



Contested Ground Studios
www.contestedground.co.uk

HOT WAR

Q U I C K - P L A Y D E M O v 1 . 0

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Contested Ground Studios would like to thank Scott for allowing us to use and publish his demo script.

This is a script for running 15-30 minute demo games of Hot War. In order to run the demo, it's good to have a reasonable familiarity with the game as a whole. However, the demo can also be used as a means of getting to know the mechanics within a group setting out to play for the first time.



S T R U C T U R E

INTRODUCTION: [to be read out to the players]

Hi, I'm [insert name], this demo is for Hot War. [Obviously, the above only needs said if you're demoing at a convention or other event!]

Very brief preamble: Hot War is a game of secrets, lies, friends, and enemies set in an alternative, post-apocalyptic 1963. London is possibly the last city left in Europe following a nuclear war, and various other weapons based on secret Nazi twisted technology have been used, releasing monsters and other menaces on the survivors. You are all members of the Special Situations Group, a government task force dedicated to keeping London safe from these monsters, as well as spies, anarchists and terrorists.

The above is all that will be said about the setting, keeping it brief and to the point, only covering the key basics that the players will need to know.

SYSTEM

Hand out character sheets (on pages 5 & 6) and briefly cover attributes, traits, hidden agendas and relationships. Actual mechanical implementations of this should be covered during play.

SUMMARY

Cover the consequences of the conflict for the characters. Briefly mention that the game covers things in a lot more detail, mention that longer games will be run, thank players for taking part.

WHAT MUST THIS DEMO SHOW?

The use of attributes, traits, hidden agendas and relationships in building a dice pool. Conflict resolution. Consequences.

HOW WILL IT DEMONSTRATE THIS?

PC versus PC conflict between Alexander Pym and Terence Bryce: the two men will come across an injured and helpless Soviet spy, who Pym will want to either recruit or help him defect, and Bryce will want to kill out of revenge.

PC versus Monster conflict: Cynthia Newley and Harry Dunlop will have to face down an alien entity threatening the Cabinet Office, and must decide whether to pull together or go for individual glory.

SITUATION

The team have been on the trail of a Soviet mole, highly-placed in the British government, who has been responsible for various acts of sabotage involving twisted technology. They have just found evidence that it is Sir Nigel Sloane, the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the War Office. Upon learning this, they have tried to call a warning ahead to the Cabinet War Rooms under the Treasury Office in Whitehall, but found the lines dead. They have just arrived at the Cabinet War Rooms, only to discover the guards dead, and have rushed to the Cabinet Room.

Brief description of the environment: concrete walls, poorly-lit, a warren of corridors, the smell of cordite and blood in the air.

CONFLICT: PYM VERSUS BRYCE

The first conflict will take place as the team arrive in the reception area outside the Cabinet Office. Say that this will focus on Pym and Bryce and show how hidden agendas can influence a conflict.

Describe that they have burst through the doors into the room, and found a scene of bloodshed, with a secretary and a security guard shot to death, and a man with a serious abdominal wound crawling across the floor towards them. The man is Nigel Sloane, and he is obviously terrified, pleading with the team for them to get him out of there before it is too late.

Point out to Pym's player that, as a Soviet mole, this man can help with either of his agendas - whichever the player prefers - as long as Pym gets him out alive.

Bryce's player should be made aware that this is the man who killed his brother. As Sloane is badly wounded and completely helpless, his fate will be determined by the conflict.

Once there has been a few seconds of back and forth between the players, ask them what they want to get out of the situation.

Get them to assemble a pool of dice based on an attribute they have chosen (they may choose to argue about it, or they may go straight for violence) and remind them that if they are acting to advance a hidden agenda, that this gives them additional dice depending on the value of the agenda. If they require guidance, point out how the hidden agendas can be used and what they say about the character.

The conflict roll should take place and a winner should be announced. Let the player of the winning character narrate what the outcome was for about 30 seconds, enough for them to get some satisfactory detail in.

CONFLICT: NEWLEY & DUNLOP VERSUS EGREGORE

Just as Pym and Bryce finish the conflict, a curious clicking noise and the sound of breaking glass can be heard from around the corner, just by the entrance to the Cabinet Office itself. If Sloane is still alive, his terror intensifies and he announces that it's too late and they are all going to die.

As Newley and Dunlop go to investigate, they see an odd metal device on the ground, with gears, a timing mechanism, a hammer and a broken glass container. Drifting out of the container is a thick black cloud that holds its shape in an unnatural manner. A few tendrils drift out, and one shoots into the corpse of the security guard and starts draining the fluid from his body.

At the same time, the door to the Cabinet Office opens, and John Profumo, the Secretary of State for War, steps out and demands to know what the hell is going on. Newley and Dunlop are going to have to act quickly, but are they going to help each other, or each take the chance to bolster the reputation of their service in Profumo's presence?

Let the players know that this is a combat situation and that the Action attribute is always used in these situations. Ask them what their characters are doing and what their goals for the conflict are. State that the Egregore is determined to send tendrils out, devouring everyone in the room. Let the players detail going for guns, grabbing improvised weapons and so forth. Allow them to state exactly what they want their character to get out of the situation. Ask them to form a dice pool using Action as the base. If they are acting together, have them nominate one player as the active character, and gather their resources into a single pool. If each is acting in their own interests, create two pools with separate stakes.

The stakes could be anything from "stop the entity spreading any further" to "make the Navy look foolish in the presence of the Secretary of State". This will also determine whether it is appropriate to use their relationships with each other or their agendas.

The players roll their pools against the pool for the Egregore. If they win, allow players to narrate outcomes for their character. If they both lose, narrate how the Egregore starts filling the room, sending fast-moving tendrils towards everyone present...

End

The demo should end after either the characters fighting the monster have won or lost their conflict. In either case, there are no further conflicts and the situation should fade to black.

OUTCOMES

The demo will show how all the elements of the basic system work together and how they affect the character.

The Pym versus Bryce conflict will show how PCs can square off against one another and show the influence of hidden agendas. The Newley and Dunlop conflict may show how characters can work together against a common opponent, using relationships to improve their chances.

Also mention consequences, for both the winning and losing characters (consequences from the game text are reproduced opposite). Thank the players for taking part in the demo.

You can always mention that Hot War is available to buy at the con you're at (if you are at a con where it is on sale!) or from www.contestedground.co.uk or www.indiepressrevolution.com

POINTS COST	POSITIVE CONSEQUENCES	NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES
1	Change a negative trait to a positive trait Lock a trait Gain a new positive relationship at 1 Increase a positive relationship or reduce a negative relationship by 1	Change a positive trait to a negative trait Gain a negative trait for this session only Gain a new negative relationship at 1 Unlock a trait Reduce a positive relationship or increase a negative relationship by 1
2	Increase an attribute by 1 Gain a new positive trait Lose a negative trait	Decrease an attribute by 1 Gain a new negative trait Lose a positive trait
3	Reduce a negative relationship to zero	Reduce an attribute to zero Reduce a positive relationship to zero

SPECIAL SITUATIONS GROUP		Identification Document	
1.	Name: <u>The Egregore</u>		
		Original	Current
2.a.	Action:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.b.	Influence:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.c.	Insight:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Traits:		+/-?
	<u>Largely insubstantial</u>		+
	<u>Highly mutable form</u>		+
	<u>Driven by animal hunger</u>		-
	<u>Angry and confused by this alien environment</u>		-

SPECIAL SITUATIONS GROUP Identification Document

PARTICULARS

1.a. Name: LIEUTENANT HARRY DUNLOP
 1.b. Faction: British Army

2.a. Action: Original 4 Current
 2.b. Influence: Original 2 Current

2.c. Insight: Original 2 Current

3.a. Factional Agenda: Rating 3 Bonus +4
Raise the profile of the British Army amongst the powers that be.

Uses: 3 5 9

3.b. Personal Agenda: Rating 5 Bonus +3
Put the memory of your dead wife Doris behind you and find love again.

Uses: 3 5 9

4. Traits:	+/-?	Locked?	5. Relationships:	+/-?	Rating
<u>Battle-hardened</u>	<u>+</u>	<u></u>	<u>Cynthia Newley</u>	<u>+</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Excessively violent</u>	<u>-</u>	<u></u>	<u>Secret lover</u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
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SPECIAL SITUATIONS GROUP Identification Document

PARTICULARS

1.a. Name: ALEXANDER PYM
 1.b. Faction: Intelligence Service (SIS)

2.a. Action: Original 2 Current
 2.b. Influence: Original 4 Current

2.c. Insight: Original 2 Current

3.a. Factional Agenda: Rating 5 Bonus +3
Find the Soviet mole in the War Office and recruit him as a double agent.

Uses: 3 5 9

3.b. Personal Agenda: Rating 3 Bonus +4
Defect to the Soviets, as Britain is obviously doomed.

Uses: 3 5 9

4. Traits:	+/-?	Locked?	5. Relationships:	+/-?	Rating
<u>Has something on everyone</u>	<u>+</u>	<u></u>	<u>Nigel Sloane</u>	<u>+</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Paranoid and jumpy</u>	<u>-</u>	<u></u>	<u>Former mentor in SIS</u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
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