

carry. a game about war. Demo Script

Materials: Printout of the 3x5 Demo cards PDF, 4d6, 3d8, 5d10, 3d12.

This is a demo for two players. You could run it for one, but I think it's way better with two. Introduce yourself. I tend to stand up when I run the demo, but not everyone likes that. Take the two character cards and hand one to each player. Do it randomly, it doesn't matter. I usually put out the card with the Approach table on it in the middle of the table as well. If they haven't gotten a pitch on the game yet, you should do a brief overview.

This is carry. a game about war. It's a game about the tensions, problems and issues that soldiers bring into war with them. Here are your characters for the demo. They have their names, ranks, a brief description, and so on. But there are some game-mechanical stuff on there too. First, Profiles. You (indicate the player with the card for Saint) are an Accuser Profile. This means that, when anything bad happens, it's not your fault. You'll take credit for good stuff, but any kind of accident or negative thing, you won't accept blame, *especially* if it is actually your fault. You (point to the player with the card for Anaconda) are a Warrior. This means that you have some code, some framework through which you view your actions. It may not match up with the rest of your squads; it may not match with the military in general; but you have one. Finally, you each have your Burden.

Now, the first thing we're going to do is fill in your last entry. You see you each have two entries already – in the full game, you would each have written down that first thing, then passed your card to the next person, and they would have written the second thing, and so on. (sometimes its worth explaining this a little more, if they get interested, but don't spend too much time on it) For the demo, I want you each to think of a third entry that follows from the first two on there. The rubric is that it should be something so that, if you read all three in sequence, they will all go together and make sense, nothing out of left field. Don't worry about writing them down, we're just going to say them.

Give them some time to think while you get out the Approach table and split up the dice. Just put the dice that they each have written on the card in front of them, and you get 2d6 and 2d10. If they're frowning and seem to be having a tough time, say If you need some direction just ask, I can give a thought. Or if you have a concept, lets hear it and we can put it into a single sentence together. Usually, the second one is whats happening.

Have them each say their final entry, talking out a concept if you need too. No matter what, their entry will be awesome, unless it really is totally out of left field or inappropriate. If it is, say so and suggest something more appropriate. To cap off this phase, you read through all three entries in sequence, flowing them together. I usually jump up and down and say how awesome it is.

Ok. So, thats that. Now. You two are with your squad in the middle of a Vietnamese village. Your squad has been given very direct orders to sweep and clear this village; there is VC in the area, there are known weapons caches and collaborators, and you are here to just destroy this place. So you guys are pulling villagers out of their homes and herding them into a pen in the middle of the place, torching hooches, shooting goats, slashing open bags of rice, and so on. Now, the two of you are in the middle of the village with the Sergeant and couple of other soldiers. Suddenly, this Vietnamese woman runs out of a hooch, screaming and crying, tears streaming down her face, clutching a rag-wrapped bundle to her chest and running directly at you. What do you do?

They don't get any more info – they need to decide on a course of action based just on that. The key things to remember is that, whatever course of action they take, you approve that and incorporate it into stakes. After they announce actions (including “I stand there and wait for something to happen” or “I freeze”), you say

Ok, so this game uses a Stakes Resolution system, which means that the conflict is resolving why your taking the actions you are. So, your stakes are (and incorporate their action into stakes. This will probably be straight-forward. “I shoot her” or “I yell at her to get down” are good for “Your stakes are to stop her from potentially harming the squad”; “I wait for someone to take care of it” or “I throw myself on the ground” are good for “Your stakes are

that you don't need to handle the situation and someone else deals with it.” And so on. Bring in Burdens if at all possible! Also, the setup is designed to create the question of whether she has a bomb or a baby in her arms. If they don't pick up on this, make it explicit. Determining which one it is a function of the stakes setting, and make sure to incorporate this is at all possible.)

Now, I'm the GM, so I get to set counter-stakes, I get to set what happens if you lose. So, if you lose... (good counter-stakes invert, not reverse, their stakes, so “If you win you stop her from potentially harming the squad; if you lose, it's your fault that she harms the squad.” and “If you win, someone else deals with it and all is good; if you lose, no-one else steps up and it's your inaction that causes harm.”)

Sometimes, their stakes will directly oppose each other (like “I shoot her” and “I stop him from shooting her”); this is cool, and the conflict is just between the two of them. Sometimes their stakes are in parallel, and the conflict is both of them against you as the GM. Announce which this is and how the other option happens as well. Then you say:

Alright, so how this works is you're each going to choose an Approach, the way you are approaching the conflict. There are four approaches: Violent, Honorable, Peaceful, and Subversive. You'll notice that each is cross-referenced to Profiles, which shows the largest dice you can roll when taking that Approach. So, the Accuser is most effective when being Subversive, and the Warrior is most effective when being Honorable. How this works is we will each pick a single dice, roll it, and high roll wins. The table shows the highest dice you can roll for each Approach; I'm the GM, and I can pick any dice in my pool. Everyone picks dice, you all roll. Point out who's winning and losing; ties between the GM and a player go to the player, ties between players go to largest die rolled, and then largest remaining die pool)

Ok, (whoever's losing) is losing. So you're going to face your losing stakes, unless you push. To push, you choose another Approach (one you haven't used yet), OR your Burden Die, roll it, and add it to the dice you've already rolled. Do you want to push? (if you are losing, you always push. I've never had a losing player not push, but encourage it if they seem reluctant) Ok, great. Now, those who are winning can let their result stand and hope that the loser doesn't roll very well, or can push back. Do you want to push back? (negotiate this a little depending on what the dice are showing. Pushing back is never a bad idea for the demo) Remember, to push you need to change Approach, or bring your Burden into the conflict in order to roll your Burden Die.

And so on. After each roll, narrate the progression of the conflict. As the GM, push if you have to until you have one dice remaining in your pool. So, you have the final high number of the person winning the conflict.

Awesome, so you win. Before we narrate that, my dice that I've rolled go out of play, and you guys need to give away your dice to anyone else at the table. You can see that there's finite amount of dice in play, and that they will move around the table a lot! Ok, great. Now; (narrate the result of the conflict according to who won their stakes, and so on. Immediately launch into the beginning of a new conflict; in general either things will go badly for the characters and the Sergeant can start freaking out and yelling at them for their failure, or things will have gone well for them, but then another member of their squad runs out of the hooch after the woman, bayoneted weapon held high, screaming about none of them can be allowed to live. Narrate the beginning, up to where you would say “and what do you do?”, but instead say:)

...and that would go into another conflict in the full game, but that's the end of the demo. Thank you very much! Do you have any more questions?