone calling you a liar? Can you handle someone threatening your life? Are you charismatic enough to convince them otherwise? The best advice I can give is to get into your characters. Live the persona of a Russian super-spy. Take the Spy Cards that give you their personalities and bring the characters to life in a vibrant way that will engage the other players, making play all the more satisfying. To the Moderators, keep the tension high. Spend your tokens at key moments; do not let the players dawdle on their turn- especially at the endgame. When it's all said and done, everyone should be leaning back in their chairs, breathing hard, and going "Whoa, that was a rush!"

No Fault	No Fault	No Fault	No Fault
No Fault	No Fault	No Fault	No Fault
No Fault	No Fault	At Fault	At Fault

Fault Cards
Feel free to make copies as needed.

Spy Cards

Feel Free to make copies as needed.

Spy Card

The Bleeder

You've been shot. Each time it is your turn, you lose one token

(put it in the Pot, for no effect)

Spy Card

The Psycho

If you ever have two or less tokens, you pull the trigger.

Spy Card

Bad "A" Mo-Fo

You may only be hit with a gunshot on a roll that is 5 or less.

Spy Card

The Vixen

If this card is revealed, at the end of your turn roll 2d6. If you roll a 12, then one gun pointed at you is switched to a target of your choice.

Spy Card

Smooth Operator

You hit your target with a gunshot on a roll of 9 or less.

Spy Card

Communist Fanatic

If this card is revealed, you may switch the target of your gun at no cost.

Spy Card

The Fink

You are always at fault regardless of what the fault cards say.

(You are a traitor to the USSR)

Spy Card

The Veteran

If this card is revealed, you may override a Fact for a cost of 2 tokens instead of 3.

Spy Card

CIA Agent

You are a CIA agent who has infiltrated the group.

(you are always considered "at Fault")

Spy Card

The Lover

You will always refuse to point your gun at the person to your right.

(Your character is in love with that player's character)

Spy Card

The Weasel

Lies you submit do not grant the Moderator a token.

Spy Card

Operation Leader

You begin with three extra chips.

Spy Cards

Feel Free to make copies as needed.

Spy Card

Undercover Cop

You always refuse to reveal your Spy Card.

Spy Card

Retired Kgb Agent

You only hit on a gunshot if you roll an 8 or above

Spy Card

The Shootist

You begin the game with two guns. Choose 2 characters to point at and who's turn comes after yours

Spy Card

Adrenaline Addict

At the end of each of your turns roll 2d6. If you roll snake-eyes, you pull the trigger.

Spy Card

Poker face

If this card is revealed, other players must spend 1 additional token to override your lies.

Spy Card

Twitchy

You always switch your gun to the person who last paid to override your lies or facts.

Spy Card

The Psychic

If this card is revealed, overriding a person's lie costs you only 1 token.

Spy Card

The New Kid

You begin with your gun dropped on the floor. It costs 1 token to pick it up and 1 token to aim it at someone.

Spy Card

The Jerk

If this card is revealed, whoever takes their turn after you must pay 1 token to the pot.

Spy Card

Russian Beauty

If this card is revealed, anyone who wants to change the target of his or her gun to you must pay 1 additional token.

Spy Card

Spy Card

Complication Card

Time Bomb

The moderator sets a timer for five minutes. If no one spends a token and lowers their gun to diffuse it, all of the characters die.

Complication Card

The feds!

U.S. Federal troops arrive on the scene. The only way out is to find the traitor quickly and get help from your superiors.

Complication Card

Flying Bullets

The building is riddled with bullets from outside. All characters are wounded and must pay one extra token to the pot at the beginning of their next turn.

Complication Card

The Boss

Your superior, general Simonov, has made a surprise visit. He wants this situation sorted out now!

Complication Card

Dark!

The moderator should announce the card then hit the lights in the room. Quickly ask what everyone does. Give 10 seconds for an answer, then turn the lights back on. Treat as a brief power outage in game.

Complication Card

Missing Member

A member of the operation who was thought dead shows up. He will be played by the moderator.

Complication Card

Clip drop

A random character (roll or use some other method) has the magazine fall out of his gun. It will cost one token to retrieve it...if the others let him.

Complication Card

The roof is on fire

Set a timer for 5 minutes. When it goes off, a random character passes out from the heat. Reset the timer and repeat.

Complication Card

Complication Card

Complication Card

Complication Card

Complication Cards
Feel Free to make copies as needed.
Gun Cards
Feel Free to make copies as needed

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Gun Card



Cocked? _____

Soviet Tokens

Feel Free to make copies as needed



