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CyberStealth Action

by Philip Reed

An action genre that blends wonderfully into futuristic D20 Modern campaigns is the stealth-based mission. Made immensely popular in various computer/console games, few GMs have taken the time to incorporate stealth action into their game sessions. This article provides GMs with the tools necessary to sample stealth action. Scattered throughout this article are adventure hooks waiting to be expanded into full-length adventures.

The new feats and the prestige class must be approved by the GM before they can be used in a campaign. For more cybernetic material see Ronin Arts' *Future: Heroes – Cyborgs*, *Future: 13 Cybernetic Enhancements*, and *Future: 13 Cyborg Weapons* PDFs.

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About the Author

Philip Reed has been working professionally in the roleplaying game industry since 1995. In that time he has worked for such companies as Atlas Games, Paradigm Concepts, Steve Jackson Games, and Dork Storm Press. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts, writing and designing new games, and trying to force himself to take a break so that his wrist will heal. To learn more about Philip Reed – and Ronin Arts – please visit www.roninarts.com.

New Feats

To create effective characters for use in cyberstealth campaigns, the following feats should be considered.

Cybernetic Feats

These feats are written for use with characters dependent upon cybernetic enhancements.

Cybernetic Compatibility

You have a natural resistance to the negative effects of taking too many cybernetic attachments.

Benefit: If you are forced to take negative levels due to having too many cybernetic attachments (as detailed in the basic cybernetics rules in the SRD),

ShadowShield

This elite mission force, organized and operated by the highest levels of government, is a covert action agency charged with protecting the government's agents, citizens, and interests across the solar system. ShadowShield, a distant descendent of the former United States' NSA, operates above, outside of, and in direct opposition of the law. ShadowShield fields some of the best-trained stealth operatives in the business and devotes its resources and energies to eliminating threats before they take place.

Throughout this article you will find boxes marked "ShadowShield Case File." These special boxes are the adventure hooks written solely for the use of the GM. If you are a player in any campaign it is recommended that you overlook these boxes since they may prove to be the basis for an upcoming adventure. GMs are encouraged to use these boxes as disinformation to distract and confuse players that cannot obey instructions.

ShadowShield Case File #1589: Neutralize the Gray Goo Device

On an orbital research station in deep space, a splinter terrorist agency is reportedly nearing completion of a new weapon of mass destruction – a nanite “gray goo” explosive device. Our agent within the facility has not reported in over 72-hours and his last report indicated that the weapon would be launched by FTL missile within a week. You – and your team – are tasked with the responsibility of infiltrating the station, locating the device, and disabling it before it can be launched.

The mission calls for complete stealth – being spotted, either on approach or once inside the station, will lead to a premature launch of the weapon. Cargo shuttles ferry between the station and the planet it is orbiting on a daily basis – sneaking aboard one of these shuttles will be the safest method of gaining access to the station.

We have reports that the station is guarded by an elite force of military cyborgs. Exercise caution and patience on this mission.

Kink: The weapon is already in flight. The agents must locate the command/control center onboard the station and disable the weapon while it is in transit to its target. Once onboard the station the agents have less than 30 minutes to destroy the weapon before it reaches its target.

you may make a DC 35 Fortitude check at the time the cybernetic that would normally force a negative level is installed – if the check succeeds you automatically gain the Cybertaker feat as a bonus and the newly-installed cybernetic attachment has no negative effect on you. If the check fails, you gain two negative levels for this one new cybernetic attachment.

Implant Focus

Choose a specific cybernetic implant, such as a mindscreen implant or a rage implant. You are especially good at using this implant’s ability.

Prerequisite: An implanted cybernetic attachment.

Benefit: You add a +1 to all rolls you make using the selected implant. The specific type of roll depends upon the chosen implant.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take this feat, you must select a different implanted cybernetic attachment.

Withstand Massive Damage to Cybernetics

You are better able to withstand the effect of attacks against your cybernetic attachments.

Prerequisite: One or more cybernetic attachments.

Benefit: Whenever you fail a Fortitude save against massive damage, and are forced to roll for effect as described in the basic rules for cybernetics, a roll of “Side Effect” has no effect and is ignored.

Stealth Feats

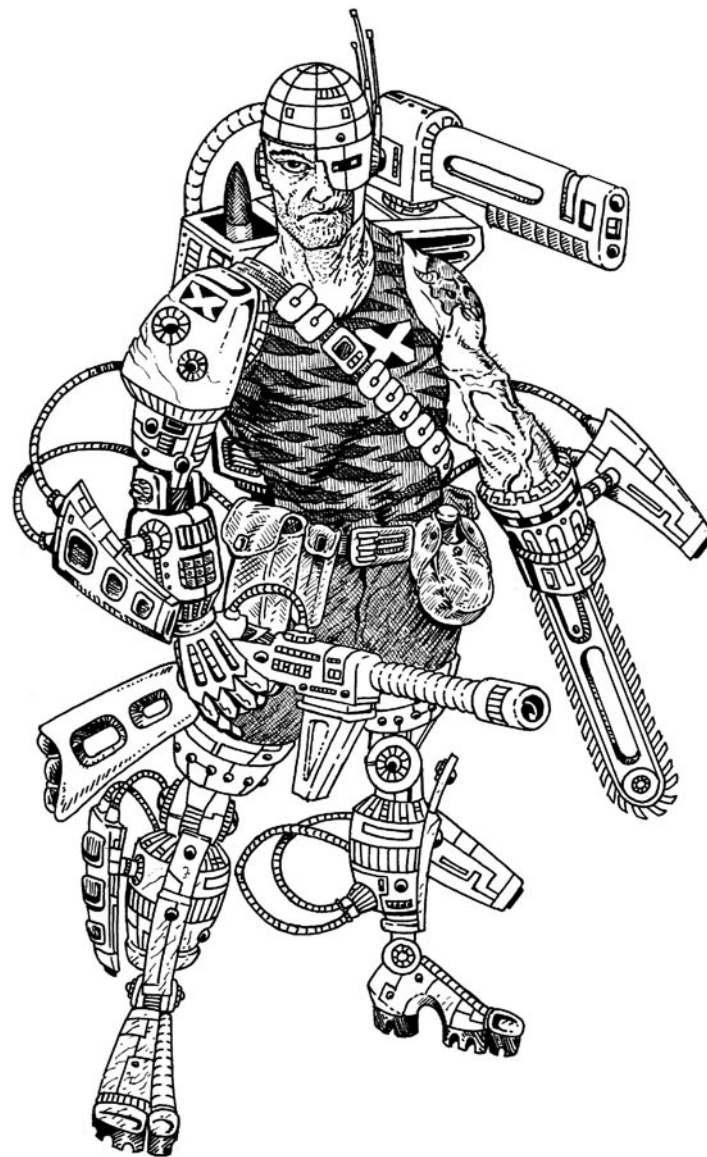
The following feats are designed specifically for stealth action campaigns. They are suitable for use in either modern or futuristic campaigns.

Back to the Wall

By flattening yourself against a wall – when in partial shadows – you are more difficult to spot.

Prerequisites: Stealthy.

Benefit: When flattened with your back to a wall you gain a +4 circumstance bonus on *Hide* checks. This bonus stacks with the bonus for Stealthy.



Shadow Dash

Your experience in stealth has taught you how move quickly when hidden within dark, shadowed places.

Prerequisites: Stealthy, Hide 4 ranks.

Benefit: When in shadowed areas – during either night or day – you may move up to your full speed and suffer no penalty on *Hide* checks. It is difficult, but not practically impossible, to hide while running or charging (-10 penalty). Attacking while hidden is still practically impossible (-20 penalty).

Normal: Moving at more than half and up to full speed while hidden is a -5 penalty. Running and charging while hidden is just as difficult as attacking (-20 penalty).

Silent Step

You are experienced at moving in a manner that greatly decreases the amount of noise that you make.

Prerequisites: Stealthy, Move Silently 4 ranks.

Benefit: You may move up to your full speed at no penalty. When attacking (with silenced or melee weapons), running, or charging you take a -10 penalty.

Normal: It's practically impossible (-20 penalty) to move silently while attacking, running, or charging.

Strike from the Shadows

When carefully hidden in the shadows, you're able to make ranged attacks against opponents and remain hidden.

Prerequisites: Stealthy, Hide 6 ranks.

Benefit: If you've already successfully hidden in a shadowed area, at least 10 feet from your target, you can make one ranged attack and then immediately hide again. You take a -10 penalty on your *Hide* check to conceal yourself after the shot. Hiding immediately after this attack is a move action.

Special: If you have the Sudden Disappearance feat you gain a +2 synergy bonus to your *Hide* check when using this feat.

ShadowShield Case File #1723: Data Theft

Ice Station Delta Five, under control of an enemy government, has been identified as a storehouse of enemy military and technological research secrets. Your mission is to drop to the planet's surface using a one-man orbital lander, approach the station stealthily, infiltrate the station's research lab, and steal the primary data disks. A military shuttle will retrieve you when the mission successful sign is transmitted through your subcutaneous communicator (cell phone or other device).

Kink: A rogue merc force is attacking the station when the agents arrive. Their job becomes more difficult now that they have two parties to contend with.

Normal: Attacking while hidden is practically impossible (-20 penalty).

Sudden Disappearance

You are skilled at hiding quickly, concealing yourself from sight seconds after creating a diversion.

Prerequisite: Shadow Dash.

Benefit: After creating a diversion (as described under the *Hide* skill in the basic rules), you maneuver into a hiding place that is within 2 feet for every rank that you possess in *Hide*. Your *Hide* check is at a -5 penalty because you have to move fast.

Normal: A successful diversion allows you to move to a hiding place that is within 1 foot for every rank of *Hide*. The check is at a -10 penalty.

Traceless

You have developed the habit of removing signs of your passage: wiping away fingerprints, smudging footprints, and wearing gloves have all become natural to you.

Prerequisites: Int 13+.

Benefit: The DC for any attempts to notice your presence or passage (i.e. whether you're in the same room as them now or have been before) is increased by a number equal to your Intelligence modifier. Further, no one may take 10 or 20 when making a skill check to notice your presence or passage. This ability works whether the pursuer is making an opposed skill

check or not.

Special: This feat does not affect items left behind, such as bugs or explosives.

Vertical Escape

When suddenly discovered, if you are near a wall, you're able to create a diversion and hide above your pursuers.

Prerequisites: Stealthy, Climb 4 ranks, Hide 4 ranks.

Benefit: When you are spotted – and within 5 feet of any non-slippery wall – you may create a diversion and hide attempt as described under the *Hide* skill in the basic rules. If this check is successful you must immediately make a *Climb* check – failure indicates that your attempt at hiding has failed and you remain in the square in which you were in when spotted. You gain a synergy bonus to your *Climb* check equal to your *Hide* ranks. Any *Hide* checks you must make after executing this ability, when you are clinging to the wall or ceiling, gain a synergy bonus equal to your *Climb* ranks.

CyberOp Prestige Class

The CyberOp is part spy and part assassin, charged with executing covert operations deep behind enemy lines. Mixing his cybernetic enhancements with specialized stealth training, the CyberOp is an experienced infiltrator prepared to follow his orders

TABLE 1: THE CYBEROP

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1 st	+0	+0	+2	+0	Cybertaker, ShadowWare	+1	+1
2 nd	+1	+0	+3	+0	Bonus Feat, Bonus Cybernetic Attachment	+1	+1
3 rd	+1	+1	+3	+1	Cybertaker, Direct Link	+2	+1
4 th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Bonus Feat, Bonus Cybernetic Attachment	+2	+2
5 th	+2	+1	+4	+1	Cybertaker, ShadowShield Drone	+4	+2

and complete his mission. A CyberOp is one of the most important members of ShadowShield.

Requirements

To qualify to become a CyberOp, a character must fulfill the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +4.

Cybernetics: The character must have a minimum of 3 cybernetic attachments.

Skills: Hide 8 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks.

Class Information

The following information pertains to the CyberOp prestige class.

Hit Die

The CyberOp gets 1d8 hit points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

The CyberOp gains a number of action points equal to 7 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills

The CyberOp's class skills are as follows.

Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Computer Use (Int), Disable Device (Int), Hide (Dex), Investigate (Int), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Repair (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 5 + Int modifier (4 + Int modifier for nonhumans).

Class Features

The following class features pertain to the CyberOp prestige class.

ShadowWare

At 1st level, the CyberOp is implanted with a special cybernetic enhancement that bends light away from the CyberOp. The CyberOp gains a +10 (+ CyberOp level) bonus to *Hide* checks if immobile or a +5 (+CyberOp level) bonus to *Hide* Checks when moving. This bonus stacks with any other bonuses. This implant does not count against the CyberOp's limit on cybernetics.

ShadowShield Case File #2067: Target Elimination

Your target is a high-level enemy general. The general is known to be traveling with a military convoy of star freighters. The convoy is under protected – only two light escorts – so it is possible that the agents will be able to close in on the general's ship and silently board it. For this operation a ShadowShield cloakship and pilot have been loaned to the team. To determine the general's ship the agents will need to close in tight and scan each ship in the convoy. Once the proper ship is discovered they'll need to climb into a spacesuit and transfer to the general's ship. If the agents are unable to complete the assignment in under 1 hour an enemy patrol will rendezvous with the general's ship and transfer a security squad aboard to deal with the intruders.

Kink: The general is better protected than expected. A trio of combat robots are assigned to the general as his bodyguards.

Cybertaker

The CyberOp gains the Cybertaker feat at 1st, 3rd, and 5th levels. This feat allows the character to have more cybernetic attachments than normal – but see the box for cybernetic rejection.

Bonus Feat

At 2nd and 4th, level, the CyberOp gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the character must meet all of the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Alertness, Athletic, Attentive, Blind-Fight, Cautious, Combat Martial Arts, Deceptive, Defensive Martial Arts, Elusive Target, Focused, Iron will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Nimble, Stealthy, Toughness, Unbalance Opponent, and all of the stealth feats described at the beginning of this article.

Bonus Cybernetic Attachment

The CyberOp gains one free cybernetic attachment at 2nd and 4th levels. To receive this attachment the character must return to the facility in which he was enhanced where he spends four weeks having the item installed and undergoing mandatory refreshment training and reorientation.

This bonus cybernetic attachment may be any single piece of cybernetic equipment with a value equal to or less than a Purchase DC of $20 + 3 \times$ the character's CyberOp level.

Direct Link

At 3rd level, the CyberOp gains a special implant that allows him to interface with computers. This never gives the CyberOp negative levels or triggers rejection. This ability grants the CyberOp a bonus to all Computer Use checks equal to his CyberOp level.

ShadowShield Drone

At 5th level, the CyberOp is given a special drone that functions as an advance scout and an extra set of eyes and ears. This drone is only a foot in diameter and looks like a metallic sphere covered with a large number of lenses, microphones, and antenna. The drone flies (30 ft., clumsy) and can operate up to 300 feet from its operative. Using the drone is a free action and, when not guided, the drone circles the CyberOp at a range of 20 ft. The drone has defense bonus +2, hardness 5, and 30 hit points. As long as it is operational the CyberOp gains a +4 bonus on all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, Search, and Spot checks. The CyberOp also gains a +2 to initiative and cannot be surprised.

Cybernetic Rejection

NOTE: This is completely optional – check with your GM to see if he will be using this rule in his campaign.

Once a character has five or more cybernetic attachments – even if he is under no risk of gaining negative levels – there becomes a risk of rejection. Each time a new cybernetic attachment is added to a character's body, starting with the fifth attachment, the character must make a Fortitude save – $DC = 15 +$ the total number of attachments the character possesses, including the newly added attachment. On a successful check the character suffers no negative consequences (assuming he is not at risk of gaining negative levels as described in the core cybernetics rules). On a failed check, the newly added cybernetic attachment is rejected by the character's body – the character suffers 1d6 Con damage and an additional 1 point of Con damage for each day the rejected cybernetic attachment is not treated by a skilled cybersurgeon. Treating cybernetic rejection requires a new cybernetic attachment be purchased – the old one can be sold as described in the core rules – and a successful ($DC 25 +$ the total number of attachments the character possesses) Treat Injury check be made by a skilled cybersurgeon (a character with the Cybernetic Surgery feat). If this Treat Injury check fails the character's body rejects the new attachment and the process must repeat itself.

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