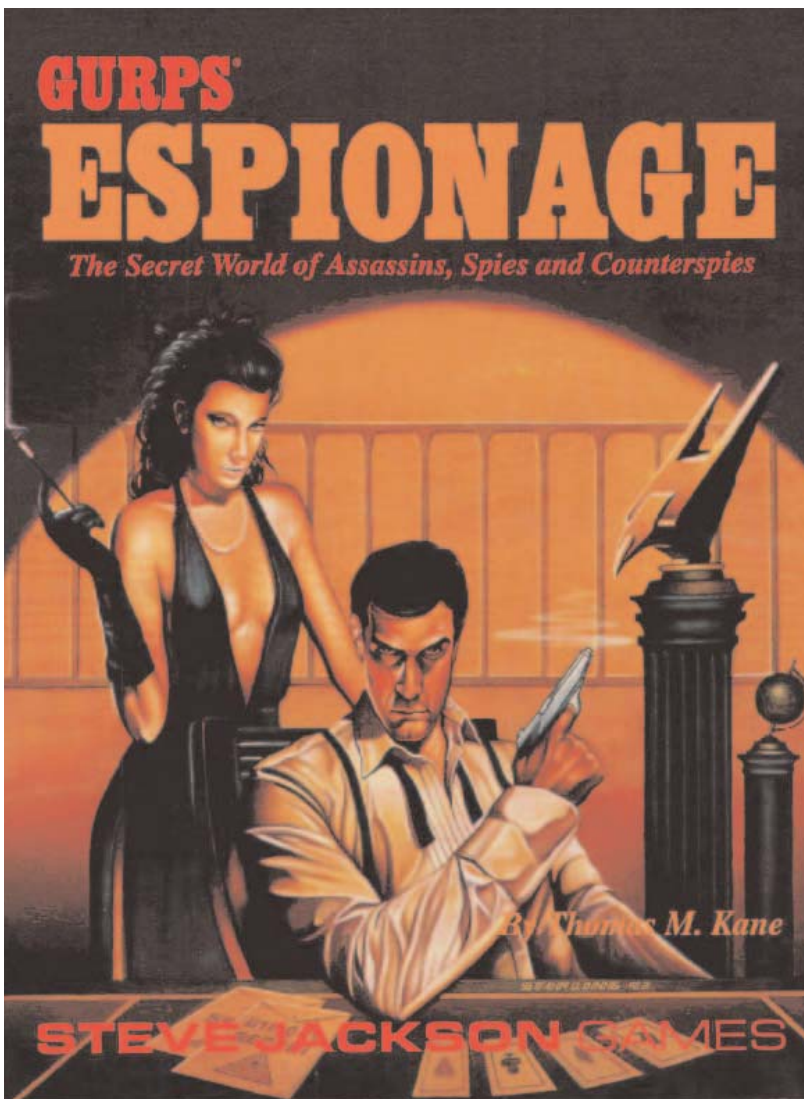


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LIFE IN THE SHADOWS

In the world of the spy, nothing is as it seems. Your closest friends are your enemies; every plot has a hidden agenda; fact is stranger than rumor, and no one can be trusted. Anyone who enters the deadly world of espionage must have the sharpest wits, the best equipment, and the most complete information. Only the truly brave and cunning will live to see their next mission . . .

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ESPIONAGE

The Secret World of Assassins, Spies and Counterspies



By Thomas M. Kane

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

LIFE IN THE SHADOWS

In the world of the spy, nothing is as it seems. Your closest friends are your enemies; every plot has a hidden agenda; fact is stranger than rumor, and no one can be trusted. Anyone who enters the deadly world of espionage must have the sharpest wits, the best equipment and the most complete information. Only the truly brave and cunning will live to see their next mission.

GURPS Espionage provides rules, gadgets and scenarios for any secret-agent campaign or character – from the cinematic assassins of the silver screen to the low-profile paranoids of real-life spy organizations.

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- *Tactics and Techniques:* How spies operate – who they trust and how they keep from getting caught.
- *Background:* Real-world spies and their incredible stories of assassination and intrigue.

Written by Thomas M. Kane
Edited by Michael Hurst and Steve Jackson
Cover by Jeffrey K. Starling
Illustrated by Darrell Midgett and Gary Washington



STEVE JACKSON GAMES



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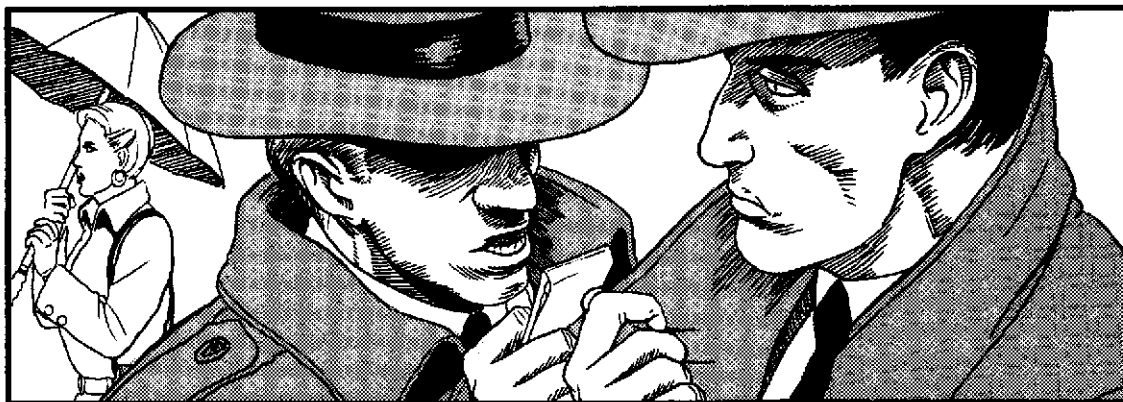
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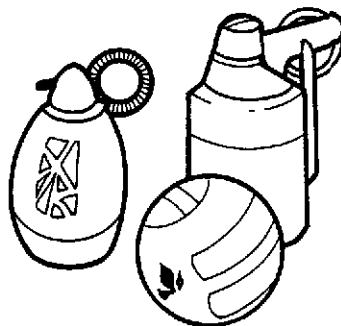
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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
<i>About GURPS</i>	3
<i>About the Author</i>	3
1. CHARACTERS	4
How to Roleplay a Spy	5
Character Types	5
Analyst	5
Cinematic Spy	6
Cut-Out	6
Controller	7
Counterspy	8
Femme Fatale	9
Guerrilla	9
Mickey, the Walk-In Spy	10
Sleeper	10
Special Agent	11
Stringer	11
Techno-Wizard	11
Terrorist	12
Wealthy Patron	12
Real-Life Spies	13
Louise de Bettignies	13
Dr. Elsbeth Schragmuller	13
Christopher Boyce and Andrew Lee	14
Mata Hari, Femme Fatale	14
Emily	15
Alexandr Dmitrevich Ogorodnik	16
Karl F. Koecher	16
Advantages	17
Disadvantages	19
Skills	20
Jobs and Income	25
Government Agents	25
Job Table	25
Sample Character: Ahmed Bashir	27
2. THE ESPIONAGE	
CAMPAIGN	28
Campaign Tone	29
Black and White vs. Shades of Gray	29
<i>Cinematic Spying</i>	29
Current Affairs vs. Cinematic Flair	30
High Security vs. High Action	30
<i>Agent Burnout</i>	30
High-Tech vs. Sci-Fi	31
<i>The Spy Schools</i>	31
The Campaign Theme	32
Spy vs. Spy	32
The Enemy Within	32
<i>Spy Gadgets</i>	32
Wars Hot and Cold	33
Big Business	33
<i>Special Devices Laboratories</i>	33
Political Movements	34
<i>The PC as a Double Agent</i>	34
The Wilderness of Mirrors	35
The Double Agent	35
<i>Mixed Loyalties</i>	35
<i>Game Master Resources</i>	36
The Disaffected Agent	37
The Rogue Operation	37
<i>What's the Point?</i>	37
The Set-Up	38

<i>The Accidental Spy</i>	38
The False Flag	39
The Hidden Agenda	39
<i>Keeping Options Open</i>	39
Leaks and Scandals	40
<i>The Best of Enemies</i>	40
The Life of a Spy	41
<i>Historical Espionage</i>	41
Campaign Crossovers	42
China	42
Cliffhangers	42
Cops	42
Horror	42
<i>Fantasy and Science Fiction</i>	
<i>Espionage</i>	42
Illuminati	43
<i>Magic and Psi</i>	43
Martial Arts	44
Prisoner	44
Special Ops	44
<i>Quiet Work</i>	44



3. SPY-TECH	45
Weapons	46
Surveillance Gear	49
Escape and Evasion Gear	51
Illegal Entry Gear	53
Communications Equipment	54
False Identification and Documents	55
Miscellaneous	56
Weird Stuff	60
Chemicals	62
4. TRADECRAFT	
AND MISSIONS	65
Tricks of the Trade	66
<i>Kurt Ludwig and Nazi</i>	
<i>Strategic Reconnaissance</i>	66
Espionage Organization	67
Combat Tactics	67
Mission Types	67
Strategic Reconnaissance	67
<i>The U2 Affair – Modern</i>	
<i>Tactical Reconnaissance</i>	67
<i>Economic Intelligence</i>	68
<i>Technical Intelligence</i>	68
Tactical Military Reconnaissance	69
<i>Blackmail</i>	70
Economic Intelligence	71
Technical Intelligence	72

Blackmail	72
<i>The Recruiting of Willie</i>	72
Counterintelligence and	
<i>Double Cross</i>	73
Recruiting Agents	74
<i>Disinformation in WWII</i>	74
Counterintelligence	75
<i>Sabotage in WWII</i>	75
<i>A Dirty Trick</i>	76
<i>Propaganda in WWII</i>	76
Disinformation	77
<i>Bodyguard Work –</i>	
<i>The Shooting of Ronald Reagan</i>	77
Sabotage	78
<i>Elsbeth's Advice to Spies</i>	78
Propaganda	79
Assassination	79
Bodyguard Work	80
<i>Historical Assassination Techniques</i>	80
Assassination	81
<i>Hostile Extraction</i>	82
Hostile Extraction	83
Friendly Extraction	83
<i>Rescue</i>	83
Rescue	84
<i>Friendly Extraction in Iran</i>	84
The Coup d'Etat	85
<i>Coup d'Etat in the Seychelles</i>	85
Plumbing	86
<i>Border Crossing</i>	87
<i>Friendly Fire</i>	87
Escape and Evasion	88
Transportation	88
Computer Espionage	89
<i>The Hannover Hackers</i>	89
Adventure Design	90
<i>Frameups</i>	90
<i>Props</i>	91
5. INTELLIGENCE	
ORGANIZATIONS	92
British Intelligence Services	93
<i>The Meaningless Numbers</i>	93
<i>Terrorism</i>	94
Canadian Intelligence Services	96
French Intelligence Services	96
<i>Worldwide Insurgent Organizations</i>	96
German Intelligence Services	97
Japanese Intelligence Services	99
Russian Intelligence Services	100
South African Intelligence Services	100
<i>Miscellaneous Front Organizations</i>	100
USSR Intelligence Services	101
United States Intelligence Services	101
<i>The Most Secret of Agencies</i>	101
<i>Espionage Training Facilities</i>	102
Miscellaneous Intelligence Services	103
<i>Old Spies Never Die</i>	103
<i>The Green House</i>	104
<i>The Stay-Behind Armies</i>	105
Warsaw Pact Intelligence Services	106
<i>World War I</i>	106
<i>Hall of Pleasurable Delights</i>	107
<i>The Red Orchestra</i>	108
<i>The Oslo Squad</i>	108
Inventing New Intelligence	
Organizations	109
<i>The Mixed Bureau</i>	109
6. SPOOKTALK	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY	123

INTRODUCTION

Espionage ranks not only among humankind's oldest occupations but among its favorite topics for adventure tales. A spy story can combine the intellectual stimulation of carefully plotted treachery with the animal thrill of gunfight on a misty pier. What fictional figure is so glamorous as the secret agent, alone among the enemy?

Espionage adventures emphasize adventure and action. A secret agent is a sanctioned outlaw, always at war with enemy agents and always running from capture. People associate spy stories with gunfights and car chases. Even gamers who emphasize realism may not wish to deny themselves the excitement of daring feats and raging battles.

Nevertheless, *Espionage* is not merely a game of combat. For a simple commando raid, the planners of secret operations would employ the military. *GURPS Special Ops* provides information on this sort of adventure. *Espionage* emphasizes mystery and intrigue.

An *Espionage* game can be extremely realistic. At this moment, real secret operations are taking place. Any GM who wished could base a campaign on current affairs, taking adventure ideas out of newspapers. By stressing the secrecy of the PCs' operations, a skillful GM can create the illusion that the adventures might actually have happened.

Science fiction offers another type of *Espionage* adventure. A secret operation can become exciting very fast if agents discover some sort of technological or supernatural breakthrough. Psionics, sorcery and advanced technology could all revolutionize a secret agent's world. In the hands of villains, such assets present a threat the heroes cannot ignore. In the hands of friendly agents, these devices offer a way to undertake missions generally regarded as impossible.

Both realistic and cinematic spy campaigns can take place in other eras. The World Wars provided a wealth of espionage history and fiction. This sourcebook applies as much to 1915 or 1943 as it does to 1992.



Veterans of established intelligence organizations try to make spying sound almost dull. Readers of "authentic" books on espionage learn that field operatives do not infiltrate enemy organizations in disguise. According to these books, real spies do nothing more exciting than tender money to traitors who know secrets and are willing to sell them. As for the more sensational missions, the kidnappings, the midnight break-ins, the parachute drops into hostile territory, official sources dismiss these as myths.

None of this debunking need discourage gamers. In the field of espionage, reports from "official sources" are not necessarily true. Clandestine operations occur in a shadowy, violent underworld of agents and organizations which officially do not exist. Therefore, a *GURPS Espionage* campaign can meet the requirements of both drama and realism. Just remember that both the heroes and villains of the spy world keep their exploits out of the press.

Whether the setting is real or cinematic, historical or fantastic, a spy's business remains the same. *Espionage* is a game of secret wars, fought beneath the surface of society. Spies employ deception and cunning to accomplish what direct action cannot. These dangerous, secret missions provide ideal challenges for a *GURPS* game.

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin TX, 78760. Please include a self-addressed-stamped-envelope (SASE) each time you write us. Resources now available include:

Roleplayer. This bimonthly newsletter includes new rules, new races, beasts, information on upcoming releases, scenario ideas and more. Ask your game retailer or write for subscription information.

New supplements and adventures. We're always working on new material and we'll be happy to let you know what's available. A current catalog is available for a SASE.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix the errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available from SJ Games. Be sure to include a SASE with your request.

Q&A. We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by a SASE.

Gamer input. We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book in later printings.

BBS. For those of you who have home computers, SJ Games operates a multi-line BBS with discussion areas for several games, including *GURPS*. Much of our playtest feedback for new products comes from the BBS. It's up 24 hours per day at 512-447-4449, at 300, 1200 or 2400 baud. Give us a call!

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. Page references that begin with an SO refer to *GURPS Special Ops*, and UT designates *GURPS Ultra-Tech*.

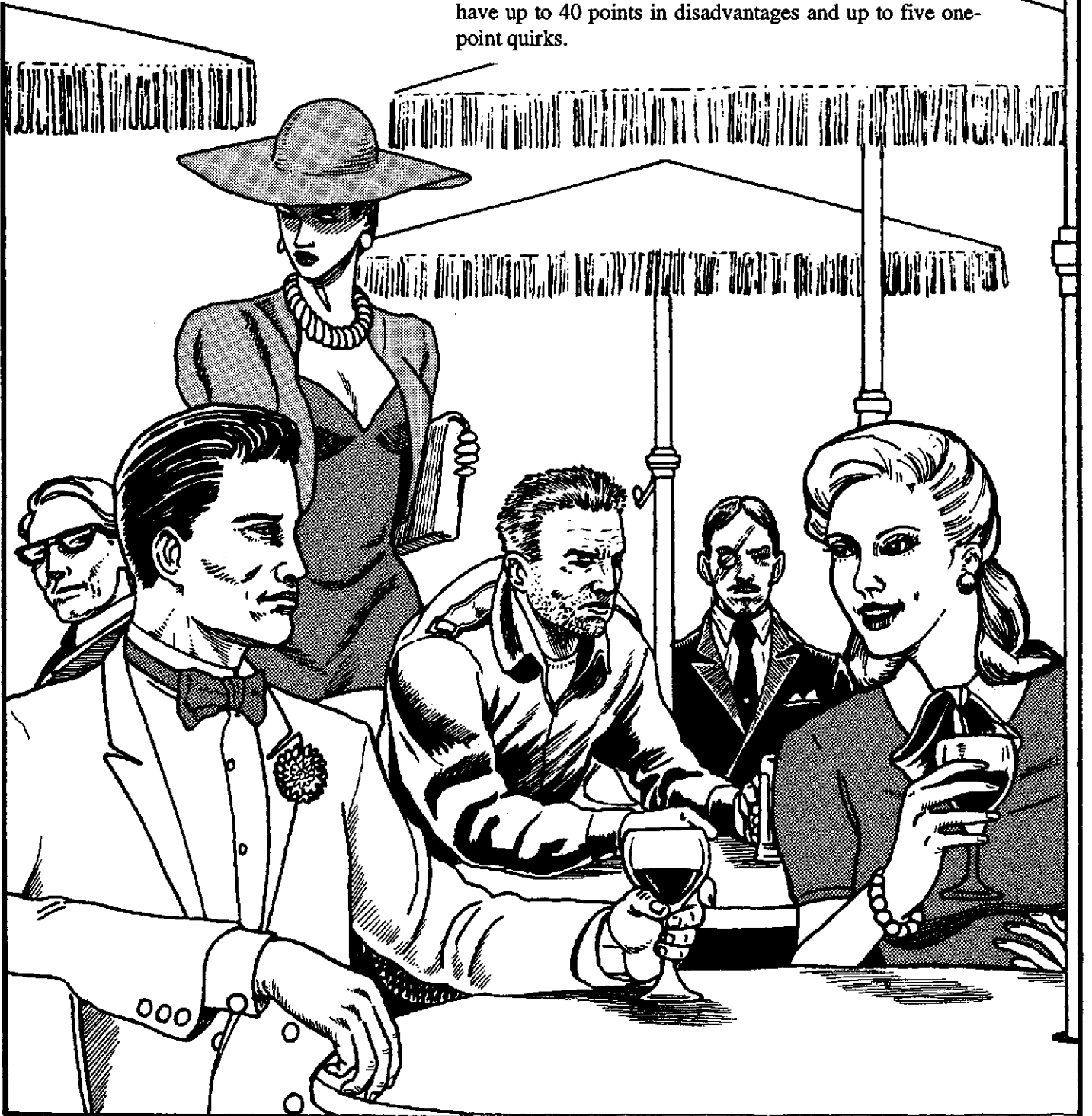
About the Author

Tom Kane enjoys strategy and roleplaying games of all kinds, and publishes materials for both sorts. Among other publications, he wrote the *GURPS China* supplement for SJ Games. He also contributes to Atlas Games' licensed *Cyberpunk* line. As a contributing editor for *Command* magazine, Tom maintains his interest in wargaming. With regard to this book, Tom recalls that the first thing he ever published concerned the *Top Secret* game. Tom wrote this book at his safehouse in the Maine woods, beneath the rotors of passing helicopters.

1

CHARACTERS

The strength of a beginning *Espionage* character varies with the atmosphere of the campaign. In a typical campaign, the party is an elite team, assembled for missions requiring both force and cunning. An agent of this nature begins play with 100 character points. These spies may have up to 40 points in disadvantages and up to five one-point quirks.



Agents of all types deserve higher point totals in cinematic campaigns. In these cases, 150 points becomes the norm for all characters.

The veteran of rigorous training, whether in a "spy school" or military commando camp, might begin play with higher point values. The *Special Ops* rulebook contains rules for characters with up to 400 points. However, most of these points must go into the skills picked up in training. Even a 400-point character cannot put more than 100 points into attributes, and the GM may limit this to 80.

Gamers should also remember that the *Special Ops* rules cover warriors who spend their lives in training. Most spies spend their time working instead. In a campaign allowing characters with over 150 points, players should develop extensive character histories. The PCs must choose skills and advantages which reflect their personal histories, not the players' plans for a super-agent.

Game Masters might also design a game specifically for less experienced characters. A spymaster does not always want the most competent agents available. When a spy must pose as an innocent civilian, no amount of training can compensate for a touch of genuine naivete. Furthermore, spy handlers consider inexperienced spies much easier to control. Those who enjoy the challenge of playing ordinary civilians might generate characters of 25-50 points, who have special skills useful to some espionage agency.

How to Roleplay a Spy

All *GURPS* worldbooks advise players to hone their skills at roleplaying. Espionage requires *real-life* spies to do just that. Spying is a roleplaying game played for keeps, in which one's life depends on one's ability to feign whatever identity or emotion the moment demands. These truths apply even when everyone knows an agent's identity. Spies live by plying contacts for information. They must be able to alternately assume the roles of confidant, superior, seducer, partner-in-crime or whatever other personality-type their informants find easiest to talk to.

Gamers in an *Espionage* campaign must roleplay roleplayers. The key to portraying a spy lies in knowing how and why the character lives a life of lies. Is she a trained actress? Does

he believe passionately in some cause? Is he pathologically deceptive? Does the spy's cover identity reflect some hidden fantasy? Well-played spies live in constant tension between their real selves, their false selves and the zone where the two merge.

Espionage can accommodate any sort of character players desire. One need not base their backgrounds on any particular stereotype. Spies never want to seem like spies. Secret agents with completely unexpected backgrounds and personalities not only have an easier time developing cover stories, they provide lots of fun in the game.



Character Types

Analyst

Perhaps the greatest difference between movie spies and real operatives lies in the data they collect. Real secret documents seldom contain plots to rule the world. Instead, spies collect reams of bureaucratic files, trivial anecdotes and technical documents on impossibly esoteric topics. Many of these documents prove false, irrelevant or available to the public. Many others seem absolutely worthless until cross-referenced with other findings.

The intelligence analyst takes the data spies produce and condenses it into truly valuable information. This involves a little deductive logic in the fashion of Sherlock Holmes. However, most analysis work consists simply of sifting through mind-numbing quantities of data, noting contradictory reports, picking out useful information and organizing it all.

Intelligence analysts do not limit themselves to stolen documents. Many of their most useful discoveries come from newspapers. Spy agencies employ numerous agents who do nothing more clandestine than living in a foreign country, keeping abreast

Surveillance Gear

Antenn-Eye

This commercially available device resembles a standard car radio antenna. However, the knob on the top contains a pinhole lens for a TV camera, and the device can perform video surveillance of a 360-degree area. Agents most commonly use it in cars or large portable radios for discreet spying. The device rotates while in use. Wary individuals may receive a Vision roll to notice the instrument. \$2,500, 4 pounds.

Binoculars

Standard binoculars are 8 power and weigh 2 lbs. Add +1 to Vision rolls and \$20 to cost for each doubling of magnification; these would be +3 and \$60. The most powerful hand-held binoculars are 20 power and would cost about \$200.

Bugs

Concealable microphones come in a staggering variety of types and sizes. Modern technology can produce bugs the size of a shirt button, containing all necessary apparatus to pick up conversations within three yards and broadcast them to a recording device up to 400 yards away. The recording machinery itself need be no larger than a cigarette carton. Its tape lasts for 2 hours of conversation. A VOX (voice-activation) circuit can keep the bug from operating during periods of silence, thereby saving the battery. With a VOX, the batteries in a bug can function for six weeks.

Numerous other bugs exist. A microphone as small as one centimeter in diameter can pick up the sounds of human activity, although not the words of conversations. In areas of airwave interference, spies can connect a bug to its recorder by wires instead of radio.

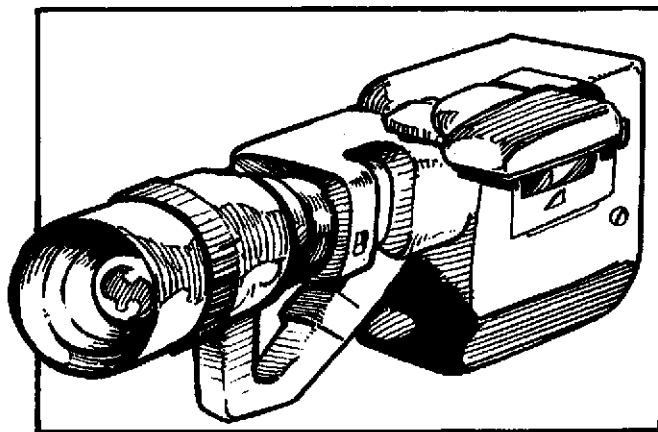
Civilians can easily buy the components of bugs, and often, the bugs themselves. One must make a simple Electronics Operations roll to build a tiny microphone from spare parts. An improvised bug is slightly larger than a professional model, usually about the size of a matchbox.

Any room containing a telephone is a bugger's paradise. With a few simple modifications, spies can implant a microphone to pick up conversations in the room and transmit them to any chosen phone number. This device functions even when the phone is on the hook. One must make an Electronics Operations roll to modify a telephone for this purpose.

Despite the advances in creating bugs, modern technology is equally effective at detecting them. (See *Bug Detectors*, p. 56, for

details.) Therefore, the real challenge to a spy lies not in hiding a microphone but in finding ways to listen to a room without placing electronic devices within it. Laser and ultrasonic microphones (described below) offer one popular solution. Also, if an intelligence agency can contrive to participate in the architectural design of a building, it can turn the walls themselves into bugs. Properly designed acoustical beams can transmit sound from any portion of a structure to recording devices anywhere else in the building.

The price for a bug ranges from \$100 to \$500. When designing a building for surveillance purposes, add 10% to the building's cost. The weight of all such devices is negligible.



Camcorder

A consumer model, with telephoto lens and time/date stamp. \$900, 18 lbs.

Camera

A 35mm camera, with flash attachment, light meter, zoom lens and assorted accessories. \$550, 3 lbs.

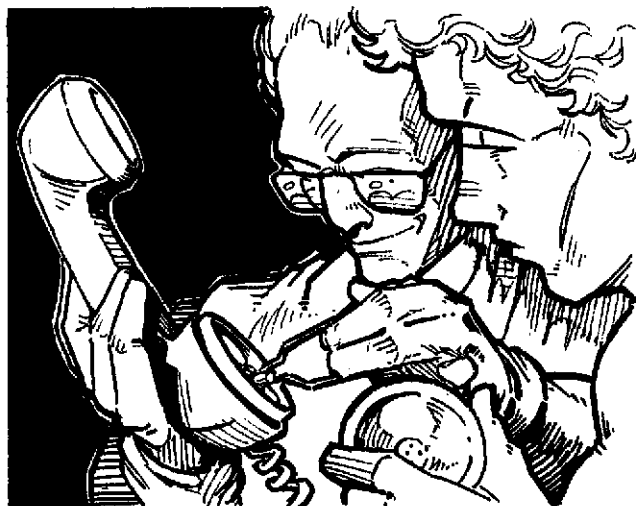
Computer Tap (TEMPEST Gear)

This device, the size of a small briefcase, picks up ambient radio emissions from standard computer monitors. It can display the current screen of any computer within twenty yards. Any form of electronic shielding prevents operation of this device. The user must make an Electronics Operations roll at -3 to distinguish one computer from the many in a modern office building. \$20,000, 3 lbs.

Fume Sponge

This square of absorbent tissue can come in any variety of shapes. The user exposes this sponge to the air in a target area, allowing it to collect dust, smokes, chemical droplets and other materials. A chemist can then analyze the sponge to identify the nature and sources of the airborne materials. This device can alert agents to industrial activity, such as factories, air traffic, secret laboratories producing atomic bombs, etc. An indoor model can also register the presence of particular people in a room, by means of their chemical "fingerprints" of toiletries, hair particles and body odor.

To analyze the materials on a fume sponge, make a Chemistry roll. A simple success reveals the presence of all significant contamination. More elusive materials, such as the effluent of one reasonably clean factory in an industrial area, require a roll at a -2 penalty. When agents use the indoor version of this device, a



Abort (noun): A failed mission.

Accommodation Address: A personal address used by couriers to receive mail which they forward to intelligence services.

Accountable Document Control System (ACDS): System used to record access to secret data.

Action Agent: An agent hired for some operation involving violence, explosives, breaking and entering or similar activity.

Active Measures: Soviet term for covert action and propaganda, as opposed to mere collection of information.

Active Opposition: Counterintelligence agents.

Additive: A set of digits or letters added to a code in order to encipher it. The key to a code.

Administratively Confidential: Information which, while not officially secret, would severely embarrass important officials.

ADSO: Assistant Director of Special Operations. CIA chief of clandestine activity.

Aeroflot: Russian national airline, often a front for KGB activity.

Agent: A spy. Technically, an "agent" is a criminal, usually a foreign national who does the "dirty work" of an intelligence organization. Legitimate employees of the CIA, etc., call themselves "Officers."

Agent Assessment: Reports sent to headquarters on an agent's performance, justifying the spy's salary.

Agent Development: Cultivation of social, professional, friendly or romantic relationships in order to gain influence over a prospective spy.

Agent In Place: A foreign citizen who wishes to defect, but remains in his current position in order to collect information.

Agent Provocateur: A government agent who tries to lure people into treason, and arranges their arrest if they succumb.

Agent Termination/Disposal: This term does not mean assassination. Instead, it refers to the more-or-less cordial dismissal of a spy.

Agent-Bolvan: A decoy spy used to fool the opposition. The agent-Bolvan may or may not know his role. This term originated among the Soviets but is now universal.

Agents of Influence: Operatives valuable to their agency because of their resources or political power rather than their access to information.

AGILE: Anti-Guerrilla Insurgency Light Equipment.

Alert Memo: A tip about potential opportunities for spies.

Alternate Meet: A pre-planned meeting which takes place if an agent and controller fail to make contact at the ordinary time.

Apparat: The entire agent network deployed against a certain target.

Area Division: The geographical area of operations of a certain department within a spy agency.

Assets: A spy's contacts. This can also indicate the entire organization in a certain area - "we have few assets in Chile since the coup."

Authentication: Any system used in communications to identify friendly users.

Authorized Persons: Those officially allowed access to classified information.

Back Channels: A secret communications network which bypasses ordinary radio frequencies or telephone lines. The CIA maintains a back-channel system in most U.S. embassies.

Backstop: Any arrangements made to support a cover story. An example might be renting an apartment in an area where one is pretending to live.

Bi-Weekly Propaganda Guidance: A booklet issued by the CIA to its stations around the world, explaining agency opinions on various world events. Agents then attempt to propound these

opinions in the media, disguising them as independent commentary.

Bigot List: A list of people who know the identities of foreign nationals working for an intelligence agency. The Bigot List itself is highly classified.

Black Bag: The diplomatic pouch, in which embassy officials may send mail across borders without going through customs searches.

Black-Bag Work (contemporary): Breaking and entering, usually for the purpose of implanting bugs.



Black-Bag Work (outdated): The smuggling of money through diplomatic "black bags." Although agents still use the term "black-bag work," it has acquired a completely different meaning, as described below.

Black Box: A recording device.

Black Designation: A telephone line, computer terminal or other information conduit which handles only encoded messages.

Black List: Any collection of sensitive data. Most often, a "black list" describes the enemy agents suspected of operating in an area.

Black Mind: A compliment, used to describe an agent perceptive enough to see through enemy intrigues.

Black Operations: Operations which an agency cannot officially sponsor. Usually, an agency cannot admit to black operations even for internal purposes. For example, in the United States, an executive order forbids the CIA to engage in assassination. Therefore, any murder must be a black operation, arranged through informal conversation and known only to the agents involved.

Black Propaganda: Propaganda in which the authors lie about their identities. For example, Soviet agents might attempt to disguise their documents as the work of American peace activists.

Blind Zone: An area immune to bugging devices.

Blipsqueak: See *Burst Transmission*.

INDEX

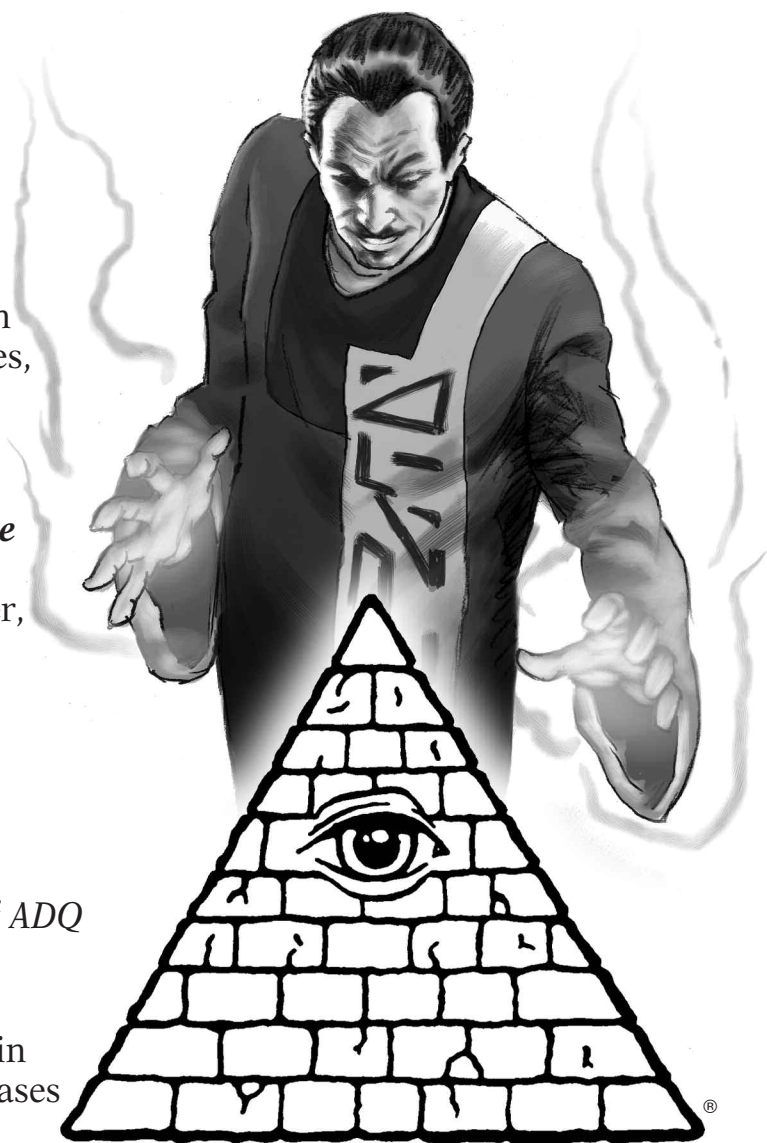
- 2 Dzerzhinsky Square, 108.
.22 Caliber atomic bomb, 62.
ABV, 106.
Abwehr, 73, 97.
Acid, 62.
Acting skill, 22.
Addiction disadvantage, 24.
Administration, Directorate of, 101.
Advantages, 5, 17-18.
Adventure design, 90.
Adversaries, 23, 32.
Agencies, *secret*, 101.
Agendas, *hidden*, 39.
Agents, *burnout*, 30; *disaffected*, 37; *double*, 32, 34, 35; *field*, 36; *foreign*, 8; *professional*, 7; *recruiting*, 74; *rogue*, 37; *Special*, 11; *see also Counterspy, Spy*.
Agitprop, 24.
Airdams, 52.
Alcohol, 62.
Alice, 13.
Aliens, 31.
Alliances, 40.
Allies advantage, 20.
Aman, 104.
Amateurs, 20.
American Civil Liberties Union, 30.
Ammunition, *incendiary*, 47; *subsonic*, 47.
Analysts, 5.
Androids, 31.
Antenn-Eye, 49.
Anti-infrared clothing, 51.
Anti-vehicle barriers, 46.
Antwerp, *WWI espionage school at*, 13; *Terrible Blonde of*, 13, 78.
Anxiolytic tranquilizers, 64.
Aphrodisiacs, 64.
Armored file cabinets, 57.
Army, *stay-behind*, 105.
Arrests, 8.
Artificial people, 61.
ASIO, 103.
Assassins, 33.
Assassination, 79-81.
Atomic ring, 69.
Atropine, 63; *sulfate*, 64.
Audio compass, 51.
Austria, 106.
Authorization, 40.
Auto ignition remote control, 56.
Autoinjector, 56.
Back doors, 90.
Bad guys, 29.
Baden-Baden, *espionage school at*, 13.
Base (chemical), 62.
Bashir, Ahmed, 27.
Behavior conditioning rig, 61.
Beirut, 16.
Belgium, 14.
Belladonna alkaloid, 63.
Betrayal, 29.
Bettignies, *Louise de*, 13.
BIV, 97.
Binoculars, 49.
Black Berets, 108.
Blackmail, 70-72.
BND, 98.
Bodyguards, 77.
Boehmler, Lucy, 66.
Bolo rounds, 46.
Bolshevik, 106.
Bomb, *noiseless button*, 58; *phone*, 47; *sniffer*, 56.
Bond, James, 44, 94, 124, 125.
Borchardt, Dr. Paul, 66.
Border crossing, 87.
BOSS, 101.
Botulin, 63.
Boyce, Christopher, 14.
Break-in, 40.
Briefings, 91.
Budgets, 93.
Bugs, 8, 11, 21, 49, 50; *detector*, 49, 56; *tracking*, 51; *typewriter*, 51.
Burglar alarms, 56.
Buried-cables, 57.
Bushmasters, 51.
"C," 94.
Caller ID, 57.
Camcorder, 49.
Camera, 49, 55; *micro*, 50; *miniature video*, 51; *underwater*, 51; *video lenses*, 51; *Wescam mount*, 51.
Camp Peary, 102.
Campaigns, 28-44; *China*, 42; *cinematic*, 3, 5; *Cliffhangers*, 42; *Cops*, 42; *Horror*, 42; *Illuminati*, 43; *Martial Arts*, 44; *realistic*, 3; *The Prisoner*, 44; *tone*, 29.
Canaris, Adm. Wilhelm, 97.
Carbon, 54.
Causes, 29.
CBR suits, 57.
Cells, 35.
Central Control of Information, 104.
Characters, *points*, 4; *sample*, 27; *types*, 5-13.
Cheka, 106, 107.
Chemicals, 62-64.
Chemistry skill, 49, 72.
Certificates, *birth*, 55; *death*, 55.
Chloral hydrate, 63.
Chrysanthemums, 99.
CIA, 14, 16, 101.
CID, 100.
Ciphers, 21.
Clones, 31.
Code of Honor disadvantage, 24.
Codes, 11, 21.
Cold War, 30, 32, 33, 82.
Communication equipment, 54-55.
Communists, 30.
Compromising positions, 73.
Compulsion disadvantage, 24.
Compulsive Behavior disadvantage, 19.
Compulsive Liar disadvantage, 59.
Computers, *personal*, 21, 58; *sentient*, 31; *tap*, 49.
Conflict, 91.
Connoisseur skill specialization, 24.
Conspiracies, 28, 44.
Contacts, 74; *advantage*, 18.
Controllers, 7.
Cooking skill, 63.
Counter-espionage, 14.
Counterintelligence, 73, 75; *see also Counter-espionage, Counterspy*.
Counterspies, 7, 8.
Coups, 86; *d'état*, 85.
Covers, 31; *blown*, 41.
Criminals, 11.
Crossbows, 46; *rubber-band hand*, 48.
Cryonic tanks, 62.
Cryptanalysis skill, 21.
Cryptography, 21.
CUKR, 108.
Curare, 63.
Cut-outs, 6.
Cyanide, 62.
de Jean, Maurice, 70.
Dead drops, 67.
Deception, 28.
Defense Intelligence Service, 93.
Delusion disadvantage, 24.
Department 12, 108.
Department 13, 108.
Department 14, 108.
Dependents disadvantage, 19.
Destructible paper, 54.
Det cord, 46.
Detect Lies skill, 59.
Deuxième Bureau, 96.
Devices, *see Gadgets*.
DGI, 104.
DGSE, 96.
DIS, 94.
DIA, 101.
Dimethyl sulfoxide, 63.
Diplomas, 56.
Diplomacy skill, 90.
Diplomatic Immunity advantage, 18.
Directorates, 101; *K*, 108; *S*, 108; *T*, 108; *First Chief*, 108; *Third of the KGB*, 108.
Disadvantages, 19-20; *mental*, 29.
Disguised explosives, 46.
Disinformation, 74, 77.
Dissidents, 99.
DMSO, 63.
DNA-matching, 21.
Documents, *false*, 55, 77; *puzzle*, 91; *scanner*, 57.
Donovan, Wild Bill, 103.
DONS, 100.
Double cross, 73.
Dr. No, 44.
DS, 106.
DST, 96.
Ejection seats, 52.
Electronic Data Systems, 83.
Electronic Operations (Surveillance) skill, 21.
Emily, 15.
Employers, 28.
Encryption, 21.
Enemies disadvantage, 19.
Engineering skill, 72.
Enlightened Ones, 44.
Escape, 88; *boots*, 52.
Espionage, *cinematic*, 5, 44; *computer*, 89; *fantasy*, 42; *historical*, 41; *organization*, 65, 67; *schools*, 13, 31; *science fiction*, 42.
Evasion, 88.
Explosives blanket, 57.
Extraction, 10; *friendly*, 83, 84; *hostile*, 82, 83.
Eye of Dawn, 14.
False flags, 39.
Farm, the, 102.
Fast-Talk skill, 24, 55, 90.
Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), 8, 66, 102; *pay*, 25.
Femme fatale, 9.
Fiber-optic scopes, 50.
Flaps and Seals skill specialization, 22.
Flechettes, 46.
Food poisoning, 63.
Forensics, 21.
Forgery, 55, *skill*, 22; *WWII*, 108.
Frameups, 90.
Fraulein Doktor, 13.
Freedom fighters, 12.
Freelancers, 41.
Friendly fire, 87.
Froelich, Rene, 66.
Fuchs, Klaus, 69.
Fuel contaminants, 46.
Fugu, 64.
Fume sponge, 49.
Gadgets, 11, 32, 33, 45-62; *high-tech*, 31; *science fiction*, 31; *TL7*, 60-61; *TL8*, 61; *TL9+*, 62.
Gas, *mask*, 57; *scanner*, 57; *tube*, 47.
Gehelen, Reinhard, 103.
Geneva Convention, 70.
Geophones, 57.
Gestapo, 95, 97, 98-99; *atrocities*, 99; *rival*, 97.
Geheime Staatspolizei, 98.
Global positioning systems, 52.
Goggles, *infrared*, 50; *light-intensifier*, 50.
Gold, Harry, 69.
GPU, 107.
Grapnel launchers, 53.
Grasshoppers, 61.
Green House, 104.
Greenglass, *David*, 69; *Ethel*, 69.
GRU, 106-107; *pay*, 25.
Guard robots, 60.
Guards, 88.
Guerrillas, 9, 77.
Heroes, 89.
HAHO skill specialization, 23.
Hall of Pleasurable Delights, 107.
Hallucinogens, 24, 63.
HALO skill specialization, 23.
Heart's Draught, 64.
Hedy firecrackers, 51.
Henchmen, 91.
Heroes, 28.
Himmler, Heinrich, 98.
Hinckley, John, 77.
Hitler, Adolf, 98.
Hoare, "Mad Mike," 85.
Hollow teeth, 52.
Holographic images, 55.
Honey traps, 9.
Hoover, J. Edgar, 102.
Hydrogen cyanide, 62.
Hydrophones, 58.
Identification, *false*, 55; *techniques*, 55.
Illegal, 7, 75.
Illuminati, 43-44.
Improvisation, 88.
Income, 25.
Inflatable, *raft*, 53; *zodiac boat*, 54.
Informants, 80.
Information, *sensitive*, 68.
Ink, *invisible*, 54.
Insurgent groups, 35.
Intelligence Analysis skill, 22.
Intelligence, *analyst*, 5; *Australian*, 105; *British*, 15, 93-95; *Canadian*, 96; *Communist China*, 104; *covert*, 71; *Cuban*, 104; *Czechoslovakian*, 16, 110; *Directorate of*, 101; *East German*, 108, 109; *economic*, 68, 71; *French*, 15, 96; *German*, 15, 97, 106; *Israeli*, 104; *Italian*, 106; *Japanese*, 99, 107; *miscellaneous services*, 103; *organizations*, 92-109; *organizations (inventing)*, 109; *Russian*, 106; *South African*, 100; *technical*, 68, 72; *United States*, 101; *USSR*, 106; *Warsaw Pact*, 106-109; *World War II*, 88.

- International Reporting and Information Service, 104.
 Interrogation, 8; *skill*, 22.
 Intrigue, 28.
 Intrusion radar systems, 58.
 Invisibility ray machines, 62.
 IQ, 22.
 IRIS, 104.
 Iron Legion, 103.
 Jammers, 59.
 Jargon, 110-122.
 Jetpacks, 60.
 Jews, 99.
 Jobs, 25; *table*, 25-26.
 JUMAR Ascender, 53.
 Kaltenbrunner, Ernst, 98.
 Kempei Tai, 99.
 KGB, 14, 107.
 Khokhlov, Nikolai, 81, 108.
 Knockout drops, 63.
 Koan Choa Cho, 99.
 Koecher, Karl, 16.
 Kriminalpolizei, 98.
 Kripo, 98.
 Ku Klux Klan, 103.
 Labor unions, 33.
 Laboratories, 33.
 LALO skill specialization, 23.
 Languages, 6.
 Laser communicators, 54.
 Leaflets, 79.
 Leaks, 40.
 Lec, Andrew, 14.
 Legal Enforcement Powers advantage, 17.
 Legal, 7.
 Licenses, boating, 55; *clip-on plate*, 52; *driver's*, 55, 56; *marriage*, 56; *pilot's*, 56; *professional*, 56; *to kill*, 31.
 Lies, 78; *detector*, 58.
 Linethrowing rockets, 53.
 Linse, Dr. Walter, 82.
 Love potions, 64.
 Loyalty, 29, 87; *mixed*, 35.
 LSD, 63.
 Ludwig, Kurt, 66.
 "M," 94.
 Macleod, Margaret Gertrud, 14.
 MAD, 98.
 Mafia, 44.
 Magazines, *extended*, 47.
 Magic, 43.
 Magnetic, *media disruptor*, 58; *stripes*, 55.
 Masons, 44.
 Mata Hari, 13-14.
 Mathematical Ability advantage, 21.
 Mathematics, 21.
 Maugham, Somerset, 95.
 McCarthy, Senator Joseph, 72.
 Mercader, Ramon, 80.
 Mercenaries, 11, 41.
 Metal detectors, 58.
 MIS, 73, 93.
 MI6, 94.
 Miceys, 10; "*Mickey Finn*," 63.
 Microphones, 49; *laser*, 50; *long-range*, 50.
 MIL-ND, 98.
 Military IDs, 56.
 Military Rank advantage, 17.
 Miniature pontoon boats, 53.
 Mixed Bureau, 13, 109.
 Moles, 32, 37, 68, 75.
 Mornard, Jacques, 80.
 Mossad, 104, 105.
 MVD-OMON, 108.
 MVF, 107.
 Nachrichtendienst, 106.
 Narcoanalysis, 64.
 National Security Agency, 102.
 Nelson, Steve, 69.
 Nerve, *agent*, 64; *gas*, 30.
 Ninth Division for Terror and Subversion, 108.
 Nitewatch systems, 58.
 NKVD, 107.
 Noise suppressors, 60.
 Nonverbal telephone communicators, 54.
 NSA, 102.
 Ogorodnik, Alexandr Dmitrevich, 16.
 OGPU, 107.
 ONA, 105.
 Operations, Directorate of, 101.
 Oppenheimer, Robert, 69.
 Options, 39.
 Oscilloscopes, 50.
 Oslo Squad, 108.
 OSS, 103.
 Palmcoders, 50.
 Parachutes, *airfoil*, 53.
 Parachuting skill, 23.
 Paramilitary, 32.
 Paranoia disadvantage, 27.
 Passports, 55, 56.
 Passwords, 89.
 Patrice Lumumba University, 102.
 Patrons, 12; *advantage*, 17.
 Pay, 25.
 Pen-knives, 47.
 Periscopes, 50.
 Perot, H. Ross, 83.
 Personnel, 93.
 Phobia disadvantage, 24.
 Phones, *bomb*, 47; *tap*, 50.
 Phosphorescent powder, 50.
 Photographs, 91.
 Photography skill, 22.
 Plastic, *explosive*, 110; *surgery*, 58.
 Plotters, 86.
 Plumbing, 86.
 Poisons, 30.
 Police, 8; *secret*, 10.
 Polygraphs, 58.
 Porcupines, 48.
 Portable IR spectrometers, 59.
 Potassium permanganate, 63.
 Powerboat skill, 23.
 Powers, Gary, 67.
 Precog crutch, 61.
 Principals, 7.
 Programs, 89.
 Programmers, 21.
 Propaganda, 79; *WWII*, 76.
 Props, 91.
 Psionics, 3, 43.
 Psychics, 31.
 Psychology skill, 23.
 Puffer fish toxin, 64.
 Punching spikes, 48.
 Radar, 57; *detector*, 53; *intrusion system*, 58; *man-portable*, 58.
 Radiation detection equipment, 59.
 Radical chic, 12.
 Radios, 54, 61; *Jammer*, 59; *UTEL underwater*, 55.
 Raids, 28, 79.
 Rallies, *monster*, 76; *political*, 79.
 Rashid, 83-84.
 RCMP-SS, 96.
 Reagan, Ronald, 77.
 Realism, 31.
 Rebet, Lev, 81.
 Reconnaissance, *Nazi Strategic*, 66; *strategic*, 67; *tactical*, 69, 70.
 Recordings, 91.
 Recruitment, 7, 38, 74.
 Red Orchestra, 108.
 Reputation advantage, 17.
 Rescues, 83, 84.
 Resources, *GM*, 36; *strategic*, 71.
 Retirement, 41.
 Revolutionaries, 86.
 Rogues, 20, 32, 37, 39, 82, 86.
 Rosenberg, Julius and Ethel, 69.
 Rote Kapelle, 108.
 RSHA, 98.
 Russia, 106.
 Sabotage, 75, 78, 79; *events*, 76; *WWII*, 108.
 Safes, 59.
 Sarin, 64.
 Satellites, 102.
 Scandals, 40.
 Scanners, 51, 55; *document*, 57; *gas*, 57; *retinal*, 55; *thumbprint*, 55.
 Schools, *espionage*, 13, 31; *WWII*, 102.
 Schragmuller, Dr. Elsbeth, 13, 78.
 Science and Technology, Directorate of, 101.
 Science fiction, 31.
 Scramblers, 54.
 Scuba gear, 53.
 SDECE, 96.
 Secrecy, 41.
 Secret, *disadvantage*, 20; *wars*, 32.
 Secret Intelligence Service, 94.
 Secret Service, 103.
 Security, 30; *clearance*, 56; *risk*, 37; *systems*, 11, 57.
 Seduction, 73.
 Sensors, 57.
 Service R, 108.
 Set-ups, 38.
 Seychelles, 85.
 Shadowing skill, 24.
 Sharansky, Anatoli, 17.
 Sherutei Habitahon, 105.
 Sicherheitsdienst, 97.
 SID, 106.
 Silenced outboard motor, 53.
 Silencers, 48.
 Simons, Col. "Bull," 83.
 Skills, 5, 20-25; *acquisition*, 20.
 Sleepers, 10.
 SMERSH, 80, 108.
Smert Shpionen, 80, 108.
 Smugglers, 55, 88.
 Social engineering, 90.
 Sodium, *amytal*, 64; *cyanide*, 62; *pentothal*, 64.
 Solid tires, 52.
 Sonar, 59.
 Space flight, 102.
 Space shuttle, 102.
 Spain, 15.
 Special Operations Executive, 94, 95.
 Spoilers, 52.
 Spies, *accidental*, 38; *cinematic*, 5, 6, 29; *embassy*, 41; *old*, 103; *ring*, 67; *schools*, 13, 31; *walk-in*, 10; *see also Agents, Counterspy*.
 Spymasters, 5, 38.
 Stashinsky, Bogdan, 81.
 Stasi, 108.
 Statistics, 93.
 STB, 110.
 Stealth skill, 57.
 Stethoscopes, 50.
 Stieber, Wilhelm, 106.
 Strategic resources, 71.
 Stringers, 11.
 Submarines, *automobile*, 61; *mini*, 53.
 Subsonic ammunition, 47.
 Subversion, 28.
 Surveillance, 8; *gear*, 49-51.
 Swallows, 70, 121.
 Swimmer delivery vehicles, 53.
 Switzerland, 71.
 Sword-umbrellas, 48.
 Tabun, 64.
 Tactical headsets, 54.
 Tactics, 65.
 Technical experts, 11.
 Technicians, 80.
 Techno-wizards, 11.
 Technology, 29, 45-64; *Directorate of Science and*, 101.
 Teheran, 84.
 Telephones, 49.
 TEMPEST gear, 49.
 Terrorism, 79, 94-95.
 Terrorists, 12; *organizations*, 96-99.
 Thallium, irradiated, 63, 81.
 Thermographic film, 50.
 Third World, 33.
 Tiger Eyes, 13.
 Time travelers, 31.
 Time-release, *beads*, 64; *poisons*, 64.
 Toxins, 63; *puffer fish*, 64.
 Trademarks, 44.
 Traitors, 8, 37.
 Tranquilizers, 24.
 Transportation, 88.
 Traps skill, 57.
 Trotsky, Leon, 80, 108.
 Truth serum, 64.
 U2, 67.
 Ultra-tech, 31.
 Ultralight aircraft, 54.
 Ultrasonic, 57; *mapper*, 59.
 Ultraviolet signalers, 53.
 Underground, 31.
 University degrees, 56.
 UTEL underwater radios, 54.
 Vandenberg Air Force Base, 102.
 Vehicular, *oil sprayer*, 52; *paint sprayer*, 52; *registration*, 56; *smokescreen*, 52; *spike dropper*, 52.
 "Very like" principle, 47.
 VFK, 110.
 Videotape editors, 59.
 Villains, 6, 28, 29.
 Visas, 56.
 Voice masks, 55.
 Voice stress analyzers, 59.
 VOX, 49.
 VX, 64.
 Walker Ring, *pay*, 25.
 Walsingham, Sir Francis, 94.
 Wars, 33.
 Water jets, 54.
 Wealth advantage, 17.
 Weapons, 8; *automatic*, 47; *improvised automatic*, 47; *improvised silencers*, 48; *Maxim*, 48; *permit*, 56; *semiautomatic*, 47; *silencers*, 48; *submachine guns*, 48; *trick gun*, 48.
 White Lotus Lodge, 44.
 White-phosphorus shotshell rounds, 46.
 Whitworth, Jerry Alfred, *pay*, 25.
 Wills, 23.
 Willie, 72.
 Wire, *saw*, 52; *tap*, 30; *wearing*, 21.
 World War I, 13, 15, 31, 41, 54, 95, 106, 109, 110.
 World War II, 11, 31, 41, 69, 73, 74, 75, 76, 88, 95, 103, 105, 108.
 Zubilin, Vasili, 69.

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