

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

ACTION™

SPECIALISTS™



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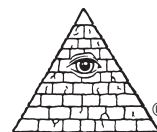
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*“Brilliant plan,
totally professional.
Must be a specialist.”
“This guy is good.”
– The Specialist*

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ABOUT GURPS

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

INTRODUCTION

GURPS Action 1: Heroes and **Action 3: Furious Fists** assume that heroes spring into existence as 250-point tough gals and guys, fully optimized for one of a small number of classic action-movie roles. Those supplements let players whip up capable, appropriate characters *quickly*: pick a template, choose from the modest lists of options it offers, and add a few quirks. Then it's time to leap into action, confident that all the necessary boots are filled!

But just as with boots, one size doesn't fit all. There are many situations where the speedy approach is a little too coarse-grained:

- When a player desires a hero more individualized than **Heroes** and **Furious Fists** allow – often one that falls between two templates – but doesn't want to wade through the entire **Basic Set** or risk omitting important abilities.

- When a player is inspired by a favorite fictional character who breaks the mold (as so many action heroes do!).

- When a player – particularly a late joiner – wants to carve out a niche by stopping specific gaps in a team's abilities.

- When the GM wants a power level different from 250 points, such as in an “origins” campaign about neophyte heroes, or in a one-on-one game that pits a high-budget action star against the world.

- When action heroes need lower-powered NPC sidekicks . . . or enemies!

These are the challenges **GURPS Action 4: Specialists** rises to meet. Its approach to character creation occupies the middle

ground between the open-ended continuum of the **Basic Set** and the broad strokes of the rest of the **Action** series, guiding the process and keeping it focused on what matters to the genre – the tasks described in **GURPS Action 2: Exploits** – without forcing narrow roles on anyone. The wide variety of “modules” available can accommodate the most complicated backgrounds, while the final cleanup process ensures that the resulting heroes remain competitive.

As a bonus, **Specialists** makes minimal assumptions about power level and keeps the most cinematic abilities modular, so even gamers creating modern-day heroes for more-or-less realistic campaigns can use it as a shortcut. Just remember that **Action** glosses over academic pursuits, plausible economics, romance, and anything else that would get in the way of car chases and explosions. In a game where such details

matter, be sure to save part of your Slush Fund (p. 6) for the necessary skills and social traits!

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

GURPS Action 4: Specialists refers to traits and templates from **GURPS Action 1: Heroes** and **GURPS Action 3: Furious Fists**. Those supplements aren't *required* but would definitely prove useful.

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of **GURPS Action 4: Specialists**. However, several perks in Chapter 2 were summarized from **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks**, while the Buddy Bond, Dabbler, and Jack of All Trades traits in Chapter 3 come from the *Pyramid* #3/53: *Action* article “Buddies and Loners.”



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean “Dr. Kromm” Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985, ended up the **GURPS** Line Editor in 1995, and has engineered rules for almost every **GURPS** product since. He developed, edited, or wrote dozens of **GURPS Third Edition** projects between 1995 and 2002. In 2004, he produced the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition** with David Pulver. Since then, he has created **GURPS Powers** (with Phil Masters), **GURPS Martial Arts** (with Peter Dell’Orto), **GURPS Zombies**, and the **GURPS Action, GURPS Dungeon Fantasy**, and **GURPS Power-Ups** series . . . among many other things. Sean has been a gamer since 1979. His big non-gaming interests are mixology and Argentine tango. He lives in Montréal, Québec with his wife, Bonnie, and their cat, Zephyra.

CHAPTER ONE

YOU GOTTA START SOMEWHERE

No two action heroes are the same, but it's reasonable to assume that all start out at least somewhat competent, receive *some* training in useful skills, and have a "trademark" trait or three. As well, they must obey the same rules as other **GURPS Action** characters – **Specialists** is about customization, not cheating! To ensure that these conditions are met, work through the following checklist:

1. Start with *The Basic Action Template* (below) – the BAT – and exercise the customization options offered there. For now, leave your Slush Fund (p. 6) alone!
2. Go to Chapter 2 and add modules from *Skill Sets* (pp. 10-24) and *Power-Ups* (pp. 24-27) until you reach the campaign power level (see *Power Levels*, p. 5).
3. Flip to *Lovably Eccentric* (p. 28), take up to five quirks, and add the extra points they grant to your Slush Fund.

4. Following *By the Book* (pp. 28-30), adjust the results so far to get legal trait levels, which can add points to or take points out of the Slush Fund.
5. Optionally, optimize skills and attributes as explained in *Trading Up* (pp. 30-31). Any points saved go into your Slush Fund.
6. Spend your remaining Slush Fund to improve attributes, secondary characteristics, and existing advantage and skill levels (*From Good to Great*, pp. 31-32) – and optionally, to buy background traits (*Everybody Comes from Somewhere*, pp. 32-33) and *Bits and Pieces* (pp. 33-34). If your Slush Fund is negative (that's possible!), see *In the Hole?* (p. 31).

This might seem like a lot of work at first, but once you've done it a few times, it will be a *lot* faster than poring over the **Basic Set**.

THE BASIC ACTION TEMPLATE

Not all action heroes are created equal – that's one of the core concepts of **Specialists** – but in terms of *Power Level* (p. B487), none should be anything less than "heroic." The following template is where *all* characters created with this system begin. Among other things, it offers average to above-average attributes (particularly DX), the Luck found on every 250-point **Action** template, and a complete set of everyman skills (**Heroes**, p. 22).

BASIC ACTION TEMPLATE (BAT)

100 points

You're quick and resourceful, and have a distinct edge – brains, remarkable reflexes, keen senses, physical conditioning, or something less tangible – that makes you a choice recruit for *somebody's* legitimate force or service, shadowy agency, or criminal crew. As a person of action, you can drive and shoot,

and know the basics of unarmed combat. You're also a child of the modern age, familiar with digital technology.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 11 [10].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-2/1d; BL 20 lbs.; HP 10 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 11 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [5]; Basic Move 6 [0].

*Maya: I was recruited out
of high school.*

*CIA Director: And do you
know why we did that?*

– Zero Dark Thirty

Advantages: Luck† [15]. • Another 40 points chosen from among ST +1 to +4 [10/level], DX +1 or +2 [20 or 40], IQ +1 or +2 [20 or 40], HT +1 to +4 [10/level], HP +1 to +3 [2/level], Will +1 to +8 [5/level], Per +1 to +8 [5/level], FP +1 to +3 [3/level], Basic Speed +0.25 to +2.00 [5 per +0.25], Basic Move +1 to +3 [5/level], Absolute Timing [2], Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Ambidexterity [5], Appearance [Varies], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense† [15], Daredevil† [15], Enhanced Dodge† 1 [15], Fearlessness [2/level] or Unfazeable† [15], Fit [5] or Very Fit [15], Gizmos† 1-3 [5/gizmo], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Intuition† [15], Night Vision 1-9 [1/level], Off-Hand Weapon Training (*Heroes*, p. 18) [1], Peripheral Vision [15], Pitiable [5], Rapid Healing [5] or Very Rapid Healing [15], Rapier Wit† [5], Serendipity† 1-2 [15/level], Signature Gear† [Varies], Weapon Bond (*Heroes*, p. 18) [1], or Wild Talent† 1 [20], or replace Luck [15] with Extraordinary Luck† [30] for 15 points.

Disadvantages: Choose a total of -50 points in disadvantages that suit character image and background. Anything goes, but here are a few categories to inspire you. These often overlap, so be sure not to take the same trait twice – and avoid *opposed* traits, like Fat and Skinny, or reducing DX after raising it with advantage points.

Antisocial†: You lack empathy, which might manifest as indifference or hate. Bloodlust [-10*], Bully [-10*], Callous [-5], Compulsive Lying [-15*], Intolerance (any large group) [-5], Loner [-5*], No Sense of Humor [-10], Odious Personal Habits [-5 to -15], Paranoia [-10], or Selfish [-5*].

Checkered Past: You've committed wrongs. If not widely known, minor indiscretions rate as Secret [-5]; a few crimes, cover-ups, or unsanctioned missions where no one died, as Secret [-10]; and a lengthy history of such misdeeds, or being a killer (e.g., assassin or mad bomber), as Secret [-20]. If known, select Social Stigma *instead* – (Criminal Record) [-5] if censure was legal or (License Revoked) [-5] if it was professional. If you didn't really do it, Mistaken Identity [-5] may apply!

Clumsy§: You're not quick and graceful, as action heroes go. DX -1 [-20], Basic Speed -0.25 to -2.00 [-5 per -0.25], Basic Move -1 to -3 [-5/level], Ham-Fisted 1-2 [-5/level], or Klutz [-5] or Total Klutz [-15].

Cocky: You approach life thinking you're the greatest, or that no harm can come to you. Compulsive Behavior (Thrill-seeking) [-5*], Delusion (anything that overplays your expertise or "natural element"; e.g., "Explosives are safe around me!", "Guns are no match for fists!", or "Reality works just like the Internet!") [-5], Impulsiveness [-10*], Jealousy [-10], Obsession (with defeating

someone, winning something, or otherwise being the best) [-5*], Overconfidence [-5*], Trademark (usually a showy one) [-5 to -15], Trickster [-15*], or Vow (overreliance on specific tactics, from only using guns [-5], through never using guns [-10], to never using *weapons* [-15]) [-5 to -15].

Crazy: You suffer from mental disadvantages – many of which also fit into other categories – entirely because you're *nuts*. Delusion (anything off-the-wall, like "They are listening!") [-5], Flashbacks [-5 or -10], Kleptomania [-15*], Nightmares [-5*], Obsession (with kooky goals like finding extraterrestrial life) [-5*], Odious Personal Habits [-5 to -15], On the Edge [-15*], Paranoia [-10], Pyromania [-5*], or Trickster [-15*].

POWER LEVELS

Specialists is modular, so it's easy to use for characters built on 125 points on up, not just 250-point heroes. Some suggestions:

Sidekicks (125 points): At 125 points, you're looking at the BAT plus one skill set. Little optimization (*Trading Up*, pp. 30-31) is possible, and the Slush Fund should be spent to improve key skills. This suits Allies for 250-point PCs; see *Sidekicks* (p. 8). While such a character could have a 25-point power-up *instead* of a skill set, that's rarely interesting.

Origin Story (150-200 points): An option for those who prefer to grow into 250 points is to build PCs on the BAT plus 50 to 100 points – enough for two to four skill sets. Using optimization to squeeze value from the points and then spending the Slush Fund on broadly useful traits (especially DX and IQ) can give capable heroes on this budget. They *might* sacrifice a skill set or two for power-ups, but earning those is a good campaign goal.

Classic Action (250 points): The standard **Action** campaign, but with custom-fitted heroes. Players will have 150 points left after the BAT. Splitting those between skill sets and power-ups 75/75, 100/50, or 125/25 works well, yielding three to five skill sets. Strategic optimization and Slush Fund spending can garner higher attribute and skill levels than standard templates give – which might be good or bad.

Buddy Movie (300-350 points): A game with only two heroes calls for extra-capable protagonists. One possibility is two broadly competent PCs who *could* work alone but have a pal to come to the rescue. Each boasts a core of identical skill sets that suit the campaign; one or two may differ, but individuality derives mostly from BAT customization, quirks, and the Slush Fund. An alternative is the "odd couple" with totally different skill sets that collectively span the campaign's needs. *Either* pair could focus heavily on skill sets – 300 to 350 points allows for eight to 10 modules – but one or two power-ups are fun.

The Professional (300-350 points): The GM should also crank up the power level for a lone PC. One approach is to keep it modest – the 300-350 points suited to two heroes works – and focus on only the challenges the star is trained to meet. That involves taking the same number of skill sets a 250-point character would, adding 50 to 100 points of power-ups for survivability, and using the Slush Fund to sharply peak a specific competency.

Army of One (400-450 points): Or the GM with a lone player could hand out 400 to 450 points and hurl *everything* at the hero! Such a loner needs eight to 10 skill sets at least, and should dump 100+ points into power-ups to cheat death.

THE SLUSH FUND

The *Slush Fund* is a pool of unallocated character points used for fine-tuning as you work your way through the design process in *Specialists*. It starts at 10 points, included in the cost of the BAT (pp. 4-7). As you develop your action hero, you'll adjust this amount upward and downward.

The Slush Fund provides a margin of error for smoothing out the oddities of traits that come in levels that can't simply be added, or that have limits on how high they can go. If you select several modules in Chapter 2 that offer the same advantage, leading to illegal levels – including repetition of a trait that comes in just *one* level (e.g., High Pain Threshold) – the point value of the excess goes into the Slush Fund instead. If multiple modules include the same skill, and total points in that skill don't buy a standard skill level (which costs 1, 2, or a multiple of 4 points), you must use the Slush Fund to adjust this to a full level. And so on.

Specialists doesn't avoid the overlap that makes the Slush Fund necessary, in part because allowing for every

possible combination would be annoying but mostly because that would be *undesirable*. Assuming that everyone who picks one module will also select or avoid another would run counter to the system's goal of maximizing individualization. Moreover, delicately engineering everything so it adds up nicely would give implausible results even for cinematic gaming – each area of expertise needs key traits at particular levels, regardless of whether *other* fields require the same abilities. Multiplying by the countless combinations possible for action heroes should make the need for this device obvious!

The Slush Fund is more than a bookkeeping convenience, however – it's also a customization tool. Taking quirks (*Lovably Eccentric*, p. 28) or optimizing stats (*Trading Up*, pp. 30-31) to get a character *you* want to play adds to the total. Between those processes and points left over after adjusting trait levels, there will usually be a healthy balance remaining at the end. That goes toward further capabilities that complement and amplify the role *you* see for your PC (*Spending the Slush Fund*, pp. 31-34).

Dimwitted¶: You don't come across as the sharpest knife in the door . . . err, drawer. IQ -1 [-20], Per -1 [-5], Short Attention Span [-10*], or Stuttering [-10].

Dutiful: You faithfully serve a cause or a group. Duty (Agency, mob, service, or similar; 9, 12, or 15 or less) [-5, -10, or -15] or (Extremely Hazardous; 9, 12, or 15 or less) [-10, -15, or -20] would be a campaign decision (see *The Call of Duty*, pp. 8-9) – but any hero might have Sense of Duty (Team) [-5] or (Nation) [-10], or Workaholic [-5].

Extremist: You put love or hate of a particular group or philosophy ahead of your own wellbeing. Fanaticism (Employer, nation, or service) [-15], Intolerance (Rival nation or other large group) [-5], or Sense of Duty (Nation or other large group) [-10].

Geeky: You're the clichéd technical expert. Absent-Mindedness [-15], Bad Sight (Correctable) [-10], Curious [-5*], Obsession (with a specific computer hack, invention, research project, etc.) [-5*], or Trademark (any design, methodology, or means of executing a technical task that's uniquely yours) [-5 or -10]. Tack on Social Stigma (Minor) [-5] if you're a child prodigy!

Hard-Boiled: You've seen evil and are willing to do anything to defeat it. Bloodlust [-10*], Callous [-5], No Sense of Humor [-10], Obsession (with bringing a criminal to justice, exacting revenge, solving a particular case, etc.) [-5*], Stubbornness [-5], or Workaholic [-5].

Honorable: You put a set of rules ahead of practicalities. This usually means Code of Honor ("Fight fair!", Hippocratic Oath, "Stay bought," etc.) [-5], (Gentleman's or Soldier's) [-10], or (Bushido) [-15]. However, Fanaticism (Employer, nation, or service) [-15], Honesty [-10*], Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents) [-10], Sense of Duty (Nation) [-10], Truthfulness [-5*], or Vows [-5 to -15] would also fit.

Obsessed: You put *goals* ahead of practicalities. Express this as Compulsive Behavior (a skilled activity such as hacking computers, modifying cars, or working out) [-5*],

Obsession (any one attainable goal) [-5*], or Vows (anything similar) [-5 to -15] – often alongside Insomniac [-10 or -15], Stubbornness [-5], or Workaholic [-5].

Out of Shape§: You've neglected your body, like the classic donut-munching cop. ST -1 [-10], HT -1 [-10], FP -1 to -3 [-3/level], Basic Move -1 or -2 [-5/level], Gluttony [-5*], Laziness [-10], Slow Riser [-5], Unfit [-5] or Very Unfit [-15], or one of Overweight [-1], Fat [-3], or Very Fat [-5].

Outgoing: You like, perhaps even need, other people. Chummy [-5] or Gregarious [-10], Compulsive Carousing [-5*], Lecherousness [-15*], or Sense of Duty (Team) [-5].

Scarred: A bad experience left you physically and/or mentally diminished. Appearance (Unattractive or Ugly) [-4 or -8], Chronic Depression [-15*], Disturbing Voice [-10], Flashbacks [-5 or -10], Guilt Complex [-5], Hard of Hearing [-10], Insomniac [-10 or -15], Missing Digit [-2 or -5], Nightmares [-5*], On the Edge [-15*], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], or Wounded [-5]. If you self-medicate, consider Alcoholism [-15].

Scrawny§: Beware of strong winds. ST -1 [-10], HP -1 to -3 [-2/level], or Skinny [-5].

Socially Awkward‡: You might be empathetic and *nice*, but you're really bad with people. Appearance (Unattractive or Ugly) [-4 or -8], Clueless [-10], Easy to Read [-10], Gullibility [-10*], Oblivious [-5], Odious Personal Habits [-5 to -15], Shyness [-5 or -10], or Stuttering [-10].

Timid: You don't deal well with strangers or stressful situations. Cowardice [-10*], Fearfulness [-2/level], Low Pain Threshold [-10], Nervous Stomach [-1], Nightmares [-5*], Post-Combat Shakes [-5*], Shyness [-5 or -10], Squeamish [-10*], or Stuttering [-10]. Any Phobia fits, *especially* Phobia (Loud Noises) [-10*].

Truth-Seeking: You can't stand *not knowing*. Compulsive Behavior (Mystery-solving) [-5*], Curious [-5*], Obsession (Learn a specific truth or solve a particular mystery) [-5*], Odious Personal Habit (Nosy) [-5], or Truthfulness [-5*].

Vice-Prone: You find one or more of life's temptations irresistible. Alcoholism [-15], Compulsive Carousing [-5*], Compulsive Gambling [-5*], Gluttony [-5*], Greed [-15*], Kleptomania [-15*], Laziness [-10], Lecherousness [-15*], or Selfish [-5*].

Violent: You tend to solve your problems *bloodily*. Bad Temper [-10*], Berserk [-10*], Bloodlust [-10*], Bully [-10*], Compulsive Behavior (Brawling) [-10*], or Obsession (with assassinating someone or defeating a particular foe) [-5*].

*He thought he was
the subject of a secret
government mind control
project. As it turns out, he
really was being given daily
doses of LSD for 11 years.*

– Frank Moses, in RED

Virtuous: You're a true hero who cares for others and tries to do no wrong! Charitable [-15*], Easy to Read [-10], Guilt Complex [-5], Honesty [-10*], Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) [-5] or (Cannot Harm Innocents) [-10], Selfless [-5*], Sense of Duty (Team) [-5], Truthfulness [-5*], Vow (Refuse no request for *medical* aid) [-10] or (Refuse no request for aid) [-15], or Workaholic [-5].

Volatile: You're unpredictable and flighty. Bad Temper [-10*], Impulsiveness [-10*], Jealousy [-10], On the Edge [-15*], Short Attention Span [-10*], or Trickster [-15*].

Skills: Computer Operation (E) IQ [1]-11; Driving (Automobile, Heavy Wheeled, or Motorcycle) (A) DX [2]-12; Guns (Pistol) (E) DX [1]-12; and Stealth (A) DX [2]-12. • *Either* Brawling (E) DX+1 [2]-13 or Karate (H) DX-1 [2]-11. • *Either* Judo (H) DX-1 [2]-11 or Wrestling (A) DX [2]-12.

Slush Fund: 10 points.

* Multiplied for self-control number; see p. B120.

† When using the BAT in a non-**Action** campaign, the GM may deem some of these traits “too cinematic.” If so, spend the allotted points on *other* choices listed here.

‡ Go light on these problems if you intend to specialize in social skills.

§ Go light on these problems if you plan to focus on physical skills – particularly *combat* skills.

¶ Go light on these problems if you hope to play an intellectual with many technical skills.

THE NEEDS OF THE MANY

In the spirit of customization, the BAT prescribes some important basics but leaves the big decisions to the player. Still, the GM may want to preassign or outlaw certain traits in particular campaign types (see *Heroes*, pp. 5-6). This is especially true if *all* PCs are required to be active-duty soldiers or lawmen.

WE HAVE STANDARDS

The best way to ensure that every PC possesses the minimum capabilities required by strict recruiters – e.g., special-ops forces – while leaving room for individualization is for the GM to make one or more skill sets from Chapter 2 mandatory, and then to set power level (*Power Levels*, p. 5) high enough that the players still have plenty of choices. But some organizations have standards that all newcomers must satisfy before receiving training in even the most basic job skills.

Lean and Mean

A cinematic fighting force or LEO might have *psychiatric* screening so lax that even twitchy, pyromaniac psychos can join up, but *physical* standards appear to be high. Cops and especially soldiers in the movies tend to be unusually buff. Ensuring this in the campaign involves two steps.

First, the GM can shift some of the 40 points the BAT reserves for advantage choices into mandatory physical traits. Replacing the first few lines of stats with the following ones

should work in most cases, though the GM is welcome to use a different configuration:

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 12 [40]; IQ 11 [20]; HT 12 [20].

Secondary Characteristics: Damage 1d-1/1d+1; BL 24 lbs.; HP 11 [0]; Will 11 [0]; Per 11 [0]; FP 12 [0]; Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0].

Advantages: Fit [5] and Luck [15]. • Another 20 points chosen from among the usual options.

Second, the GM can prohibit reduced ST, DX, HT, HP, FP, Basic Speed, and Basic Move; Hard of Hearing; Missing Digit; Overweight, Fat, and Very Fat; Unfit and Very Unfit; and Wounded. Exceptions are possible but rare.

Minor flaws not mentioned on the BAT but listed in *Suitable Disadvantages* (*Heroes*, pp. 19-20) *might* be forbidden. Examples include Motion Sickness in a game inspired by *The Fast and the Furious*, and Night Blindness in a campaign about midnight commando raids. On the other hand, correctable Bad Sight usually passes even in real-world forces, while One Eye with a dashing eye-patch suits cinematic ones – ask Nick Fury or Snake Plissken!

Severe conditions not mentioned in the BAT or *Suitable Disadvantages* – particularly Bad Back, Blindness, Chronic Pain, Combat Paralysis, Deafness, Epilepsy, Hemophilia, Hunchback, Lamé, Mute, Neurological Disorder, One Arm, One Hand, Quadriplegic, Restricted Vision, and Terminally Ill – are always unsuitable for **Action** and especially inappropriate here.

No Section 8s

Psychiatric standards, common in real life, are lax in action fiction. Evidence abounds – consider “Howling Mad” Murdock of *The A-Team*. Still, the worst problems can be *no fun*, whether for the player of the afflicted PC (who has to gibber through cool scenes) or everyone else (“There goes

Captain Crazy, hogging the spotlight and ruining our plans ... *again*.”).

Consequently, the GM might outlaw some or all of reduced IQ, Will, and Per, as well as Alcoholism, Berserk, Chronic Depression, Cowardice, Flashbacks, Kleptomania, On the Edge, Paranoia, and Short Attention Span. Traits that inhibit essential tactics – e.g., Pacifism (Reluctant Killer) or Vow (Never use guns) for a soldier – should definitely be forbidden. It’s advisable to cap Compulsive Behaviors, Delusions, Obsessions, Odious Personal Habits, and Phobias at -5 points apiece, too.

As with physical disadvantages, *really* crippling traits aren’t recommended for **Action** in general or elite operators in particular. These include Addiction, anything that stalls or prevents action (especially Confused, Indecisive, and Slave Mentality), major cognitive disorders (Cannot Learn, Dyslexia, Innumerate, and Non-Iconographic), and exclusively *villainous* traits (Megalomania and Sadism) except when actually creating a villain.

THE CALL OF DUTY

On the other hand, a few disadvantages are *appropriate* for those who serve. The GM might make some of these mandatory and count them against the -50 points in the BAT; if many physical and mental traits are prohibited, this can help PCs hit the disadvantage load the BAT assumes. Alternatively, the GM can add them *on top*, balancing them with the advantages under *Duty Empowered* (p. 9) or an equal number of positive points in the Slush Fund.

There are two main choices:

Duty: Police and soldiers in active service – and officers of all but the most shadowy intelligence and security agencies – have a Duty. Even mobsters might be bound to their boss! Frequency is typically 12 or less [-10], but may be just 9 or less [-5] for deep-cover agents or high-level crooks with lots of autonomy, or 15 or less [-15] for commandos, or for *cine-matic* cops or security officers who are on duty whenever they’re on screen. The Duty is Extremely Hazardous (add -5 points) in a violent campaign where villains are gunning for the heroes almost all the time – a common situation in **Action**.

Sense of Duty: Requiring Sense of Duty (Team) [-5] is a simple way to ensure that the PCs operate as a cohesive unit. To make this more carrot than stick, the GM is advised to allow it *on top of* the -50 points in the BAT, contributing five points to the Slush Fund. In a military or national-security themed campaign, Sense of Duty (Nation) [-10] might be mandatory, and *include* Sense of Duty (Team) in any unit tasked with the nation’s best interests.

NPCs

The rules in **Specialists** address the player who’s designing a PC. However, the system works for NPCs and was designed to support that option as well. A few classes of NPCs are worth mentioning.

Sidekicks

Suitable Advantages (**Heroes**, pp. 17-18) lists Allies (pp. B36-38) but offers no details. The modular nature of **Specialists** makes Allies easy!

1. Decide whether the Ally is built on 50% or 75% of the PC’s points, and thus is worth 2 or 3 points before multiplying for frequency of appearance. (Specialists with 25% of the PC’s points won’t work in anything less than a 500-point game, while 100% and 150% ones are no longer suitable sidekicks.) That’s 125 or 187 points in a standard 250-point **Action** campaign.

2. Spend the first 100 points on the BAT. The GM – *not* the player – selects the associated advantages and disadvantages! In a standard campaign, 25 or 87 points will remain.

3. Buy as many skill sets from Chapter 2 as the remaining points can afford. In a 250-point game, that’s one or three. The player selects the packages but not any options within.

4. Put any leftover points into the Slush Fund. That’s where the residual 12 points of a 187-point Ally end up.

5. Customize. The GM select quirks, adjusts advantage and skill levels, and optimizes (if desired). The player gets to spend any remaining Slush Fund.

Any hero may pay for such an Ally using the points his template sets aside for advantages. This is a good way to plug gaps in the team’s lineup.

Extras

In a campaign that uses *Pulling Rank* (**Heroes**, pp. 24-25), various nameless helpers can appear on a successful Assistance Roll. The GM can quickly create supporting cast – gunmen, pilots, etc. – by starting with the BAT, adding a single relevant skill set, and spending the Slush Fund to improve key abilities. Ignore customization like quirks and optimization for one-dimensional NPCs who show up for just long enough to do their job.

Enemies

Bad guys (**Exploits**, pp. 45-46) more capable than mooks can also use these rules. Handle “mook leaders” like extras: one skill set and nothing fancy. Create “named henchmen” and competent bosses like PCs. The main differences are that bad guys gravitate toward disadvantages off the Antisocial, Checkered Past, Crazy, Extremist, Obsessed, Vice-Prone, and Violent lists; can have villainous disadvantages forbidden to PCs, like Megalomania and Sadism; and may ignore *The Needs of the Many* (pp. 7-9) unless they belong to organized rival groups.

Mandating that everyone have Fanaticism [-15] to the cause or Intolerance [-5] of a rival cause is also possible, especially if all the PCs are guerrillas or revolutionaries – or when designing crazy-eyed NPC bad guys. Less-extreme types might have a Code of Honor worth -5 points (mercenaries who stay bought, gangsters who don't backstab their own, etc.) or -10 points (soldiers).

DULY EMPOWERED

On the upside, people who meet suitable standards and fulfill duties usually enjoy the powers and privileges of their post, most often those described in *Pulling Rank* (**Heroes**, pp. 24-25) and *Legal Enforcement Powers* (**Heroes**, p. 25). The GM might make any of these traits *mandatory*:

Active-Duty Intelligence Officers: Intelligence Rank 1-4 [5/level].

Active-Duty Lawmen: Legal Enforcement Powers (Local) [5] or (Federal) [10]; Police Rank 1-4 [5/level].

Active-Duty Security Personnel: Legal Enforcement Powers (Federal) [10] or (Secret Service) [15]; Security Rank 1-4 [5/level].

Active-Duty Soldiers: Military Rank 1-4 [5/level].

Criminals: Contact Group (Gang, mob, etc.; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15].

Ex- or Freelance Anything: Contact Group (Former agency, force, or service; Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15].

BATs?

Specialists assumes that everyone starts from the same BAT, but that need not be the case. If action heroes can hail from several distinct backgrounds, the GM might use *The Needs of the Many* (pp. 7-9) to craft a variant template for each major origin; e.g., Civilian BAT, Intelligence BAT, Law-Enforcement BAT, and Military BAT. To give everyone the same degree of flexibility, these should all have the same point cost; 100 points makes it easiest to use **Specialists** as written. Multiple BATs offer another way for players to customize their characters – though the GM may limit which skill sets and power ups can be added to each (to ensure that soldiers learn military specialties and so on), perhaps allowing one or two “free choices” to reflect past careers or cross-training.

There are three ways to pay for such advantages:

1. Balance them against some of the disadvantages under *The Call of Duty* (pp. 8-9). This has the smallest impact on player choice.
2. Reserve some of the 40 points the BAT sets aside for advantage choices. This will have a modest impact on player choice.
3. Take their point value out of the Slush Fund. This can have a major impact on how the system works, and isn't advised.



CHAPTER TWO

A VERY PARTICULAR SET OF SKILLS

A specialist has at least one and usually several areas of expertise defined by two classes of “modules” or “packages”:

Skill Sets (below): These represent relatively plausible training at activities such as burglary, jumping out of planes, hacking computers, and shooting rifles.

Power-Ups (pp. 24-27): These add implausibly cinematic elements that may not suit non-**Action** campaigns.

After paying 100 points for the BAT, spend the remainder of your point budget (see *Power Levels*, p. 5) on whatever choices from these lists fit your character concept. For example, in a standard 250-point campaign, you’ll have 150 points left; as most modules cost 25 points, you’ll typically be able to afford six. Gamers familiar with **GURPS**-speak will recognize these packages as “lenses” for the BAT.

SKILL SETS

A *skill set* is a collection of traits relevant to a particular action niche like car chases, gunfights, or blowing things up. Think of it as defining the same kind of role as one of the templates in **Heroes** or **Furious Fists**, but far *narrower*: a face man is good at charm, impersonation, business deals, languages, and much more; a skill set might cover just one of those areas. This allows you to fine-tune your character, mixing and matching in ways that are awkward with 250-point templates. It also lets you create specialists suited to lower- or higher-powered campaigns, or for use as minor NPCs.

Skill sets mostly contain skills, whence the name. However, training can also convey perks, or the specialized techniques from pp. 16-19 of **Furious Fists**. It’s even possible to gain attribute levels and advantages this way, which you can interpret as either “The training helped me develop my talents” or “I was chosen for this training because I had these gifts” . . . the choice doesn’t affect the rules in the slightest.

Each skill set comes with a name and a description. These often suggest some kind of real-life training, but that doesn’t mean you took such a course! You might have learned on the street or at the school of hard knocks, or be a natural. Still, it’s fun to think about the order you learned things in and come up with an origin story. That, too, has no effect on the rules, although it’s likely to affect what the GM is willing to accept when you get to *Everybody Comes from Somewhere* (pp. 32-33).

Skill sets cost 25 points apiece. Many overlap, which is tackled in *By the Book* (pp. 28-30). For now, simply note which ones you’re spending points on and make any choices they

offer – but be aware that it’s more effective to select sets that complement each other and overlap just a little, and that if you *really* want to focus on an area, you can select the same option twice (*Doubling Up*, p. 11).

*But what I do have are
a very particular set of skills,
skills I have acquired over
a very long career.*

– Bryan Mills, in **Taken**

Academics

25 points

You went to school and did *well*, whether that means a liberal-arts education or (with Scientist, p. 21) being a cinematic Mr. Wizard. Any hero can improve IQ later on (*From Good to Great*, pp. 31-32), but if being “book smart” is your skill set, try to build it into your backstory.

Attributes: IQ +1 [20].

Skills: Research (IQ/A) [2]; Teaching (IQ/A) [1]; Writing (IQ/A) [2].

Airborne School

25 points

You're trained at military or paramilitary parachuting. You have no problem with jumping out of a perfectly good airplane, and you're ready to handle threats – environmental or human – when you land.

Advantages: Fearlessness 1 [2].

Perks: Upside-Down (Knife) [1].

Skills: Fast-Draw (Knife) (DX/E) [1]; Guns (Rifle or Submachine Gun) (DX/E) [2]; Jumping (DX/E) [1]; Knife (DX/E) [2]; Navigation (Land) (IQ/A) [2]; Parachuting (DX/E) [4]; Soldier (IQ/A) [2]. • *Two* of these options, or one of them twice:

Advanced Jump: HAHO, HALO, and all that jazz. **Skills:** Parachuting (DX/E) [4].

Air Assault: Gliding down a rope under whirling helicopter blades. **Skills:** Climbing (DX/A) [2]. **Techniques:** Rappelling at Climbing+1 [2].

Glider Insertion: Using any kind of steerable glider. **Skills:** Piloting (Glider) (DX/A) [4].

Amphibious Operations

25 points

You've studied military or paramilitary small-watercraft ops – anything from coast-guard work to marine expeditions. You're at home on a rocking ship or waist-deep in water, and know your way around small craft.

Advantages: Breath-Holding 1 [2].

Perks: Any *two* of Naval Training [1], Old Salt [1], or Surefooted (Shallow Water) [1].

Skills: Boating (Motorboat) (DX/A) [8]; Knot-Tying (DX/E) [1]; Navigation (Sea) (IQ/A) [2]; Seamanship (IQ/E) [2]; Soldier (IQ/A) [2]; Survival (Island/Beach) (Per/A) [2]; Swimming (HT/E) [4].

Area Security

25 points

You're trained at guarding and patrolling airports, borders, and similar chokepoints. Your tools of choice are well-trained senses, sensors (metal detectors, X-ray machines, and even ground radar), and dogs.

Secondary Characteristics: Per +1 [5].

Skills: Animal Handling (Dogs) (IQ/A) [4]; Body Language (Per/A) [2]; Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Electronics Operation (Sensors) (IQ/A) [2]; Observation (Per/A) [2]; Search (Per/A) [2]; Tactics (IQ/H) [4].

Armory

25 points

You're qualified to maintain, modify, and repair man-portable weapons and add-ons. You don't *design* them, but you're adept at procuring and customizing such gear . . . and you've been known to improvise the occasional silencer or Molotov cocktail.

Advantages: Artificer 1 [10].

Perks: Any *two* of Cheaper Gear (Guns) [1], Equipment Bond (any one tool kit) [1], or Weapon Bond (any one gun) [1].

Skills: Armoury (Heavy Weapons) (IQ/A) [4]; Armoury (Small Arms) (IQ/A) [4]; Explosives (Fireworks) (IQ/A) [2]; Machinist (IQ/A) [2]; Scrounging (Per/E) [1].

Doubling Up

You can purchase the same skill set twice to become a true expert. Double the level of each attribute, secondary characteristic, or leveled advantage or perk, and the points in each skill or technique, subject to any notes in the skill set and the limits discussed in *By the Book* (pp. 28-30). Where the skill set offers choices, you may choose differently the second time if you want. A few skill sets offer 25- and 50-point versions; always use the 50-point one when doubling up.

You can *sometimes* take a power-up more than once; where that's allowed, see the specific package for notes and effects.

Bon Vivant

25 points

You're most at home when you have your arm around someone attractive and your feet on a dance floor. You're also a regular James Bond when it comes to card games, fine wine, and fashionable clothing. This goes well with Social Engineering (p. 22).

Advantages: Fashion Sense* [5].

Perks: *Two* of Alcohol Tolerance [1], High-Heeled Heroine [1], High-Heeled Hurt (requires the previous perk!) [1], Honest Face [1], No Hangover [1], or Sartorial Integrity [1].

Skills: Carousing (HT/E) [4]; Connoisseur (any) (IQ/A) [4]; Dancing (DX/A) [2]; Gambling (IQ/A) [4]; Sex Appeal (HT/A) [4].

* When doubling up, the second instance gives Charisma 1 [5].

Booby Traps

25 points

You're a master at setting *and concealing* all kinds of nasty surprises: tripwires, tiger pits, car bombs . . . you name it. You have a disturbing ability to turn anything you find into a deadly trap. You might also be good at avoiding such things – you may use your Slush Fund to buy Enhanced Dodge (Dive for Cover) [5/level] (**Heroes**, p. 18).

Skills: Camouflage (IQ/E) [2]; Explosives (Demolition) (IQ/A) [8]; Mechanic (Automobile) (IQ/A) [2]; Scrounging (Per/E) [1]; Smuggling (IQ/A) [4]; Traps (IQ/A) [8].

Bugging

25 points

You're an expert at concealing "wires" and indoor bugs, and good with recording technology. Many specialists add expertise in Communications (p. 13) and Electronic Surveillance (p. 14) – and at Illicit Entry (p. 17) in order to break in and plant bugs.

Advantages: Circuit Sense 2 [10].

Perks: *Either* Cheaper Gear (Electronics) [1] *or* Equipment Bond (any one tool kit) [1].

Skills: Electronics Operation (Media) (IQ/A) [1]; Electronics Operation (Surveillance) (IQ/A) [4]; Electronics Repair (Media *or* Surveillance) (IQ/A) [1]; Holdout (IQ/A) [4]; Smuggling (IQ/A) [4].

Bushwhacker

25 points

You're adept at moving alongside or ahead of enemies in the wilderness, setting traps and ambushes. For greater deadliness, add Booby Traps (pp. 11-12) or a combat skill set such as Sniper School (p. 22). A terrain-specific package like Desert Training (p. 14), Forest or Jungle Training (p. 16), or Mountain Training (p. 18) is handy if you specialize.

Advantages: Craftiness 1 [5].

Skills: Camouflage (IQ/E) [2]; Naturalist* (IQ/H) [4]; Stealth (DX/A) [2]; Tactics (IQ/H) [4]; Tracking (Per/A) [4]; Traps (IQ/A) [4].

* To give Naturalist more oomph in **Action**, let it act as a complementary skill when using Camouflage, Stealth, Tactics, Tracking, or Traps in genuine wilderness (not campgrounds or city parks!).

We ain't huntin' him, he's huntin' us!
— Preston, in **First Blood**

Businessperson

25 points

Whether you're a slick MBA or a self-made success, you're good at deals, numbers, and paperwork. In an **Action** campaign, this usually means you either lead a corporate-backed team or are using your personal wealth to fund crime or vigilantism on the side.

Advantages: Business Acumen 1 [10].

Skills: Accounting (IQ/H) [4]; Administration (IQ/A) [2]; Gambling (IQ/A) [2]; Leadership (IQ/A) [2]; Merchant (IQ/A) [2]; Propaganda (IQ/A) [2]; Savoir-Faire (High Society) (IQ/E) [1].

Car Thief

25 points

You're great at finding unattended cars, boosting them, and being gone in 60 seconds – for either personal use or profit. This enhances Illicit Entry (p. 17) or Security Systems (p. 21) in a specific role, and fits well with Repairman (p. 20) or Tactical Driving (p. 22).

Perks: *Either* Cheaper Gear (Ground Vehicles) [1] *or* Equipment Bond (any one tool kit) [1].

Skills: Connoisseur (Cars)* (IQ/A) [4]; Driving (Automobile) (DX/A) [2]; Electronics Repair (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Forced Entry (DX/E) [2]; Lockpicking (IQ/A) [4]; Mechanic

(Automobile) (IQ/A) [4]; Stealth (DX/A) [2]. • *One of* Area Knowledge (city) (IQ/E) [2], Streetwise (IQ/A) [2], or Urban Survival (Per/A) [2].

* Allows a complementary skill roll when applying Electronics Repair, Forced Entry, Lockpicking, or Mechanic to auto theft – or Merchant or Streetwise to buy/sell cars.

Chemical Safety

25 points

You're skilled at finding and safely dealing with toxic spills and nerve gas. To *treat* poisoning, take Doctor (p. 18) as well. As dangerous chemicals often go boom, you may use your Slush Fund to buy Enhanced Dodge (Dive for Cover) [5/level] (**Heroes**, p. 18).

Perks: Precautions 1 [1].

Skills: Chemistry (IQ/H) [4]; Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Hazardous Materials (Chemical) (IQ/A) [8]; NBC Suit (DX/A) [4]; Poisons (IQ/H) [4].

Cleaning

25 points

You're the one the mob or shadowy agency calls when sensitive evidence needs to be found and either disposed of or destroyed. Blood, bodies, spent cartridges . . . you make it go away. This is dirty, nasty work that brings no glory, but somebody has to do it.

Advantages: Craftiness 1 [5]; Fearlessness 1 [2].

Skills: Camouflage (IQ/E) [1]; Forensics (IQ/H) [4]; Freight Handling (IQ/A) [2]; Holdout (IQ/A) [1]; Housekeeping (IQ/E) [4]; Smuggling (IQ/A) [4]. • *Either* Animal Handling (Dogs or Pigs) (IQ/A) [2] *or* Chemistry (IQ/H) [2].

Climber

25 points

You're an expert at overcoming *vertical* obstacles – fences, buildings, rock faces, mountains – and with the use of ropes, grapnels, and similar equipment. You have a strong grip and the sure-footedness of a mountain goat.

Advantages: Lifting ST 1 [3].

Perks: Special Exercises (Lifting ST 1)* [1]. • *Either* Equipment Bond (Climbing Kit) [1] *or* Sure-Footed (Uneven) [1].

Skills: Acrobatics (DX/H) [4]; Climbing (DX/A) [8]; Jumping (DX/E) [1]; Knot-Tying (DX/E) [2]; Throwing (DX/A) [2].

Techniques: Rope Up at Climbing-1 [1]; Scaling at Climbing-2 [2].

* When doubling up, treat this as leveled: Special Exercises (Lifting ST 2) [2].

Close-Quarters Battle

25 points

You're trained at rapid close-quarters engagements. Take other skill sets to reflect whether the training was military or police, or indoors or out. This one covers spotting threats, fighting with knives and short-ranged firearms, and using (and *resisting*) stun grenades.

Secondary Characteristics: Per +1 [5].

Perks: Robust Hearing [1]; Robust Vision [1].

Skills: Fast-Draw (Ammo) (DX/E) [1]; Fast-Draw (Knife) (DX/E) [1]; Fast-Draw (Long Arm) (DX/E) [1]; Fast-Draw (Pistol) (DX/E) [1]; Gesture (IQ/E) [1]; Guns (Pistol) (DX/E) [2]; Knife (DX/E) [1]; Tactics (IQ/H) [4]; Throwing (DX/A) [2]. • *Two of Guns (Grenade Launcher*, Rifle, Shotgun, or Submachine Gun) (DX/E) [2].*

* Heroes with police backgrounds *can* justify this – it's used to deliver tear gas.

Command

25 points

You are or were a military officer or senior NCO, or maybe a leader in a paramilitary, intelligence, or police force. You have an inspiring manner, a good range of motivational skills, and a fair grasp of practical organization. Compare Mastermind (p. 18).

Advantages: Charisma 1 [5].

Perks: Penetrating Voice [1].

Skills: Administration (IQ/A) [2]; Diplomacy (IQ/H) [4]; Intimidation (Will/A) [2]; Leadership (IQ/A) [4]; Savoir-Faire (Military or Police) (IQ/E) [1]; Teaching (IQ/A) [2]. • A total of 4 points in Expert Skill (Military Science), Law (Police), Strategy, or Tactics, all (IQ/H). Those with Sailor (p. 21) add Shiphandling (IQ/H) to this list.

Communications

25 points

You're trained at operating and maintaining fancy comms gear – including direction-finders, jammers, and digital networks – and with codes and ciphers. Espionage work calls for one or more of Bugging (pp. 11-12), Computer Intrusion (below), and Electronic Surveillance (p. 14) as well.

Advantages: Acute Hearing 1 [2]; Circuit Sense 1 [5].

Perks: *Either* Cheaper Gear (Electronics) [1] *or* Equipment Bond (any one radio or tool kit) [1].

Skills: Computer Operation (IQ/E) [1]; Cryptography (IQ/H) [8]; Electronics Operation (Communications) (IQ/A) [4]; Electronics Repair (Communications) (IQ/A) [2]; Electronics Repair (Computers) (IQ/A) [2].

Computer Intrusion

25 points

You're a hacker, adept at cracking digital networks and encryption to steal or alter data – typically using a custom rig, code of your own design, and a bit of Dumpster-diving.

Advantages: Born to Be Wired 2 [10].

Perks: *Either* Cheaper Gear (Electronics) [1] *or* Equipment Bond (any one computer) [1].

Skills: Computer Hacking (IQ/VH) [4]; Computer Operation (IQ/E) [1]; Computer Programming (IQ/H) [2]; Cryptography (IQ/H) [2]; Electronics Operation (Communications) (IQ/A) [1]; Electronics Repair (Computers) (IQ/A) [1]; Expert Skill (Computer Security) (IQ/H) [2]; Scrounging (Per/E) [1].

Conspiracies

25 points

You're a conspiracy nut or possibly a MIB. Pick other skill sets for technical know-how – this one covers seeing plots in every word you hear or read. Add Detective Work (p. 14) or Journalism (p. 17) if you pry further, and/or Tradecraft (p. 23) to foil Them.

Secondary Characteristics: *Either* Will +1 [5] (iron-willed true believer) *or* Per +1 [5] (wary shoulder-checker).

Skills: Current Affairs (Headline News) (IQ/E) [2]; Current Affairs (Politics) (IQ/E) [2]; Detect Lies (Per/H) [2]; Expert Skill (Conspiracy Theory)* (IQ/H) [8]; Intelligence Analysis (IQ/H) [2]; Research (IQ/A) [4].

* In **Action**, acts as a complementary skill to Current Affairs, Intelligence Analysis, or Research when probing an *organization* (not a lone individual!) that keeps secrets. When attempting to penetrate active disinformation – e.g., using Detect Lies on a Brainwashing victim or Intelligence Analysis to oppose Propaganda – Expert Skill (Conspiracy) can act as the master skill and the other skill, as complementary.

Construction

25 points

Many action plots require knowledge of buildings, plumbing, tunnels, and so on. Add Illicit Entry (p. 17) to focus on infiltration, or Demolitions (p. 14) or Sabotage (p. 21) for destruction. Brawny working-man's heroes have Physical Training (pp. 19-20) – or possibly Goon (p. 16).

Advantages: Artificer 1 [10].

Perks: Equipment Bond (any one tool kit *or* construction vehicle) [1].

Skills: Architecture (IQ/A) [4]; Forced Entry (DX/E) [2]. • *Two of Carpentry* or Masonry*, both (IQ/E) [2]; Electrician, Machinist, or Mechanic (any), all (IQ/A) [2]; or Engineer (Combat) (IQ/H) [2].* • *Either* Area Knowledge (city *or* tunnels under a city) (IQ/E) [4] *or* Urban Survival (Per/A) [4].

* Nonstandard **Action** skills. Carpentry complements Architecture, Forced Entry, or Engineer when dealing with wooden structures; Masonry does the same for stone ones; and alongside *Repairs (Exploits*, pp. 41-42), these skills can fix kicked-in doors, breaks in walls, and so on to create barricades or hide escape routes.

We are tracing the encryption signal.

– Tanner, in Skyfall

Countersurveillance

25 points

You're a pro at bug-sweeping and spotting lens glint, silently signaling your findings, and generally foiling snoops. Your skills are transferable to snooping, though Electronic Surveillance (p. 14) or Surveillance (p. 22) is better. Consider Area Security (p. 11), too.

Secondary Characteristics: Per +1 [5].

Advantages: Circuit Sense 1 [5].

Skills: Electronics Operation (Communications) (IQ/A) [2]; Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [2]; Electronics Operation (Sensors) (IQ/A) [2]; Electronics Operation (Surveillance) (IQ/A) [2]; Gesture (IQ/E) [1]; Observation (Per/A) [2]; Search (Per/A) [2]; Shadowing (IQ/A) [2].

Sounds like a cowboy score.

– Neil McCauley, in *Heat*

Cowboy

25 points

Perhaps you aren't literally a cowboy, but you're at home on the range, a fair hand with horses, and a good shot. As befits the image, you're tough, rugged, and always see or hear the bad guys coming. Many a cowboy is also a Bushwhacker (p. 12).

Attributes: HT +1 [10].

Secondary Characteristics: Per +1 [5].

Skills: Guns (Pistol or Rifle) (DX/E) [2]; Riding (Horse) (DX/A) [4]; Survival (Plains) (Per/A) [2]; Tracking (Per/A) [2].

Criminal Past

25 points

You are or were some kind of crook. Your *other* skill sets hint at your crimes – from petty Theft (p. 22) to almost any violent option for murder for hire – but you're at home in seamy cityscapes, around everyone from bums and addicts on up to “made men.”

Advantages: Contact Group (Gang, mob, or possibly even the police; Skill-12; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable)* [5].

Skills: Carousing (HT/E) [2]; Holdout (IQ/A) [4]; Savoir-Faire (Mafia) (IQ/E) [2]; Streetwise (IQ/A) [4]; Urban Survival (Per/A) [4]. • *Either* Fast-Talk (IQ/A) [4] *or* Intimidation (Will/A) [4].

* When doubling up, improve skill to 15, or frequency to 12 or less, or reliability to “Usually Reliable.”

Demolitions

25 points

You're an expert at blowing up structures and obstacles, with sidelines in arson and high-explosive munitions. To be a mad bomber, take Booby Traps (pp. 11-12) instead . . . or as well! Enhanced Dodge (Dive for Cover) [5/level] (*Heroes*, p. 18) suits what you do, and you may use your Slush Fund to acquire it.

Advantages: Fearlessness 1 [2].

Perks: *Either* Cheaper Gear (Explosives*) [1] *or* Equipment Bond (any one tool kit) [1].

Skills: Architecture (IQ/A) [2]; Armoury (Heavy Weapons) (IQ/A) [2]; Chemistry (IQ/H) [2]; Engineer (Combat) (IQ/H) [4]; Explosives (Demolition) (IQ/A) [8]; Explosives (Fireworks) (IQ/A) [4].

* Everything under *Arson and Demolition* (*Heroes*, p. 26); all grenades, rockets, and their launchers; and bulk chemicals for explosives.

Desert Training

25 points

You're a desert rat, hardened by blistering heat and whipping sands. This *might* be due to military “desert warfare” training – but it also suits lone rugged survivalists.

Attributes: HT +1 [10].

Perks: Sure-Footed (Sand) [1].

Skills: Hiking (HT/A) [2]; Navigation (Land) (IQ/A) [2]; Survival (Desert) (Per/A) [8]; Tracking (Per/A) [2].

Detective Work

25 points

You're a trained crime-solver. A genuine police officer should add Law Enforcement (pp. 17-18), and possibly Forensics (p. 16) or Undercover (p. 23). This skill set offers basic interrogation techniques – tack on Interrogation (p. 17) for *secret* police.

Secondary Characteristics: Per +1 [5].

Skills: Criminology (IQ/A) [4]; Detect Lies (Per/H) [2]; Intelligence Analysis (IQ/H) [4]; Interrogation (IQ/A) [2]; Research (IQ/A) [2]; Observation (Per/A) [2]; Search (Per/A) [2]; Streetwise (IQ/A) [2].

Disease Control

25 points

You're qualified to deal with all manner of scary contagion, whether contained in a lab or dispersed in a population; to *treat* it, take Doctor (p. 18), too. This includes use of the relevant safety gear.

Advantages: Resistant to Disease (+3)* [3].

Skills: Diagnosis (IQ/H) [2]; Expert Skill (Epidemiology) (IQ/H) [8]; Hazardous Materials (Biological) (IQ/A) [8]; NBC Suit (DX/A) [4].

* When doubling up, the second level gives Precautions 1 [1] and Resistant to Disease (+8) [5].

Electronic Surveillance

25 points

You know all about using long-range mics, sensors, and tracking beacons to keep tabs on targets, usually from a vehicle. This sort of work is for the most part is “hands off.” If you plant bugs and tap phone lines, add Bugging (pp. 11-12).

Advantages: Circuit Sense 2 [10].

Perks: *Either* Cheaper Gear (Electronics) [1] *or* Equipment Bond (any one tool kit or surveillance van) [1].

Skills: Driving (Automobile or Heavy Wheeled) (DX/A) [2]; Electronics Operation (Sensors) (IQ/A) [4]; Electronics Operation (Surveillance) (IQ/A) [4]; Electronics Repair (Sensors) (IQ/A) [1]; Electronics Repair (Surveillance) (IQ/A) [1]; Observation (Per/A) [2].

Electronics

25 points

You're a wizard with a soldering iron, skilled at general electronics repair. This also lets you disarm and sabotage digital devices, but that's not the focus of this skill set.

Advantages: Circuit Sense 2 [10].

Perks: *Either* Cheaper Gear (Electronics) [1] *or* Equipment Bond (any one tool kit) [1].

Skills: *Two* specialties of Electronics Repair (Communications, Computers, Media, Security, Sensors, and Surveillance) (IQ/A) [4], the other *four* at [1]. • Scrounging (Per/E) [2].

Escape and Evasion

25 points

You're good at escaping restraints and prisons, and at eluding pursuit on foot. Spies and commandos often learn this alongside Resistance (p. 21) and/or Survival (p. 22) . . . though it could be something you learned the hard way after doing a little time inside.

Advantages: Craftiness 1 [5].

Secondary Characteristics: Basic Move +1 [5].

Skills: Camouflage (IQ/E) [1]; Escape (DX/H) [4]; Lockpicking (IQ/A) [2]; Running (HT/A) [4]; Shadowing (IQ/A) [2]; Stealth (DX/A) [2].

Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)

25 points

You have the risky job of finding, defusing, and disposing of bombs, including booby traps, car bombs, IEDs, and land mines. Most EOD experts have either Infantry Training (p. 17) or Law Enforcement (pp. 17-18), too. For reasons that should be obvious, you may use your Slush Fund to buy Enhanced Dodge (Dive for Cover) [5/level] (*Heroes*, p. 18).

Advantages: Fearlessness 1 [2].

Skills: Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Explosives (EOD) (IQ/A) [8]; Hazardous Materials (Chemical) (IQ/A) [2]; Mechanic (Automobile) (IQ/A) [1]; Search (Per/A) [4]; Traps (IQ/A) [4].

Femme Fatale

25 points

You use attraction as a tool – and as a weapon. Though you *might* be a “party girl” with Bon Vivant (p. 11) or a full-fledged manipulator with Social Engineering (p. 22), that isn't a given. This is customarily a female role, but gigolos have the same skill set.

Advantages: Appearance (Beautiful)* [12].

Perks: *One* of High-Heeled Heroine [1], Honest Face [1], or Penetrating Voice† [1].

Skills: Acting (IQ/A) [4]; Carousing (HT/E) [2]; Fast-Talk (IQ/A) [4]; Sex Appeal* (HT/A) [2].

* Beautiful gives +4 to Sex Appeal. When doubling up, the second instance improves Appearance to Very Beautiful [16]

(+6 to Sex Appeal!) *and* grants Sex Appeal (HT/A) [12] instead of [4].

† For screaming, of course!

Fireman

25 points

Action movies seem to love firefighters. Such heroes are more skilled than their realistic counterparts at wielding fire axes in anger, using extinguishers as weapons, and *setting* fires. They're also *buff*, and good at carrying victims out of danger.

Advantages: Breath Holding 1 [2]; Lifting ST 1 [3].

Perks: Special Exercises (Lifting ST 1)* [1].

Skills†: Climbing (DX/A) [2]; Driving (Heavy Wheeled) (DX/A) [2]; Explosives (Fireworks) (IQ/A) [2]; First Aid (IQ/E) [2]; Forced Entry (DX/E) [2]; Liquid Projector (any) (DX/E) [1]; NBC Suit (DX/A) [2]; Professional Skill (Firefighter) (IQ/A) [4]. • *Either* Axe/Mace *or* Two-Handed Axe/Mace, both (DX/A) [2].

* When doubling up, treat this as leveled: Special Exercises (Lifting ST 2) [2].

† Professional Skill (Firefighter) allows a complementary skill roll when using *any* other skill to enter a burning building, extinguish a fire, save a trapped victim, etc. In a realistic game, replace Explosives and melee skill with 4 more points in this skill, and the Liquid Projector specialty is always Water Cannon.

Advantage Bonuses

Many skill sets include advantages that grant bonuses to their skills. These affect point distributions: skills that benefit usually get fewer points than those that don't. Some advantages on the BAT also improve skills. *Optimal Advantages* (pp. 30-31) summarizes most of the relevant traits, but don't overlook 3D Spatial Sense (+1 to Piloting, as well as +3 to Navigation for Absolute Direction), Appearance (+1, +4, or +6 to Sex Appeal), Perfect Balance (+1 to Acrobatics, Climbing, and Piloting), and Voice (+2 to Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Public Speaking, and Sex Appeal). It's least confusing to add advantage bonuses at the *end* of the character-design process – but don't forget to claim them when you get there!

Fixer

25 points

Your specialty is obtaining gear – wherever, whenever, and however you can. You're a master of scrounging, smuggling, and the black-market deal.

Advantages: Contact Group (Any group that can help you obtain or smuggle gear – corporation, mob, port authority, etc.; Skill-12; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable)* [5].

Perks: Cheaper Gear (any one of drugs and medical gear, electronics, explosives, ground vehicles, guns, etc.) [1]; Cheaper Gear (a *different* category of equipment) [1].

Skills: Administration (IQ/A) [2]; Freight Handling (IQ/A) [4]; Merchant (IQ/A) [2]; Scrounging (Per/E) [2]; Smuggling (IQ/A) [4]; Streetwise (IQ/A) [4].

* When doubling up, the second instance can be another Contact Group or a superior version of the existing one: improve skill to 15, *or* frequency to 12 or less, *or* reliability to "Usually Reliable."

Flight School

You're a keen-eyed airman with good situational awareness, rated on *one* broad class of aircraft. Civilian and military flyers differ, and while any pilot might take this skill set twice to qualify on other equipment – and ex-military commercial pilots often have both packages – combat aces regularly double up on a *single* type!

Civilian Pilot

25 points

Advantages: Absolute Direction* [5]; Acute Vision 1 [2].

Skills: Electronics Operation (Communications) (IQ/A) [2]; Mechanic (for Piloting specialty) (IQ/A) [2]; Navigation (Air) (IQ/A) [2]; Piloting (Glider, Helicopter, Light Airplane, *or* Ultralight) (DX/A) [8]. • A total of 4 points in Freight Handling and Smuggling, both (IQ/A).

* When doubling up, this becomes 3D Spatial Sense [10] – which aids Piloting as well as Navigation!

Military Pilot

25 points

Advantages: Absolute Direction* [5]; Acute Vision 1 [2].

Skills: Electronics Operation (Communications) (IQ/A) [1]; Navigation (Air) (IQ/A) [1]; Parachuting (DX/E) [1]; Piloting (Helicopter *or* High-Performance Airplane) (DX/A) [8]; Savoir-Faire (Military) (IQ/E) [1]. • Any *three* of Artillery (Bombs *or* Guided Missile) (IQ/A) [2], Gunner (Machine Gun *or* Rockets) (DX/E) [2], *or* Tactics (IQ/H) [2].

* Again, doubling up makes this 3D Spatial Sense [10].

Forensics

25 points

You're skilled at *scientific* evidence collection and analysis, from lifting fingerprints to finding footprints to examining cold corpses. This doesn't require Law Enforcement (pp. 17-18) – perhaps you're a dedicated lab monkey, or a medical examiner with Medicine (p. 18).

Skills: Criminology (IQ/A) [1]; Diagnosis (IQ/H) [4]; Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Forensics (IQ/H) [8]; Search (Per/A) [4]; Tracking (Per/A) [4].

Forest or Jungle Training

25 points

You're comfortable operating in dense vegetation and adept at exploiting the short lines of sight there. You might be a rugged, axe-swinging survivalist, familiar with temperate woodlands – or a commando, guerrilla, or mercenary, at home in the jungle, machete in hand.

Secondary Characteristics: Outdoorsman 1 [10].

Skills: Camouflage (IQ/E) [1]; Hiking (HT/A) [2]; Navigation (Land) (IQ/A) [2]; Stealth (DX/A) [2]; Tracking (Per/A) [2].

• *One* of these options:

Forest: Axe/Mace (DX/A) [2]; Survival (Woodlands) (Per/A) [4].

Jungle: Knife (DX/E) [2]; Survival (Jungle) (Per/A) [4].

*I'll bleed ya, real quiet.
Leave ya here. Got that?*

– Mac, in Predator

Goon

25 points

You're big, menacing, and hard to coerce. How good you are at violence depends on your other skill sets: Heavy Weapons (below), Obsolete Weapons (p. 19), and Unarmed Combat (p. 23) all fit – but action fiction frequently portrays laborers with Construction (p. 13) or Repairman (p. 20), and jocks with Physical Training (pp. 19-20), as goons.

Attributes: ST +1 [10].

Secondary Characteristics: Will +1 [5].

Advantages: Fearlessness 1 [2].

Skills: Intimidation (Will/A) [8].

Heavy Weapons

25 points

You have the strength and training to use *big* guns: flamethrowers, grenade launchers, LAWs, machine guns, mortars, and SAMs. The most realistic background for this stuff is military – but in *Action*, all bets are off!

Attributes: ST +1 [10].

Perks: Huge Weapons 1 [1].

Skills: Artillery (Cannon *or* Guided Missile) (IQ/A) [2]; Gunner (Cannon *or* Machine Gun) (DX/E) [2]; Guns (Grenade Launcher) (DX/E) [2]; Guns (LAW) (DX/E) [2]; Guns (Light Machine Gun) (DX/E) [2]; Liquid Projector (Flamethrower) (DX/E) [2]. • Another 2 points in any one of those skills *or* Forward Observer (IQ/A) [2].

Hostile Extraction

25 points

That is, *kidnapping*: You stalk your unsuspecting quarry until you can overpower him – usually to force him into a vehicle. Tools range from basic (threats, blackjacks, grappling, rope, and handcuffs) to high-tech (pepper spray, stun guns, and Tasers).

Advantages: Craftiness 1 [5].

Skills: Brawling (DX/E) [2]; Fast-Draw (Pistol) (DX/E) [1]; Guns (Pistol) (DX/E) [1]; Holdout (IQ/A) [2]; Intimidation (Will/A) [4]; Knot-Tying (DX/E) [2]; Liquid Projector (Sprayer) (DX/E) [2]; Shadowing (IQ/A) [2]; Stealth (DX/A) [2]. • *Either* Judo (DX/H) [2] *or* Wrestling (DX/A) [2].

Illicit Entry

25 points

You have in-depth experience at defeating doors and mechanical locks, and aren't bad with simpler fences and alarms. A full-on thief also needs a few of Climber (p. 12), Parkour (p. 19), Security Systems (p. 21), and Theft (p. 22).

Perks: Equipment Bond (any item from *Burglar's Tools, Heroes*, pp. 26-27) [1].

Skills: Climbing (DX/A) [2]; Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Escape (DX/H) [4]; Forced Entry (DX/E) [4]; Lockpicking (IQ/A) [8]; Stealth (DX/A) [2].

Impersonation

25 points

You're good at passing yourself off as someone you aren't – usually a generic alter-ego, occasionally a specific target – and are *especially* fluent in one particular cultural background. You're skilled with faked mannerisms, disguises, and outright lies.

Advantages: Craftiness 1 [5]; Cultural Familiarity (any)* [1]; Language (any at Native)* [6].

Skills: Acting (IQ/A) [4]; Disguise (IQ/A) [4]; Fast-Talk (IQ/A) [4]. • One skill for *Fitting In (Exploits*, p. 16): Administration (IQ/A) [1], Savoir-Faire (High Society, Mafia, Military, or Police) (IQ/E) [1], or Streetwise (IQ/A) [1].

* Each counts as a successful complementary skill roll (giving +1) when using Acting or Fast-Talk merely *not* to be identified as yourself.

*You'll be impersonating
General Anatoly Fedorov.
– Recording,
in Mission:
Impossible –
Ghost Protocol*

Infantry Training

25 points

You've attended boot camp and learned to shoot rifles, chuck grenades, and bayonet things – and to salute, march, and schlep a heavy pack. To raise combat skills, also take Close-Quarters Battle (pp. 12-13), Heavy Weapons (p. 16), Sniper School (p. 22), or the like.

Advantages: Fit* [5].

Skills*: Camouflage (IQ/E) [1]; Guns (Rifle) (DX/E) [2]; Hiking (HT/A) [2]; NBC Suit (DX/A) [2]; Savoir-Faire (Military) (IQ/E) [1]; Soldier (IQ/A) [4]; Spear (DX/A) [2]; Throwing (DX/A) [2]. • *Either* Brawling (DX/E) [2] *or* Karate (DX/H) [2]. • *Either* Judo (DX/H) [2] *or* Wrestling (DX/A) [2].

* When doubling up, Fit [5] becomes a general HT +1 [10], and the soldier may opt *not* to double up on one skill, instead spending the points on Gunner (any) or Guns (any), both (DX/E); Artillery (any) or Forward Observer, both (IQ/A); or Engineer (Combat) (IQ/H).

Intelligence

25 points

You've been taught to identify valuable information, grab what you can (especially maps and reports), and memorize or photograph what you can't. You also know how to *analyze* this stuff – preferably after you're out of harm's way.

Advantages: Eidetic Memory* [5].

Skills: Cartography (IQ/A) [2]; Intelligence Analysis (IQ/H) [8]; Photography (IQ/A) [2]; Search (Per/A) [2]; Speed-Reading (IQ/A) [2]. • Another 4 points distributed among any of those skills, Accounting (IQ/H), or Expert Skill (Military Science) (IQ/H).

* When doubling up, this becomes Photographic Memory [10].

Interrogation

25 points

You're a hardcore interrogator. You don't just interview people – that's Detective Work (p. 14) or Journalism (below). You *break* them, and might even employ torture. If you don't merely learn but also attempt to *alter* what your subject believes, get Psy-Ops (p. 20) as well.

Perks: Penetrating Voice* [1].

Skills: Detect Lies (Per/H) [8]; Interrogation (IQ/A) [8]; Intimidation (Will/A) [4]; Psychology (IQ/H) [4].

* When you have someone strapped to a chair and are yelling at him, the +1 to Intimidation definitely *does* apply!

Journalism

25 points

Hard-nosed reporters and stringers seeking their big break are often drawn into *Action* stories. Anything interesting or unusual attracts you. You're used to using investigative skills at bonuses in safe circumstances (pp. B345-346); double up to count on them in dangerous ones.

Skills: Current Affairs (any) (IQ/E) [2]; Current Affairs (any other) (IQ/E) [1]; Intelligence Analysis (IQ/H) [2]; Interrogation (IQ/A) [2]; Observation (Per/A) [2]; Photography (IQ/A) [2]; Propaganda (IQ/A) [2]; Public Speaking (IQ/A) [4]; Research (IQ/A) [4]; Writing (IQ/A) [4].

Law Enforcement

25 points

You know how to pound a beat and respect procedure. Combat training spans the "spectrum of force" from unarmed, through pepper spray, Taser, and baton or tonfa, to handgun and finally shotgun. To be good at anything *but* driving around, making people respect your authority, add a skill set like Area Security (p. 11), Detective Work (p. 14), Forensics (p. 16), or Personal Security (p. 19).

Skills: Criminology (IQ/A) [2]; Guns (Pistol) (DX/E) [1]; Guns (Shotgun or Submachine Gun) (DX/E) [2]; Law (Police) (IQ/H) [4]; Liquid Projector (Sprayer) (DX/E) [2]; Savoir-Faire (Police) (IQ/E) [1]. • *Either* Driving (Automobile or Motorcycle) or Riding (Horse), both (DX/A) [2]. • *Either* Brawling (DX/E) [2] or Karate (DX/H) [2]. • *Either* Judo (DX/H) [2] or Wrestling (DX/A) [2]. • *Either* Shortsword or Tonfa, both (DX/A) [2].

Techniques: Arm Lock at Judo+2 or Wrestling+2 [2]; Retain Weapon (Pistol) at DX+2 [3].

Linguist

25 points

You're a trained interpreter or just a "citizen of the world." You're multilingual in the extreme and have a trained ear.

Advantages: Acute Hearing 1 [2]; Language Talent* [10]; Language (any at Native) [4]; Language (any other at Native) [4]; Language (yet *another* at Native) [4].

Skills: *One* of Gesture (IQ/E) [1], Lip Reading (Per/A) [1], Public Speaking (IQ/A) [1], or Writing (IQ/A) [1] – or Linguistics (IQ/H) [1] in a realistic campaign, though **Action** doesn't use that skill.

* When doubling up, choose Cultural Adaptability [10] or Voice [10] the second time.

Local Expert

25 points

Traveling heroes in globetrotting campaigns need locals to navigate, translate, and make introductions. This skill set covers NPC guides and "exotic foreigner" PCs alike.

Advantages*: Contact Group (Any local group of importance; Skill-12; 12 or less; Somewhat Reliable)† [10]; Cultural Familiarity (any) [1]; Language (any at Native) [6].

Skills*: Area Knowledge (any) (IQ/E) [2]; Current Affairs (Regional) (IQ/E) [2]. • *One* of Savoir-Faire (High Society, Mafia, or Servant) (IQ/E) [4], or Streetwise (IQ/A) [4].

* Choose traits consistently! A Moscow-based underworld liaison might have Contact Group (*Sohitsevskaya Bratva*), Cultural Familiarity (Eastern Europe), Language (Russian), Area Knowledge (Moscow), Current Affairs (Moscow), and Savoir-Faire (Mafia), while a state-provided attaché in China gets Contact Group (Ministry of State Security), Cultural Familiarity (East Asia), Language (Mandarin), Area Knowledge (Beijing), Current Affairs (Beijing), and Savoir-Faire (Servant). Mixing these lists would make no sense.

† When doubling up, improve skill to 15 or reliability to "Usually Reliable."

Mastermind

25 points

You excel at *Planning* (**Exploits**, p. 17) – prepping for stings, tactical strikes, heists, raids, and so on. You work best with maps, equipment lists, and mockups. To be really good with people, take Command (p. 13) as well.

Skills: Area Knowledge (any) (IQ/A) [1]; Cartography (IQ/A) [4]; Research (IQ/A) [4]. • *Three* of Architecture, Leadership,

Streetwise, Teaching, or Writing, all (IQ/A) [4]; or Strategy or Tactics, both (IQ/H) [4]. • *Either* Criminology (IQ/A) [4] or Intelligence Analysis (IQ/H) [4].

Medicine

You're a trained medical practitioner. The 25-point level (Medic) is for a military corpsman, police- or fire-department paramedic, or similar first-responder; the 50-point level (Doctor), for a qualified physician. In either case, you may use your Slush Fund to buy Higher Purpose ("Medic!") [5]; see **Heroes**, p. 18.

Medic

25 points

Advantages: Healer 1 [10].

Perks: Equipment Bond (crash kit or first aid kit) [1].

Skills: Diagnosis (IQ/H) [1]; Fast-Draw (Medical Gear) (DX/E) [1]; First Aid (IQ/E) [4]; Surgery (IQ/VH) [8].

Doctor

50 points

Advantages: Healer 3 [30].

Perks: Equipment Bond (crash kit, first aid kit, or surgical kit) [1].

Skills: Diagnosis (IQ/H) [4]; Fast-Draw (Medical Gear) (DX/E) [1]; Pharmacy (Synthetic) (IQ/H) [2]; Physician (IQ/H) [4]; Surgery (IQ/VH) [8].

GSW. That's what the hospitals call it: gunshot wound. Doctor has to report it to the police.

– Porter, in **Payback**

Mountain Training

25 points

You're accustomed to moving through and surviving in mountainous terrain, where the ground is at best uneven and at worst *vertical*. You may belong to a special military unit or be a simple mountain man. Climber (p. 12) is a common complement.

Advantages: Outdoorsman 1 [10].

Perks: Sure-Footed (Uneven) [1].

Skills: Camouflage (IQ/E) [1]; Climbing (DX/A) [4]; Hiking (HT/A) [2]; Knot-Tying (DX/E) [1]; Navigation (Land) (IQ/A) [2]; Survival (Mountain) (Per/A) [4].

Negotiator

You know what people want and try to broker deals between all parties in a dispute. With Law Enforcement (pp. 17-18), this makes you a cop who handles tense stand-offs, but that isn't the only option – plenty of super-spies are diplomats, at least in name.

Negotiator 1

25 points

Advantages: Sensitive [5].

Skills: Diplomacy (IQ/H) [8]; Merchant (IQ/A) [4]; Psychology (IQ/H) [8].

Negotiator 2

50 points

Advantages: Empathy [15]; Voice [10].

Skills: Diplomacy (IQ/H) [8]; Merchant (IQ/A) [8]; Psychology (IQ/H) [8]; Public Speaking (IQ/A) [1].

Nuclear Disposal

25 points

You know the correct techniques for detecting, handling, and disposing of radioactive dangers like stolen plutonium, dirty bombs, and nuclear weapons. This just about always suggests a military background! (It's also very specialized.)

Advantages: Fearlessness 1 [2].

Perks: Precautions 1 [1].

Skills: Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Expert Skill (Military Science) (IQ/H) [2]; Explosives (Nuclear Ordnance Disposal) (IQ/A) [8]; Hazardous Materials (Radioactive) (IQ/A) [4]; NBC Suit (DX/A) [4].

Obsolete Weapons

25 points

Action stories have a special place for slick heroes who wield katanas or sword canes despite the existence of guns; for thugs who like clubs, lengths of chain, and axes; for all manner of knife-fighters; and of course for ninjas (who often double up!).

Advantages: Enhanced Parry 1 (One melee weapon) [5].

Perks and Techniques*: A total of 8 points in any combination of *weapon* perks and techniques from *Furious Fists*, pp. 15-19 for which you have the prerequisites.

Skills*: A total of 12 points in any of Fast-Draw (any low-tech weapon) or Knife, both (DX/E); Axe/Mace, Broadsword, Cloak, Jitte/Sai, Main-Gauche, Parry Missile Weapons, Rapier, Saber, Shortsword, Smallsword, Spear, Staff, Tonfa, Two-Handed Axe/Mace, Two-Handed Sword, or Whip, all (DX/A); Flail, Kusari, or Two-Handed Flail, all (DX/H); or Armoury (Melee Weapons) (IQ/A).

* Optionally, put some of these points toward Crossbow (DX/E), Thrown Weapon (any) (DX/E), or Blowpipe (DX/H).

Parkour

25 points

You're adept at tactical movement on foot. Such athletics are used in urban settings by students of the street and forward-looking law-enforcement and military schools. Combine it with Climber (p. 12) and there will be few places you can't reach!

Secondary Characteristics: Basic Move +1 [5].

Perks: Compact Frame [1].

Skills: Acrobatics (DX/H) [4]; Climbing (DX/A) [2]; Escape (DX/H) [2]; Jumping (DX/E) [1]; Running (HT/A) [4]; Urban Survival (Per/A) [2].

Techniques: Evade at Acrobatics+2 [2]. • One of Acrobatic Stand at Acrobatics-4 [2], Balancing at Acrobatics+2 [2], Dive n' Roll at Acrobatics-2 [2], Running Climb at Acrobatics+1 [2], Skidding at DX [2], Sliding at Acrobatics+2 [2], or Spinning at Acrobatics [2].

SKILL SETS AS SUGGESTIONS

Some gamers may disagree with the character-point distributions in skill sets, and perhaps with the inclusion of certain traits at all. The GM who feels this way is free to change things up. The obvious approach is to redistribute the points, emphasizing whatever seems important and removing anything bothersome.

A simpler, if more radical, option is to use the system largely as written but to treat a skill set as 25 or 50 points earmarked for player allocation among the included traits. While players must still pick skill sets, they can invest as little as one point in each skill and distribute the remainder across the package's other traits however they like. The GM might even permit them to make the minimum skill investment and transfer the remaining points to the Slush Fund.

The logical extreme is freeform character design – and *Specialists* is useful even then, serving as both inspiration and a checklist of abilities that make sense in *Action*. The GM might declare that the skills found on certain skill sets will matter a great deal in the campaign and be expected of anybody who does an associated job. This gives those who want to succeed and have spotlight time an incentive to select those skills, but the choice ultimately remains theirs.

Personal Security

25 points

You're a bodyguard, good at spotting threats and covering your man. If necessary, you're ready to stop a bullet. A protection agent assigned to a politician should take Law Enforcement (pp. 17-18), too – but you could be a hireling or a mob soldier instead.

Secondary Characteristics: Per +1 [5].

Advantages: Fearlessness 1 [2]; Hard to Kill 1 [2].

Skills: Body Language (Per/A) [2]; Fast-Draw (Pistol) (DX/E) [1]; Guns (Pistol) (DX/E) [1]; Holdout (IQ/A) [2]; Observation (Per/A) [2]; Savoir-Faire (Servant) (IQ/E) [2]; Tactics (IQ/H) [4]. • Either Judo (DX/H) [2] or Wrestling (DX/A) [2].

Physical Training

25 points

This represents spending lots of time at the climbing wall, gym, pool, ski slope, track, weight room, etc. Any action hero can improve most of these traits (*From Good to Great*, pp. 31-32) – selecting it *here* makes it part of your backstory, so play it up!

Attributes: Either ST +2 [20] or both ST +1 [10] and HT +1 [10].
Secondary Characteristics: FP +1 [3].

Skills: A total of 2 points in any of Bicycling or Jumping, both (DX/E); Boxing, Climbing, or Wrestling, all (DX/A); Acrobatics, Judo, or Karate, all (DX/H); Swimming (HT/E); Lifting or Running, both (HT/A); or Skiing (HT/H).

Pistolero

25 points

You're well-trained with handguns, and can carry, maintain, shoot, and reload pistols with maximum efficiency.

Perks: Off-Hand Weapon Training (Pistol)* [1]. • Either Cheaper Gear (Guns) [1] or Weapon Bond (any one handgun) [1].

Skills: Armoury (Small Arms) (IQ/A) [2]; Fast-Draw (Ammo) (DX/E) [2]; Fast-Draw (Pistol) (DX/E) [2]; Guns (Pistol) (DX/E) [8]; Holdout (IQ/A) [4].

Techniques: Dual-Weapon Attack (Pistol) at Guns (Pistol)-3* [2]; Retain Weapon (Pistol) at DX+2 [3].

* When doubling up, these two traits become Off-Hand Weapon Training (Pistol) [1] and Dual-Weapon Attack at Guns (Pistol) [5].



Psy-Ops

25 points

You deal in brainwashing, propaganda, and related mind games. You know how to apply and resist those arts – but the most heroic application is *deprogramming* (*Exploits*, p. 17). Whatever you do most, consider taking Interrogation (p. 17) as well.

Secondary Characteristics: Will +1 [5].

Skills: Brainwashing (IQ/H) [8]; Propaganda (IQ/A) [4]; Psychology (IQ/H) [8].

Recon

25 points

You're a military-style scout who infiltrates quietly, observes from concealment, and then departs swiftly. This usually accompanies Desert Training (p. 14), Forest or Jungle Training (p. 16), Mountain Training (p. 18), Sniper School (p. 22), or Survival (p. 22). A Rambo would want Booby Traps (pp. 11-12) and/or Bushwhacker (p. 12), too.

Secondary Characteristics: Per +1 [5]; Basic Move +1 [5].

Advantages: Night Vision 2 [2].

Skills: Camouflage (IQ/E) [2]; Gesture (IQ/E) [1]; Navigation (Land) (IQ/A) [2]; Observation (Per/A) [4]; Stealth (DX/A) [2]. • Either Forward Observer (IQ/A) [2] or Tracking (Per/A) [2].

Records Falsification

25 points

You can fake documents of most kinds: identity cards, ledgers, photographs . . . even banknotes, in a pinch. To falsify *digital* records, tack on Computer Intrusion (p. 13).

Skills: Accounting (IQ/H) [4]; Administration (IQ/A) [4]; Computer Operation (IQ/E) [1]; Electronics Operation (Media) (IQ/A) [4]; Forgery* (IQ/H) [12].

* Counterfeiting (IQ/H) defaults to Forgery-2, which usually suffices because it rarely arises in *Action*. If it's *essential* to a character concept, take it instead of Forgery and use Forgery at its Counterfeiting-2 default.

Repairman

25 points

You're skilled at general automotive, mechanical, and electrical repair, and familiar with tools and shops. This doesn't include electronics – Electronics (p. 15) and specific technical skill sets cover that. Likewise, you'll need Armoury (p. 11) to fix weapons.

Advantages: Artificer 1 [10].

Perks: Equipment Bond (any one tool kit) [1].

Skills: Electrician (IQ/A) [2]; Machinist (IQ/A) [2]; Mechanic (Automobile) (IQ/A) [4]; Mechanic (Free-Flooding Sub, Glider, Heavy Wheeled, Helicopter, High-Performance Airplane, Light Airplane, Motorboat, Motorcycle, Ship, or Ultralight) (IQ/A) [2]; Mechanic (any other) (IQ/A) [2]; Scrounging (Per/E) [2].

Researcher

25 points

You can wade through your own weight in records – digital or paper – in, err, *record* time, and run database searches like nobody else.

Skills: Accounting (IQ/H) [4]; Administration (IQ/A) [2]; Computer Operation (IQ/E) [1]; Current Affairs (any) (IQ/E) [2]; Electronics Operation (Media) (IQ/A) [4]; Research (IQ/A) [8]; Speed-Reading (IQ/A) [4].

Resistance

25 points

You're either a graduate of a course on deceiving interrogators and resisting torture, or you've been a victim so often that you've learned to anticipate the tricks. Regardless, you're hardened against Interrogation (p. 17) and Psy-Ops (p. 20).

Secondary Characteristics: Will +1 [5].

Advantages: Hard to Subdue 1 [2]; High Pain Threshold* [10].

Skills: Acting (IQ/A) [4]; Fast-Talk (IQ/A) [4].

* When doubling up, the second instance adds HT +1 [10].

Sabotage

25 points

You're adept at getting into and damaging machinery in subtle ways that endanger users: ground faults, severed elevator cables, gas leaks, and so on. Many saboteurs add Booby Traps (pp. 11-12) or Demolitions (p. 14) – or Repairman (p. 20), which overlaps.

Perks: Equipment Bond (any one tool kit) [1].

Skills: Electrician (IQ/A) [4]; Forced Entry (DX/E) [2]; Lock-picking (IQ/A) [4]; Machinist (IQ/A) [4]; Mechanic (any*) (IQ/A) [4]; Scrounging (Per/E) [2]; Traps (IQ/A) [4].

* Besides vehicular specialties, there may be ones like “Nuclear Power Plant” that go beyond what Electrician and Machinist cover. Ask the GM!

Safecracking

25 points

You're an artist with high-security vaults. If you're exceptionally good, *also* take Demolitions (p. 14) if you favor thermite and explosives, or Illicit Entry (p. 17) if you prefer burglar's tools – the overlap will boost skills that often suffer large penalties.

Skills: Connoisseur (Safes & Vaults)* (IQ/A) [1]; Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Explosives (Demolition) (IQ/A) [4]; Forced Entry (DX/E) [4]; Lockpicking (IQ/A) [8]; Machinist (IQ/A) [4].

* Allows a complementary skill roll when attacking a safe or a vault with any *other* skill in this set.

Sailor

You have experience as a crewman aboard a merchant or blue-water navy vessel. Each is its own skill set. Either way, you're comfortable days away from land, on (or *under*) the open ocean.

Civilian Crewman

25 points

Perks: Old Salt [1].

Skills: Boating (Motorboat) (DX/A) [2]; Knot-Tying (DX/E) [2]; Mechanic (Ship) (IQ/A) [4]; Navigation (Sea) (IQ/A) [4]; Scrounging (Per/E) [2]; Seamanship (IQ/E) [4]; Swimming (HT/E) [2]. • A total of 4 points in Freight Handling and Smuggling, both (IQ/A).

Military Crewman

25 points

Perks: Naval Training [1]; Old Salt [1].

Skills: Boating (Motorboat) (DX/A) [2]; Knot-Tying (DX/E) [2]; Mechanic (Ship) (IQ/A) [2]; Navigation (Sea) (IQ/A) [4]; Savoir-Faire (Military) (IQ/E) [1]; Swimming (HT/E) [2]. • *Either* Seamanship or Submariner, both (IQ/E) [4]. • *Three* of Artillery (Cannon, Guided Missile, or Torpedoes) or Forward Observer, both (IQ/A) [2], or Gunner (Machine Gun) or Guns (Pistol, Rifle, or Submachine Gun), both (DX/E) [2].

Scientist

25 points

You're skilled at the few nonmedical sciences relevant to action heroes – that is, you know about dangerous chemicals, plants, and animals, and can run lab tests for clues. This skill set almost always accompanies Academics (p. 10).

Skills: Chemistry (IQ/H) [8]; Current Affairs (Science & Technology)* (IQ/E) [1]; Forensics (IQ/H) [8]; Naturalist† (IQ/H) [8].

* **Action** has uses for Chemistry, Forensics, and Naturalist, but not Biology, Geology, Physics, or other sciences. Those are one-off plot devices in this genre, reserved for NPC specialists. If a PC must advance a science plot, Current Affairs (Science & Technology) is the go-to skill (**Exploits**, p. 10).

† See *Bushwhacker* (p. 12) for an important note.

Security Systems

25 points

You're a pro at running bypasses on electronic alarms, cutting power to sensors, and disabling deadly booby traps. This also makes you good at setting up and operating such things, though that isn't your focus. This skill set pairs well with Illicit Entry (p. 17).

Advantages: Circuit Sense 2 [10].

Perks: *Either* Cheaper Gear (Electronics) [1] or Equipment Bond (any one tool kit or electronic burglary gadget) [1].

Skills: Computer Operation (IQ/E) [1]; Electrician (IQ/A) [1]; Electronics Operation (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Electronics Repair (Security) (IQ/A) [4]; Traps (IQ/A) [4].

Silent Killing

25 points

You're adept at using bare hands, knives, and garrotes for surprise attacks and sentry removal (though not necessarily for *fighting*).

Advantages: Striking ST 1 (Assassination, -60%) [2].

Perks: Dirty Fighting 1 [1]; Special Exercises (Striking ST 1)* [1].

Skills: Fast-Draw (Knife) (DX/E) [1]; Holdout (IQ/A) [4]; Garrote (DX/E) [4]; Knife (DX/E) [4]; Stealth (DX/A) [4].

Techniques: Neck Snap at ST-1 [4].

* When doubling up, treat this as leveled: Special Exercises (Striking ST 2) [2].

Sniper School

25 points

Whether you're called "sharpshooter," "assassin," or even "big game hunter" by those around you, you know how to use high-powered rifles from concealment to deliver death from afar.

Advantages: Acute Vision 1 [2]; Night Vision 1 [1].

Skills: Armoury (Small Arms) (IQ/A) [2]; Camouflage (IQ/E) [2]; Guns (Rifle)* (DX/E) [12]; Observation (Per/A) [2]; Stealth (DX/A) [4].

* If you insist, put some or all of these points into Crossbow (DX/E) instead. That *will* necessitate getting closer!

Social Engineering

25 points

You know how to "work" other people to learn secrets, enter private functions, and get close enough for skullduggery. This is sufficiently risky that devotees usually double up and later optimize (*Trading Up*, pp. 30-31) by skimming skill points to acquire Smooth Operator [15/level]. The classic social engineer is also a Bon Vivant (p. 11).

Advantages: Charisma 1 [5].

Perks: Honest Face [1].

Skills: Acting (IQ/A) [4]; Diplomacy* (IQ/H) [4]; Fast-Talk* (IQ/A) [2]; Intimidation* (Will/A) [2]; Public Speaking (IQ/A) [2]; Savoir-Faire (High Society or Servant)* (IQ/E) [1]; Sex Appeal* (HT/A) [2]; Streetwise* (IQ/A) [2].

* Charisma doesn't add to these skills in general (only to Public Speaking) but *does* apply when making Influence rolls.

Spin Doctor

25 points

You have a gift for convincing people – usually mobs but sometimes those watching at home – to see things your way. A squad with a silver-tongued mouthpiece can keep a major screw-up from turning into a riot *right now*. See also *Cover-Ups (Exploits)*, p. 26).

Advantages: Voice* [10].

Perks: Honest Face [1].

Skills: Diplomacy (IQ/H) [4]; Fast-Talk (IQ/A) [2]; Propaganda (IQ/A) [4]; Public Speaking (IQ/A) [2]; Writing (IQ/A) [2].

* When doubling up, the second instance gives Charisma 2 [10].

Surveillance

25 points

You're talented at staking out or shadowing targets up close – often on foot, usually in the city. You prefer the old-fashioned way, involving no gear more high-tech than a camera. As far as your mark knows, you're just someone having coffee at the next table.

Secondary Characteristics: Per +1 [5].

Skills: Body Language (Per/A) [2]; Lip Reading (Per/A) [2]; Observation (Per/A) [4]; Photography (IQ/A) [4]; Shadowing (IQ/A) [8].

Survival

25 points

You have *general* survival training for being unequipped behind enemy lines in any terrain. A specialized skill set like Desert Training (p. 14), Forest or Jungle Training (p. 16), or Mountain Training (p. 18) is a common addition. For military types, Escape and Evasion (p. 15) and Resistance (p. 21) traditionally go with it.

Attributes: HT +1 [10].

Skills: First Aid (IQ/E) [2]; Hiking (HT/A) [2]; Navigation (Land) (IQ/A) [2]; Naturalist* (IQ/H) [4]; Scrounging (Per/E) [2]; Swimming (HT/E) [1]; Urban Survival (Per/A) [2].

* See *Bushwhacker* (p. 12) for an important note.

Tactical Driving

25 points

You can handle a ground vehicle under hostile conditions. This covers driving, route-plotting, and tailing – especially in built-up areas – and also being able to cope with stop-searches, flat tires, and so on.

Perks: Either Cheaper Gear (Ground Vehicles) [1] or Equipment Bond (one particular vehicle) [1].

Skills: Driving (Automobile, Heavy Wheeled, or Motorcycle) (DX/A) [8]; Mechanic (for Driving specialty) (IQ/A) [2]; Navigation (Land) (IQ/A) [4]; Shadowing (IQ/A) [4]; Urban Survival (Per/A) [2]. • A total of 4 points in Freight Handling and Smuggling, both (IQ/A).

*You drive like you've done this
before. What are you, a wheelman?*

*– Dom, in **The Fast
and the Furious***

Theft

25 points

You're slick at shoplifting, palming valuables, and picking pockets. You needn't be a petty criminal – spies need this skill set to grab secret files and acquire untraceable gear in the field, while underfunded guerrillas often have no choice but to steal.

Advantages: High Manual Dexterity 1 [5].

Skills: Filch (DX/A) [4]; Holdout (IQ/A) [4]; Pickpocket (DX/H) [4]; Search (Per/A) [2]; Sleight of Hand (DX/H) [4]; Stealth (DX/A) [2].

Toxicology

25 points

You aren't a forensic scientist but an expert with noxious substances. You *might* be a killer, but this skill set is just as useful for sedating violent bad guys and for using truth serums alongside Interrogation (p. 17).

Skills: Holdout (IQ/A) [4]; Pharmacy (Synthetic) (IQ/H) [8]; Physician (Drugs)* (IQ/A) [4]; Poisons (IQ/H) [8]. • *Either* Fast-Draw (Syringe) *or* Liquid Projector (Squirt Gun), both (DX/E) [1].

* This *optional* specialty works as Physician when the sole objective is to administer drugs. Combine its points with full-fledged Physician if you have Doctor (p. 18).

Tradecraft

25 points

You have basic skills taught to spies everywhere: not standing out, safely entering and exiting neutral areas, spotting and avoiding threats, and making and collecting “dead drops.” Just about every skill on the BAT is part of this picture as well.

Advantages: Craftiness 1 [5].

Skills: Acting (IQ/A) [2]; Filch (DX/A) [2]; Holdout (IQ/A) [2]; Observation (Per/A) [4]; Shadowing (IQ/A) [2]; Smuggling (IQ/A) [4]; Urban Survival (Per/A) [4].

Unarmed Combat

All **Action** characters can fight unarmed, but you're *tough*. Below, Self-Defense is for those who can't avoid barehanded mayhem on the job, while Martial Arts is for those for whom it's a lifestyle. See **Furious Fists** for details regarding perks and techniques.

Self-Defense

25 points

Advantages: *Either* Enhanced Parry 1 (Bare Hands) [5] *or* Fit [5].

Skills: *Either* Brawling (DX/E) [8] *or* Karate (DX/H) [8]. • *Either* Judo (DX/H) [8] *or* Wrestling (DX/A) [8].

Techniques: A total of 4 points in any of Arm Lock [1 to 4], Choke Hold [2 or 3], Disarming [2 to 4], Elbow Strike [1 or 2], Feint [2 to 4], Ground Fighting [2 to 4], Kicking [2 or 3], Knee Strike [1], Leg Lock [1 to 4], Stamp Kick [2 to 4], Uppercut [1], or Wrench (Limb) [2 to 4].

Martial Arts

50 points

Advantages: Enhanced Parry 1 (Bare Hands) [5]; Fit [5].

Perks and Techniques: A total of 12 points in any combination of perks and techniques from **Furious Fists**, pp. 15-19 for which you have the prerequisites.

Skills: Acrobatics (DX/H) [4]. • *One* of Boxing (DX/A) [12], Brawling (DX/E) [12], *or* Karate (DX/H) [12]. • *One* of Judo (DX/H) [12], Sumo Wrestling (DX/A) [12], *or* Wrestling (DX/A) [12].

Undercover

25 points

You are or were a plainclothes cop in the **Action** mode. Add Detective Work (p. 14) and/or Law Enforcement (pp. 17-18) if you're as good at honest police work as you are at deceiving gangsters, and Impersonation (p. 17) if you're posing as someone else.

Skills: Acting (IQ/A) [4]; Criminology (IQ/A) [2]; Fast-Draw (Pistol) (DX/E) [1]; Fast-Talk (IQ/A) [4]; Guns (Pistol) (DX/E) [1]; Holdout (IQ/A) [4]; Law (Police) (IQ/H) [2]; Savoir-Faire (Mafia) (IQ/E) [2]; Savoir-Faire (Police) (IQ/E) [1]; Streetwise (IQ/A) [4].

NEW PERKS

These perks aren't *completely* new – gamers who have **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks** will recognize them as simplified from that catalog – but they're new to **Action**, where they're available to heroes with suitable skill sets.

Cheaper Gear: You have a surefire source (name it!) of one broad category of equipment – guns, electronics, or whatever – and get 10% off the price when you buy it with the team budget or personal cash.

Equipment Bond: Works like Weapon Bond (**Heroes**, p. 18), but applies to a specific gadget or tool kit instead, giving +1 to skill when using *your* pet gear.

Huge Weapons: Each level (maximum two) gives you +1 ST for the sole purpose of meeting ST requirements for weapons. No effect on damage!

Naval Training: Most people have -2 to attack and -1 to defend (bad footing) on a rocking watercraft. You don't.

Old Salt: You have +1 on all DX, HT, Boating, and Seamanship rolls to resist personal (not *vehicular*) disasters afloat: falling overboard, seasickness, etc. This includes rolls to grab life preservers or man lifeboats.

Precautions: When neutralizing a threat that could cause mass destruction – like plague, nerve gas, or a nuke – critical failure removes one level of this perk and counts as ordinary failure instead. This provides the benefit of two points of *Buying Success* (p. B347) at half price.

Robust Hearing: You may ignore -1 in Hearing penalties due to noise, and get +1 to HT rolls to resist deafening and stun grenades.

Robust Vision: You may ignore -1 in Vision penalties due to bright light, and get +1 to HT rolls to resist dazzling and stun grenades.

Sartorial Integrity: Your clothes never get torn or dirty – even after combat!

Special Exercises: You lack Trained by a Master or Weapon Master but have access to *one specific advantage* that calls for it (e.g., Arm ST, Damage Resistance, Extra Attack, Lifting ST, or Striking ST). If you buy Trained by a Master or Weapon Master later on, put a point toward it and remove this perk.

Sure-Footed: Most people have -2 to attack and -1 to defend (bad footing) on loose or wet terrain. In one particular terrain type, you don't. In **Action**, anybody with Perfect Balance gets these benefits at all times and doesn't need this perk.

Upside-Down: Most people suffer -2 or worse to use weapons when hanging upside down. With one particular weapon type (e.g., knives), you don't.

Underwater Operations

25 points

You're adept with scuba gear, swimmer delivery vehicles, underwater demolition, and (most cinematically) spearguns. It's rare to have this skill set without Amphibious Operations (p. 11).

Secondary Characteristics: Water Move +1 [5].

Advantages: Breath-Holding 1 [2].

Skills: Aquabatics* (DX/H) [2]; Crossbow (Speargun) (DX/E) [1]; Explosives (Underwater Demolition) (IQ/A) [4]; Knife (DX/E) [1]; Scuba (IQ/A) [4]; Submarine (Free-Flooding Sub) (DX/A) [2]; Swimming (HT/E) [4].

* Replaces Acrobatics underwater, where it's used for eluding sensors (*Exploits*, p. 22), in chases (Reverse and Stunt maneuvers, and boarding hostile subs), and in flashy fighting between divers (*Exploits*, p. 37).

Urban Assault

25 points

You have training at breaching buildings and fighting in built-up areas. Your methods include rappelling down from the roof; using explosives, rams, and shotguns on doors; and exploiting cover. True urban commandos add Close-Quarters Battle (pp. 12-13).

Advantages: Enhanced Dodge 1 (Dive for Cover) [5].

Skills: Climbing (DX/A) [2]; Explosives (Demolition) (IQ/A) [2]; Forced Entry (DX/E) [2]; Guns (Rifle or Submachine

Gun) (DX/E) [2]; Guns (Shotgun) (DX/E) [2]; Tactics (IQ/H) [4]; Urban Survival (Per/A) [4].

Techniques: Rappelling at Climbing+1 [2].

Winter Operations

25 points

You're comfortable in cold environments ranging from winter snow to Arctic ice. This is common among Alaskan, Canadian, Nordic, and Russian action heroes. To be a winter warrior, add Infantry Training (p. 17).

Attributes: HT +1 [10].

Perks: Sure-Footed (Ice/Snow)* [1].

Skills: Navigation (Land) (IQ/A) [2]; Survival (Arctic) (Per/A) [8]; Tracking (Per/A) [2]. • *One* of Animal Handling (Dogs) (IQ/A) [2], Driving (Halftrack)† (DX/A) [2], Hiking (HT/A) [2], or Skiing (HT/H) [2], for dogsleds, snowmobiles, snowshoes, or skis, as suits your stereotype.

* *One* specialty in **Action**, because this doesn't come up often.

† Another rare specialty, covering snowcats and snowmobiles of all configurations.

POWER-UPS

A *power-up* is a bundle of traits that add cinematic oomph. It's like a skill set with a focus on larger-than-life abilities. Where a skill set might give Judo and Karate, a power-up would bestow Trained by a Master; where a skill set might include technical skills, a power-up would grant Quick Gadgeteer. Power-ups that provide cinematic advantages also open the door to spending your Slush Fund on further capabilities which have those advantages as prerequisites.

Because power-ups tend to enhance skills, many require specific skill sets, which are noted as prerequisites. Power-ups that include impressive cinematic abilities often cost more than 25 points. Be sure to look for these details when building your character – you wouldn't want to waste points on an advantage that depends on skills you lack, and you don't want to go over budget.

When using **Specialists** in a non-**Action** campaign, the GM may rule that some or *all* power-ups are off-limits. This system can yield plausible – if high-powered – cops and soldiers, but they're unlikely to have advantages such as Gunslinger!

Finally, be aware that these packages force an investment of 25+ points in traits for a reason, which is to create action heroes who fit specific dramatic niches. Power-ups are *emphatic*, not *sidelines*.

The training helped me develop my talents.

Cat

25 points

Prerequisite: At least one skill set from among Climber, Escape and Evasion, Illicit Entry, Martial Arts, Mountain Training, Parkour, or Physical Training.

You're *very* sure on your feet! With this power-up, you don't need Sure-Footed perks – put those points back in your Slush Fund. Someone with the Parkour skill set *can* take this package, but Traceur (p. 27) is better; this option is mainly for burglars and jocks.

Advantages: Catfall [10]; Perfect Balance [15].

Extra Life

25 points

You have the Extra Life advantage (p. B55). In **Action**, this is “plot armor” and never supernatural. Explain what happened; e.g., you found cover from the explosion or were thrown clear of the crash. If nobody can prove otherwise, you'll return for the next scene (usually after the chase or fight that “killed” you). If *everybody* saw your body, the GM may require you to sit out a few scenes. But even if the bad guy brandishes your severed head, you'll be back . . . doubtless to avenge your twin brother or that guy the boss had impersonating you!

As any action hero can spend character points on flesh wounds (*Exploits*, p. 38) or lucky breaks (*Exploits*, p. 41), and because death is rare in any event (*Exploits*, p. 40), Extra Life could be seen as tying up 25 points in the form of insurance that other PCs can buy as needed. To resolve this, Extra Life has its usual benefits in **Action** but also a special bonus: Heroes who have it get one *free* life-saving flesh wound or lucky break per game session. Thus, the advantage can pay for itself after 25 sessions – and in the improbable event of inevitable death before that time, Extra Life is lost as usual but the hero returns with (25 - number of past freebies) unspent points.

Advantages: Extra Life 1 [25].

Gadgeteer

There are three, mutually exclusive versions of this power-up.

H4xx0r

25 points

Prerequisite: Computer Intrusion.

You're a Quick Gadgeteer (p. B57) with computers (*Heroes*, pp. 18-19). You may use your Slush Fund to buy up to four levels of Born to Be Wired [5/level].

Advantages: Quick Gadgeteer (H4xx0r, -50%) [25].

Soldering-Gun Slinger

25 points

Prerequisite: Electronics.

You're a Quick Gadgeteer (p. B57) with electrical and electronic devices (*Heroes*, p. 19). You may use your Slush Fund to buy up to four levels of Circuit Sense [5/level], as many Gizmos [5/level] as you like, and the skill Fast-Draw (Gizmo) (DX/E).

Advantages: Quick Gadgeteer (Solder and Duct Tape, -50%) [25].

Ultimate Repairman

50 points

Prerequisites: At least two different skill sets from among Armory, Computer Intrusion, Construction, Electronics, or Repairman.

You're a full-on Quick Gadgeteer (p. B57)! You can perform all of the computer- and electronics-related tasks described on pp. 18-19 of *Heroes*. You can extend this to other technology, too, using Armoury for weapons, Electrician for power tools, Machinist for unpowered tools, and Mechanic for vehicles. This enables you to attempt *Repurposing* (*Exploits*, p. 13) and instant *Repairs* (*Exploits*, pp. 41-42) on any equipment you have the skills to fix. As usual, minor tasks such as ordinary repairs or improvising gear from appropriate parts (e.g., adapting a .45-caliber pistol to fire 9mm ammo) take 10 minutes, while major ones like extraordinary repairs and working from inappropriate parts (e.g., turning a toy pistol into a real one) take an hour.

For the purpose of *Assembling Kit* (*Exploits*, pp. 6-7), your \$200 freebie can be any article you could repair: a weapon or weapon accessory on a suitable Armoury roll, an electronic gadget on an appropriate Electronics Repair roll, a tool on

a Machinist roll (Electrician, for a power tool), or a vehicle modification or even a low-cost vehicle on a Mechanic roll.

You may use your Slush Fund to buy up to four levels apiece of Artificer [10/level], Born to Be Wired [5/level], and/or Circuit Sense [5/level]; as many Gizmos [5/level] as you like; and the skill Fast-Draw (Gizmo) (DX/E).

Advantages: Quick Gadgeteer [50].

Gunslinger

25 points

Prerequisite: At least one skill set from among Close-Quarters Battle, Cowboy, Heavy Weapons, Infantry Training, Law Enforcement, Pistolero, Sniper School, or Urban Assault.

You possess the Gunslinger advantage (p. B58) as expanded for *Action* and may use your Slush Fund to buy whatever Gun Perks you like. See *Heroes*, p. 18.

Advantages: Gunslinger [25].

Just That Good

25 points/level

You're even larger than life than usual for an action hero. The BAT grants a healthy dose of advantages – but you have more!

Traits: Each level lets you spend *another* 25 points on any combination of ST [10/level], DX or IQ [20/level], Will or Per [5/level], FP [3/level], Basic Speed [5 per +0.25], Basic Move [5/level], Absolute Timing [2], Acute Senses (any) [2/level], Ambidexterity [5], Appearance [Varies], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense [15], Daredevil [15], Fearlessness [2/level] or Unfazeable [15], Gizmos* [5/gizmo], Intuition [15], Night Vision 1-9 [1/level], Peripheral Vision [15], Rapier Wit [5], Serendipity [15/level], Signature Gear [Varies], Wild Talent [20/level], or Zeroed [10], or upgrade Luck [15] to Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points or Ridiculous Luck [60] for 45 points.

* Maximum three Gizmos, unless you're a Gadgeteer (above).



Martial-Arts Master

You're a cinematic master of the martial arts. This power-up comes in three distinct flavors, which are rarely combined. In all cases, you may use your Slush Fund to acquire more of the listed advantages (which often cost more than the points allocated here!) or any cinematic martial-arts perk, skill, or technique for which you have the prerequisites; see **Furious Fists**, pp. 13-19 for details. You also don't need Special Exercises perks, as Trained by a Master or Weapon Master covers that ground – put those points back in your Slush Fund.

Master (Armed)

50 points

Prerequisite: Obsolete Weapons.

You're an expert with muscle-powered weaponry of some kind.

Advantages: Weapon Master (Weapon of choice) [20].
• Another 30 points in Arm ST 1-2 [5/level], Enhanced Dodge 1-2 [15/level], Enhanced Parry 1-3 (One melee weapon) [5/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], Striking ST 1-2 [5/level], Strong Chi 1-4 [5/level], or Weapon Bond [1/weapon], or expand Weapon Master to Weapon Master (Two weapons) [25] for 5 points or Weapon Master (Small class of weapons) [30] for 10 points.

Permitted Cinematic Perks: Focused Fury.

Permitted Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting (Per/VH), Flying Leap (IQ/H), Kiai (HT/H), Power Blow (Will/H), Pressure Points (IQ/H), and Throwing Art (DX/H).

Permitted Cinematic Techniques: Roll with Blow.

Master (Ninja)

50 points

Prerequisite: Obsolete Weapons or Silent Killing.

You're a master of shadows and obscure ethnic weapons.

Advantages: Weapon Master (Ninja Weapons) [35].
• Another 15 points in Enhanced Parry 1-3 (One melee weapon) [5/level] or (All) [10/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], Perfect Balance [15], Striking ST 1-5 (Assassination, -60%) [2/level], Strong Chi 1-4 [5/level], or Zeroed (Ninja) [10].

Permitted Cinematic Perks: High-Heeled Heroine and High-Heeled Hurt.

Permitted Cinematic Skills: Blind Fighting (Per/VH), Flying Leap (IQ/H), Light Walk (DX/H), Power Blow (Will/H), Pressure Points (IQ/H), and Throwing Art (DX/H).

Permitted Cinematic Techniques: Disappear and Roll with Blow.

Master (Unarmed)

50 points

Prerequisite: Unarmed Combat.

Your martial art is all about fists, feet, and twisting people like pretzels.

Advantages: Trained by a Master [30]. • Another 20 points in Arm ST 1-2 [5/level], Blunt Claws [3], DR 1-2 (Limited, Crushing, -40%) [3/level], Enhanced Parry 1-3 (Bare Hands) [5/level], Extra Attack 1 [25], Lifting ST 1-2 [3/level], Striker (Crushing; Shin, -20%) [4], Striking ST 1-2 [5/level], or Strong Chi 1-4 [5/level].

Permitted Cinematic Perks: Focused Fury, High-Heeled Heroine, High-Heeled Hurt, and Iron Hands.

Permitted Cinematic Skills: Breaking Blow (IQ/H), Flying Leap (IQ/H), Immovable Stance (DX/H), Kiai (HT/H), Power Blow (Will/H), Pressure Points (IQ/H), Pressure Secrets (IQ/VH), and Push (DX/H).

Permitted Cinematic Techniques: Flying Jump Kick, Lethal Kick, Lethal Strike, Piledriver, and Roll with Blow.

PACKAGES AS LEVEL-UPS

Skill sets and power-ups don't *have* to be used with the BAT or reserved for starting characters! Here are two other possibilities:

Templates Plus. If the GM likes the templates in **Heroes** and **Furious Fists** but wants to start the campaign above 250 points, a simple way to do so is to have the players build heroes on templates and then add skill sets and power-ups to hit the desired power level. As the occasional awkward overlap is likely, *By the Book* (pp. 28-30) applies, subject to a special condition: any trait "rounded up" must be paid for by taking points from *something else in the package* so that the character stays on budget. The GM may permit *Trading Up* (pp. 30-31) at the end. Spend any points left over after all this as if they were a Slush Fund (*Spending the Slush Fund*, pp. 31-34).

Experienced Heroes. However the heroes were designed initially, they'll earn character points after each mission or session. If they save up enough for a skill set or a power-up, they can buy it provided that they can justify this in story terms. Action fiction often stars cinematic agents, cops, and soldiers who receive lavish training; at worst, going back to school might require an Assistance Roll. Such training can even *replace* unspent points as an adventure's reward, foreshadowing the next plot with what would be a montage in the movies. Either way, simply add the traits to the character – and if that results in illegal levels, redistribute points *within* the package to correct that. If that's possible only by going over or under budget, go low and leave the PC some unspent points.

In both cases, it's crucial to avoid niche invasion. For instance, if using templates, a crew that includes a cleaner and a demolition man from **Heroes** shouldn't have access to the Cleaning and Demolitions skill sets, because that territory has been claimed. Similarly, if a group of PCs built using **Specialists** already has three doses of Sniper School, it would be best to say the school rejects trainees from the team because *other* squads have a greater need (unless the campaign is all about snipers!). Of course, some packages are general enough not to be a problem; e.g., Academics, Extra Life, Goon, Just That Good, Physical Training, Super Luck, and Survivor.

Special Agent

25 points

You're familiar with all manner of "sexy" spy-tech: sneaky stuff like bugs, miniature cameras, disguise kits, and lock-picks; apparatus for sea, air, and land infiltration (scuba gear and tiny submarines, hang-gliders and parachutes, and skis); sniper rifles and even crossbows for silent assassination; and remote detonators and shoulder-launched missiles for missions of destruction. This is a power-up because no plausible skill set is so broad. You *can* double up, but real super-spies get better at all this by having ungodly attribute levels.

Skills: Artillery (Guided Missile) (IQ/A) [2]; Crossbow (DX/E) [1]; Disguise (IQ/A) [2]; Electronics Operation (Surveillance) (IQ/A) [2]; Explosives (Demolition) (IQ/A) [2]; Guns (Rifle) (DX/E) [1]; Lockpicking (IQ/A) [2]; Parachuting (DX/E) [1]; Photography (IQ/A) [2]; Piloting (Glider) (DX/A) [2]; Scuba (IQ/A) [2]; Skiing (HT/H) [4]; Submarine (Free-Flooding Sub) (DX/A) [2].

Super Luck

100 points

You're *stupidly* lucky. You have the Super Luck advantage (p. B89). In **Action**, this is dramatic convention – not probability control – which imposes several conditions:

- It is for *you* and affects only rolls for *your* individual efforts: picking a lock, finding a file, shooting a bad guy, etc. It cannot influence group actions, including anything that benefits from a complementary skill roll by a friend.
- Rolls to advance the plot to the next scene, notably those under **Planning** (**Exploits**, p. 17), are deemed group actions and beyond reach.
- Like bought critical successes (**Exploits**, p. 41), Super Luck can't be used to defeat henchmen or bosses in combat. You can request a critical hit on a mook, but the best you can do against an important NPC is specify a success or affect the damage roll after a hit.

There's no discount for this . . . it's just how Super Luck works in **Action**. Don't like it? Don't take the power-up!

Advantages: Super Luck [100].

Survivor

25 points/level

You're uncannily hard to wipe out! *Any* action hero can be tough with just the options on the BAT, but you have access to more of those and a few additional larger-than-life traits besides.

Traits: Each level lets you spend 25 points on any combination of HT [10/level], HP up to $1.5 \times \text{ST}$ [2/level], Breath-Holding 1-2 [2/level], Catfall [10], DR 1 (Tough Skin, -40%) [3], Enhanced Dodge 1-3 (Dive for Cover) [5/level] or Enhanced Dodge 1-3 [15/level], Fit [5] or Very Fit [15], Hard to Kill [2/level], Hard to Subdue [2/level], High Pain Threshold [10], Injury Tolerance (No Neck)* [5], Rapid Healing [5] or Very Rapid Healing [15], Recovery [10], Resistant to Disease (+3) or (+8) [3 or 5], or Resistant to Poison (+3) [5], or upgrade Luck [15] to Extraordinary Luck [30] for 15 points or Ridiculous Luck [60] for 45 points.

* Requires ST 15+. Technically, you *have* a neck, but it's so protected by muscle that attacks on it count as torso hits and nobody can choke or strangle you.

Traceur

25 points

Prerequisite: Parkour.

You push past the realistic Parkour skill set (p. 19) and into the world of being fast enough to run up walls and resilient enough to leap from high rooftops and land unscathed. You may use your Slush Fund to buy more of the listed advantages or any of the noted cinematic martial-arts perks, skills, or techniques for which you have the prerequisites. See **Furious Fists**, pp. 13-19 for details.

Advantages: Trained by a Master (Evasion, -50%) [15].
• Another 10 points in Arm ST 1-2 [5/level], Catfall [10], DR 1-2 (Limited, Crushing, -40%) [3/level], Enhanced Dodge 1-2 [15/level], Lifting ST 1-2 [3/level], or Perfect Balance [15], or generalize Trained by a Master (Evasion, -50%) [15] to Trained by a Master [30] for 15 points.

Permitted Cinematic Perks: High-Heeled Heroine and Urban Jungle Gym.

Permitted Cinematic Skills: Flying Leap (IQ/H), Immovable Stance (DX/H), and Light Walk (DX/H).

Permitted Cinematic Techniques: Disappear, Flying Jump Kick, and Roll with Blow.

*Matt Farrell: You just
killed a helicopter with a car!
John McClane: Hundreds
of thousands of people get
killed by cars every year.
That's just like four more.
– Live Free or Die Hard*

Transporter

25 or 50 points

Prerequisites: At least 50 points spent on Amphibious Operations, Car Thief, Flight School, Sailor, or Tactical Driving skill sets.

You're a cinematic driver, adept at handling diverse vehicle types under the toughest conditions.

Advantages: A total of 25 or 50 points spent on Driver's Reflexes 1-4 [5/level], Enhanced Dodge 1-3 (Vehicular, One skill) [5/level], Enhanced Dodge 1-3 (Vehicular, All) [10/level], or Higher Purpose (Deliver the package; see **Heroes**, p. 18) [5].

CHAPTER THREE

SPIT AND POLISH

At this point, your “character sheet” is probably just a mess of notes. That’s fine – the aim so far has been to paint in broad

strokes, jotting down whatever fits your character concept. Now it’s time to get serious!

Who has a safety deposit box full of money and six passports and a gun? Who has a bank account number in their hip?

– Jason Bourne, in *The Bourne Identity* (2002)

Decisive Action

Many skill sets and power-ups require you to choose from or distribute points among lists of traits. Before going any further, make sure you’ve done so for each such package. All steps past this point assume you’ve selected *specific* advantages, skills, and so on.

TYING UP LOOSE ENDS

The biggest tasks remaining are filling in glaring blanks and making sure your action hero is 100% rules-legal. It’s best to do this in stages. The order suggested here ensures that nothing is overlooked. Once you become familiar with *Specialists*, follow whatever sequence makes the most sense to you!

LOVABLY ECCENTRIC

The first loose end to deal with is your lack of quirks. If you don’t want quirks – and faceless extras (p. 8) often lack them – just skip to the next step. Many players prefer to describe their PC’s quirks last, but *Specialists* works best when you know how many points you have to play with *now*.

When choosing quirks, it’s fun to relate at least some of them to skill sets and power-ups; e.g., stereotypically bookish foibles to accompany Academics (p. 10), or preferred weapons and tactics for a marine who boasts Amphibious Operations (p. 11) and Infantry Training (p. 17). Any action hero in the cinematic mold is likely to have a catchphrase or a quirk-level Trademark, too. For further inspiration, peruse pp. B162-165 or *GURPS Power-Ups 6: Quirks* (which offers tons of options ideal for *Action*, such as Cosmetic Eyeglasses for geeks and Bulky Frame for those built like Schwarzenegger).

In most campaigns, you’ll be limited to five quirks. However many quirks you have, add the points they give you to your Slush Fund.

BY THE BOOK

Next, it’s important to ensure that every trait is legal under the rules and in the eyes of the GM. Sum up all the points put toward each trait by the BAT and your selected skill sets and power-ups. Then apply the following general principles.

- If you end up with multiple copies of a trait that comes in but a single level, keep only one instance. Discard the duplicates and add their point value to your Slush Fund.

- If you have more levels of a trait than you’re allowed, drop the excess levels and add their point value to your Slush Fund.

- If points spent on repeated instances of a trait add up to a cost that falls between two allowed levels of that trait, choose one or the other of those levels, moving points out of or into the Slush Fund as needed to reach the cost of the desired level.

Some skill sets and power-ups offer alternative instructions; e.g., Spin Doctor (p. 22) suggests a different way to handle multiple copies of Voice, and Survivor (p. 27) lets you have higher-than-usual HP. Below are general details on how things work in the absence of such exceptions. Where these establish limits, the GM is free to set a lower or higher ceiling.

Attribute and Secondary Characteristic Caps

Strength (ST) can go as high as you like! Other scores have limits, even in *Action*. If your choices result in a higher level than is permitted, reduce the value to the maximum and increase your Slush Fund by the point value of the excess.

DX, IQ, HT, Will, and Per: These scores cannot exceed 20.

HP and FP: HP cannot exceed ST, and FP cannot exceed HT, by more than 30%.

Basic Speed: Figure this as (DX + HT)/4. If you want a round-numbered value, adjust your score *upward* to such a level, taking five points per +0.25 from your Slush Fund. The maximum is +2.00 over your figured baseline.

Basic Move: Maximum Basic Move is Basic Speed+3.

Perk Limits

Ignore the limits that some other **GURPS** supplements place on total number of perks – action heroes can have as many as they can afford! Most perks are one-off deals; each instance after the first adds a point to the Slush Fund. There are two exceptions:

Perks Requiring Specialization: You can take these more than once with *different* specialties.

Leveled Perks: Add the levels together. There's a maximum of *two* levels for Huge Weapons, *three* for Dirty Fighting. Put excess points in the Slush Fund.

Advantage Limits

Quite a few advantages are one-off deals. Put the point cost of any duplicates in the Slush Fund. Examples likely to be seen in **Action** are Absolute Timing, Ambidexterity, Catfall, Combat Reflexes, Cultural Adaptability, Danger Sense, Daredevil, Fashion Sense, Gunslinger, High Pain Threshold, Intuition, Language Talent, Perfect Balance, Peripheral Vision, Pitiable, Rapier Wit, Trained by a Master, Voice, Weapon Master, and Zeroed.

Many other advantages come in numbered levels. These add, but there's a maximum in certain cases: *one* level for Extra Attack; *two* for Arm ST, Breath-Holding, Damage Resistance (Limited, Crushing), Lifting ST, and Striking ST; *three* for any given Enhanced Defense or Higher Purpose, and for Gizmos for non-Gadgeteers; *four* for High Manual Dexterity, Rank (for starting PCs), Reputation, Social Regard, and Talent (e.g., Artificer, Born to be Wired, Business Acumen, Craftiness, Driver's Reflexes, Healer, Mathematical Ability, Outdoorsman, Smooth Operator, or Strong Chi); *five* for Striking ST (Assassination); and *nine* for Night Vision. Levels past these maxima increase the Slush Fund instead.

Some special cases:

I Am Not a Number! Advantage levels may have names instead of numbers. Two instances of Absolute Direction become 3D Spatial Sense, and two of Eidetic Memory become Photographic Memory. Excess points go in the Slush Fund.

Highly Irregular: Several advantages have 5- and 15-point levels only: Fit/Very Fit, Flexibility/Double-Jointed, Rapid Healing/Very Rapid Healing, and Sensitive/Empathy. Three or more instances of the first add up to the second, but two require a choice: Take five points out of the Slush Fund to upgrade, or settle for the lower level and move five points into the Slush Fund. Do something similar for Appearance (allowed levels are Attractive [4], Handsome/Beautiful [12], and Very Handsome/Very Beautiful [16]), Luck (levels are Luck [15], Extraordinary Luck [30], and Ridiculous Luck [60]), and Resistant to Disease (two instances of (+3) [3] add up to (+8) [5] and put a point in the Slush Fund).

Cultural Differences: Those who have Cultural Adaptability and specific Cultural Familiarities should remove the latter and put the points in their Slush Fund. Anyone who has one or more extra Cultural Familiarities may opt to replace these with Cultural Adaptability [10] by paying the cost difference out of their Slush Fund.

SPECIALIST CAMPAIGNS

Specialists falls partway between template-based and freeform character design. For the players, "follow instructions, create heroes" still applies – only the instructions change. Being less prescriptive than the rest of **Action**, however, **Specialists** asks the GM to make more decisions. Here's a quick summary:

Templates, Too? The GM may require *everybody* to use **Specialists** or permit templates from **Heroes** and **Furious Fists** as well. In the latter case, be sure to read *Compatibility?* (p. 34).

Power! As *Power Levels* (p. 5) discusses, the starting budget needn't be 250 points – although if templates are allowed as well, that's the *minimum*, and going higher forces the issue of "leveling-up" templates (*Packages as Level-Ups*, p. 26).

Regulation BATs. The BAT (pp. 4-7) isn't fixed. The GM may adjust it to reflect recruitment standards or mandatory traits, which might include entire skill sets; see *The Needs of the Many* (pp. 7-9). In a non-**Action** campaign, some traits may be unsuitable, as the footnotes explain.

On Message. Not every package in Chapter 2 fits all campaigns. The GM should discard anything that won't be useful or doesn't suit the intended protagonists (e.g., Criminal Past for security agents subject to background checks). The GM might want to outlaw most or all power-ups (pp. 24-27) in a non-**Action** game.

Special Specialists. The GM is free to define *additional* skill sets, optional or mandatory. For instance, an **Action** campaign that will go into space may require everyone to take an "Astronaut" skill set that offers Improved G-Tolerance, Free Fall, Spacer, Vacc Suit, and spaceship-related Piloting skills.

Caps, Limits, Maxima. The GM should review *By the Book* (pp. 28-30) and set the ceilings on trait levels – especially attributes and advantages. In particular, while Talent is normally capped at four levels, **GURPS Power-Ups 3: Talents** supports up to 10 levels, and the GM may prefer that.

Renaissance (Gun)men. Lots of points isn't the only way for PCs to cover lots of ground. *Generalists* (p. 32) offers alternatives. The Dabbler perk (p. 33) and Jack of All Trades advantage (p. 32) *always* require GM permission.

Social Problems. The GM must decide how Contact Groups, Rank, Wealth, and the like will work before anybody buys them – review *Duly Empowered* (p. 9) and *A Man of Wealth and Taste* (pp. 33-34).

Veto! Some players won't just run with **Specialists** – they'll put it in a fast car and hit the NOS. At a minimum, the GM needs to review character sheets and negotiate custom Higher Purpose advantages (*I Take My Job Seriously*, p. 34). It's even better to work through the design process with each player.

NPCs. The GM decides whether to allow Allies, and at what power levels; see *Sidekicks* (p. 8). If they're allowed, designing them is mainly the GM's job. The GM *could* even reserve **Specialists** for NPCs while PCs use templates!

Fear Is Not an Option: Those who have even one level of Fearlessness [2/level] may replace it with Unfazeable [15] by paying the cost difference out of their Slush Fund. *Always* replace Fearlessness 8+ with Unfazeable and move the excess points *into* the Slush Fund.

I Know People: It suits some character concepts for multiple instances of Contact or Contact Group to represent different relationships. Other heroes have just the one. In the latter case, add the points together and then work backward to adjust skill, frequency of appearance, and/or reliability to match, if necessary transferring points into or out of the Slush Fund as you would for irregularly priced advantage levels.

Round Skill Levels

For each *skill*, add up all the points put toward it by the BAT, skill sets, and power-ups, and verify that the total results in a sensible level. Per the *Skill Cost Table* (p. B170), a skill can cost either 1, 2, or some multiple of 4 points; intermediate expenditures don't mean anything. If points in a skill don't add up to one of these values, finish what you started! Take points out of your Slush Fund and buy the next level up. (Okay, if the skill isn't *that* important to you, go ahead and settle for the highest level your points in that skill will buy and move the excess into the Slush Fund.)

Technique Maxima

The only *techniques* used in **Action** are found on pp. 16-19 of **Furious Fists**. If more than one source contributes points toward a technique, add up the points. Each technique has a maximum level. Points beyond that go in the Slush Fund.

TRADING UP

Experienced players – and all the templates in **Heroes** and **Furious Fists** – don't buy skills if attributes or advantages would do. The latter traits are often wonderful package deals, raising *everything* they affect for less than the sum of the costs of the parts. Yet Chapters 1 and 2 tend to yield "unoptimized" heroes with excessive skill investments. The resolution is math-intensive and thus optional, but recommended. Be sure to carry out *these* steps in order!

Optimal Techniques

Check whether dropping every technique based on a given skill by one level would give back enough points to raise the skill by a level. That's a certainty if you have four or more techniques based on a skill . . . but if you have just one, this can *still* be worthwhile if you have only one point in the skill – or even two points, if that's also the cost for the first level of improvement for the technique.

Optimal Attributes

DX: If selling back one level of every DX-based skill that has two or more points in it would free up 20 or more points, then do so, improve DX by one level for 20 points, and put the excess points in your Slush Fund. Skills with just one point in them remain at the one-point level and increase by one skill level instead. You can keep doing this until you no longer get 20 points back from DX-based skills.

IQ: This works the same way as DX, except that since IQ increases improve Will and Per as well, you may sell back IQ-, Will-, and Per-based skills to buy up your IQ score (and thus Will and Per).

HT: This works just like DX, too – but of course HT costs only 10 points per level, so that's the cutoff when selling back HT-based skills. Also, if you've bought extra FP, you can trade one FP for three points while you're at it, because raising HT by one gives you +1 FP.

Will and Per: After optimizing IQ, check your Will-based skills. If selling back one level of every such skill with two or more points in it would refund at least five points, improve Will by one level for five points and put the excess points in your Slush Fund; skills with just one point in them go up one skill level instead. Do the same for Per and Per-based skills.

Basic Speed: If you've spent points to raise Basic Speed, you can strip out five points per +0.25 to put toward either DX or HT – your choice – if that would, combined with points from skills, let you raise the attribute. Getting +1 to DX or HT will leave you with the same Basic Speed.

Optimal Advantages

Once you're below all the cutoffs for raising attributes, you might *still* be able to pad your Slush Fund by swapping skill points into advantages that raise skills, or by shifting points to more-efficient advantages. The most dramatic examples are:

Absolute Direction [5]: This advantage gives +3 to Navigation. Lowering points in Navigation specialties to buy this is nearly always a good idea.

Combat Reflexes [15]: This gives +1 to *all* active defenses. Swap your first level of Enhanced Dodge [15], which affects only Dodge, for this. That will raise all your Fast-Draw skills by one level, too, allowing you to sell back a level of any Fast-Draw skill with more than a point in it. If you have Enhanced Parry, you can further save the cost of one level of *that* and keep the same active defenses.

Flexibility [5]: This advantage grants +3 to Climbing and Escape, and is a fantastic deal if you've invested significantly in either or both of those skills. Double-Jointed [15] gives +5, which can save you points if you've spent heavily on those skills.

Language Talent [10]: If you have five or more languages at Accented or Native level, swap two points out of each to get this advantage. With six or more languages, your Slush Fund will benefit!

Sensitive [5] and **Empathy** [15]: These give +1 and +3, respectively, to Detect Lies and Psychology.

Optimal Talents

Talents (and advantages that work almost exactly like them) are an important special case. If lowering every skill a Talent covers by one level would yield points equal to or greater than the cost of one level of the Talent, and you're below the campaign cap on that Talent, then make the swap and put any leftover points in the Slush Fund. For quick reference, here's a summary of the Talents common in **Action**, each with its cost per level and relevant skills found in skill sets:

Artificer [10/level]: Armoury, Carpentry, Electrician, Electronics Repair, Engineer (Combat), Machinist, Masonry, Mechanic.

Born to Be Wired [5/level]: Computer Hacking, Computer Operation, Computer Programming, Cryptography, Electronics Repair (Computers), Expert Skill (Computer Security).

Business Acumen [10/level]: Accounting, Administration, Gambling, Merchant, Propaganda.

Charisma [5/level]: Leadership, Public Speaking.

Circuit Sense [5/level]: Electrician, Electronics Operation, Electronics Repair.

Craftiness [5/level]: Acting, Camouflage, Disguise, Holdout, Shadowing, Stealth.

Driver's Reflexes [5/level]: Boating, Driving, Piloting, Submarine.

Healer [10/level]: Diagnosis, First Aid, Pharmacy, Physician, Psychology, Surgery.

High Manual Dexterity [5/level]: Knot-Tying, Pickpocket, Sleight of Hand.

Mathematical Ability [10/level]: Accounting, Cryptography, Engineer (Combat).

Outdoorsman [10/level]: Camouflage, Naturalist, Navigation, Survival, Tracking.

Smooth Operator [15/level]: Acting, Carousing, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Intimidation, Leadership, Public Speaking, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, Streetwise.

Strong Chi [5/level]: Breaking Blow, Flying Leap, Power Blow, Pressure Points, Pressure Secrets.

Optimal Skills

Very optionally – because it's yet more annoying math – apply the guidelines on p. 22 of *Heroes* for linking together multiple specialties of Driving, Explosives, Gunner, Guns, and Piloting. For instance, if you have Guns (Pistol) (E) DX+2 [4] and Guns (Rifle) (E) DX+2 [4], you can default one to the other at -2, raise it from there, and save one point. Any points saved go in the Slush Fund.

Especially close defaults likely to save points in **Action** are:

Driving: Automobile and Heavy Wheeled default at -2.

Explosives: Demolition and Underwater Demolition default at -2. So do Explosive Ordnance Disposal and Nuclear Ordnance Disposal.

Guns: Light Machine Gun, Pistol, Rifle, Shotgun, and Submachine Gun default at -2.

Piloting: Glider, Light Airplane, and Ultralight default at -2. So do High-Performance Airplane and Light Airplane.

This is likely to matter only if you have several specialties, at least one at a high level. Even in the close cases listed above, it's never worth the trouble unless you have four or more points in a skill after the previous steps.

Optimal Techniques Revisited

At the very end, some skill investments might have come down so much thanks to optimization that you can now raise skills by taking a point or two out of techniques. Go ahead if you like! If this saves points, put them in the Slush Fund.

IN THE HOLE?

The Slush Fund starts out positive and most often increases. Selecting quirks (*Lovably Eccentric*, p. 28), eliminating out-of-bounds traits (*By the Book*, pp. 28-30), and optimizing (*Trading Up*, pp. 30-31) can all add to it – and the GM may augment it further through campaign disadvantages (*The Call of Duty*, pp. 8-9) or fiat, while characters whose starting points don't divide cleanly by 25 store the remainder here (*Sidekicks*, p. 8). Still, it can be depleted by buying traits – usually skills – up to legal levels, or by certain campaign advantages (*Duly Empowered*, p. 9). It's unlikely but possible to end up with a negative value by the time you reach *Spending the Slush Fund* (below).

This is not a problem! Simply follow the advice on spending the Slush Fund in reverse: Trim away traits that don't closely match your character concept until you balance the books. For instance, if somebody with Amphibious Operations (p. 11) learned her trade working for a drug cartel, she might be good with small craft and around water but have no formal training as a marine, and reduce or drop her Seamanship and Soldier skills.

SPENDING THE SLUSH FUND

If your Slush Fund is positive, it's time to spend it. This is a great way to distinguish *your* gunslinging businessman-turned-detective who's an ace with pistols and kung fu from all the *other* gunslinging businessmen-turned-detectives who are pros with pistols and kung fu. More seriously, it can add a much-needed individual touch when the entire squad consists of soldiers in the same unit or cops on the same force.

If your Slush Fund is at zero, you're done. If it's *negative*, see *In the Hole?* (above).

FROM GOOD TO GREAT

The simplest and often the best way to spend the Slush Fund is to get even better at "general action stuff" or traits

specific to your character concept. These fall into a few basic categories. See *Generalists* (p. 32) for some related discussion.

BAT-Man

Every attribute and secondary characteristic boost, advantage, perk, and skill on the BAT is for sale. That includes both higher levels of previously selected traits and options that weren't chosen the first time through. You can buy as much as you can afford; e.g., if you squirrel away a 60-point Slush Fund, you can pick DX +3 or Serendipity 4, even though the BAT stops at just DX +2 and Serendipity 2. Levels cannot exceed the limits discussed in *By the Book* (pp. 28-30), however.

GENERALISTS

Action is about heroic *teams*, the members of which fill emphatic niches that differ enough that everyone gets some spotlight time. This supplement's title is a big hint that generalists aren't especially appropriate! Still, the GM might want each character to cover more ground, especially if the cast is small.

While the obvious option is to increase the power level (p. 5), that might not appeal to the GM. It suits many action stories for the protagonists to *know* lots of stuff without being *good* at it all, succeeding in marginal areas mostly because the plot calls for it – that is, because they have Luck or buy successes (p. B347). Here are three ways to give heroes broader background knowledge without handing out more points:

1. If the goal is to stop minor gaps in team competency, it's simplest to use *Sidelines* (p. 33). Each player may spend points from the Slush Fund on skills from one extra skill set, taking care to choose an option nobody has taken yet. This requires sitting down and discussing who will do what.

2. If the idea is to hedge bets – “We *might* need this. Then again, maybe not.” – spending many points on extra skills is wasteful. Instead, the GM is advised to talk up

Dabbler perks (p. 33), permitting even wild-and-crazy combos as Slush Fund purchases and perhaps adding Dabbler to the BAT or otherwise making it mandatory.

3. If the objective is to let the heroes succeed at practically anything with a little luck, the GM can allow Jack of All Trades (below) as a Slush Fund option, or put *that* on the BAT.

New Advantage: Jack of All Trades

10 points/level

This gives no bonus at all on any skill you *know*, but when you roll at default for a skill that permits such a roll, add your Jack of All Trades level (maximum three levels) to your effective skill level. This doesn't make skills any cheaper or faster to learn. Alone or combined with Dabbler, this advantage cannot improve a skill to the level that one or more points would buy – maximum default level is one lower than the one-point level.

For those who like to see guts:

Attributes: DX +1 to +3 (Only for defaults, -80%) [4/level];
IQ +1 to +3 (Only for defaults, -80%) [4/level]; HT +1 to +3 (Only for defaults, -80%) [2/level].

Laser-Like Focus

Improving any positive-cost trait that *isn't* on the BAT but *is* on your character sheet – whether it got there thanks to a skill set, a power-up, or later optimization – is also an option. Again, *By the Book* (pp. 28-30) still applies.

Special Dispensation

Several packages *don't* put traits on your character sheet but *do* give you the option of spending your Slush Fund on capabilities that aren't widely available. These are the skill sets Booby Traps (pp. 11-12), Chemical Safety (p. 12), Demolitions (p. 14), Explosive Ordnance Disposal (p. 15), Medicine (p. 18), and Records Falsification (p. 20), and the power-ups Gadgeteer (p. 25), Gunslinger (p. 25), Martial-Arts Master (p. 26), and Traceur (p. 27).

EVERYBODY COMES FROM SOMEWHERE

Certain traits transcend skill sets – they flow from life experiences anyone might have. That isn't the same as a free-for-all! To spend Slush Fund points here, the player must come up with a character backstory – though this needn't be more wordy than an action-movie tagline (“Born and raised in the backstreets of Bangkok, Ice Kaa *is* the Knee of Justice!”) – and choose background elements and interests to match. The GM is free to veto any purchase that seems inconsistent with the offered biography.

Backgrounds

Even the larger-than-life denizens of action movies are born, grow up somewhere, and have families. The following guidelines explain how to spend the Slush Fund on traits that reflect this. Real-life people often have intricate backgrounds, but **Action** characters are high-relief heroes: they might have lived in a dozen places, but they *know* L.A.; once a street kid, *always* a street kid at heart; and hailing from the city means *not* being a farm boy.

Class. A poor background can justify Scrounging (Per/E), as well as Urban Survival (Per/A) if from the city and Streetwise (IQ/A) if the area is rough. Rich folks have Savoir-Faire (High Society) (IQ/E) instead. If you *served* the wealthy, you may take Savoir-Faire (Servant) (IQ/E) in place of those other skills.

Culture. Anybody can have an extra Cultural Familiarity [1] or Language [1-6] to reflect ethnic or national origins. If your area has *many* cultural groups, you might even have two extras – and possibly skill at Gesture (IQ/E). If this kind of thing is your shtick, however, take Impersonation (p. 17) or Linguist (p. 18).

Hobby. True Hobby Skills cover no important tasks in **Action**, but Carousing (HT/E), Connoisseur (IQ/A), and Dancing (DX/A) are valuable for social exploits, and are logical consequences of being a lover of food, drink, music, dance, etc. If planning to spend more than a point or two, consider Bon Vivant (p. 11).

Region. Any action hero could – and arguably *should* – buy Area Knowledge (IQ/E) and/or Current Affairs (Regional) (IQ/E) for his home turf. For the deluxe version, get Local Expert (p. 18).

Not Where I Come From!

The baseline competence the BAT offers at sneaking, shooting, and unarmed combat isn't negotiable – erasing that wouldn't leave an action hero. But it would be reasonable to swap the *other* basic skills for ones that better suit a particular character background:

Computer Operation: Anyone who doesn't have Artificer, Born to Be Wired, or Circuit Sense can remove this for an extra point in the Slush Fund. An older or dirt-poor hero might turn around and spend that point on more of the background traits above to reflect what he knows *without* whipping out his smart phone!

Driving: Replace this with Bicycling (DX/E) for someone from a place where only the rich operate motor vehicles, Boating (Motorboat) (DX/A) for a riverside- or coast-dweller, or Riding (Horse) (DX/A) for a country boy.

Sidelines

Some action heroes have areas where their competence exceeds the scope of a Dabbler perk (below) but falls short of a skill set or power-up. Distant past experiences ("Back in the 'Nam . . ."), incomplete training ("I quit police academy to avenge my family!"), and action-y hobbies and pastimes (shooting, skydiving, spear-fishing, and so on) seem to impart surprising expertise in action movies. Each PC may optionally choose *one* skill set which describes such an interest and put Slush Fund points into any of the *skills* on it. This doesn't extend access to any other traits it includes or offers special dispensation (p. 32) to buy, and doesn't let that skill set count as a prerequisite for power-ups.

Those with Slush Funds fat enough to buy entire skill sets or power-ups are welcome to do so! Such purchases *do* grant access to everything and count as prerequisites. To protect other heroes' niches, though, the GM may permit such afterthoughts on a strictly "take it or leave it" basis – no reapplying *Trading Up* (pp. 30-31) to squeeze out extra points.

Dr. Richard Kimble: It's a hobby of mine.

Dr. Anne Eastman: It's a hobby, really?

What are your other hobbies – brain surgery?

– The Fugitive (1993)

BITS AND PIECES

A few advantages used in **Action** haven't turned up yet because they are extremely minor, don't suit all campaigns, or make sense only *after* describing a clear role for a hero. These make excellent Slush Fund purchases!

The Perks of Being the Hero

New Perks (p. 23), **Gun Perks** (**Heroes**, p. 18), and the martial-arts perks on p. 15 of **Furious Fists** are exclusive to particular skill sets. On the other hand, any *mundane* perk from pp. B100-101 – and anything the GM permits from **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks** – is available to anybody who

has points left in their Slush Fund. Such perks aren't bound to particular packages. For instance, while Shtick (Can strike a flame *anywhere*) is linked to the demolition man in **Heroes**, it's no less appropriate for the cigar-smoking sergeant, the suave super-spy who always has a light for a beautiful lady, or a hundred other action archetypes. If a hero really wants this flashy Shtick alongside Alcohol Tolerance and No Hangover . . . no worries!

One particular perk from **Power-Ups 2** is so useful for rounding out action heroes that it bears repeating. Review *Sidelines* (above) and *Jack of All Trades* (p. 32) before choosing it, however.

New Perk: Dabbler

1 point

You know a little about a set of *related* skills – but not enough to have a full point in any of them. Select eight skills (which *must* have defaults) that you can use at +1 to the usual attribute default. You can trade in two choices for one at default+2, or four choices for one at default+3.

Example: Dirk Steel – a police detective whose skill sets are Detective Work (p. 14), Law Enforcement (pp. 17-18), Pistolero (p. 20), Self-Defense (p. 23), and Surveillance (p. 22) – has dealt with terrorists enough to know about WMDs and booby traps. He dabbles in Explosives (EOD), Hazardous Materials (Chemical), NBC Suit, and Traps. He trades his eight skills at default+1 for four at default+2, and uses Explosives, Hazardous Materials, and Traps at IQ-3 instead of at IQ-5, and NBC Suit at DX-3 rather than at DX-5.

These skills are still considered defaults, not studied. You *can't* default other skills to your improved defaults and *don't* benefit from rules that apply to people who "know" a skill.

Alone or combined with Jack of All Trades (p. 32), Dabbler cannot improve a skill to the level that one or more points would buy. Maximum default level is one lower than the one-point level.

A Man of Wealth and Taste

If desired, a hero can spend Slush Fund points on more or better versions of the social advantages discussed in *Duly Empowered* (p. 9), usually meaning one of the following:

Contact Groups. Groups required as campaign advantages can be improved in skill, frequency of appearance, and reliability to whatever maxima the GM is willing to permit. Any hero can add a *different* group instead or as well. The most common form is Contact Group (Skill-12, 15, or 18; 9 or less; Somewhat Reliable) [5, 10, or 15].

Rank. If the PCs work for a hierarchical organization like an army or a police force, it's usually permissible to enter play with up to four levels of Rank in that group. If the campaign is unusually realistic, the GM may limit this option to heroes who selected the Command skill set (p. 13) – but in most **Action** games, being the best shot or sneakiest ninja is perfectly reasonable grounds for promotion. Rank beyond what's required as a campaign trait (often Rank 0!) costs its usual 5 points/level.

Action tales regularly lack social resolution finer than Rank (if the team serves an organization), Legal Enforcement Powers (if the heroes are lawmen), and/or amorphous Contact Groups. If the GM wishes, though, action heroes can spend their Slush Fund on any of these additional advantages that suit the campaign:

<i>Advantage</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Page</i>
Allies	Variable	B36
Contacts	Variable	B44
Favor	Variable	B55
Legal Immunity	5 to 20	B65
Patrons	Variable	B72
Reputation	Variable	B26
Security Clearance	Variable	B82
Social Regard	5/level	B86
Wealth	10, 20, or 30	B25

COMPATIBILITY?

Can characters created with *Specialists* and those generated using *Heroes* and *Furious Fists* team up to take down bad guys? That's a valid question!

On one hand, this supplement makes every effort to ensure that no trait found in *Heroes* or *Furious Fists* goes overlooked. Its skill sets span the full gamut of tasks discussed in *Exploits* – even obscure ones, such as disarming nukes! In fact, *Specialists* offers a few *extra* traits, although the fair-minded GM will let all *Action* characters buy those, so that aspect comes out in the wash.

On the other, while the templates in *Heroes* and *Furious Fists* are optimized collections of traits that synergize nicely in action, *Specialists* leaves hitting that target to the player. For new players – or ones who want to skip the fiddling and jump in, guns blazing – that can be a weakness. However, it's offset by greater customizability, which allows characters to shine in whatever scenes matter to the player, even if those heroes aren't "the best" in any one area.

In the balance, there should be no problems. Still, when using *Specialists*, it becomes extra-important for the gaming group to discuss who intends to choose what (from skill sets to entire templates) *before* anyone creates a character. That way, players can avoid niche invasion – and as a bonus, those using *Specialists* can exploit their flexibility to patch gaps in the team's capabilities, which benefits everyone.

A final note: Although *Specialists* is more structured than freeform character design, it's still *much* easier to "crook" than templates. Experienced players might use it to create heroes who outshine everybody else. The simplest solution is for the GM to permit gamers who prefer templates to apply the methods in *Trading Up* (pp. 30-31) and then spend any points saved just like a Slush Fund.

I Take My Job Seriously

Two forms of Higher Purpose appear on p. 18 of *Heroes*: "Deliver the package" and "Medic!" However, both are tied to broad archetypes – templates that would span two or three skill sets at least. The degree of customizability built into

Specialists requires more flexibility! At the GM's option, any player who can *clearly* and *concisely* describe his or her PC's intended role in the campaign can use the Slush Fund to buy a custom Higher Purpose that gives superior performance in that role's spotlight moments.

Like any Higher Purpose, this kind comes in two parts. First, the player must define a Code of Honor specific to an occupation or a dramatic role (which might be one and the same!) that matches the character's skill sets and power-ups. This is built-in and implicit; it gives back no points. Second, the player and GM should negotiate a narrow group of tasks – about as broad in scope as the two examples in *Heroes* – that somebody with the PC's code, role, and skills would perform in the course of a typical action plot.

Once that's done, the Higher Purpose works as usual: As long as the player roleplays the hero as respecting the Code of Honor, all dice rolls for relevant tasks are at +1. This costs five points. Optionally, the GM can treat Higher Purpose as having up to three levels, with Higher Purpose 2 [10] and Higher Purpose 3 [15] granting +2 or +3, respectively, to affected dice rolls.

Existing Examples

Higher Purpose (Deliver the package): This is specifically available to heroes with the Transporter power-up (p. 27). With the GM's permission, it might also suit anybody with vehicle-operation skills and an appropriate skill set: Tactical Driving (p. 22) usually qualifies; Fixer (pp. 15-16) and Car Thief (p. 12) do, too, for someone whose defining role is delivering contraband; and either Personal Security (p. 19) or Hostile Extraction (p. 16) works if the goal is to deliver passengers, willing or unwilling.

Higher Purpose ("Medic!"): This makes sense only for those who have one of the Medicine skill sets (p. 18).

New Advantage: Buddy Bond

5 points/level

This Higher Purpose does nothing when you're alone and never aids rolls made for *your* benefit. However, you get +1 per level (maximum three levels) on rolls you make to render direct assistance to one particular buddy. You receive this bonus when you make complementary skill rolls to support his tasks or use your skill to cover for his lack of skill (*Exploits*, p. 5); in the specific situations of giving him a leg up (*Exploits*, p. 19), tackling him out of harm's way (*Exploits*, p. 28), or "spotting" for him in combat (*Exploits*, p. 39); and whenever you roll to provide him with medical care (*Exploits*, pp. 40-41) or save his life (e.g., disarming a bomb handcuffed to him or using Swimming to rescue him from drowning). The GM decides when else it applies – it would probably help a Throwing roll to chuck your buddy ammo, but not your DX roll to catch ammo he threw your way.

Any *Action* character may buy this trait, irrespective of other abilities. However, the GM may wish to make Sense of Duty (Team) a prerequisite.

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So what I heard downstairs there is that they got a guy, some Swede, real badass, supposedly a "specialist" and they're bringing him over. Now he ain't coming cheap.

*— Serna, in **Smokin' Aces***

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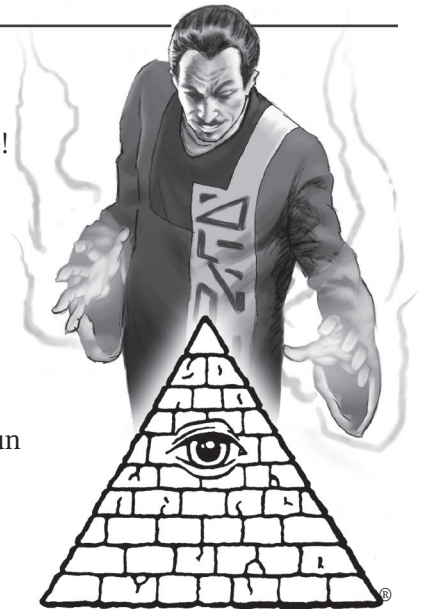
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