44

A GAME OF AUTOMATIC FEAR

by Matt Snyder

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Original Concept

Can
You
SURVIVE?

You can live through a robot conspiracy and you won't have special detectors, advanced training, or help from anyone in order to do it.

The secrets of survival are:

KNOW THEY ARE COMING FOR YOU.

KNOW THE STEPS YOU CAN TAKE

TO ESCAPE THEM.

SURVIVAL SECRETS FOR ROBOT CONSPIRACIES

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is a game about imaginary people. These people are afraid. Someone they know has been replaced by a machine. They are afraid because they don't know how or why. They aren't sure whom to trust. Most of all they are afraid because they might be replaced next.

They are right.

THE DIRECTOR

When you play this game with friends, one of you will be the Director. The Director controls Section 44, a robotic conspiracy that threatens to replace humanity. Your job is to act as relentless adversity to the main characters, pressuring and terrorizing them throughout the game. You do this by portraying a wide range of characters, most of which are the robot agents of Section 44.

You are in control.

THE MAIN CHARACTERS

The rest of you portray one main character each. You create your main character. Name him or her. Decide what the person is like, what he or she fears. Show how your main character acts in the face of fear. You do this during the game. You talk and motion to show what your character does in the story you all create together.

Not everyone survives.

THE GAME

The game occurs in a short span – three or four hours, usually. During the game, the main characters race against the clock to survive the conspiracy of Section 44. Sometimes they survive. Sometimes they are replaced.

They are always afraid.

THE MATERIALS

Each player will need a character sheet. The Director will need a director sheet. Everone will need a pen or pencil.

You'll also need several dice, the normal six-sided variety. It helps to have several light colored dice (like white) and several dark colored dice (like black or red).

TIME & PLACE

It is the early 1950s, a time of paranoia, of red scares and fears of the other and the unknown.

Imagine a city in the years after World War II. Men wear hats and trench coats and open doors for women. Women wear heels and lipstick and carry umbrellas. There are cars and telephone booths. Newspapers shout headlines about Communists and official inquiries. There are brick apartment buildings and gray skyscrapers, diners and bus stations. Everyone smokes cigarettes. People are friendly. Most of the time.

The city grows under bright lights and bustling movement. But there is a dark side to it all.

It is the age of technology. Humanity fascinates and terrifies itself with with machines. Machines make their lives possible. People travel across the city in trams and buses and cars. The latest great invention, the television, brings news of impending doom from nuclear war. Jet engines and rockets captivate the masses, but everyone knows these came from war machines of the greatest slaughter in history.

In some quiet corners scientists are crafting the earliest thinking machines. The gargantuan devices herald exponential progress in knowledge in coming decades. And with it they bring doubt. People question the human mind's uniqueness. If machines can think, then the sanctity of the human mind is in jeopardy.

Fear is everywhere.

THE CONSPIRACY

For each game, the Director creates the details of Section 44. Each game is different, but two things must remain the same:

- Section 44 replaces human beings with machines that look and act like humans.
- The machines are difficult to detect. Main characters may recognize the machines, but the general human population remains unaware.

From there, the Director creates a basic framework for Section 44. These may help spark ideas:

- Why does Section 44 replace humans? Where are the replaced? Alive or dead?
- Who or what is behind Section 44? The government? Something else?
- What kind of machines are Section 44 agents? Are they clockwork machines? Mechanical robots? Androids?
- How does Section 44 operate? Does it have strange tools or weapons? Do agents drive black sedans?

Don't decide every facet of Section 44. Just create a few details to hint at a larger mystery and allow for other details you create during play.

Some things are better left unknown.

PART 2: GETTING STARTED

The first part of this game involves creating the main characters and the components of Section 44. It takes only a few minutes.

MAIN CHARACTERS

Create your main character while the other players create theirs. Bounce ideas off one another. You can create connections between main characters with creative thinking. It helps make the game more interesting.

Listen to people.

Step 1: Concept

First, come up with a basic concept for your main character. What does your character do for a living? Who does he or she know? How old is he or she? Do not detail every aspect of your character; just create a basic idea that interests you.

> **EXAMPLE**: You create Mr. Clark. He's a math professor who's good with puzzles and codes. He's middle aged, and he only has a few intellectual friends.

Step 2: Ticker

Second, write a Ticker. The Ticker is the moment in time when your character realized someone close to him or her was replaced by Section 44. It helps you figure out what you want to do in your first turn of the game.

Answer these four questions, then write your Ticker.

- Who was replaced?
- What happened?
- Where was your character?
- What will he or she do now?
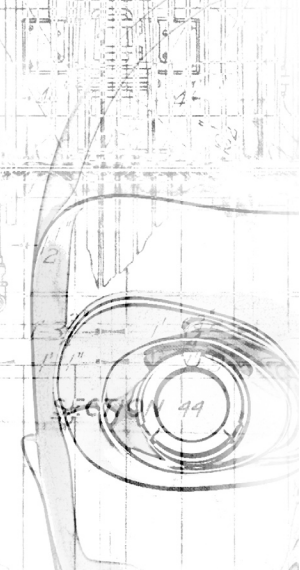
Step 3: Qualities

Main characters have three Qualities: Resolve, Contact, and Material.

- *Resolve*: Your main character's ability to overcome his or her fears and act decisively. Use Resolve to overcome conflicts with bold behavior, often by acting alone.
- *Contact:* Your character's ability to influence or connect with other people. Use Contact to solve problems with the aid of others.
- *Material:* Your character's access to resources, whether physical or financial. Use Material to solve problems with tools, money, weapons, or other similar means.

Material also determines your main character's *Reserve*. This is the number of dice you can sometimes save after you roll. These extra dice help your main character in different ways. If you ever have a Material rating of 0, you can still keep 1 die in Reserve.

Assign 6 points among the three Qualities. Each Quality must have a minimum rating of 1.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Clark has a high Resolve (he's level-headed), a fair Material (he's smart) and a weak Contact (he's a loner):
 Resolve: 3
 Contact: 1
 Material: 2
 The *Material: 2* also means Mr. Clark's Reserve can hold 2 dice maximum.

Step 4: Bonds

Your main character has Bonds. These are other people he or she can turn to for help.

Assign 3 points among one or more Bonds. At the start of the game, your character can have a number of separate Bonds up to his or her Contact score. Each Bond must have a minimum score of 1.

Choose your friends wisely.

> **EXAMPLE**: Because his Contact is only 1, Mr. Clark can only have one Bond to begin the game. His Bond is:
> *Alice, friend and secretary: 3*

Step 5: Anxieties

Your main character has one or more Anxieties. These are things that your character truly fears or things that cause your character great stress. The game is more thrilling when you create Anxieties that you or your fellow players identify with.

Assign 4 points among one or more Anxieties. At the start of the game, your character can have a number of separate Anxieties up to his or her Resolve score. Each Anxiety must have a rating of at least 1.

> **EXAMPLE**: Mr. Clark has these three Anxieties:
> *Afraid to lose his job: 2*
> *Doesn't want to die alone: 1*
> *Fear of heights: 1*
> Note that Mr. Clark can have up to three separate Anxieties because his Resolve score is 3.

MAKE A CHARACTER

1. Create a concept.

2. Write a ticker.

3. Assign 6 points to Qualities.

4. Assign 3 points to Bonds.

5. Assign 4 points to Anxieties.

THE DIRECTOR

While other players create their main characters, the Director completes the details of Section 44.

Step 1: Qualities

Like main characters, the Director has Qualities that represent Section 44's power and reach. There are two such Qualities:

- *Control:* Section 44's level of power. It is the number main characters must confront as they wrestle with the Section 44 conspiracy.
- *Program:* Section 44's reach and resources. Program represents things the conspiracy can call on to enact its dangerous schemes.

Program also determines *Reserve*. This is the number of dice the Director saves after rolls to help Section 44 later on. Should Program reach 0, the Director can still keep 1 die in Reserve.

All games begin with the Control rating at 4, and the Program rating at 1.

Step 2: Agents

The Director records the Agents of Section 44, the machines operating as people they've replaced. The Director's first Agents are based on the main characters' Tickers. When a player answers question 1 from his or her Ticker ("Who was replaced?"), the Director records the answer of that question as an Agent.

Agents are usually individuals, but Agents can be a group of people. For example, the Director could have the "family" that lives downstairs represented as one Agent with a single rating.

The Director writes each Agent on the roster with a rating of 1.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Clark's Ticker described an older professor, Dr. Kurzweil who was replaced with a machine. The other players' Tickers described Molly, a little girl, and Leonard, the local butcher. These are your starting Agents. You record them under Agents:

Molly, little girl: 1
Dr. Kurzweil, former mentor: 1
Leonard, butcher: 1

Step 3: Secrets

Lastly, Section 44 has Secrets, parts of the conspiracy revealed to the main characters in times of stress and action. The Director should create Secrets that make the game more disturbing.

The Director creates two secrets, each with a rating of 2.

EXAMPLE: You want Section 44 to be quiet and efficient. So, you decide to keep the first Secret simple: *Section 44 uses black sedans: 2.* For your second Secret, you want things to be a little more disturbing. You settle on: *The machines never blink: 2.*

PART 3: PLAYING THE GAME

You and your fellow players are now ready to play the game. You are all something like the cast in a play. As you portray the main characters and supporting characters in stressful situations, the story unfolds.

But, this is a play without a script. You don't know which characters in the story will remain human or which will become terrible machines.

No one knows how it ends. Not even them.

THE PROCESS

This game works in a Countdown. Each Countdown is a game turn. Here's a summary of how it works:

- The Countdown starts at 4.
- During each Countdown, each player gets 1 scene. The Director doesn't have a turn, but plays in most scenes.
- During your main character's scene, you role-play your character, and the Director role-plays Agents and other supporting characters. Sometimes, other players will role-play their characters in the scene, too.
- Each scene builds to a suspenseful point. Then, you roll dice to resolve what happens to the main character.
- Sometimes, Section 44 replaces your main character, and he or she becomes an Operative. You still get a turn, but you now try to replace the other main characters!
- Once all players complete their turns, players with main characters roll some dice against the Director and his Operatives. The winning side gets a reward, and everyone narrates how the conspiracy fares overall.
- The Director decreases the Countdown by 1 and the turn process begins again.
- Once the countdown reaches 0, the game is over.
- Compare surviving main characters' Quality scores to the Director's Control rating to learn their fates.

RESISTANCE & MENACE

When the game begins, place a number of dice equal to the number of main characters where everyone can reach and use the dice. These are Resistance dice. You can use any of the Resistance dice to help your main character or to help other main characters any time you want.

Also, the Director places an equal number of dice in a separate pile. These are Menace dice. The Director or players portraying Operatives may use any of the dice at any time to improve any rolls for the Section 44 conspiracy.

Use colored dice to tell Resistance and Menace dice apart.

Telling things apart isn't always easy.

THE COUNTDOWN

The Countdown starts at 4. During each Countdown, every player except the Director gets one scene. After each turn, decrease the Countdown by 1. Once the Countdown reaches 0, the game ends.

When the Countdown changes, say so out loud. Don't let people forget.

Some people want to forget.

ORDER SCENES

At the beginning of each Countdown, each player with a main character rolls 1 die (players with Operative characters do not roll). The player with the highest result decides the order for all players' scenes. This includes scenes for main characters and Operatives. Re-roll to resolve ties.

Write down scene order to help players remember.

Section 44 forgets nothing.

FRAMING A SCENE: THREE DETAILS

When it is your scene, you start by setting the scene with the other players.

- First, you add one detail to the scene.
- Next, the Director adds a detail.
- Finally, all other players come up with a detail together.

Scene details are short descriptions of the surroundings, other supporting characters in the scene, sights and sounds, time of day, or other scenery.

> **EXAMPLE**: It's Mr. Clark's first scene.
> You announce the first scene detail: "Ok, Mr. Clark's going to get in his car."
> The Director chimes in next: "You waited until everyone else went home, so it's night and pretty dark."
> The rest of the players talk some ideas over. Finally, they say: "And how about it's pouring rain outside."

PLAYING A SCENE

With the three details, begin playing your character. Say what your main character does. Start with your Ticker or the cliffhanger from the previous scene. The Director responds with his own supporting characters, usually Agents. Play out the scene for several minutes. Try to stay one step ahead of Section 44 while the Director ratchets up suspense.

Sometimes, the Director will start a scene instead. Play your character in response, and go from there. Other players can offer suggestions, too.

All scenes in the game build to a tense point. This will come pretty naturally as you play. As soon as you or the Director disagrees about your main character's fate, it's time to roll the dice and decide the outcome.

EXAMPLE: You and the Director play a scene for a while. Then, the Director says "Mr. Clark's driving his car in the dark, rainy streets, and he realizes a black sedan is following him. What does he do?"

You respond. "Mr. Clark speeds up his car to escape the black sedan."

The Director says, "He tries, but the sedan stays on his tail, following him around corners, tires screeching."

You could make this the conflict roll – to see if Mr. Clark gets away. But, you decide to keep playing a bit more.

You say, "Ok, I drive onto the river bridge. This is crazy, but I want Mr. Clark to drive the black sedan off the road or the bridge and into the river."

"No way!" the Director says immediately. "This is going to the conflict roll for this scene. Let's see what happens."

CONFLICT!

To see what happens in a conflict, you and the Director use dice and characters' scores. This is called the conflict roll.

Usually, you will know what outcome you want to happen. If you're not sure, clarify quickly with the Director. You only need a general idea. Let the roll help decide details.

EXAMPLE: You wanted to drive the Agents' car off the bridge. If you win the conflict roll, that will happen.

But, the Director doesn't want that. So, you say, "What are you rolling for here?"

"Well, I don't want you to drive my Agents off the road," says the Director. "But, if I win, I'm not sure yet what will happen. Let's roll. I'll come up with something."

Choose Qualities

First, decide which Quality you will use in the conflict roll.

1) Choose Resolve if your character's approach is his own will and determination.

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2) Choose Contact if your main character's approach is aid from others.

3) Choose Material if your main character's approach is using things, like objects, tools, or maybe even money.

You may not use a Quality two times in a row, including when your main character appears in other players' scenes.

Choose a Quality and grab a number of dice equal to that Quality's rating. Don't roll them yet. You have a couple more decisions to make.

> **EXAMPLE**: Since Mr. Clark is using his car to drive the Section 44 agents off the road, you chose Material. Mr. Clark's Material rating is 2; you pick up 2 dice.

Enlist Bonds

Second, you may enlist any of your main character's Bonds to help you, though this puts them at risk of being replaced. Each enlisted Bond must have already appeared in the scene.

Explain how your enlisted Bonds help in the scene. Then, pick up a number of dice equal to the ratings of all enlisted Bonds.

> **EXAMPLE**: You remember that Mr. Clark's only Bond, *Alice, friend and secretary: 3*, was in the scene earlier. "Ok, when I left Alice at the University, she noticed the black sedan. She's been following them, and now she speeds up behind right as I veer."
> Alice's Bond rating is 3, so you pick up three more dice for the conflict roll.

Trigger Anxieties

Third, you may trigger any of your Anxieties if they are relevant to the scene somehow.

When you trigger an Anxiety, look at its rating. You must remove this number of highest dice results from your conflict roll. If you trigger more than one Anxiety, total up all ratings and remove that many highest dice results from your roll. When you do this, set the dice to the side, but keep them face up for later.

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EXAMPLE: You look at Mr. Clark's Anxieties. *Fear of Heights: 1* is relevant because the bridge is high over a river. Mr. Clark could be staring over the edge or worse! The rating of 1 means you'll be penalized 1 die result in your conflict roll. See *Remove Penalties* on page 18.

SECTION 44 IN CONFLICT

As you prepare your conflict roll, the Director also prepares.

Control Rating

First, the Director always begins by grabbing a number of dice equal to the current Control rating.

Activate Agents

Second, the Director activates any Agents of Section 44. The Agents must have already appeared in the scene.

The Director explains how the Agents threaten the main character. Then, the Director grabs a number of dice equal to the ratings of all activated Agents.

EXAMPLE: Earlier, the Director said Dr. Kurzweil was in the black sedan. When Mr. Clark tries to drive the sedan off the bridge, the Director activates Agent *Dr. Kurzweil, former mentor: 1*. And, he picks up 1 extra die.

Reveal Secrets

Third, the Director may reveal Section 44's Secrets. Each Secret must be relevant in the scene somehow.

The Director removes a number of highest dice results from his conflict roll equal to the ratings of revealed Secrets. The Director sets these highest results aside, keeping them face up for later.

EXAMPLE: The Director reveals the Secret: *Section 44 uses black sedans: 2*. "I'm revealing the black sedans secret, so I'll have to remove my two highest dice results when I roll."

> ### AGENTS & SECRETS
>
> Agents & Secrets must also be relevant to the scene before the Director (or Operative players) can use them.
>
> It's the Director's job to introduce Agent characters prior to the conflict roll.
>
> The Director also should include Secret details prior to the roll. This also helps increase suspense in scenes.

GET EXTRA DICE

You and the Director finish collecting dice and penalties for the conflict roll. Now, you both may assign extra Resistance dice and Menace dice.

Resistance

You may grab any available Resistance dice to add more dice to your conflict roll. And, any other player with a main character may assign any available Resistance dice to you.

Using Resistance dice decreases available Resistance dice. However, winning conflict rolls can add more Resistance dice.

Sometimes there's nothing you can do.

Menace

The Director may grab any available Menace dice for the conflict roll or any Operative's conflict roll. And, any player who controls an Operative can assign any available Menace dice to the Director or any Operative.

Using or assigning Menace dice decreases available Menace dice. However, the Director (or an Operative player) can add more Menace dice by winning conflict rolls.

No good deed goes unpunished.

ROLLING THE DICE

You and the Director are finally ready to roll dice. Follow these steps to roll, check results, and decide what happens.

1. Roll the dice.

You and the Director roll the dice you've gathered. Keep your roll results in front of you.

2. Remove Penalties

Remove a number of the highest results equal to your triggered Anxieties ratings. The Director does the same with his revealed Secret ratings. If this removes all your dice, your result is 0.

Set the removed dice aside, but don't lose track of them. At the end of the scene, you may put a number of these dice into your Reserve, up to your maximum Reserve rating. You may replace existing dice in your Reserve with better dice results.

You can literally place the dice on your character record, or just write the results down to remember.

EXAMPLE: You roll seven dice: ⚀ ⚁ ⚁ ⚃ ⚃ ⚄ ⚅. You also triggered Mr. Clark's Anxiety *Afraid of heights: 1*. So, you must remove one die result. You set the highest result — a ⚅ — off to the side.

At the end of your turn, you can move the die result into your Reserve, even if it replaces another die already in Reserve.

3. Spot Your Result

Now, examine your remaining dice results. Choose the highest single die value for your result.

However, when you choose a die value, each additional die result with the same value grants +1 to your result. Results can exceed 6 — there is no maximum.

EXAMPLE: After removing the highest results, you look at your remaining dice: ⚀ ⚀ ⚁ ⚃. The best result is 4.

EXAMPLE: In a later scene, you remove more highest results and examine your remaining dice: ⚀ ⚁ ⚁ ⚁ ⚁ ⚄ ⚃. Now your best result is all the ⚁ combined. First, you take one ⚁ as a result (result 2 in this case), then add +1 for each other ⚁ (2 + ⚁ + ⚁ + ⚁ = 5). Your total result is 5.

Replacing Results

You may spend dice in your Reserve to replace your result. Choose a die from your Reserve. Its value replaces your conflict roll result.

You can also do this to boost your result if your Reserve dice tie your rolled result.

EXAMPLE: You roll ⚀ ⚀ ⚁ ⚄ for a result of 4. However, you have a ⚄ in Reserve. So, you remove the ⚄ from your Reserve to replace your result. Your result is now 6!

**EXAMPLE**: In another scene, your dice results after removing highest dice is: ⚀ ⚂ ⚂ ⚂ ⚅. You result should be a 5. But, you also have two dice in Reserve: ⚂ ⚂. You expend both Reserve dice to boost your result. Each additional ⚂ grants +1. So, your result is now 7 (3 + ⚂ + ⚂ + ⚂ + ⚂ = 7).

4. Compare Results

Compare your result with your opponent:
- If your result exceeds the Director's (or the Operative's), you win the conflict. Your desired outcome happens.
- If you result is less than or equal to the Director's (or the Operative's), you fail. The Director's outcome occurs.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Clark tries to drive the black sedan off the bridge. Your best result is a 5. The Director's is 3. Mr. Clark will drive the black sedan off the bridge in this scene!

EXAMPLE: Later, Mr. Clark is home, but Section 44 Agents appear at his door. Mr. Clark tries to flee on the fire escape.
Your result is 4. The Director's result is also 4. You lose. The Director decides the scene's outcome — Mr. Clark falls on the fire escape, hanging on for dear life as the Agents appear in the window.

5. Enforce Consequences

Winning Menace or Resistance Dice

Now, apply consequences to the winner and the loser.

- If you win, you earn new Resistance dice for any Anxieties you triggered. Add new Resistance dice equal to the total of all Anxiety ratings you triggered.
- If the Director (or an Operative) wins, add new Menace dice equal to the total of all Secrets ratings revealed.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Clark fails to escape the Section 44 Agents in his apartment. The Director won. The Director revealed the Secret: *The machines never blink: 2*. So, he picks up two dice and adds them to the Menace dice.

Stress

Also, whoever lost the conflict roll suffers Stress, which decreases your Qualities and Bonds. Stress takes many forms in the story — actual trauma, heightened paranoia, sheer terror, exhaustion, and so on.

Conflict losers suffer Stress equal to the difference in the conflict roll results.

Apply Stress to your main character as follows:

- First, subtract the Stress from any Bonds you enlisted.
  - » Each point of Stress reduces the Bond rating by 1.
  - » If you have more than one enlisted Bond, you choose which the Stress affects first.
  - » If Stress reduces any Bond to 0, the Bond becomes an Agent with a rating of 1. You remove the Bond.
- Second, if any Stress remains, subtract from the Quality you used in the conflict roll.
  - » Each point of Stress reduces the Quality rating by 1.
  - » If your Quality reaches 0 and any Stress remains, the Director adds 1 Menace die for each point of Stress.

Note that when your conflict result ties the Director's, you lose the conflict but suffer no Stress.

EXAMPLE: In his next scene, Mr. Clark enlists his Bond, *Alice, friend and secretary: 3*, to help lock an Agent in his office. Things go badly. Mr. Clark suffers 5 Stress.

First, you must subtract Stress from Alice's Bond rating. Alice suffers 3 Stress, reducing her to 0. She becomes an Agent with a rating of 1. The Director adds her to the roster.

You have 2 Stress remaining. You now must substract from Mr. Clark's *Contact: 1*, which you used in this conflict. It becomes Contact: 0.

One point of Stress still remains. So, the Director adds one Menace die.

The Director applies Stress as follows:

- First, subtract the Stress from any activated Agents.
  » Each point of Stress reduces the Agent rating by 1.
  » If the Director activated more thanth one Agent, he chooses which the Stress affects first.
  » If Stress reduces an Agent rating to 0, the Agent is deactivated and eliminated from the game.
- Next, if any Stress remains, reduce Control or Program.
  » Each point of Stress reduces Control or Program by 1 point. The Director decides which to reduce.
  » If Control is 0, play on. The Director has fewer dice.
  » If Program becomes 0, play continues. Remember the Director can still keep 1 die in Reserve.
- Last, if any Stress remains after Control or Program are 0, add 1 Resistance die for each remaining point of Stress.

EXAMPLE: You're running out of options ... and friends. You have Mr. Clark decode the cryptic message from Dr. Kurzweil while agents beat down the office door. You win, inflicting 4 Stress on the Director.

First, the Director must apply the stress to *Dr. Kurzweil, former mentor: 2* and *Alice, former friend: 1.* The Stress reduces both Agents to 0. They are destroyed.

Second, 1 point of Stress remains. The Director decides to subtract 1 from his Program: 2. This also means he has to sacrifice one of the two dice he has in Reserve since he can only hold 1 die in Reserve now.

No one emerges unscathed.

Too Much Stress

If your main character suffers Stress while *any* Quality is 0, your character is replaced by Section 44. You are now an Operative. See *Operative Characters* on page 30 for details.
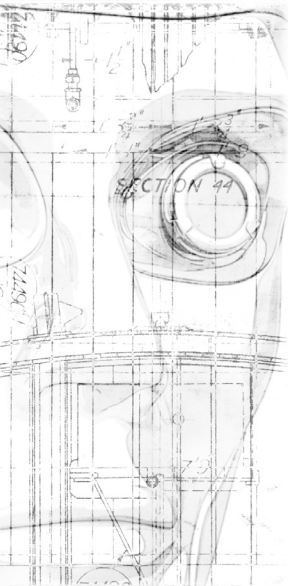
6. Narrate the Outcome

Once you resolve the conflict roll, you and the other players collaborate to tell what happens in the story. Talk and act it out for a few minutes. The Director settles any disagreements about details, but usually players incorporate each other's ideas.

You must explain the outcome of the conflict. For example, if you win a conflict where your main character tries to hide from Section 44 Agents, you must explain how your main character hides. You may also add other details, like how Stress appears in the story or explaining how a Bond becomes an Agent.

7. The Conspiracy Grows

Finally, at the end of each main character scene, Section 44 may redouble its efforts.

- If the Director wins the conflict roll, nothing changes.
- If the Director loses the conflict roll, he adds 1 point one of the following:
  » Control or Program rating
  » An Agent's rating (or add a new Agent at rating 1)
  » A Secret rating (or add a new Secret at rating 1)

ENDING A TURN

Once all players complete their scenes in a Countdown, it's time to see if Section 44 is getting the upper hand.

Players with main characters roll all Resistance dice. Choose the highest single die value for your result. However, just like with conflict rolls, multiples of the same die value can increase your result. Each additional die value adds +1. You can't use any Bonds or Anxieties for this roll. But, you can use any Reserve dice to either replace your result or add to it.

If there are no Resistance dice, the players' result is 0 unless someone replaces or improves the result with Reserve dice.

Meanwhile, the Director rolls all Menace dice representing Section 44. He chooses the highest die value for his result. He can't use Agents or Secrets, but he can use Reserve dice to

<aside>
CLIFFHANGERS

Try to end scenes with a cliff-hanger. It increases suspense and gives you ideas for your next turn.
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replace or improve results just like the players do. Additionally, Operative players can use their Reserve dice to do the same.

If there are no Menace dice, Section 44's result is 0 unless the Director or Operative players replace or improve the result with Reserve dice.

End Turn Results

Compare the results of the Resistance and Menace dice.

If the Resistance dice result is higher, the main characters gain ground against Section 44.

- Each player with a main characters immediately adds 1 point to one of the following:
  - » Any one Quality
  - » A Bond rating (or add a new Bond at rating 1)
  - » An Anxiety rating (or add a new Anxiety at rating 1)
- Additionally, add a number of new Resistance dice equal to the difference between the Resistance and Menace results. Players will use these in the next Countdown.

If the Menace dice result meets or exceeds the Resistance result, Section 44 increases its activity.

- The Director and each Operative player adds 1 point to one of the following:
  - » Control or Program rating
  - » An Agent's rating (or add a new Agent at rating 1)
  - » A Secret rating (or add a new Secret at rating 1)
- Additionally, add a number of new Menace dice equal to the difference between the Menace and Resistance results. The Director and any Operative players will use these in the next Countdown.

In either case, everyone narrates together a "cut scene" that reveals the conspiracy at large. You might reveal Section 44 behind the scenes, or describe Section 44 activities the main characters haven't yet encountered.

Finally, reduce the Countdown by 1 and begin a new turn (unless the Countdown is now 0 — see *Zero Hour* below).

> **EXAMPLE**: Your turn ends. You and your fellow players have no Resistance dice, so your result is 0. But, another player replaces the result with a Reserve die: ⚄. Now the Resistance result is 5.
>
> The Director rolls 4 Menace dice: ⚀ ⚁ ⚄ ⚄. The extra ⚄ adds +1, so the result is 6. Also, an Operative player adds a Reserve die: ⚄. This adds another +1 for a total result of 7.
>
> The Menace roll wins by 2. So, the Director puts two darker colored dice nearby for the next Countdown's starting Menace dice.
>
> The Director chooses to increase the Program rating by 1. And, the Operative player creates a new Agent, *Suspicious janitor: 1.*
>
> Everyone decides the new janitor will be the "cut scene." The Director says, "The janitor works at the college. At night, he finds a strange rubbery mask buried under papers in the trash can."
>
> Another player chimes in. "And right then, two Agents in dark suits come up behind him. One has a syringe with some metallic liquid in it!"
>
> "And fade to black!" The Director says. "The Countdown is now 2."

Zero Hour

When you reduce the Countdown to 0, do not begin a new turn. This is the Zero Hour. The game is almost ended.

The Last Roll

At the Zero Hour, roll Resistance dice against Menace dice as above. However, the effects of the roll are as follows:

- If the Resistance Roll is higher, each player with a main character may add 1 to any one Quality.
- If the Menace result meets or exceeds the Resistance result, the Director adds 1 to Control rating.
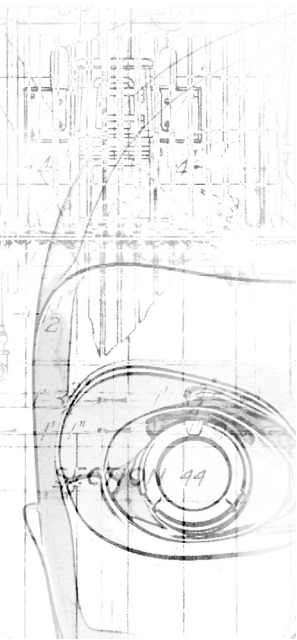
Next, each player with a main character compares the sum of his Qualities to the Director's Control rating.

- If the sum of your main character's Qualities exceeds the Control rating, your main character has survived Section 44's conspiracy!
- If the sum of your main character's Qualities is equal to or less than the Control rating, your main character is finally replaced by Section 44.

Epilogues

Narrate with everyone a final scene for each remaining main character. Explain how each survives or becomes replaced.

Everything ends.

Ending before the Zero Hour

In some games, Section 44 replaces all main characters before the Countdown reaches 0. The endings explain themselves as each person is replaced by an inhuman machine to fulfill the impenetrable purposes of Section 44.

Welcome to the machine.

PART 4: EXPANDING THE GAME

This section explains additional rules for the game, including how main characters help each other, how to use Reserve dice, and how main characters become Operatives.

ASSISTING MAIN CHARACTERS

Your main character may be part of other players' main character scenes. However, in order to help in the active player's conflict roll:

- You must use a Quality that meets or exceeds the current Countdown.
- You cannot use the Quality that you last used in a roll (whether on your turn or assisting others).
- The main character you're helping can only have a number of assisting main characters equal to his or her Contact rating.

If you meet these requirements, you may assist in the conflict. Add a number dice equal to your Quality rating to the active player's dice total for the conflict roll. You may also use Reserve dice to improve the Result.

You may trigger your main character's Anxieties. The active player removes highest dice results equal to your triggered Anxiety ratings, plus any other Anxieties already triggered.

You cannot use your main character's Bonds when you assist. The active player may use any of his Bonds as usual.

Assisting Consequences

Your main character may help the active player succeed, but your character will suffer right along with the active main character if you fail.

- If the active main character loses the conflict roll, each main character suffers the full amount Stress for the roll.

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- If the main character you assist wins the conflict roll, add a number of Resistance dice equal to the total of all triggered Anxieties.
- After the conflict roll, the active player first chooses any penalized dice to place in his Reserve. Then, the active player selects an assisting player to choose Reserve dice until no penalized dice remain.

EXAMPLE: It's Countdown 2 and Mr. Clark assists another main character, Margaret, who faces Leonard the butcher (an Agent) in a dark alley.

You already used your *Resolve: 3* in your scene this turn, so you look at your *Contact: 1* and *Material: 2*. Your only option is Material, so you give the active player 2 dice. You also trigger your *Doesn't want to die alone: 1* Anxiety, which is relevant because you're trying to overcome the Anxiety.

Margaret's player now has 2 extra dice to roll, but also has to set aside 1 additional highest result. She rolls: ⚀ ⚁ ⚂ ⚄ ⚄ ⚅ ⚅. She sets aside: ⚄ ⚅ ⚅.

Her result is 5. The Director's result is 8. So, Mr. Clark and Margaret suffer 3 Stress each.

From the penalized dice, Margaret's player selects ⚅ ⚅ for her Reserve. You choose the ⚄ for Mr. Clark's Reserve.

You all narrate the scene together, explaining in turns how Mr. Clark hears screams from his car, but he's too late to stop Leonard from dragging Margaret back into the alley. He runs away alone and terrified.

"I hope Margaret gets out of this one in her next scene," you say. It's all you can do at this point.

When you assist, play your part. Say what your character does in the scene. If your character helps with the conflict roll, help narrate through the close of the scene.

You don't have to face everything alone.

USING RESERVE DICE

Reserve dice help players improve their conflict rolls and increase various ratings.

Any player, including the Director and Operative players, may use Reserve dice to do the following:

1) Spend a die to replace your conflict roll result with the value of the spent die. Or, you may spend multiple dice with the same value to boost by +1 for each extra die.

2) Spend any number of dice to give any other player an equal number of extra dice for his conflict roll. Note that you give extra dice that the player rolls.

3) Spend any number of dice to add an equal number of Resistance dice (for main characters) or Menace dice (for the Director or Operative players) at the end a turn.

4) Spend any die with value ⚃ or greater to improve a Bond rating by 1. Alternatively, you may acquire a new Bond with rating 1. The Director and Operative players may spend a die with value ⚄ or greater to improve an Agent rating by 1, or they can create a new Agent with rating 1.

5) Spend a die with value of ⚅ to improve any Quality. Each ⚅ you spend improves the Quality rating by 1. You may do this at any time. Main character players increase Resolve, Contact, or Material. The Director and Operative players increase Control or Program ratings.

When you spend dice to improve Bonds, Agents, or Qualities, you require dice with certain values — ⚃ for Bonds and Agents or ⚅ for Qualities. You may spend multiple dice. Each equal-value die in addition to the first you spend adds +1 to the value.

EXAMPLE: You have dice in Reserve: ⚃ ⚃ ⚃. You could spend all and improve your Bonds by up to 3 points. Or, you can spend all the dice to earn a value of 6 (4 + ⚃ + ⚃ = 6) to increase a Quality rating by 1. It's just like spending ⚅.

Spend wisely.

RESERVE & SURVIVING

Reserve dice are crucial for your main character to survive.

You'll need to increase your main character's Qualities to win.

But, you also need to reduce the Director's Control rating.

You need to make choices about both these tactics as you play the game.

OPERATIVE CHARACTERS

While your main character has any Quality at 0, the character risks replacement. At that point, if your character suffers Stress to any Quality, even to a Quality that isn't currently 0, your character is replaced. Section 44 erases your main character's human identity and replaces it with a robot duplicate.

Do not apply the Stress to your main character. Instead, add Menace dice equal to the Stress you suffered that turn.

Role-play your main character's replacement, portraying how it happens, and how the Operative appears.

Define Your Operative

You main character is now an Operative, a special agent of Section 44! For the rest of the game, you ally with the Director to thwart other main characters.

Create your Operative's ratings immediately.

First, sum your remaining Qualities. Assign the sum between two new Qualities:

1) *Control:* Control is your Operative's level of power. This is the base number of dice you roll in all conflicts.
2) *Program:* Program represents your Operative's support from Section 44. Program is the maximum number of Agents and Operatives that can assist you on your turn. Program is also the number of Reserve dice you can have. When you create your Operative, you may keep Reserve dice you had as a main character up to your Reserve limit.

Second, you share Agents with the Director. You may activate a number of Agents equal to your Program during your turn. If the Agents suffer Stress and are deactivated during your turn, they are removed from the Director's roster permanently.

Finally, you also share Secrets with the Director. You may reveal any Secrets during your turn. When you reveal Secrets, you remove a number of highest dice results from your conflict roll. You may put these penalized dice in Reserve after your turn.

If you win a conflict roll, add a number of Resistance dice equal to the revealed Secrets ratings.

> **EXAMPLE**: Mr. Clark's Material rating is 0. In a new scene, he suffers 3 Stress that affects his Resolve. Mr. Clark becomes an Operative. You don't apply the 3 Stress. Instead, you add 3 Menace dice. Then, you assign a total of 5 points between Operative Clark's new Qualities: *Control: 4* and *Program: 1.* You now share Agents and Secrets with the Director.

Your Turn as an Operative

When you play an Operative, you still get one scene during each Countdown. When main characters players roll dice to decide the turn order, they now include you as part of the order.

When your turn begins, select one main character as your opponent. Your goal is to turn the opponent into an Operative.

Frame the scene with three details:

1) First, you add one detail to the scene.
2) Next, your opponent adds a detail.
3) Finally, all other players come up with a detail together.

You and the other player role-play the scene until you reach a conflict. Then, you do a conflict roll. If you win, your conflict goal happens and your opponent may suffer Stress. However, if your opponent wins, his or her goal happens in the story, and you will suffer Stress.

During your Operative turn, there are some restrictions:

- Other main characters may assist your opponent.
- The Director cannot assist you. However, the Director may use Reserve dice and Menace dice normally.
- Other Operatives may assist you.
  - » Assisting Operatives must have a Control rating equal to or less than the current Countdown number.
  - » The number of assisting Operatives plus activated Agents cannot exceed your Program rating.

> » Assisting Operatives add their Control rating to the conflict roll for the scene.
> » When you or others reveal Secrets, you choose which highest dice results to put in your Reserve. Then, you choose which assisting players may select remaining Reserve dice.

Make sure to narrate assisting Operatives' roles in the scene. Players say how they threaten the main character and what they do in the scene.

Operative Reserve Dice

You may spend Reserve dice just like the Director. You may not improve Control or Program ratings on other Operatives, nor may you improve the Director's Control or Program ratings. See *Using Reserve Dice* on page 29 for more details.

Operative Stress

Operatives suffer Stress as follows:

- First, subtract the Stress from any activated Agents.
  - » Each point of Stress reduces the Agent rating by 1.
  - » If you activated more than one Agent, choose which the Stress affects first.
  - » If Stress reduces any Agent rating to 0, the Agent is deactivated and eliminated from the game.
- If any Stress remains, subtract from Control or Program.
  - » Each point of Stress reduces Control or Program by 1 point. You decide which ratings to reduce.
  - » If Stress reduces Control to 0, play continues, though your Operative is much less effective.
  - » If Stress reduces Program to 0, play continues. You can still keep 1 die in Reserve, however.
  - » If any Stress remains after Control or Program are 0, the Director suffers instead! Remove 1 point of the Director's Control rating for each point of Stress.
  - » If the Director's Control rating is 0, add 1 Resistance dice for each remaining point of Stress.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Clark has his first scene as an Operative. He loses the conflict and suffers 4 Stress. The first point of Stress deactivates an Agent, *Leonard, the butcher: 1*. Three Stress remain. You split the Stress points between Mr. Clark's Control and Program, reducing each by one point. That reduces his Program to 0. One point of Stress remains. The Director immediately reduces his Control rating by 1 point.

Everything in the conspiracy is connected. Even you.
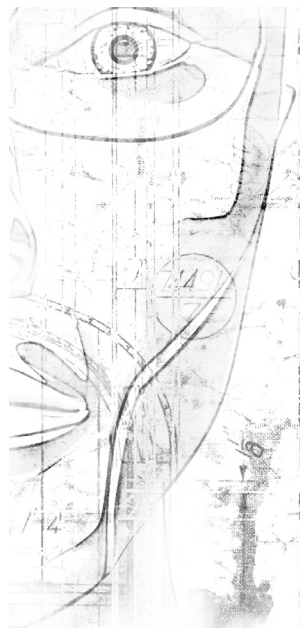
A GAME OF AUTOMATIC FEAR 44

NAME: _____

CONCEPT: _____

TICKER: _____
Who was replaced? _____
What happened? _____
What will your character do now? _____
Where was your character? _____

Qualities

Bonds

Description   Rating   Replaced?

☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐

Anxieties

Description   Rating

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

Resolve: ☐

Contact: ☐

Material: ☐

Replaced!

Control: ☐

Program: ☐

Reserve

Place Reserve dice here, or record their values.

OPERATIVE SHEET

SECTION 44

A GAME OF AUTOMATIC FEAR 44

ABOUT THE CONSPIRACY

What is Section 44's goal? _____

What are the Agents like? _____

Who or what is behind it all? _____

How does it replace humans? _____

Qualities

Control: ☐ ☐

Program: ☐

→ Reserve

Place Reserve dice here, or record their values.

☐ ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐

Agents

Description	Rating	Deactivated?
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐
_____	☐	☐

Secrets

Description	Rating
_____	☐
_____	☐
_____	☐
_____	☐
_____	☐
_____	☐
_____	☐
_____	☐

PLEASE NOTE