

T R A D E C R A F T

Vol. 1: The Stockholm Incident

Instructions for Moderators

Overview

Hosting a game of Tradecraft is not difficult but it does require some preparation. Refer to the "Rules for Players" documents for the basic ground rules of the game. This document contains everything else you need to know.

Contents

Your Tradecraft packet includes the following documents in addition to this one:

- US_communiques, GB_communiques, EG_communiques, USSR_communiques: The memos that will be distributed to players at the start of each round
- rules_for_players: Rules that should be explained to players before the game begins.
- tradecraft_stockholm_role_summary: One-page guide to each agent's roles and assignments.
- tradecraft_stockholm_secret_summary: One-page guide to all of the secret information in the game.
- tradecraft_stockholm_score_sheet: Table to help you score the game
- opening_address: A short speech to set up the backstory.

Note that only the Rules for Players document should be made available to players prior to or during the game.

Planning your game night

You will need exactly 12 players to play Tradecraft Vol. 1. (Note that, as moderator, you will not play the game.) There is no contingency plan for playing with any number other than 12, so make sure that you get firm commitments from each player or have alternates on call. I also

recommend having one assistant moderator. This is not required, but it will speed up some of the bookkeeping phases of the game.

Choose teams and assign roles before the game night. I like to split up couples or people who know each other well so that they won't be working closely together. One school of thought for assigning roles is to give the most challenging roles (double agents, especially) to the best players. Another school of thought is to assign roles randomly so that players can't try to guess at your intentions.

Prior to the game night, the less the players know about gameplay, the better. However, it's ok if they review the information available on the website, tradcrafter-game.com.

You should allow about 3 hours to play, including an explanation of the rules.

You will need at least three rooms or isolated spaces: A common area where all players gather at the beginning of each round, a safe house for the East, and one for the West. For example, the common area could be your living room, and each of the safe houses could be a bedroom. Players may wish to find additional private areas to conduct meetings. Use your own discretion about what areas are in play. The smaller the area that players are confined to, the more difficult it will be for them to communicate without other players being aware of their actions. You don't want privacy to be too easily found.

Before the game night, you will print up the communiqués that players will be given at the start of each round. There are 36 communiqués altogether. I like to put each communiqué in a manila envelope with a "Confidential" stamp, which you may be able to get at an office supply store. Each communiqué is coded with the agent number and round. For example, communiqué EG03-1 should be given to East German agent EG03 at the beginning of round 1. These codes are printed at the bottom of the communiqué.

Briefing players on the rules

Once you have all players present, you can present the backstory of the Stockholm Incident and go over the rules. Everything players need to know is in the "Rules for

Players" document. The cardinal rule for Tradecraft moderators is this: Clearly communicate all of the information that players need, and no information that they do not need. If something is not listed in the "Rules for Players" document, the players do not need to know it. For example, players may ask about the existence of double agents. You should not confirm or deny the existence of double agents, except in those instances when a player is specifically granted access to that information. (See Round 3). Players may initially think that it is ok to share all of their information openly within their teams, not suspecting the presence of traitors. You should neither encourage nor discourage this. When players give you information in a debrief, they may want to know whether the information is valid. You should not tell them. Be evasive! Once you get into the mindset that information is of paramount importance in Tradecraft, it will seem quite natural to speak in deliberately opaque, bureaucratic language.

Once the players get involved in the game, they will begin to question any information that they obtain. It is important to establish some sources of information that players can trust. You will want to emphasize that they can trust anything you tell them, including the contents of the communiques. It is also important to make all of the official identities public knowledge. A player posing as a different nationality could obtain information in a way that is not in the spirit of the game. The easiest way to make official identities known is to post a roster where all players can see it.

Players may be confused or frustrated by the statement that "not all of the ways to score points will be known a priori". This refers to the false information in Round 1 and the seduction challenge in Round 2. Let them be frustrated, but reassure them that the most important way to score points is to convey and steal information.

- Notes about mobile phones

It is up to your discretion whether or not to allow the use of mobile phones, especially for text messaging. I like to tell players that "in the 60's, spies had amazingly advanced technology such as wireless messaging devices" and allow players to text message each other. In a group where everyone has a mobile phone, this is quite reasonable, as long as there is no place for a player to easily hide while

texting. (This is the origin of the "bathroom rule".) In a group where not everyone has a mobile phone, or if you just want to go low-tech, banning the use of mobile phones might make more sense. Text messaging is a powerful tool in the hands of the double agent.

- Notes about safe houses

I can imagine a tactic where a double agent whose cover has been blown would refuse to leave the safe house of his or her official team, just to make it difficult for them to pass secrets. If this happens, you will need to step in and allow the other team members to conduct a meeting without the double. This is the origin of the "If you have trouble scheduling a meeting..." rule.

- Notes on the "spirit of the game"

Lying, fakery and snooping are not just allowed in Tradecraft, they are highly encouraged! If players want to listen at doors, make up false information or concoct any manner of duplicitous scheme, let them. What is not allowed is any attempt to circumvent the ground rules. Official identities are public information. No texting from the bathroom. Some mini-games may be scored on the honor system. Make sure that players know the boundaries and there should be no trouble with cheating.

Beginning the round

At the start of each round, each player will be given a communiqué with instructions for that round. It is important that each player understands his instructions. Because some communiqués are much more involved than others, I like to meet individually with each player at the start of each round in his or her team's safe house and review the communiqué with him or her. This way, they can ask for clarification without being conspicuous. I then have them return the communiqué, after taking notes if necessary. This way there is no chance of the player being able to show game materials to another player. This is a phase of the game in which having two moderators is very helpful. Each moderator can meet individually with the six players of one team, rather than one moderator having to hold twelve consecutive meetings.

During the round

After all players have received their communiqués, the round begins. During the round, your only responsibility is to answer questions as they come up. You are free to observe the goings-on. Drop in on either safe house as you wish.

Ending the round

It is up to your discretion to determine when the round ends. I prefer not to set a time limit. Once it appears that players have stopped holding meetings, I call an end to the round.

At the end of the round, you will hold debriefing sessions with one country at a time (not one team at a time). This is another phase that goes twice as fast with two moderators holding simultaneous meetings in the two safe houses. During the debrief you will simply ask the players "What credible information have you acquired during this round?" Players may still need a few minutes to discuss whether they think certain information is credible. You can let this discussion go on as long as you like. Note down whatever information they report but do not comment on its validity. Try to get a consensus, but accept the information if two of the three players agree that it is credible. Use your best judgment if the information has been mangled or worded differently. If the essential idea has been conveyed, you should award the points.

After all four debriefing sessions have been held, total up the points and announce the total scores for each team (not each country). Do not provide a breakdown of the scoring until the game is over.

- Notes on debriefs

It may be possible, especially if mobile phones are used, for a double agent to acquire information in a debriefing session and pass it on in time for his team's debriefing session. This is not in the spirit of the game and should not be allowed. It is probably best to inform double agents during their round 1 briefing not to do this. Another way to discourage this would be to simultaneously debrief the countries with double agents last. For the Stockholm Incident, the two moderators would debrief the

American and East German sides first, and the Russian and English sides second.

Ending the Game

At the end of Round 3, you should choose a side to receive the half-point authenticity bonus. Naturally this is up to your discretion. Then total up the points and announce the winners. Naturally all secrets can be revealed once the game is over.

Special Notes on Tradecraft vol. 1: "The Stockholm Incident"

The first volume of Tradecraft is subtitled "The Stockholm Incident". The game is set in Stockholm, Sweden, during the 1962 Nobel Prize ceremonies. The USSR and East Germany represent the East side, while the US and Great Britain represent the West. (Special thanks to Emily Capurso for help with the backstory!)

Vol. 1 has one double agent and one handler per team. There are misdirection mini-games in both the first and second rounds. In Round 2, one player from each team is told about a player on his ally that he can trust. In Round 3, one player from each team is given the opportunity to find out whether any agent is loyal or a double agent.

Round 1

The misdirection in this round is the false information that two agents can try to feed to the other side. Note that players may try to feed false information to the other team in any round to get penalty points deducted from the opposition. In Round 1 there is an additional incentive of 2 points if the false information is believed.

There is a lot of information in the double agent communiqués in round 1. Even if it takes a little extra time, make sure that the double agents understand their roles. It's better to arouse a little suspicion with a long meeting than to let the double agents make a major blunder early on.

Round 2

The misdirection in this round is the "seduction challenge" in which selected agents can earn points by getting opposing agents of the opposite sex alone in a room. If you can't balance out the number of possible seductions on each team, feel free to assign someone a different gender for the purpose of the game! You only need tell the seducer about this. Seducers should know that they are on the honor system. Ask them discretely at the end of the round how many seductions they managed.

Round 3

Round 3 is relatively straightforward. Two agents will be given the opportunity to ask about exactly one agent on either side. You should indicate whether they are loyal or a double agent. They can ask when they receive their communiqué or later on in the round.

Presentation

The instructions in this document should be all you need to host a fun night of game playing. There are plenty of possibilities to enhance the experience, however. Have people dress up like spies. Turn your house into Stockholm circa 1962. Give the players names to reflect their temporary nationalities. Mix up some cold-war cocktails. However you choose to set the stage, have fun, take notes and photos, and let me know how it goes.

Best wishes,

Patrick Riehl
director@tradecraftgame.com

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