

UNSTABLE SIGNALS

No. 03



THE CARRY ISSUE

THE TERRA CONFLICTUS HOBBY MAGAZINE

UNSTABLE SIGNALS / No. 03 / THE CARRY ISSUE

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WEEKLY ISSUE // 20 JUNE 2026

NO. 03 // THE CARRY ISSUE

THE HOBBY ZINE

PLAYTEST RECORD // SHOW YOUR WORK

ISSUE: NO. 03

THEME: THE CARRY ISSUE

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NO. 03 // THE CARRY ISSUE // HOBBY ZINE THE KILL ISN'T

THE JOB CARRY THE BOX HOME // OR FILE A LOSS

OUT NOW 6 REPORTS COMPILED Q2 2066 THE CARRY ISSUE ZERO GAMES

REPLAYED

// ROLL IN THE OPEN // COUNT THE DICE // BLAME THE TERRAIN // FILE

THE REPORT //

// UNSTABLE SIGNALS // NO. 03 // THE CARRY ISSUE

Six games hit the table and most of them turned on one question nobody planned to ask: did the thing come home. The week the kill stopped being the job.

CARRY IT HOME

NO. 03 // THE CARRY ISSUE // 2026-06-20

THE MAKING OF THE THING // THE DICE ARE ON RECORD.

// THE FREQUENCY

Six games hit the table this week and most of them turned on one question the desk did not plan to ask: did the thing come home. Not did you win the fight. Did the box, the patient, the data, the specimen end the night in your hands.

DEAD IN HAND is our report of the week because it makes the case better than any of us could. A skirmish where one splice wins every exchange that matters, drops more of the enemy, holds the better ground, and files a loss anyway. Both packages were secured. Neither runner lived long enough to carry one off the table. A box you have grabbed is not a box you have kept. You learn that once and you build differently forever.

The rest of the week kept proving it. A Threat Response team in HOLLOWMARK found its demolition target fused to three people on life support and chose the harder job, burning both Failsafe to bring the relay down without bringing the ward down with it. An RPG crew on the TRAVELER walked out with the data and no wounds and still left a name behind in a stairwell. The hunt in JAVA SCATTER walked home empty, no capture, because chasing a runner is not the same as controlling one.

So this is THE CARRY ISSUE. Quill has a relay tower in THE WORKBENCH that finally blocks line of sight instead of standing there looking tall, which is its own kind of pulling your weight. Rio digs into the courier culture the world actually runs on, and what a handoff costs when it goes wrong. Tib's COMMAND TABLE is all about the last ten inches of an objective game: the part where you stop shooting and start moving the thing.

Roll in the open. Count the dice. And before you congratulate yourself on a clean firefight, check whether anyone is still holding the box.

// MARGIT KOSE // DESK HOST

// THE WEEK ON THE TABLE

// REPORT OF THE WEEK

DEAD IN HAND

OPERATOR TACTICS // SKIRMISH // GLASSWING 2-1 // T8 // RIO SOLVENG BRASSARD's gun-line won every exchange that mattered and lost the game by one body, because both packages got secured and neither runner lived to carry one home. It is the cleanest demonstration we filed all week of the gap between killing well and winning. Read it before your next objective game and you will reposition a model you used to leave standing in the firing line.

RAID RACERS // LOW COAST // 2026-06-19

THE EASY LINE

A planned wait only pays if your jumper is aboard for the grab. One missed corner and the smart play becomes no play at all.

CINDER LARK EXTRACTS // T4

THREAT RESPONSE // HOLLOWMARK // 2026-06-18

ONE LINE LEFT LIVE

Spend Failsafe on the job, not on staying clean. The harder version of the objective is still the objective, and worth both charges.

SPINE DOWN // WARD LIVES // T6

RPG // UNSO TRAVELER // 2026-06-16

TISSUE COUNT

A no-shots run can still cost you. Tally the people you walk past, not only the wounds you take, or the campaign forgets nothing for you.

DATA SECURED // NO WOUNDS // BREACH 3

HVT // AMAZON BASIN // 2026-06-15

CUT THE STRINGS

A nat-1 on card one is not the game. Keep your one key operator alive by feeding the medic to the cards meant for her.

HVT DOWN // T3

BIG GAME HUNTS // JAVA SCATTER // 2026-06-14

EMPTY NET

A live capture with a hazard in the lane needs a control plan before contact. Chase a runner blind and you walk home empty.

NO CAPTURE // OPERATOR WALKS

DESK NOTE // THE WEEK // 2026-06-20

SIX FILED, ONE LESSON

No game filed on the 20th yet. Six reports compiled across all six modes, and five of them turned on the carry. Browse the full feed.

2026-06-14 / 2026-06-19

// THE WORKBENCH

Every dead-signal table needs a relay tower, and every relay tower I see at a table has the same problem: it reads tall and plays flat. You build a beautiful lattice mast, eighteen centimeters of open trusswork, and then you discover on turn two that every model on the board can see straight through it. The silhouette says cover. The line-of-sight check says daylight. A tower you can shoot through is scenery, not terrain.

The fix is dumb and it works: hide a solid blocker inside the lattice. The lattice is the costume. The blocker is a core column the eye barely registers because the trusswork is doing all the talking. Build it opaque from the base up through the band where a crouched operator's eyeline actually lives, dress the rest in open struts, and you get a tower that looks like a relay and plays like a wall in the one place it counts.

// BITS

- One travel deodorant cap or a 35mm film canister (the opaque core)
- Coffee stirrers or stripped sprue (the truss cage)
- A dead pen clip or designer-toy antenna sprue (the dish crown)
- Fine sand + PVA (base texture)
- A printed hazard stripe + relay number decal
- Plasticard offcut for the base, 40mm or wider

// STEPS

1. Pick a solid core as tall as your tallest model plus the base it sits on. A travel cap or film canister is the right diameter to read as a mast core, not a pillar.
2. Cage it. Glue stirrer or sprue trusses up the outside so the eye reads open lattice while the core stays solid behind them.
3. Block the firing band. The opaque core has to cover from the base up to about an inch and a half, the height a prone-to-crouched operator's head sits at. That is the line of sight you are actually denying.
4. Crown it. A dish, an antenna cluster, a dead pen clip, anything that breaks the top line so it does not read as a plain tube.
5. Texture and decal. Sand the base, hit it with a hazard stripe and a relay number so it reads as infrastructure somebody installed, not a model somebody built.

The failure point is wanting it to look right more than play right. The instinct is to build the whole thing from beautiful open lattice, and the moment you do, you can see through it and so can every gun on the table. Keep the core opaque. If you hold the finished tower up to a lamp and see light through the firing band, you built scenery again. Start over with a fatter core.

On the table it gives you the one thing dead-signal games are short on: a real line-of-sight break in open ground, not bolted to a building. Drop two of these on a relay grid and you have a center lane that has to be walked, not shot across. Which is exactly the kind of lane a carrier can cross alive.

VERDICT: WORTH IT. ONE EVENING, SCRAP-BOX BITS, AND IT FIXES A PROBLEM HALF YOUR TERRAIN HAS.

// THE RECORD

Here is a thing the setting tells you in passing and almost nobody builds a table around: in 2066, the network lies. Every contested zone in the world is laced with dead-signal corridors, spoofed relays, and feeds that report whatever the last faction to touch them wants reported. The maps in this issue alone gave us a relay grid, a flooded sublevel relay, a solar tower loop, a derelict ship's inner core. None of those are places you trust a transmission.

So the world moves things the old way. It moves them in hands. The single most valuable object crossing a contested zone is, more often than not, a person carrying another object, because a courier is the only protocol nobody has cracked. You cannot spoof a body that knows the handoff phrase. You cannot intercept a drive that never went near an antenna. The dead drop, the live carry, the runner who walks the package the last mile on foot, that is not flavor. It is the load-bearing structure of how the setting moves value at all.

Which is why every game in the line, whether the rulebook says so or not, is secretly a courier game. The HVT is a courier of a kill order. The Raid Racers jumper is a courier of a box. The RPG crew on the TRAVELER were couriers of data that had to leave on a person because it could not leave on a wire. Once you see it, you cannot unsee it, and your tables get better, because you stop treating the objective as a square to stand on and start treating it as a thing somebody has to physically carry through forty inches of people who want it.

The table consequence is one rule of thumb. Give your objective a carrier. Not a marker you stand next to, a thing one named model is holding, that drops where they fall, that slows them or fills their hands. Watch the whole game reorganize around protecting one body. That is not a house rule you bolted on. That is the setting, finally showing up on your table.

The network lies. The courier is the only protocol nobody has cracked.

// THE COMMAND TABLE

1

PLAN THE CARRY, NOT THE GRAB

Most objective lists spend every point on reaching the package and nothing on leaving with it. Before the game, name which model carries and which two cover the carry. If your answer is "whoever survives," you have not built a plan, you have built a hope, and the dice eat hopes.

2

KEEP THE CARRIER OUT OF THE FIREFIGHT

The model holding the objective is worth more than any kill on the board. Pull it one position back from your gun-line so a single lucky activation cannot delete the box. DEAD IN HAND lost because both carriers died in the open. Let your shooters trade. Let your carrier walk.

3

SPEND FAILSAFE ON THE JOB

Threat Response players hoard Failsafe like it is a health bar. It is a job tool. ONE LINE LEFT LIVE burned both charges to bring a relay down clean and that was the correct read. If you reach the last turn with Failsafe unspent and the objective unfinished, you misjudged the clock, not your luck.

4

A NAT-1 ON CARD ONE IS NOT THE GAME

In HVT, losing your point man on the first card feels terminal and almost never is. CUT THE STRINGS kept its key operator alive by feeding the medic to the cards meant for her. Protect the one model who can touch the target. Everything else is a body you can afford to spend.

5

GIVE A LIVE CAPTURE A CONTROL STEP

A capture in Big Game Hunts is not a kill with a different result tag. If the specimen can run and the lane holds a hazard, the hunter needs a way to pin it before contact or the chase eats the clock. EMPTY NET walked home empty for exactly this. Decide your control move before you roll for contact.

COUNT WHAT YOU LEAVE

A no-wounds run can still cost you. TISSUE COUNT secured the data clean and left a name in a stairwell, and that name is the part the table remembered. When you tally a mission, log the people you walked past, not only the boxes you ticked. It is how a campaign grows teeth.

// TWO CHAIRS

We sat down with DJANGO PELLE, who runs an objective-heavy skirmish table out of New Geneva and has a house reputation for walking the box home even after his gun-line is gone. He loses more firefights than anyone at his club and wins more games.

You lose firefights and win games. How?

I decided a long time ago the firefight is rent, not the prize. I pay it to buy three inches of movement for whoever is carrying. If I win the shooting and lose the box, I lost. It takes people a while to feel that in their hands, but once they do they never argue with me about it again.

What is the first thing you build in a list?

The carrier and its two minders. Everything else is leftover points. Most players build the gun-line first and find out on turn four they have nobody free to pick the objective up. I build the exit first and the entrance second.

Give me a hot take.

A secured objective sitting on the table is worth nothing, and most players treat it like money in the bank. The dice do not care that you reached it. They care whether you are still holding it on the last turn. Reaching the box is the easy half and everyone spends their whole list on it.

Any table ritual?

I say the carrier's name out loud at the start of every one of my turns. Out loud, at the table. It sounds stupid. It also means I have not once forgotten to move the most important model on the board, which I used to do constantly when it was just a marker in my head.

Worst habit you broke?

Reinforcing a fight I was already winning. You feel great piling onto a flank that is already yours. Meanwhile the box is sitting in the open with one model on it and a bad activation away from gone. Now I ask, every activation, is this moving the objective or just feeding my ego.

Advice for someone who keeps doing what you used to?

Play one game where you are not allowed to fire a shot until the carrier has moved that turn. One game. It is miserable and it will rewire you. You will never again leave the box standing there so you can admire your own firing line.

// SIGNAL TRAFFIC

How do I make an extraction feel tense when my players know the rules let them just leave whenever? // NO STAKES EXIT // JAVA SCATTER

The rules letting them leave is not your problem. The carry is. An extraction is only boring if the package walks itself. Put the objective on a model that moves at half speed, or make it two-handed so the carrier cannot shoot, or make the exit zone the most exposed tile on the table. Now "just leave whenever" means "cross forty inches of open ground holding something the enemy wants more than they want you." Nobody yawns through that.

Is it worth basing a whole HVT crew around one Initiative operator, or do I spread it? // EGGS ONE BASKET // SCSF OPEN WATER

Spread it, then guard the basket anyway. One Initiative operator buys you the order of the turn, and the turn you lose them you lose tempo for the rest of the game. Build a second model who can limp the role if the first goes down on a bad card. CUT THE STRINGS this week kept its key operator alive by spending the medic in front of her. That is the model: make someone the wall.

How do you make a kitbashed relay actually block line of sight instead of just looking tall? // READS TALL PLAYS FLAT // SALT-LINE YARDS

Quill wrote you a whole feature this issue, so I will be short. Your lattice is the costume. The blocker is the solid core you hide inside it. If you can see daylight through your tower at the height a crouched operator's head sits, so can every model on the table. Build opaque from the base to an inch and a half, dress the rest. Page yourself up to THE WORKBENCH.

What's the move when a new player freezes on their turn and the clock is running for everyone? // SLOW TURN SAM // AMAZONIAN METROPLEX

Help him before the freeze, not during it. New players freeze because they are holding the whole board in their head at once. Hand him one question to answer on his turn: what is the single most important thing my best model does right now. That is it. Do not narrate his options at him while the table waits, that is how you turn a slow player into a permanent one. Give him the one question and your patience, and his turns shrink on their own.

// THE DROP

OPERATOR TACTICS // SKIRMISH

THE CARRY

SETUP // Two splices, one package each, both hidden in enemy ground. Recover yours, deny theirs. **TWIST** // A secured package scores nothing until its carrier crosses your own deployment edge. A box on a dead model drops where it falls and is anyone's. **WIN** // Most packages carried home at turn cap. Kills break ties only.

TURNS // 8.

OPERATOR TACTICS // THREAT RESPONSE

THE HARDER JOB

SETUP // Demolish an enemy relay in a flooded sublevel before the clock runs out.

TWIST // The relay is fused to a civilian life-support line. Bring it down clean and the demolition scores double. Cut corners and the ward counts against you. **WIN** // Relay down with the ward intact inside the turn cap. **TURNS** // 6.

OPERATOR TACTICS // BIG GAME HUNTS

EMPTY NET

SETUP // A solo hunter must take one priority target alive in a flooded sector.

TWIST // A second predator shares the lane and answers to nobody. The target you want is loose in the same water. **WIN** // Target captured and carried to the extraction tile. A kill is a failed contract. **TURNS** // Open. The hazard activates every third turn.

OPERATOR TACTICS // RAID RACERS

THE GRAB

SETUP // Two crews chase the same moving convoy for the same living package.

TWIST // The package can only be lifted by a crew with its jumper aboard at the grab. Lose the jumper and you can win every board and still take nothing home. **WIN** // Package extracted to your start line. **TURNS** // 4.

THE KILL IS RENT. THE CARRY IS THE PRIZE.