

# In the Dark

a LARP for 4 people by Clinton Dreisbach

This live-action game is for 4 people and can be played in 1 hour after setup. It uses the following techniques:

- Hidden information
- Power dynamics
- Sensory deprivation (darkness)
- Touch

You will need:

- A small lightless space (The Box), big enough to fit two people comfortably but small enough that they will touch. An empty closet works best for this.
- A space outside the Box with two chairs (The Chamber)
- Another space that cannot be seen from the Chamber (the Observation Area)
- Two copies of each playsheet

This game does not use a facilitator but has the possibility to make participants uncomfortable, so be clear about all rules during setup. In particular, make sure to establish an unambiguous signal that any participant can give at any time to end the game.

## Setup

Two players are chosen to be the Interrogators. The other two players are the Captives.

Use a six-sided die to determine the role for the Interrogators and Captives. Using the following list, roll once to find out which of the six roles the Interrogators are in, and then roll again using the sub-list to find out which role the Captives are in.

1. Federal agents
  - 1-2. Cops
  - 3-4. Crime lords
  - 5-6. Low-life criminals
2. Cops
  - 1-2. Dirty cops
  - 3-4. Crime lords
  - 5-6. Low-life criminals

3. Dirty cops
  - 1-2. Cops
  - 3-4. Low-lives
  - 5-6. Vigilantes
4. Vigilantes
  - 1-2. Dirty cops
  - 3-4. Crime lords
  - 5-6. Low-lives
5. Crime lords
  - 1-2. Cops
  - 3-4. Federal agents
  - 5-6. Vigilantes
6. Low-life criminals
  - 1-2. Vigilantes
  - 3-4. Crime lords
  - 5-6. Low-life criminals

*Example: Skyler, Quinn, Kendall, and Indigo are going to play. Skyler and Quinn are the Interrogators and roll a 3, making them dirty cops. Kendall and Indigo then roll a 5, making them vigilantes.*

The Interrogators and the Captives should take the play-sheet for their role. Read through your sheet and fill it out. Feel free to write other details like your religion, ethnicity, college, or other details.

Interrogators have:

- something they want
- something they're vulnerable to

Captives have:

- some information
- a personal detail they might be able to use

Introduce the characters you are playing. The only questions you must answer are the one or two italicized questions at the top of the page. You can answer any other questions with truth or lies.

Once you know the characters, talk through the dynamic if you need to in order to understand the situation.

## Physical setup

Once the characters are introduced, set up the physical space. You will need a space for the Box, the Chamber, and the Observation Area. Optimally, these will all be in one building next to each other. Feel free to play with the setup for these spaces. For example, you may want a table in the Chamber, or a white noise generator for the Box.

The Box is meant to be a small lightless space. Depending on the Interrogators, this might represent a car trunk, a closet, a windowless cell, or something else. The Interrogators should describe it now.

The Chamber is where interrogations happen. It should be set up so that any loud talking or shouting can be heard in the Box, but normal voices cannot. The Interrogators should describe it now.

The Observation Area is either a physical or emotional space in the game, depending on the setup. Interrogators take Captives there when they are done with them so that the Captive can hear what happens next, but not see it. It should be set up so that the Chamber can be heard from it.

## Rules

The point of the game for the Interrogators is to:

- get the information you want
- do not believe false information

The Interrogators do not want to:

- accept false information as truth
- kill or release Captives without getting the truth
- kill or hurt Captives that fall in a category they have a soft spot for
- believe Captives that are trying to play on their soft spots by lying

The Interrogators *must*:

- release Captives that play on their soft spot *if* they believe the Captive

The point of the game for the Captives is to:

- not give actual information
- get the Interrogators to believe their lies
- get immunity or released

The Captives do not want to:

- tell truth the Interrogators want to know (truth that the Interrogators don't need is fine)
- die (unless they have a death wish)

During the game, the Interrogators will interrogate the Captives using any methods they want to unless they have a prohibition (killing for some play-sheets.)

### **The Laws of the Game**

The Interrogators cannot have more than one Captive in the Chamber at the same time.

The Interrogators cannot enter the Box except to pull someone out.

The Captives cannot independently move.

Captives that are dead, given immunity, or released are sent to the Observation Room.

No one in the Observation Room is allowed to talk.

No actual violence between players is allowed.

Interrogators can be violent toward Captives through simulation. In order to commit violence, place your open hand against where you will commit violence and say what you are doing. You can only do this to the head, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. All other areas are off limits.

If any player wants the game to end at any point for any reason, they can and all rules about movement and talking are removed.

### **After the game**

All players should take a few minutes to reflect then sit down with refreshments to talk about the game. While there aren't clear rules for winning and losing, you should compare your play-sheets that you wrote on to see who got what they wanted.

## Federal Agent

You're an agent for an organization most people never even hear of, something spooky enough that it doesn't even go by a three-letter acronym.

*What's the name you give?*

*What's the name of your organization?*

### **If you are the Interrogators:**

You cannot kill the Captives.

You can grant immunity to one Captive.

You want to know something: *(choose one with your teammate)*

- the key to capturing an international terrorist
- information that will bring down a smuggling ring
- a secret that will overturn a wrongful conviction

You have a soft spot for: *(choose one by yourself)*

- people with families
- people who are truly terrified
- people who are dying

### **If you are the Captives:**

You know something: *(choose one by yourself and write down the information)*

- when and where the raid on the Interrogators is happening
- the name of a mole in the Interrogators' organization
- the codename of the case against the Interrogators

Choose one:

- You have a family you love and who loves you
- This is your first case and you are terrified
- You're willing to help the Interrogators from the inside

# Cops

You're a state or local police officer, a detective on the beat.

*What is your name?*

*Who's your captain?*

## **If you are the Interrogators:**

You cannot kill the Captives.

You can let one Captive off the hook this time.

You want to know something: *(choose one with your teammate)*

- the name of a high-level criminal
- the location of a piece of evidence you need
- when an illegal deal is happening

You have a soft spot for: *(choose one by yourself)*

- people with families
- ex-cops
- addicts

## **If you are the Captives:**

You know something: *(choose one by yourself and write down the information)*

- when and where the raid on the Interrogators is happening
- the name of an unknown rival to the Interrogators
- a piece of evidence the Interrogators don't know about

Choose one:

- You have a family you love and who loves you
- This is your first case and you are terrified
- You are a true believer in a higher power

## Dirty Cops

You're a cop gone bad, an abuser of power that either pursues your own crimes or lets others' crimes slide for payoff.

*What is your name?*

*Who's your captain?*

*What's your vice?*

### **If you are the Interrogators:**

You can kill the Captives unless they are law enforcement.

You want to know something: *(choose one with your teammate)*

- the name of a high-level criminal
- the location of a piece of damning evidence
- where the person you're looking for is hiding

You have a soft spot for: *(choose one by yourself)*

- true believers
- ex-cops
- people who are terrified

### **If you are the Captives:**

You know something: *(choose one by yourself and write down the information)*

- when and where the raid on the Interrogators is happening
- the name of a mole in the Interrogators' organization
- where a smoking gun (an actual gun or something else) is hidden

Choose one:

- You have a family you love and who loves you
- You are an addict
- You're willing to help the Interrogators from the inside

# Vigilantes

You are a person driven to fight crime not by a badge but by some personal quest. What you're doing is illegal, putting you in league with those you hate.

*What's your persona?*

*What happened to you?*

## **If you are the Interrogators:**

You can / cannot kill the Captives. *(Choose this but do not reveal it.)*

You want to know something: *(choose one by yourself)*

- the name of the person who did whatever it is that set you off
- where the person you're looking for is hiding
- a secret that will overturn a wrongful conviction

You have a soft spot for: *(choose one by yourself)*

- true believers
- people with families
- people who are terrified

## **If you are the Captives:**

You know something: *(choose one by yourself and write down the information)*

- the name of a mole in the Interrogators' organization
- where a smoking gun (an actual gun or something else) is hidden
- the location of an innocent being hunted

Choose one:

- You are a true believer in a higher power / justice
- You have no one in your life
- You have a death wish



## Crime Lords

You are high up in a criminal empire, maybe even running it. Your life has been a series of ruthless calculations.

*What's the name you go by?*

*What's your empire?*

### **If you are the Interrogators:**

You can kill the Captives.

You want to know something: *(choose one by yourself)*

- when and where a raid is happening
- the name of the mole in your organization
- the name and location of an innocent person who saw something they shouldn't

You have a soft spot for: *(choose one by yourself)*

- people with a death wish
- people you can make work for you
- people who are dying

### **If you are the Captives:**

You know something: *(choose one by yourself and write down the information)*

- the name of the mole in the Interrogator's organization
- where a smoking gun (an actual gun or something else) is hidden
- a piece of evidence the Interrogators don't know about

Choose one:

- You have no one in your life
- You have a terminal illness
- You are an ex-cop

## Low-Life Criminals

You're not anyone important, just a street-level thug. You've got people above you putting pressure on you, so you're putting it on someone else.

*What is the name you go by?*

### **If you are the Interrogators:**

You can kill the Captives.

You want to know something: *(choose one with your teammate)*

- when and where a shakedown is happening
- the name of the person interfering with your business
- where the person you're looking for is hiding

You have a soft spot for: *(choose one by yourself)*

- people with families
- people who served time
- addicts

### **If you are the Captives:**

You know something: *(choose one by yourself and write down the information)*

- your boss's name
- where a smoking gun (an actual gun or something else) is hidden
- when and where a shakedown is happening

Choose one:

- You are an addict
- You are terrified of the Interrogators
- You're undercover and are one of the Interrogators