

Welcome to Pick Up and Deliver, the podcast where I pick up my audio recorder as I step out for a walk and deliver that episode to you while I stroll around.

I'm Brendan Riley.

Greetings listeners, it's a lovely day here in suburban Chicago.

I'm excited to be out walking.

It's actually kind of a gloomy day.

It's overcast, but not unpleasantly so.

The weather is chilly, but not unreasonable for early April.

It really feels more like late March weather, but I'll take it, especially given yesterday when I left the house that felt like 18 degrees I had to get up my dang winter jacket again.

So, we're not in that boat anyway.

So it's been a couple episodes since I've talked about what I'm playing.

So it's time for a board game espresso triple shot.

[coffee noises] Order up.

I don't know, I like the sound of someone working on a latte.

That's my board game espresso sound.

I know it sounds kind of silly, but you know when I say order up, I'm serving you a heaping, cup full of board game delight.

I have three games I want to talk about today.

They're all old.

None of them is newer.

I think the newest one is 2020, so it's going to be an interesting look back.

No new hotness today, but they're all new to me.

So now I'm going to talk about is an old time game from my shelf of opportunity.

This is Donald X Vaccarino's Android: Infiltration.

This is a game I have to look.

Go look in the show notes folks, I'll have it there.

I have had this game on my top of the stack many times.

At least I would say at least three before last month when I achieved it.

And it's a game that looked fun to me.

I like the theme and I just never got to the table.

Well, I've played it now.

And you know what?

It's pretty good.

Android: Infiltration is themed in the Android universe, which is a fantasy flight, moderate retake of the cyberpunk universe.

Or they're kind of their own take on it.

They use the term "netrunner," which is from the cyberpunk universe, but they expanded out with their own evil corporations and their own technology and all of this.

The plot feels almost more like shadow run than cyberpunk.

At least in terms of you are a group of mercenaries who have been hired to get into the facility and steal as much data as you can.

This is a push your luck game in the long form.

So it's not like flip seven or something where you are each round pushing your luck and then stopping or not.

It's more like clank where you are delving into the facility, trying to get as much stuff as you can and then get out before everything goes haywire.

The way the game works, you set up this trail of rooms that become successively more difficult and valuable.

Each player plays a mercenary or we play two players so you get two mercenaries if you two players.

And the mercenaries are running into the facility, stealing information, destroying things, evading security, then trying to get out before the security arrives at the end of the game.

Like in the adventurers or clank there is a final moment where if you haven't gotten out by the time that happens, you lose.

Now in clank of course that final moment happens when your cubes are drawn, you're put out that way and the game just gets successively harder and harder to avoid having your cubes get drawn.

In the adventurers, if the path out of the temple, the adventurers the pyramid of Horus.

If the path gets blocked by the falling stones, then the ability to get out of the temple is disrupted and that ends the game.

In Android: Infiltration there is this counter that goes up to 99 and the way it works is starts at zero zero, it goes up to 99.

Once the number should exceed 99, the game is over.

At the beginning it's not going up at all or it's going up like one or two per turn, but as the game goes along and you activate more alarms, then it goes up more and more each turn until eventually you lose.

We lost.

I made a tactical blunder and accidentally set off the alarm in a way that none of us made it out of the game.

It's sort of like somebody picking up a whole bunch of treasure in deep sea adventure, they can tank the thing for everybody and that's what happened for us.

But it is an interesting system and pretty fun enough so that I'm considering not putting it into the math trade which I'm about to participate in, but instead keeping it because it is themed around the netrunner universe which as you know is one of my favorites and I really like the style of it.

So that is Android Infiltration from Donald X Vacarino, published in 2012.

Donald X Vacarino is of course the designer of Dominion.

Next up another game I got to try.

I talked about this a little bit in the Fantasy Flight Games 2004 catalog episode.

This is Minotaur Lords.

Minotaur Lords was published in 2004 designed by Reiner Knizia, published by Fantasy Flight Games.

Rob tells me he saw that there is another game that is also called something

Lords and if you get that one you can combine it with this one so you have multiple decks.

Reminds me a little bit of like the Vlada Chvaatil game Tash Kalar in terms of the combined ability in the different decks.

The gameplay is not at all similar.

In terms of gameplay the closest thing I can think of is something like a battle line in which you have a series of contested spaces and each player is bringing units to the board

with which they will contest those spaces.

There is a Red Deck and a Blue Deck and you play Best of 3 and after each game the loser gets to change their deck some or maybe both people do.

I think just the loser gets to change their deck a little bit to try to anticipate what's happening with the other person's deck.

I think once you've played a few times then you can start altering the deck as you go.

I don't really remember what the factions are but the idea is sort of asymmetric abilities.

They are engaging with the game in slightly different ways and so you are bringing different sets of skills to the table to have this battle over these control points.

A newer game that feels similar in terms of the outcome is Drones vs Seagulls which

I mentioned a couple times is a very similar game and that one again there's like 7 control points I think instead of 5 but the game works very similarly on your turn.

You try to gain control of as many control points as you can.

Your opponent is trying to get control of those points on their turn.

The lever has the most control points at the right moment wins the game.

[jackhammer noises in the background] I'm walking by a construction site right now.

The long and short of it was: for us the game felt really unbalanced.

The two decks that we had one of the decks had these cards that cascaded points off of one another so they'd have like a strength of 2 but they have a strength of 2 for each other card of that type that's on the board.

So we literally had a round where Rob drew 3 or 4 of those in his deck and was able to put them out and there was nothing I could do like it was literally impossible with the cards I had to get enough resistance out that he couldn't win the next round or whatever.

And this happened a couple times.

Now it's certainly possible that A) I'm bad at the game.

Absolutely I could have been.

B) we're misreading a rule somewhere.

The one we thought about was maybe you only get the benefit if they're in the same location.

Not on your board but the rules written pretty clearly that they're on your board so that part didn't feel true or see that it's hideously unbalanced which this is a Reiner Knizia game... he is not known for making hideously unbalanced games.

That said, we played two games they were both over very quickly because the blue side just had these cards that compounded each other's strength in a way that we couldn't find anything in the red deck that had anything like that strength.

So we played it twice in about half an hour or 45 minutes and we were like well I guess

Minitar Lords is not for us.

At least it wasn't for me.

Maybe Rob is going around trying to get everybody to play at Rob are you?

Are you still playing Minitar lords?

Head over to board game geek guild 3 2 6 9 and let the listeners know.

But I didn't really enjoy that much.

So that is Minotaur Lords from designer Reiner Knizia and publisher Fantasy Flight games published in 2004.

2004.

I didn't get a chance to dust off one of my top 50 games this is Sidereal Confluence.

I didn't even have to make this happen.

Somebody came to our toggle game night with a copy of Sidereal Confluence and said hey everybody let's play this.

It was great.

I didn't have to teach it.

I just got to sit down and play.

I will say I was a little rusty on the basic flow of the game.

The person who set it up did do a sort of semi reminder of a teach but particularly the way that certain things move around I was a little rusty on so it took me a little while to get my sea legs under me again.

But it is a really interesting game.

I like the distinction or difference between the way the different factions play the kinds of machines you have and what they do.

I like the wheeling and dealing of trying to get people to give you stuff that you want and trying to give people stuff they want.

I felt like this game I didn't have a good sense of how to make my faction do what it wanted.

I think early on I made a really bad trade that hurt my economy in a way that I don't think I ever recovered but I don't know for certain that that's true.

The game is only six rounds so I guess that means a bad trade early on can really hurt you or there's not really enough room for it to hurt you dramatically either way.

So I didn't do very well but I had a good time and I love the system of Sidereal Confluence.

This did really make me want to play it again hopefully with some of the expansion content at some point because while I have played it twice since I got the expansion I have not yet used any of the expansion material just because I haven't had a chance to try it.

And I hesitate to inflict an expansion material on people who are new to the game.

So that was my experience with Sidereal Confluence again a game I think is really fun.

I didn't explain how it plays.

If you haven't encountered me talking about before or haven't heard about it on the podcast

Sidereal Confluence is a game about trading.

The subtitle is Trading and Negotiation in the Elysium Quadrant.

The idea is that players are representatives of alien races making their way into an intergalactic trading alliance.

It is a game designed so that the player who trades the most and best will win rather than being the player who sort of manipulates people or cheats people.

In fact the game specifically disallows cheating or reneging on your deals.

You're not allowed to say "hey I'll make a deal with you" and then not do it later.

The game does allow long term trades which there are a lot of games that allow long term trades but don't allow, don't have any regulation against stiffing somebody so you can say like hey if you give me three gold this round I'll give you six gold next round and then you just not give them six gold in the game.

Many games would not have a response to that.

Sidereal Confluence has a specific rule that you have to meet your obligations and if you can't there's dire penalties to be had.

So that part I find pretty interesting and fun.

I like the way that the technologies come out and the way that as time goes on you get more and more stuff you can do because as people invent technologies it opens up cards that you get to use.



I like that part.

I just am not very good at it.

Good all and all.

It's an interesting goofy game really a fun chance to play whenever I get a chance.

That's Sidereal Confluence.

The original subtitle was trading and negotiation in the Elysium quadrant.

I think at this point they just call it Sidereal Confluence.

So that was my, oh and that was two years and some number of days dusty.

Not two years one month somewhere less than a month off of two years.

Finally the last game I want to talk about today is Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars.

The should not be confused with Sherlock Holmes consulting detective the Baker Street Irregulars which is the green box of that really fun mystery game.

Instead Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars is a comic book mystery game from van ryder games and it's a really, it's a weird, it's an interesting weird system.

In the game you play one of four different members of the Baker Street Irregulars, this group of children like homeless children and vagabonds that Sherlock Holmes is training to be detectives and you are sent off on missions and the game is played with comic books.

The comic books remind me of the old choose your own adventure D&D books.

They weren't D&D specifically these the ones I had but they were like: you're in the Grand Hallway.

If you go left you go to this number if you go forward you go to that number which is kind of like a choose your own adventure but slightly different.

In this one there's a map of London and you are navigating your way down the map around the map of London looking at different places finding different interactions and each player has their own comic book which shares many of the images and ideas from the locations you're going but also different slightly based on your skills.

So if you're the character who has a lot of charisma you might have an ability to talk to somebody and if you're the character who is a bruiser you might not have that ability.

So the different interactions that you can have based on the numbers in the books are pretty it's a really interesting system.

It is much more "choose your own adventure" mystery game rather than any other kind of game.

It is not a cooperative mystery solving game with a really neat format, this comic book format.

We did one of the mysteries there are four I believe in the set although they're all interwoven in the book itself which works really nicely because that means there's a lot of stuff in each round that isn't part of the mystery you're seeing so you can't accidentally see something that would ruin it because there's so much that is part of it.

So that works really well.

I thought it was really fun.

The designer is Cedric Asana and the art is done by Grilan looks like Gremlin without the m, Grilan.

It's published in the United States by Van Ryder games.

Did you get a chance to play this one?

I would recommend it.

It's really interesting at the same time it's definitely a try someone else's copy thing.

I mean you know you could buy it and support Van Ryder games but it is you know a one-play game.

It took us about 45 minutes to play one of the mysteries and there's only four mysteries in the box.

So in terms of one-play games it's relatively slim.

That said I think it cost me 20 or 25 dollars and an unlock costs 15 and that's or the the old single episode unlocks costs 15 or exit costs 15 and those take an hour to play so my lives may vary.

But definitely worth it taking a look if you get a chance.

Well that's it for my board game espresso.

What games have you tried out lately?

Head over to board game geek guild 3269 and share your thoughts there.

See if Rob showed up to tell us the answer to whether or not he's playing a lot of minotaur lords or not.

Well thanks for joining me.

I'm off today.

I hope you next walk

is as pleasant as mine was.

Bye bye.

[Music]

Brought to you by Rattlebox Games.

[Music]