

CONSPIRACY



The Largest Trading Card Game on Earth

Synopsis

A game for two or more players, each of whom has previously assembly assembled a network of secret agents. These agents are each represented by a seemingly innocent business card. When these cards have been played on the game table, the agents are “in the field”. If any player loses all their field agents, they are out of the game. The last remaining player wins, and gets to rule the world.

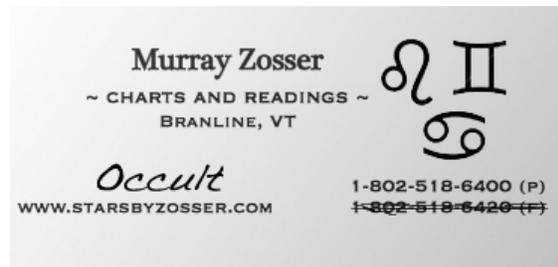
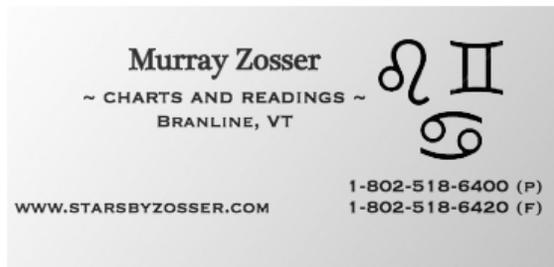
In a conventional trading card games, many of the details of game-play are written on the cards themselves. That is not the case here; hence the larger scope of this rule-book. Updates to this rule-book (the equivalent of deck expansions in other trading card games) will appear annually, online: www.zemita.net/madsheepgames.

The Deck is Out There

Each player's deck consists of their agents' business cards. The suggested deck size is 40-60 cards. There is no upper limit on deck size, but players should have decks of roughly equal size. The cards have to be actual business cards, in any of the normal size ranges (75-90 mm by 48-55 mm). “Mini” cards and postcard-style cards are not allowed. Bifold and speciality cards are allowed, so long as they meet the basic parameters described below, and do not add undue confusion.

Each agent's card should ideally contain a *person's name*, a *telephone number*, a *business location*, and an identifiable *occupation*. The absence of any of these elements will usually make a card strategically disadvantageous, though it does not prevent it from being played. If a card has additional information that may cause confusion (such as multiple telephone numbers), one of them should be indicated by underlining it, or crossing out the others.

If it is not clear which of the shadow armies (see below) an agent belongs to, this should be marked on the card. Otherwise, information cannot be added to a card even if it is factually correct. In the example below, the player has decided that an astrologer whose last name starts with Z is a valuable asset, even though the location is somewhat non-specific. The card is modified by crossing out the fax number and noting the shadow army, but the player cannot add that Zosser lives at “14 Main St”.



Agents are unique!

No agent's card can be used twice in the same game, even if previously discarded. If more than one player has an agent's card in their deck, it is “claimed” at the first moment the agent is deployed or used in a pro move. If a player draws a card that has already appeared in the game—or has such a card in their hand when another player uses the same card—they must reveal it, discard it, and draw a new one.

Definitions: The Shadow Armies

All agents are divided into 33 very broad categories—the shadow armies—based on their allegiance to the Reptilians, Illuminati, and the Agency. The networks of these armies are shown on the board, with a few examples listed for each one. The intention is that the agent should be considered to belong to the category that best describes them, and that usually this will be uncontroversial. Where there are ambiguities, players should resolve the matter in advance by annotating the agent's card—no agent can belong to more than shadow army at once. For instance, a pet therapist could arguably be placed under either *Animals* or *Therapy*, but would not be appropriate under *Real Estate* or even *Medicine*. Note that “*All Others*” is a category.

Definitions: Occupations

The occupation of an agent is more precise than their shadow army, and it is relevant to the Pro Moves listed below. Occupations are strictly defined, in one of several ways, with examples below:

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Who qualifies</i>
<i>Pizza place workers</i>	Agents with a pizza logo on their card Agents whose card says “Al's Pies-on-the-fly” Agent whose card says “Pizza Delivery”
<i>Lactation consultants</i>	Agents whose card uses the specific phrase “lactation” or “lactating”.
<i>SA: Industry</i>	Any card in the shadow army <i>Industry</i>
<i>[Embossed cards]</i>	Any card fitting the description.

If there is significant ambiguity about an occupation, players should err on the side of disallowing the pro moves in question. For instance, if a card simply reads “Kelly Banner, business consulting”, it cannot be assumed that she is an accountant, or a marketing strategist, or a human resources expert.

On the other hand, it is acceptable for an agent to have multiple occupations or other qualifying features that allow multiple pro moves. For instance “Xavier Torres, Tango instructor, Argentine Tango Tours” could qualify for *Onslaught* and *Spy Satellite* pro moves (and possibly also *Foreign Agent*).

If players do not think that they can resolve these questions amicably on their own, they should engage a referee or some other form of outside help.

Definitions: Attack Modes

There are nine possible “attack modes” during *Conspiracy*, each of which specifies a way for one agent to defeat another or be defeated. During most of the game, two modes will be active at once, and marked on the board by two counters. There are never more than two active attack modes. The first six attack modes described below are pairs of opposites; they can never both be activated at once.

AAA / ZZZ

In “AAA”, agents whose names are alphabetically lower beat those whose last names are alphabetically higher. (Addams beats Ziegler). In “ZZZ”, the reverse is true. This follows library-alphabetization style: last name, then first name, etc. Agents whose cards do not have an individual's last name will lose automatically in either of these contests.

000 / 999

In “000”, agents whose phone numbers are numerically lower beat those whose phone numbers are numerically higher (555-1212 beats 900-1212). In “999”, the reverse is true. Please note that when phone numbers are being compared across different formats, this comparison is based on a *left-hand-digit* approach. (It may be helpful to imagine both numbers as decimals, or to imagine that the shorter number is padded out with zeroes until they both have same number of digits.)

Thus, for instance:

In the “999” mode: 802-545-2525 beats 1-71-56-23-40-04 x8999

If an agent's card does not have a phone number, they automatically lose either contest.

Near / Far

In “near”, the agent whose business address is closest to the place where the game is being played wins. In “far”, the reverse is true. The defining question is travel distance, not as-the-crow-flies distance. Any of the various widely available route-finding programs can be used to settle disputes if they arise. Agents whose location is not mentioned lose automatically in either contest. This is also true if an agent's location is defined ambiguously enough to affect the outcome. Thus, “64 Broad St, Philadelphia, PA” beats “Downtown Philadelphia” in either contest.

Reptilians / Illuminati / The Agency

When one of these shadow networks is chosen as an attack mode, the 33 shadow armies are compared hierarchically in terms of how many tiers down the apex of the pyramid, as shown on the board. For instance, if the Reptilians are chosen, agents in *Cleaning* (two tiers down) will beat agents in *Law* (six tiers down), but would only tie with agents in *Performance*.

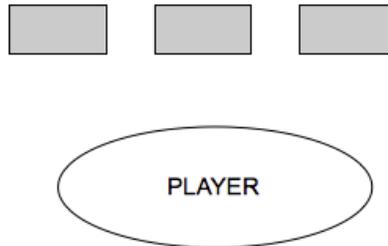
If *two* of these are chosen as attack modes, then agents are compared in terms of how many tiers they are below the face of the triangle joining the two modes. For instance, if the Illuminati and the Agency are chosen, then agents in *Real Estate* are on the top tier, and would beat agents in *Sales*, which is now three tiers down.

GAME PLAY

Setup

At the beginning of the game, each player shuffles their own deck, places it aside as a draw pile, and draws a six-card hand which they keep private. They then draw three cards from their deck and play these face-up, side by side, as shown below. These are the player's initial "field agents". As agents are lost or discarded during the game, they do not return to the draw pile, but into a discard pile.

Initially, no attack modes are selected.



Rounds

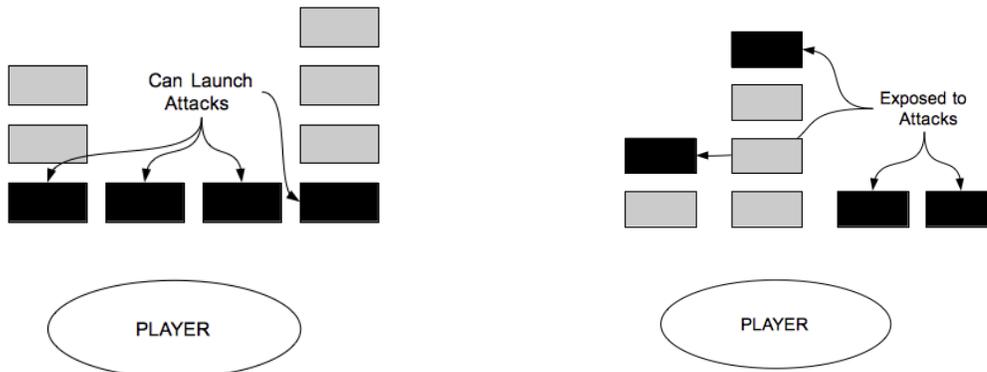
Play proceeds in a circle. Players take turns performing one of the three possible actions listed below. At the end of their turn, players draw new cards (if needed) to bring their hand size back up to six cards. If a player runs out of new cards to draw, they are not eliminated from the game, though they are certainly in trouble.

If at any time a player has no field agents, and they have no ability to *immediately* place a new agent in the field, they are eliminated from the game. The last remaining player rules the world.

Possible Actions:

(#1) Deploy a New Field Agent

The player can add any card in their hand to their roster of active field agents, by playing it face-up in front of them. New field agents can be placed either alongside other field agents, or in front of or behind existing agents, to form columns. An agent cannot be deployed into the middle of a column. If agents are placed in a column, the field agents in the front are defending the ones behind them. Only the rearmost file of agents can launch an attack, and only the frontmost agents in each column are exposed to attacks. Lone agents fall into both these categories, as shown below:



(#2) *Attacking*

Attacking is not an option until two attack modes have been selected. Thereafter, a player can use their turn to attack another player. To do this, they choose a field agent to launch the attack, who must be deployed alone, or in the rearmost position of a defensive column. This agent simultaneously attacks all the exposed agents of one other player.

Each of these attacks is determined using the two active attack modes. If the attacking agent can beat the exposed agent in *both* attack modes, the exposed agent is killed and discarded. If one or more of the exposed agents can beat the attacking agent in both modes, then the attacking agent is *also* killed, at the end of the turn. Here is a worked example:

Attacker:	Helen Waters (SA: <i>performance</i>)	Attack Modes: ZZZ	Reptilians
Exposed:	Art Addams (SA: <i>education</i>)	loss	loss
Exposed:	Dale Wilson (SA: <i>clothing</i>)	win	win
Exposed:	Liz Monroe (SA: <i>cleaning</i>)	loss	tie
Exposed:	Alan Wong: (SA: <i>industry</i>)	win	loss
Exposed:	Miriam Cho (SA: <i>medicine</i>)	loss	loss

In this example, Waters defeats Addams and Cho, but not Monroe or Wong. Because Wilson beats Waters in both categories, Waters herself is lost in the attack.

It is sometimes possible for one or both players to execute special pro moves (see below) during the course of an attack.

(#3) *Pro Moves*

A number of agents have special powers, called “pro moves”, which are described below. Many of these require a player's entire turn to enact.

THE PRO MOVES

This is the 2014 version of conspiracy, with 36 pro moves. Think of it as a starter deck. Future “expansions” will be posted on the web at www.zemita.net/madsheepgames.

Key to the Pro Moves:

T	Takes the player's entire turn to enact.
dH	Agent must be discarded from your hand to enact.
dF	Agent must be discarded from the field to enact.
D	Enacted at the time the agent is deployed to the field.
AoA	Enacted automatically when the player is attacked.
P	Permanently in effect while agent is in the field.
M1, M2, etc.	Requires (one, two) master plan(s).

Big Con

Who: Dollar store or thrift store owners.

How: T dH M1

What: Player may replace any of their field agents with agents from their hand (discarding the ones being replaced), leaving their defensive arrangement the same. They may replace up to five agents in this way.

Brainwashing

Who: psychotherapists

How: dH or dF

What: If the player launches an attack and successfully defeats one or more agents, they may then use this pro move to re-deploy one of those agents into their own team of field agents. For each master plan the player has in place, they may brainwash an additional agent (if possible). For instance, at M2, brainwashing can be used to capture three agents.

Capable of Anything

Who: life coaches, motivational speakers

How: P

What: This allows the player to enact one pro move that would otherwise take their entire turn, and then proceed to their turn as usual.

Clockwork (Wo)man

Who: Clock or watch repair or salespeople.

How: T dH or dF

What: Both attack modes are rotated clockwise. If this would create a disallowed position (such as AAA with ZZZ), then they are rotated clockwise again.

Crash Clinic

Who: M.D.s, R.N.s.

How: AoA P

What: This allows the player to save any one agent who was killed in an attack. Medical agents cannot save themselves, each other, or any agent who is defending them.

Disguise

Who: SA: Beauty.

How: AoA P

What: The player being attacked can switch one of the agents they would have lost with any other of their

agents, including one from their hand.

Foreign Agents

Who: [Agents from a country that no other field agent is from.]

How: P

What: Foreign agents can be used to launch attacks even if they are placed in a defense position.

Getting the Ball Rolling

Who: [any card with color printing]

How: T dF

What: Allows the player to select an attack mode *if* less than two attack modes are currently selected. The player cannot choose mutually incompatible attack modes.

Hacking

Who: SA: Computers.

How: D

What: Forces a chosen player to play their private hand face-up. Alternatively, reverses that situation.

Home Turf

Who: Elected officials (representative government only; not judges, or sheriffs. No heads of state).

How: P

What: As long as the agent is in the field, no other player's agent from that jurisdiction (i.e. city, state, congressional district) can launch an attack.

Inside Job

Who: Interior decorators

How: T dF

What: This allows a player to choose any of another player's field agents and use it to launch an attack on a third player, as per the usual rules. The chosen agent does *not* need to be from the backmost rank of the player's field agents. The chosen agent cannot attack their own player.

Legal Maneuvering

Who: SA: Law

How: T D or dH or dF

What: Allows the player to select a new attack mode (if less than two are selected), or to change one of the attack modes (if both are already selected). It does not allow the player to deselect an attack mode without replacing it, or to choose mutually incompatible attack modes.

Master Plan (six subcategories)

Ancient Secrets *Who:* [any card mentioning a date prior to 1914]

Chemtrails *Who:* airplane pilots

Fluoride *Who:* dentists

Mark of the Beast *Who:* tattoo artists

Soylent *Who:* beverage producers

Vaccines *Who:* pediatricians

How: P

What: Having one or more of these agents in the field is a requirement for some of the advanced pro moves, and—word to the wise—this will be especially important in Conspiracy 2015. Only one field agent at a time can exercise “master plan” status for each subcategory, and this agent may not exercise any other pro moves. For instance, if a pediatrician is played and claims the “vaccines” master plan, that agent may not also use the crash clinic pro move (described below), and no other pediatrician may claim the “vaccines” master plan until the first pediatrician has been killed or removed from play. Finally, an agent can only claim “master plan” status *when it*

enters the field, not subsequently.

Ninja Ops

Who: Yoga instructors, rock climbing instructors.

How: P

What: If this agent is used to launch an attack, they may simultaneously attack all *the agents in a single column* of another player's field agents, regardless of defensive positioning. (Agents not in that column are not exposed).

Note that this pro move does not *have* to be exercised: the agent can attack in the usual way as well.

Tenth-Dan Ninja Ops

Who: Yoga instructors, rock climbing instructors.

How: P M2

What: As above, but the agent can simultaneously attack every one of another player's field agents, regardless of defensive positioning.

Old School

Who: [any black-and-white card without a website or email listed]

How: dF at any time

What: This move can be enacted whenever anyone tries to change the attack mode—it prevents the change from taking effect.

Onslaught

Who: Dancers

How: dH M1 or better

What: On the turn that they make this pro move, the player may launch an attack on two other players simultaneously. (Only one agent can launch the attack). At M2, the player can launch an attack on three other players simultaneously, and so forth.

Paperwork

Who: Accountants, IRS officers

How: T dH

What: Reduces (or increases) any player's hand size by one card. This effect is permanent until reversed; that is, if a player's hand has been reduced to five cards, they do not draw a sixth card at the end of their turn. No player's hand can be reduced to less than three cards.

Planting bombs

Who: landscapers, ice cream vendors, dog walkers

How: T dH or dF

What: Links any two of another player's exposed field agents. (Their cards should be marked with counters to indicate the bomb). Any subsequent attack that kills one of those agents will kill both of them. Alternatively, it removes such a bomb.

Scrying

Who: Psychics and fortune-tellers.

How: D

What: Allow the player to look privately at the next five cards in another player's draw pile, and rearrange them as they like before putting them back on top of the draw pile.

All-Seeing Eye

Who: Psychics and fortune-tellers.

How: D M1 or more

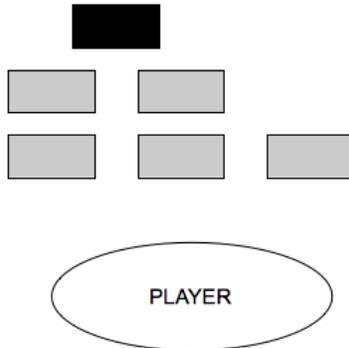
What: As above, but the player can choose to place one card per master-plan level at the bottom of the draw pile.

Security Perimeter

Who: private security, police officers

How: P

What: These agents can be placed in such a way that they defend two different agents (or columns of agents) simultaneously, as shown below:



Shadow Surges (three subcategories)

Temple of Dagon (surge for the Reptilians)

Who: Fish merchants, processors, or restaurateurs, or fishing guides.

Big Brother (surge for the Agency)

Who: network admins or administrators

Secret Handshake (surge for the Illuminati)

Who: stonemasons, [any card with a masonic emblem on it], archivists

How: D, then dF

What: When the agent is deployed, the player can set either of the attack modes to the group in question. This agent can also be discarded at the beginning of any of the player's subsequent turns, with the same effect.

Shakeup

Who: Human resources workers, recruiters

How: T dF

What: Allows the player to re-arrange all their field agents in terms of who is defending whom.

Hostile Takeover

Who: Human resources workers, recruiters

How: T dF MI

What: Allows the player to re-arrange *another player's* field agents, preserving the same number of columns as the original arrangement.

Tabula Recta

Who: librarians

How: T dH or dF

What: Allows the player to set one of the attack modes to either AAA or ZZZ, provided that both AAA and ZZZ are not selected at once.

Third-Rate Burglary

Who: Plumbers

How: dF

What: This allows a player to launch an attack against another player's elected officials, regardless of whether or not they are defended, or whether or not "home turf" is in effect. This attack must be launched by another agent, not the plumber. A more advanced version:

Second-Rate Burglary

Who: Plumbers

How: dF MI

What: As above, but the attack can be launched against all other players' elected officials, simultaneously.

Spy Satellite

Who: travel agents

How: T dH or dF

What: Allows the player to set one of the attack modes to either NEAR or FAR, provided that both NEAR and FAR are not selected at once.

Wiretap

Who: telephone or cell phone salesmen or technicians

How: T dH or dF

What: Allows the player to set one of the attack modes to either 000 or 999, provided that both 000 and 999 are not selected at once.

CREDITS

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