

Signals and Shadows: Espionage Across the Iron Curtain

Introduction: Signals and Shadows is a Cold War-themed game designed for 6-18 players. The game challenges players to take on the roles of agents, handlers, and counter-intelligence officers during the tense geopolitical standoff between NATO and the Soviet Union. Players will attempt to pass secrets safely and uncover opposing spies, using strategic communication and deduction skills.

Objective: The aim is to successfully pass secrets between handlers and agents to score points for your team, while counter-intelligence works to intercept these exchanges and identify spies. The game ends when one team reaches 6 points or after 30 minutes of play.

Setup:

1. Players and Roles:

- o **6-11 Players:** Create a starting deck of Identity cards (Photographs/Names only) by selecting 1 counter-intelligence agent from each side and then, and an even number of Soviet and NATO bloc agents. If there is an uneven number of players, include Vladimi Petrov.
- o **12-18 Players:** Same as above, except include all 4 counter-intelligence officer Identity cards
- o Shuffle deck and pass out identity cards

2. **Materials:** Each player takes one agent card and one drop method card.

3. **Drop Methods:** Place each of the drop methods (signal site, safe house, dead drop, brush pass) in locations where everyone can see them and are far apart from one another.

4. **Secrets Briefcase:** Place all the 'State Secrets' cards in an envelope or briefcase.

Gameplay:

1. **Handlers and Agents:** Each non-Counter Intelligence Officer is playing as a Handler and an Agent and will attempt to hide their schemes through non-verbal cues like winking or nodding.

- o **Handler Role:** Try to get the attention of the agent on your **Agent** card and wait for them to indicate which drop method they will be using.
- o **Agent Role:** Try to determine who your handler is and, once you know, indicate to them which **Drop Method** card you are holding by winking or nodding at the location of the drop method.
- o **Handler Role:** When the Briefcase/Envelope comes to you, you will state which **Drop Method** your **Agent** is holding. If your

2. **Making the Drop:** When the Briefcase/Envelope comes to you one of two conditions will be true:

- o **If you know which drop method your Agent has:** You will read aloud a **State Secrets** card from their bloc (you may ask if you do not know) and hand it to the counter-intelligence officer of the opposite bloc.
- o **If you do not know which Drop Method your Agent has:** You will read aloud a **State Secrets** card from your own bloc and hand it to your own counter-intelligence officer.

3. **Role of Counter-Intelligence:** These players monitor to deduce who is exchanging secrets and may speak anytime to make accusations or remain silent to observe further.

- o **Accusations:** Counter-intelligence makes accusations by stating a suspected Agent's **Handler** and the **Drop Method** of the agent. The accused must confirm by revealing their cards.

Scoring:

- o Successfully passing a secret: 1 point to each of the agent and handler, and to their team.
- o Correct accusation by counter-intelligence: 3 points to their team.
- o Incorrect accusation: Point deductions vary by role (-4 points for MI6, -1 for HUAC, -3 for MGB, -2 for NKVD).

Round and Game End:

- A round ends when a secret is successfully passed and discussed. Counter-intelligence may choose to initiate the next round.
- The game ends either when a team scores 6 points or after 30 minutes.

Player Competition: Agents add their individual scores to their team's total, competing both within their bloc (NATO or Soviet) and against the opposing bloc. This fosters both individual and team competition.