

Diplomatic Immunity rulebook

vo.27 · 3–6 players, best with 4–5 · 30–45 minutes · ages 12+ · <https://diplomatic-immunity-game.com/rules/>

You are a diplomat. You are also a criminal. The point is to never get caught doing something your immunity doesn't cover.

Everyone has a secret **Goal**. Commit crimes to get rich and build your record, but every uncovered crime adds **Heat**. Hit your Heat Limit and it's a **Scandal**. Three Scandals and you're **Recalled** home in disgrace.

When your Goal is met, you **book a Departure** and try to leave the country. Nobody has to let you go. But everyone gets one chance to stop you.

Components

Item	Count
Character boards (8 × 4 in, one per archetype: the woman on one face, the man on the other)	12
Goal cards (12, one of each)	12
Die (six-sided, for the roll at setup)	1
Street deck (Crimes, Covers, Dirty Tricks)	74
Politics deck (Laws, Maneuvers, Departure cards)	45
Headline deck	18
Quick-reference cards (Departures board on the back)	7
Bribes and Favors reference card	2
Blank card	2
Money: quarter-size punch-out coins, \$1M ×45, \$5M ×25, \$10M ×14	\$310M
Favor chips (punch-out, one per character, carrying that diplomat's face)	24
Immunity chips 6 (quarter-size), Heat markers 6, Signature chips 6, Law markers 18 (3 per seat), Scandal tokens 30, Departing markers 6: all punch-out chips	72

Full card lists are on the cards page; the characters are on the diplomats page.

Setup

1. **Roll for it.** Everyone rolls the die; highest wins (tied players roll again). The winner of the roll chooses a character first, takes a Goal last, and takes the first turn.

2. **Choose your character.** Starting with the roll winner and going clockwise, each player takes any **Character board** still on the table. Every board is one archetype with two diplomats, the woman on one face and the man on the other; they share the Bend and Cost and differ only in their Signature, so choose your diplomat and lay that face up. One board per player means no archetype is ever at the table twice. Take a set of seat markers in one colour (Heat marker, Signature chip, three Law markers) and an **Immunity chip**. Put the Heat marker on **0** of the board's Heat track and the Immunity, Signature and Favor chips in their slots.
3. Everyone takes **\$5M** and their character's **Favor chip**, the one with their face on. Money is in millions and the bank never runs out.
4. **Take a Goal, the other way round.** The Goal deck has twelve Goals, one of each. It goes first to the player who chose their character last, then counter-clockwise, and reaches the roll winner last. Look through the deck in secret, keep one Goal face down beside your board, and pass the rest on. No two players share a Goal, and nobody knows which one you took; the players after you only see what is gone. Don't reveal it until you book a Departure. Any Goal is open to any character, including ones your character can't meet (a Spouse cannot propose Laws, so Puppet Master would be a long night). Choose well.
5. Shuffle the Street and Politics decks. Deal each player **4 Street cards and 2 Politics cards**.
6. Shuffle the Headline deck and deal a face-down pile of **12**. Return the rest to the box. This pile is the game clock. The Goals nobody took go back in the box too.
7. The roll winner takes the first turn.

Your Turn

Players take turns one at a time, clockwise. **One turn is one diplomat's day.** It has three steps, always in this order, and you do all three before the next player does anything:

MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
wake up, tidy up	do your crimes	go to the party
-1 Heat, draw 2	(or lay low)	one political move
+----- all three = ONE turn, then play passes left -----+		

So a full **round** is every player taking one turn. Play normally passes to the **player after you**; **Change of Protocol** (a Politics maneuver) reverses that direction, so "the player after you" and "before you" swap. A reversal never gives anyone a second turn in the same round: the players who have not yet had their turn take it in the new order, and the first player opens the next round as usual. Think of it as a day at the embassy: everyone wakes up, works, and goes to the party, one diplomat at a time. Diplomats do their crimes by day and their politics at cocktail parties.

A sample turn in one breath: "Morning: I cool one Heat and draw two cards. Afternoon: I commit two crimes, take three Heat and \$6M. Evening: I propose Legalise Smuggling, we vote, it passes. I discard down to seven. Your turn."

You can talk, trade money and trade Favor chips at any time, on anyone's turn. The three steps only govern what you *do*.

* Morning (upkeep)

1. **If you are the first player** (the start of a new round): flip the top **Headline**. It replaces the previous Headline and stays in effect until the next one.
2. **Cool off**: remove 1 Heat (minimum 0).
3. **Draw 2 cards** from the Street deck, the Politics deck, or one of each.

⚡ Afternoon (action)

Choose one:

- **Lay Low**. Remove 2 more Heat. You commit no crimes this turn.
- **Commit crimes**. Play as many Crime cards as you like, one at a time.

To commit a crime:

1. Play the Crime card face up and announce it.
2. **Other players may react** with Tip-Off (cancels the crime) or Leak (+1 Heat). Everyone decides at once: each rival puts the cards they want to play face down (or nothing), then all reveal together. Resolve them in seat order from the criminal's left. **Leak Heat lands as each Leak resolves**, Scandal check included, so you know exactly where you stand before the next step. A second Tip-Off on the same crime is wasted.
3. **Cover it or take it**. Now, knowing your Heat, you may play one Cover on the crime. A Cover whose type matches the crime (or a wild Cover) cancels the crime's printed Heat.
4. **Take the Heat**. Add the crime's Heat unless it is Covered or legal for you. If your Heat is now **equal to or above your Heat Limit**, you suffer a **Scandal** immediately (see below).
5. **Take the payout** and resolve any effect text.
6. Put the crime face down in your **Rap Sheet** pile.

You may also play Dirty Tricks marked "Afternoon" during this phase.

Laws are checked at the moment Heat is taken (step 4). If a Law is Repealed during the reaction step, the crime resolves without it.

🍷 Evening (politics)

Choose one:

- **Propose a Law**. Pay a **\$1M filing fee** to the bank (win or lose), play a Law card and call a vote (see Voting). If it passes it goes in the middle with your Law marker on it. Only **3 Laws** can be in effect. If a 4th passes, discard the oldest.
- **Play a Maneuver**. Pay its printed price, if any, and resolve it. No vote.
- **Hush Money**. Pay **\$3M** to the bank: remove 1 Heat.
- **Book a Departure**. Only if your Goal is met. See Leaving the Country.
- **Pass**.

Money leaves the game through filing fees, Maneuver prices, Hush Money and Departures. Bribes only move it around. Spend it to be safer, or hoard it and stay hot.

Burn Bag (any phase of your turn, as often as you like)

Stuck with cards you can never use? Discard **any three cards** from your hand and draw **one** card from either deck. It's free, it doesn't use your Afternoon or Evening action, and you can do it as often as you like: three cards out, one in, every time.

End of turn

Discard down to **7 cards** in hand. Play passes left.

Heat, Scandal, and Recall

- Your **Heat Limit** is **5** while your Immunity chip sits on your board. Without Immunity your limit is **3**; both are boxed on your Heat track. Characters, Laws and Headlines change it.
- You suffer a **Scandal** the instant your Heat reaches your Limit, on anyone's turn.

Scandal: 1. Your Heat resets to 0. 2. Lose **half your money**, rounded down. 3. Discard **half your Rap Sheet**, rounded down. You choose which cards. 4. Take a **Scandal token**. Tokens never go away. Your turn ends if it was your turn.

Third Scandal → Recalled. Discard your hand. You're out of the running, but you still **vote on Laws** and you can still be bribed. You've been posted to the Foreign Ministry, where you are now extremely bitter.

Immunity is only lost to a **Persona Non Grata** Law, the Chaplain's Excommunication, or by giving it up to Defect or enter Witness Protection. Persona Non Grata is a standing Law: when it passes, the named player puts their Immunity chip on the Law card, and the moment the Law leaves the table (Repeal, Term Limits, pushed out by a fourth Law, Redlined away) the chip comes home. The Scandal check when it passes is immediate. A chip given up to Defect or Witness Protection goes back to the bank; Reinstatement or Diplomatic Reconciliation brings it back to your board.

Voting

Only Laws are voted on. Nothing you need in order to win ever goes to a vote.

When a Law is proposed, everyone including the proposer votes at once: thumb up or down. Recalled players vote too. Lobbyist cards add a vote either way. The Spook never votes (its Cost); a Spook holding an unused Double Agent declares before the tally: cast one vote that counts three times, or sit out.

- **Passes** with more than half of all votes cast. **Ties fail.**

- **Bribes are allowed and encouraged.** Money and Favor chips must change hands *before* thumbs go up. A spoken promise is not binding. A payment is. A Favor chip is (see below).
- A failed Law is discarded.

Favors

Diplomacy runs on favors. Every player has **one Favor chip** carrying their character's face. That chip is your word.

Giving it. Hand your chip to any player at any time, as part of any deal: to buy a vote, to stop a Leak, to keep a Tip-Off in someone's hand, or simply to be liked. You have only the one, so while it is out you have nothing left to promise. Chips can be traded onward, so your word can end up in anyone's hands. Who holds whose chip is always public.

Cashing it. The holder of your chip may cash it against you in exactly two ways:

Call	When	What happens
"Vote with me."	During any vote, before thumbs go up	You vote the way the holder says. (Your vote still counts double if you're the Ambassador. If you never vote, the call does nothing.)
"Take it back."	Right after you play a card: a crime as the table reacts to it, a Law as it is voted on, or a Dirty Trick, Leak or Tip-Off against the holder, their crime or their Departure	The card is cancelled and discarded: the crime never happens, the Law is withdrawn without a vote, the trick fizzles. Shred can't stop this. It was your word. A Favor cannot cancel a Departure.

When a chip is cashed it goes back to its owner, who can give it again. Favors are relationships, not ammunition.

Breaking your word. You may refuse to honour a cashed Favor. Take **3 Heat**, and the holder keeps the chip. A diplomat at Heat 0 can afford to break a promise. A diplomat at Heat 2 cannot. Every Favor you hold is a bet on the promiser's future.

Why it plays the way it does. Favors are cheap now and expensive later, like crimes. The broke Heir who buys a vote with the chip in round 2 pays for it in round 8 when the holder cashes it at the airport. One chip each means every promise is the only promise you can make until it comes home, and everyone can see where it is.

- A Recalled player's chips are void. Return them.
- The Goal **Everyone Owes Me** is met when you hold Favors from three different players (two, at 3-4 players).

Leaving the Country

There are no exit cards to find. The nine **Departures** are printed on the back of every quick-reference card and are always available. Each Goal card names the **three Departures its holder may use**.

Departure	Cost or condition	You're telling the table...
Private Jet	Pay \$8M	"I can afford to leave."
Pardon	Your Heat is 0	"There's nothing on me."
Defect	Your Heat is 2 or more, and under your no-Immunity Limit (3; the Heir 4). Return your Immunity chip to the bank: your Limit drops at once, and reaching it is a Scandal like any other. A Defector at Heat 2 is one Leak from a Scandal. Bring a Shred.	"They're onto me. I'm switching sides."
Asylum	Your Heat is 3 or more. Discard your hand.	"I'm not safe here. Anywhere else will do."
Witness Protection	Return your Immunity chip and discard 3 crimes from your Rap Sheet (your choice). A player of your choice takes 2 Heat. Your Limit drops at once, as for Defect. The Goal must still hold after the three crimes go: a Vendetta needs 7 on record to leave this way.	"I have names. Would you like some?"
Slow Boat	Pay \$5M and cool 2 Heat. Resolves at the start of your turn after next: the table gets two full rounds at you.	"Nobody looks for you at sea."
Elected	A Law with your marker is in effect. Pay \$4M.	"I'm untouchable now."
Medical Evacuation	Pay \$3M and discard your hand	"Sudden illness. Very sudden."
Diplomatic Marriage	Pay a \$6M dowry and name another player. They may accept, revealing a met Goal, or walk out. Accept: you both leave, you both win. Walk out: you lose the dowry.	"We're family now."

Booking a Departure (your Evening)

- 1. Reveal your Goal, name your door, and pay for it.** The door must be one of the three on your Goal card, its cost or condition is paid or shown now, and the Goal must be met right now with what you have left. Put the Departing marker in front of you. The price is paid either way; a failed Departure does not refund it.
- 2. Everyone else gets one full turn.** Play continues round the table as normal. Every other player takes their Morning, Afternoon and Evening with you sitting there, Goal face up, marker in front of you. (Online, the table is asked the moment you book: everyone else gets a short window to play a Tip-Off or a Leak at once, then the turns go round.) Almost anything in the game can be aimed at you: Tip-Offs, Leaks, Shakedowns and Blackmail, Frames, Expunge the Record, Laws and Repeals. Three ways to stop a leaver, and two protections:
- 3. Heat lands on you.** Leaks, Society Dinners, Dawn Raids, Zero Tolerance, a Limit drop from Persona Non Grata: all of it counts. If you hit your Limit while Departing you take the Scandal as normal **and the Departure collapses** on the spot. Cool off before you book, or leave with a Shred in hand.
- 4. Shred** cancels a Leak or a Tip-Off aimed at you or your Departure.

5. **Deny.** When a Tip-Off is played on you, you may pay **\$10M** to the bank to cancel it. Once per Tip-Off, as often as you can afford. It comes out of the money your Goal is counted on, so an Extravagance player can Deny their way under the line. You can also answer a Tip-Off or a Leak with the trickster's own Favor. You take no turn while Departing.
6. **Resolve at the start of your next turn**, instead of taking it. Check three things, in this order:
 7. You have not suffered a **Scandal** since booking.
 8. No **Tip-Off** was played on your Departure.
 9. Your **Goal is still met**. For a money Goal that means the money is still in hand with the door already paid: Extravagance needs \$20M on the table at resolution, the Jet's \$8M or the dowry's \$6M already gone. Take a Shakedown during the wait and you may be under the line.
10. **All three hold: you're gone.** You win. The game ends immediately. **Any one fails: the Departure fails.** You skip this turn entirely (no Morning, no cooling, no cards), the marker comes off, and your Goal stays face up for the rest of the game. You can book again on a later Evening, and the table will be waiting.

Diplomatic Marriage is the one door that needs another person, and it is priced like it. You pay the \$6M dowry and name your partner when you book. They **accept**, revealing a met Goal and taking a Departing marker of their own, or **walk out**, keeping their Goal secret, in which case your booking fails on the spot, the dowry is gone, and your Goal stays face up. If they accept you are both Departing through the same round, each resolving at the start of your own next turn. If either is stopped, only the other leaves. Both who leave win.

Why would anyone walk out on a shared win? Because a shared win is still a win for you, and some players would rather take their own door next round.

Why it plays the way it does

Nobody at the table wants to let you win, so the design gives them a whole round to try. What they have is still limited:

- There are **3 Tip-Offs** in the whole Street deck, and they're also the only way to cancel a big crime. Every Tip-Off spent on a crime is one that isn't waiting at the airport. Every Tip-Off held for the airport is a crime that went through.
- **Rap Sheets are a target too.** Expunge the Record strips two crimes from a leaver counting on them; they pick which, and they can Shred it.
- **Money is a target now.** Shakedown, Kidnap the Chef and Blackmail can knock an Extravagance player under the line during the waiting round, and a Scandal halves everything. Book with a margin, or book something other than the Jet.
- **Deny costs more than the Jet.** \$10M to make one Tip-Off disappear is a real decision even for a rich player, and it's the last big money sink in the game. A Kingpin who spent everything on Hush Money can't afford it and has to rely on Shred or a Favor.
- **Conditions are targets too.** Repeal can strip the Law an Elected player needs; Amnesty can put a Notorious player's Heat to 0. The check at resolution is the real one.
- There are **5 Leaks**, and since v0.17 they do touch a Departing player: Heat lands on a leaver, and reaching the Limit collapses the Departure. A Leak against a leaver at Heat 4 is the cheapest stop

in the game. They are also for the crime phase: pushing a greedy player over the line on their own turn.

- **Shred** cancels a Tip-Off, and so does holding the Tip-Off player's Favor. Either one is the difference between leaving and being sent back to your seat with your Goal face up.
- **Gag Order** (a Law) turns off Leaks and Tip-Offs entirely. A leader who passes it is announcing they're leaving next round. Repeal is an Anytime card, so the table can tear it down in the middle of the Departure and reopen the door.
- **Medical Evacuation** costs your whole hand at booking, including your Shred, so you wait out the round with no defences. It's the cheap door for someone who's sure nobody's holding a Tip-Off.

Departure cards

Nine Maneuver cards in the Politics deck share the Departures' names. They have an ordinary **Use** anyone can play in their Evening, and a **Departure bonus** that waives that door's cost or condition when you book through it. They are never required. See the card list.

Other endings

- **The clock runs out.** When the last Headline is flipped, finish that round. Among the players who still hold **Immunity**, the one with the most crimes in their Rap Sheet wins. Ties go to the most money, then the lowest Heat. If nobody holds Immunity, the same order applies to everyone. Nobody wins by sitting on cash, and nobody wins in disgrace.
 - **Overtime.** If anyone is Departing when the final round ends, the game does not stop: discard the Headline and play one more round with **no drawing** in the Morning, so the table gets its full turn at the leaver. The Departure resolves at the leaver's next turn as usual. If it fails and nobody else is Departing, the clock ending above decides the winner; if another Departure is in progress, play another overtime round the same way.
 - **Last one standing.** If everyone else is Recalled, you win.
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Timing and Rulings

- **Anytime** cards (Leak, Shred, Repeal) may be played on any turn, including during votes, during a crime's reaction step, and against a Departing player.
- **Two players Departing at once** each resolve at the start of their own next turn, in turn order. The first to resolve successfully wins.
- A Departing player still votes, still responds with Anytime and React cards, and can still be bribed. They just don't take a turn until they resolve.
- **React** cards are played right after the thing they respond to, before it resolves.
- **Once per game** character abilities: discard your Signature chip from its slot when used.
- **Drawing at random from a hand** (the Pilot's Excess Baggage): the owner squares up their hand and fans it face down toward you. You slide the cards out of the spread yourself, choosing

where in the fan each one comes from, but you see no face until the card is in your hand. Take the whole hand if it holds fewer than three.

- "Legal" crimes (via a Law) still count as crimes: they go in your Rap Sheet and can still be Tipped-Off or Leaked. Leaked Heat applies even to legal or Covered crimes.
- **Cannot be Covered** overrides Covers but not Laws that make the crime legal.
- **Recalled players** can't be targeted by anything and take no Heat. They can still play Leaks and Tip-Offs from a hand they no longer have, which is to say they can't.
- "A player of your choice" includes you. Yes, you can Leak yourself. Notorious players do.
- Character Heat Limit changes are modifiers on the base (5 with Immunity, 3 without) and stack with Laws and Headlines.
- **Limit changes apply immediately.** If a Law or Headline drops your Limit to or below your current Heat, you suffer a Scandal on the spot. Zero Tolerance is exactly as nasty as it sounds.
- If a deck runs out, shuffle its discards.
- When a rule and a card disagree, the card wins. When two cards disagree, the one played later wins.

Quick Reference (front of card)

MORNING First player flips Headline • -1 Heat • Draw 2 (any decks)
AFTERNOON Lay Low (-2 Heat) OR commit crimes one at a time
→ rivals may Tip-Off / Leak (Leak Heat lands now) → Cover it or take the Heat → payout
→ Rap Sheet
EVENING Propose a Law (\$1M fee, vote) OR play a Maneuver (its price) OR Hush Money (\$3M: -1 Heat)
OR Book a Departure (Goal met) OR pass
ANY PHASE Burn Bag (any time on your turn, as often as you like): discard any 3 cards, draw 1 from either deck
END Discard to 7

HEAT LIMIT 5 with Immunity • 3 without • Scandal when Heat ≥ Limit
SCANDAL Heat → 0 • lose half money • lose half Rap Sheet • take token • 3rd = Recalled
VOTE Laws only • all vote at once • needs more than half • ties fail • bribe first
FAVOR CHIP Give anytime • cash: "Vote with me" or "Take it back" (cancel their crime, Law or trick; never a Departure) • break it: +3 Heat, they keep it
DEPARTURE Evening: reveal Goal, name a door, pay it, take the marker • everyone else gets a full turn
Heat still lands: a Scandal collapses it • Deny a Tip-Off for \$10M • Shred and Favors work too
Start of your next turn: no Scandal, no Tip-Off, Goal still met = you win
Otherwise it fails (price kept), you skip that turn, Goal stays face up

Departures board (back of card)

PRIVATE JET	Pay \$8M
PARDON	Heat 0
DEFECT	Heat 2+ • give up your Immunity chip
ELECTED	A Law with your marker • pay \$4M
MEDICAL EVACUATION	Pay \$3M • discard your hand
ASYLUM	Heat 3+ • discard your hand
WITNESS PROTECTION	Give up Immunity chip + 3 crimes • a player of your choice takes 2 Heat

SLOW BOAT Pay \$5M • resolves at the start of your turn after next
DIPLOMATIC MARRIAGE Pay \$6M dowry • name a partner • they accept (Goal met) or walk out
Your Goal card names your three doors.

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