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Wherever there are powerful interests, there are shadowy special agents doing their bidding. This article is a description of the secret agent archetype for *Shadowrun*; the character concept, though, can be used for any cyberpunk or near-future game.

The secret agent was created by giving Priority A to Tech, B to Attributes, C to Skills, D to Magic and E to Race, using *Shadowrun* 2nd ed. and the *Street Samurai Catalog*.

The secret agent in *Shadowrun* is a shadow within the shadows: posing as just another shadowrunner, he is in fact still employed by a government, corporate or tribal intelligence agency to act as a street-level operative. The secret agent is well-placed to keep an eye on things in the shadows and to act as a "trouble-shooter" for any situation the agency sees to be a problem.

The agency (a generic term for any spy agency, as they are all alike in fundamental ways) is the intelligence-gathering and covert operations branch of a host organization. Its purpose is to protect and further the interests of its governing body.

The secret agent is the agency's most versatile operative—the agent's high level of skillwires enable him to be capable of just about any job that a mundane could accomplish. The secret agent prefers using stealth to accomplish the agency's goals. When violence is absolutely necessary, the secret agent prefers to use very "surgical" methods—precise, quick and, if possible, quiet.

Secret Agent

By Dave Panchyk

Shadowrun 2nd ed.



HOMBRE SECRETO HOMBRE SECRETO HOMBRE SECRETO HOMBRE SECRETO

The secret agent has been thrown SINless into the shadows, with a thorough cover story prepared by the agency whenever possible. The agent will often pose as a former company man because the agent's skills and cyberware are much like those of a corporate troubleshooter. The agency will often have a corporate "front" complete with computer records in order to make the agent's background story credible.

The secret agent has two missions: to uncover, assess, report and neutralize any threat to the agency's interests; and to gather information about shadowrunners, corporations, etc., and pass this information on to the agency.

The agency is a 100,000 nuyen contact for character creation purposes. The secret agent character can communicate with the agency via a secured line. With a successful Etiquette (Agency) roll, the character can gain limited access to information (or more rarely, money, equipment or human resources) to help with a shadowrun. The amount of help the agency gives depends on the number of successes the player rolls, and also on how suspicious outside help would look (would it blow the agent's cover?), how the results of the run would benefit the agency and how the character has performed for the agency in the past.

Remember, the secret agent character is still an employee of the agency. He must report at least every 14 days and must act on orders given by the agency, even if they complicate a shadowrun. Any breach of conduct will be secretly investigated by the agency, possibly by an operative the character doesn't know. The agent's income while in the shadows is what he gets from shadowruns, to better fit in with "genuine" shadowrunners.

The secret agent's extensive cyberware modifications mean that the agent has an extremely low Essence. While for many people a low Essence means that they become borderline psychotics or tend toward being moody and depressed, the secret agent is one of those whom a low Essence turns cold and hard. His psyche finishes the job the invasive insertion of cyberware began and turns the agent into an almost totally unfeeling, machine-like person. The "spook" is one of the spookiest people on the street.

PLAYER TIPS

The secret agent is usually a cold-hearted, ruthlessly efficient individual, but doesn't always have to be this way. A tribal council agent, for example, is going to be different from the typical government "man in black." Remember, though, as an agent, that the agency made you, and its goals always come first. You are a well-constructed weapon in its service.

Part of your importance to the agency is your "deniability" as an operative. Don't let anyone, even the other shadowrunners, know that you are a secret agent. Arrange with the GM to refer to the agency as your "government contact" or something else that will not arouse suspicion. Part of your job is to gather information on shadowrunners and give that to the agency; your teammates wouldn't be happy to find this out.

Contact the agency every two weeks. It's assumed you'll tell the agency about everything you've learned and everything that's happened to you, unless you tell the GM you're holding something back. You can call the agency for help or information during a shadowrun, but only as a last resort, and you should never ask for too much.

REFEREE TIPS

Always keep game balance in mind when giving agency help to the secret agent character. Although the agency values its field agents, the character should not expect to be loaned a Banshee LAV, for example. By the same token, the agency will not reject reasonable requests for information or other services, nor will it continuously make demands that interfere with the character's shadowrunning.

When the secret agent character asks for information, help or equipment, decide what that particular agency would have access to. A government agency would have some information on corporate figures (at a +2 target number to Agency Etiquette rolls), but not on go-gangs or many people in the magic world, for instance. (Part of the reason the secret agent is on the street is so the agency can expand its databases.)

And even if a tribal agency were fond enough of the indiscreet agent in the example above, it would be hard-pressed to supply him with a Banshee. The help the agency gives also depends on the number of successes the player makes on an Agency Etiquette roll.

Help keep the character's connection to the agency a secret. The easiest way to do this is give a code name to the character's contact inside the agency, for when the agency needs to contact the character.

This is much better than the old standard of note-passing, which immediately makes the other players suspicious.

The agency can be a little bit of a mystery even to the player character, which allows you to have a little fun. Information can be passed on by agents on the street, such as a bag lady who passes the character a note and disappears.

The character can pick equipment up from a store that is then boarded up and empty the next day. You set the ambience for the agency.

SAMPLE AGENCIES

Each type of agency is obviously going to have different concerns. In general, though, the main concern is sovereignty. The geopolitics of post-Treaty of Denver North America are fairly fragile, and most governing bodies don't want to see any threat to the new status quo.

The following examples serve to show the primary objectives of the various kinds of agencies. The secret agent is expected to follow those objectives and, if possible, deal with any threats with the prior clearance of the agency.

Intelligence agencies try to remain secret, but hardly anything ever is—nonagent characters who make a Street Etiquette (5) test will have heard of one or more of these agencies.

Salish-Sidhe Tribal Security Council: The main threat to any Native American nation is terrorist Humanis groups; tribal secret agents are expected to keep an eye on any potential trouble from them. The council is also on the lookout against organized poaching and corporate despoiling of the land.

Bureau des Affaires Spéciales (Québec): The Office of Special Affairs monitors any potential threats to the independent state of Québec. Agents have the basic duty of gathering intelligence on organized crime (Montréal has been a Mafia stronghold since the latter part of the 20th century) and on radical or terrorist policlubs such as Der Nachtmachen. Since the Oka confrontation in 1990, the government has also been concerned about land claims from the Mohawk nations.

UCAS Intelligence Service (UCASIS): In addition to the potential trouble from organized crime and radical policlubs, the UCAS government has a great concern with corporations. The government does not like the extra-legal status most megacorps claim for themselves and so watches their activities closely. This is especially important in Seattle—the UCAS does not want anything to jeopardize its control of Seattle as a treaty city.

Special Operations Cadre (Mitsuham Corporation): The cadre exists to identify and monitor interests hostile to the corporation. Primarily, these are other corporations; the cadre has a special interest in keeping tabs on shadowrunners, as they do the bulk of corporate dirty work. Mitsuham also likes to know in advance about any tribal or federal attempt to interfere with the running of the corp.

Secret Agent Character Creation

Priorities: Race-E, Magic-D, Skills-C, Attributes-B, Tech-A.

Cyberware	Essence Loss	Nuyen Cost
Skillwire (5)	1.0	500,000
Wired reflexes (2)	3.0	165,000
Smartgun link	0.5	2,500
Fingertip compartment	0.1	3,000
2 chipjacks	0.4	2,000
Datajack	0.2	1,000
50 MP memory	0.5	5,000
Subtotal	5.7	678,500

Equipment	Nuyen Cost
Secure long coat	650
Scorpion machinepistol (smart variant)	1,700
Narcoject pistol	600
Walther WA 2100 sniping rifle	6,500
Monofilament whip (in fingertip compartment)	3,000
Silencer for Scorpion	500
Concealable holster for Scorpion	100
Ford Americar	20,000
Pocket Computer—1000 MP memory	5,000
Dataline Tap (3)	15,000
Data encryption system (6)	6,000
Dataline scanner (6)	600
Wristphone	1,000

Ammunition	Nuyen Cost
100 rounds APDS (Scorpion)	700
40 rounds APDS (sniper rifle)	280
5 Narcoject darts	1,000

Skillsofts	Nuyen Cost
Unarmed Combat: 5	25,000
Etiquette (Street): 5	15,000
Etiquette (Corporate): 5	15,000
Car (Passenger vehicle): 4	12,000
Athletics: 5	25,000
Negotiation: 5	25,000
Interrogation: 5	25,000
Middle Lifestyle (two months prepaid)	10,000

Contacts	Nuyen Cost
Agency	100,000
Fixer	5,000
Street Doc	Free
Armorer	Free
Total	998,130



Secret Agent Archetype

Attributes

Body: 4
Quickness: 5
Strength: 4
Charisma: 2
Intelligence: 5
Willpower: 4
Essence: .3
Reaction: 5 (9)

Initiative

9 + 3D6

Dice Pools

Combat: 7

Skills

Etiquette (Agency): 6
Firearms: 6
Stealth: 6
Armed Combat: 6

Cyberware

Skillwires (5)
Wired reflexes (2)
Smartgun link
Fingertip compartment
2 chipjacks
Datajack
50 MP memory

Equipment

Secure long coat
Scorpion machinepistol (smart variant)
Narcoject pistol
Walther WA 2100 sniping rifle
Monofilament whip (in fingertip compartment)
Silencer and concealable holster for Scorpion
Ford Americar
Pocket computer—1000 MP Memory
Dataline tap (3)
Data encryption system (6)
Dataline scanner (6)
Wristphone

Ammunition

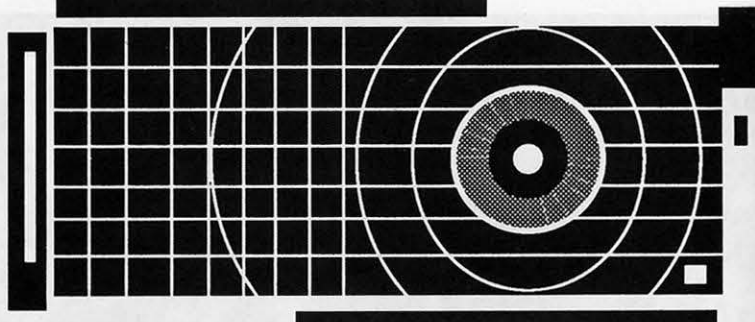
100 rounds APDS (Scorpion)
40 rounds APDS (sniper rifle)
5 Narcoject darts

Skillsofts

Unarmed Combat: 5
Etiquette (Street): 5
Etiquette (Corporate): 5
Car (Passenger Vehicle): 4
Athletics: 5
Negotiation: 5
Interrogation: 5
Middle Lifestyle (two months prepaid)

Contacts

Agency, Fixer, Street Doc, Armorer Ω



Assassin Archetype

"You want somebody what? 'Terminated with extreme prejudice?' Why can't anyone just say 'kill' these days?"

"So you want someone dead, and you came to me because I'm the best. But in this world, excellence costs, my friends, and my type of excellence costs a great deal. How much are you willing to pay?"

"That is within negotiating range of my price. Sit down, and we'll talk."

Calculating, efficient and totally business-like, the modern assassin will always get his target, no matter who gets in the way.

Attributes

Body: 3
Quickness: 4 (5)
Strength: 3 (4)
Charisma: 2
Intelligence: 4
Willpower: 5
Essence: 0.2
Reaction: 4 (8)

Skills

Firearms: 6
Demolitions: 4
Unarmed Combat: 5
Stealth: 4
Etiquette (Corp): 3
Car: 3
Electronics: 3
Throwing: 3

Cyberware: Wired reflexes (2), retractable hand razors, smartgun link, air filtration, cybereyes with low-light, flare protection and thermographic imaging, skillwire (level 3), muscle replacement (1).

Equipment: Armor jacket, doc wagon contract (Gold), H&K 227 S variant with smartgun link, Ares Predator with silencer, Ranger Arms sniper rifle with smartgun link and silencer, maglock passkey, plastic explosives, compound 12, radio detonator, two neuro-stun grenades, two flash grenades, neuro-poison (ingestible, five doses).

Skillsofts: Korean: 3, Japanese: 3, Projectile Weapons: 3, Sun Tzu's Art of War: 3, Toxicology: 3.

Contacts: Mr. Johnson, Fixer, Yakuza Boss, Decker.

Description: Elegant and cool. Always dressed immaculately. Utterly charming, totally deadly. Ω

By David Perry