

Election Defense Scenario Session — Run-of-Show

Two escalating rounds · ~75 people in groups of 8 · 2 hours

Scenario style adapted from Freedom Trainers' *Election Defense Scenarios*. This is a fictional preparedness simulation — the scenarios and BREAKING NEWS are drills, not real events. Read the injects aloud, on the clock — the point is to make people creative and generative, not “getting the right answer.”

The point of the exercise

We are practicing to get **ready** — not to get it perfect. Real crises don't wait for a perfect plan. In two rounds we put teams under pressure, drop breaking news on them, and see what they reach for: What are our reactions as leaders, what gets generated in real time, where is the imagination is too small, and how do people figure out division of labor and dynamic strategy? Round 1 is close to home. Round 2 is the federated test — when we are not the direct target, that occurs in other states/cities, but we have to ask, what power can we leverage, what contribution can we uniquely make?

The rules of the game (say this at the open)

- **We're playing to get ready, not to get it right.** There are no perfect answers — there's readiness.
- **You are a team.** Make decisions and create clear roles and responsibilities around a shared strategy
- **Move at the speed of the crisis.** When BREAKING NEWS hits, you adapt — you build on what you have.
- **Bias to action.** Name real actions, real targets, real people — not “we would convene a conversation to have a meeting to plan something.”
- **Commander's intent.** Get clear on the outcome you're driving, then improvise the path to it.

- **Nonviolent and disciplined — always.**

Room & materials

Tables of 8 (≈9–10 groups). A clock/timer visible to the whole room. Each table: butcher paper or the group worksheet, and markers. One wall as the targets, strategies and “**tactical palette**” — as groups report out, capture every workable move up on the wall so the room builds a shared menu. Each BREAKING NEWS is read aloud *and* shown on the screen.

Who runs what

Trainer 1 — opens and sets the stakes; frames the rules of the game; leads both debriefs and the personal-leadership close.

Trainer 2 — runs the clock and the room; delivers each BREAKING NEWS with urgency; calls the report-backs and harvests moves onto the tactical-palette wall.

Run-of-show — 2 hours

Time	Segment	Lead	Minutes
0:00	Open & the rules of the game	Doran + Alex	12
0:12	Form groups of 8 · pick your place	Alex	5
0:17	Round 1 — scenario presented	Doran	5
0:22	Group planning — initial response	Groups	15
0:37	BREAKING NEWS #1 → re-plan	Alex	2 + 10
0:49	BREAKING NEWS #2 → re-plan	Alex	2 + 8

0:59	Report-back / harvest (3–4 groups)	Doran	8
1:07	Round 1 quick debrief	Doran	5
1:12	Round 2 — the federated frame + scenario	Doran + Alex	7
1:19	Group planning — our place, our power	Groups	12
1:31	BREAKING NEWS: he won't seat the winners → re-plan	Alex	2 + 10
1:43	Report-back (3–4 groups)	Alex	7
1:50	Final debrief — leadership, imagination, strategy, tactics, division of labor	Doran + Alex	10

Forming the groups (0:12)

Groups of 8. Set up—when doing this with movement and base organizations, we want them to stay focused on what they can do, uniquely, with their leaders, their base and their constituency. Start with everyone in single organization teams or people can also work solo.

What can you do with what you have?

Base, Leaders, political relationships

Your leaders, in your base. In your network. Who can you mobilize?

What moves or actions are aligned with your constituency? How could you push them?

What political relationships would you leverage? For what?

How is this an opportunity to grow what you have?

ROUND 1 — close to home 10Min

THE SCENARIO — read aloud)

It's the last week of early voting. In a set of your most organized precincts — Black, Latino, and immigrant neighborhoods — every voter receives a notice, sent by the DOJ through the U.S. Postal Service, telling them they have been “flagged as ineligible” to vote. The Governor and Secretary of State go public to calm people down — clarifying that the **state**, not the federal government, verifies voters, and that these notices carry no legal weight. But the fear is already landing. And outside early-vote sites, Nick Sartour and other MAGA grifters are filming Black and brown voters to harvest “content” for the fraud narrative. Your members are calling, scared and confused: *Is my vote going to count? Is it safe to go vote?*

Individual planning: On your paper:

Think about, concretely, your base. And influence. What can you do, creatively, with what you actually have? How do you leverage what you have, for more?

- Who do we move, and how — base, allies, officials, press?
- Who is the target with the power to fix this, and what's the ask? How would you, with what you have, move power to change it?
- What tactical action would you take?
- What do we do about the grifters filming our people — confront, ignore, out-organize, flip the footage?

Trainer 2:

BREAKING NEWS #1 — read aloud (0:37)

The DOJ announces it is sending federal agents to “monitor” polling places in your county. A ballot drop box in your strongest precinct receives a bomb threat and is shut down. The grifters' clips are going viral with the caption that “the fraud is finally being exposed.”

Re-plan (10 min): What changes now?

Everyone RIGHT NOW find 8 comrades—they also have leaders and bases and political relationships they can move. 1) You will need to create a strategy that aligns bases and moves larger and critical targets for defections and pressure the opposition. 2) What do you need from

your most important political and economic targets in your state to overcome the opposition and build momentum and advantage for your base, interests and movement?

Remember:

Name clear and defined targets

And a set of tactics that rely on bases of leaders who must and lead and take action themselves.

The response has to be as sharp as the threat. And strategies and tactics that require taking the risk of moving new constituent leaders into responsibility and action. (not more organizations) more people.

What tactics will you deploy? What targets? What strategic actions? What direct action?

BREAKING NEWS #2 — read aloud (0:49)

The FBI raids the offices of the largest voter-registration and voter-contact organization in your state — carrying out records and equipment — Todd Blanche comes to your city to serve a subpoena on the Secretary of State, claiming the state has “allowed ineligible voters to vote.” A leading union president and a prominent movement leader have been detained. National press is calling you.

Re-plan (8 min): The anchor org is under attack and your leaders are in custody. Who speaks when the biggest org is raided? How do you show force without losing discipline? What do you demand — and of whom? How do you keep the base voting and in motion, not frozen in fear?

Report-back & harvest (0:59, 15min)

Take 3–4 groups. One move each — the sharpest thing they'd do. Alex captures every move on the tactical-palette wall.

Trainer 2

Where did you get stuck? Frozen? Confused? When did you feel insufficient? What did you do about it?

What was the most creative idea or tactic you had or came up with? That involved leveraging the leadership of people.

Create list of tactics.

Trainer 1:

What are you learning about the nature of your power and how you imagine moving your bases and growing it? Every action, risk, shared responsibility, organizes more people. You start with 12 and can end with 500. If you take the risk, in uncertainty, to take direct action. But also many teams who have real missions and responsibility.

What was missing? What did you learn about your actual power and the scale of your base? Do you see how moving it into action in a real world scenario is an opportunity to grow your power by growing your base. How?

WORKSHOP THIS.

Come up with real examples of people leveraging a base creatively and strategically.

What you have to offer is not only your smarts or how well you can coordinate with the staff of other organizations. . .its your base, leveraged, in a strategic role! (examples!)

ROUND 2 — the storm is somewhere else

Set the frame (1:12): Move people to their own state. Doran

This time you are in **your own state** — the place you actually organize. The eye of the storm is on other states. The question of this round is the hard one: **what do we do when it's not our backyard?**

THE SCENARIO — read aloud

It's just after Election Day, and the results are close and contested across the country. In the wake of a narrow **Talarico** win in Texas, DHS/HSI and ICE are surged into **Houston and Dallas**. In Ohio, the DOJ indicts **seven Black canvassers** in Youngstown and Cleveland and declares that **Sherrod Brown's** Senate race “cannot be called” due to “irregularities and fraud.” In Georgia, **Jon Ossoff** wins by three points — but the President cites “foreign interference” and declares Ossoff, Brown, and Talarico **illegitimate**. Local GOP election deniers serving as electors refuse to certify in **Fulton (GA), Dallas (TX), and Cuyahoga (OH)**. It's a standoff — and the national movement is asking everyone to move.

Group planning — our place, our power (12 min):

- What do we do in **our** place, even though the crisis is elsewhere?
- What power do we actually have to move — who and what can we affect?
- Who can we organize, and how fast?
- What would it take to sustain action over **weeks**, not a single day?

 BREAKING NEWS — read aloud (1:31)

Citing the “foreign interference” and “unresolved fraud,” the President declares he will not recognize the winners or seat the newly elected Congress. This is a constitutional crisis. The call goes out for a sustained, nationwide “All In.”

*Re-plan (10 min): What happens in DC — and what's our role in it? What do we do at home? With **which constituency** do we move first? What is our strategy to sustain — days into weeks — until Congress is seated?*

Report-back (1:43, 7 min).

Trainer 1: You can use this across states or multiple groups or geographies. It is about aligned strategy, where we have a shared strategy, but different roles.

3–4 groups. Push for the federated answer: not just “we'd rally,” but how *our* move adds up to national (or state wide) force.

The debrief should unpack leveraging a base, in a strategy, around moving **YOUR** power to contribute to a whole strategy. Move your power relationships around a clear demand.

1. Clergy can do X, Y, Z in core cities; clergy in other cities can do?
2. Governors or AGs or SOS could take action, who can move them?

3. Mass mobilization is required but not on its own! What direct actions, NVDA, strategic action is ALSO required.

Pull out here. What power do you have to uniquely leverage from your own context?

Jess–NY can move Jeffries and Schumer

CA has Silicon Valley

AZ as Gallego and Kelly, Aldulta–AG could call other AGs

Final debrief (1:50, 10 min) — five lenses

Personal leadership — What did you notice about your own leadership under pressure — your instincts, your fears, your strong suit?

Imagination — Where were we too small? What became possible only once we let ourselves imagine it?

Strategy — What power could you wield with partners that you're not using now? What could this set up for 2027–28?

Tactics — Which moves were real and pre-positioned — and which got invented on the fly? What has to be ready *before* the crisis?

Division of labor — Who did what? Where were the gaps — rapid response, targets, base, comms? What would you assign the moment you get home?

Close: