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## CyberStealth Action 2

By Phil Reed



It has now been a year since I wrote *CyberStealth Action* for the *Modern Dispatch*, which means that it's definitely time for a sequel. In this issue of the *Modern Dispatch*, which assumes that you already own *Modern Dispatch #16, CyberStealth Action*, I present new feats, cybernetics, and adventure hooks for futuristic stealth action adventures. If you do not own the original issue – which you can grab at [www.rpgnow.com](http://www.rpgnow.com) – then some of the material (especially a few feats) will not be usable to you.

While many of the stealth feats found in this issue can be used in modern-era campaigns, the entire document is specifically targeted at Gravity Age (PL 7) campaigns. For more cybernetic equipment please take the time to investigate Ronin Arts' *Future* series of PDFs.

**NOTE:** The list of bonus feats that the CyberOp prestige class (see *Modern Dispatch #16*) may draw from is expanded by the addition of the new feats included in this PDF.

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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, Privateer Press, and *Scrye* magazine. Today Philip spends his days at home running Ronin Arts,

### 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 *Dispatch* issue you will find boxes marked "ShadowShield Case File." These special boxes are 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.

writing and designing new games, and watching DVDs. To learn more about Philip Reed – and Ronin Arts – please visit [www.roninarts.com](http://www.roninarts.com) and [www.philipjreed.com/php](http://www.philipjreed.com/php). The official Ronin Arts forums can be found at [www.raforums.com](http://www.raforums.com).

## New Feats

The following feats are geared toward both cybernetics and stealth.

### Cybernetic Feats

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

#### Cybernetic Savant

You are adept at using your cybernetic enhancements in ways that other people cannot even fathom, and receive greater benefits from them as a result.

**Benefit:** When you take this feat, select one cybernetic enhancement that provides a bonus to attack rolls, skill checks, or saves. Whenever you make use of that cybernetic enhancement, the benefit

it normally provides is doubled.

**Special:** You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you do so, you must select another cybernetic enhancement to gain the benefits of this feat.

#### Cyberphile

You are obsessed with cybernetics – so much so that you have become almost addicted to them – and can handle the loss of biological parts better than most.

**Prerequisite:** Cybertaker.

**Benefit:** The total number of negative levels from having more cybernetic enhancements than your body can normally bear is halved. For example, if you have 4 cybernetic enhancements beyond your normal limit, you suffer 2 negative levels instead of 4.

**Special:** In order to take this feat, you must have at least 2 more cybernetic enhancements or replacements than you would normally be allowed, resulting in at least 2 negative levels.

### Hardened Components

You've invested in improving the durability of your cybernetics.

**Benefit:** When you take this feat, select one cybernetic replacement or enhancement with a hardness of 1 or more. That component's hardness and hit points are improved by 50% each (round up).

**Special:** You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you do so, you must select another cybernetic replacement or enhancement to gain the benefits of this feat.

### Stealth Feats

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

#### Dislocate

You're able to dislocate your shoulder, making it easier for you to escape.

**Prerequisite:** Nimble.

**Benefit:** As a full-round action you may dislocate your shoulder, gaining a +6 bonus to Escape Artist and Grapple checks. You do not gain this bonus to Escape Artist checks if you are handcuffed or otherwise bound in a manner that being able to move your arm in an unexpected manner would enable you to more easily escape. Your GM has final say in when you may claim this bonus.

#### Diversion Mastery

You've become quite skilled at creating diversions that give the few seconds that you need to hide.

**Prerequisites:** Bluff 4 ranks, Hide 4 ranks.

**Benefit:** Whenever you create a diversion to hide (see the Hide skill in the modern SRD) you gain a +4 competence bonus to your Bluff check.

### New Gear: Shadow Suit (PL 7)

The shadow suit incorporates a few key advanced technological components into a single design that enables the suit's wearer to remain better hidden in darkened environments. The first element, light-absorbing materials, collects and redistributes ambient and direct light which prevents the suit from reflecting light. The second element, shadow generators embedded throughout the suit, release a dense, dark fog at random intervals which obscure the wearer's form and covers the wearer in shadow-like conditions at almost all times. When in any darkened area, the wearer of a shadow suit gains a +6 equipment bonus to Hide checks and increases any natural concealment bonuses by one step (one-quarter is increased to one-half, one-half is increased to three-quarters, three-quarters is increased to nine-tenths, and nine-tenths is increased to total). If utilized in areas that are not covered in shadows the suit has no effect.

Other than detailed below, the shadow suit's statistics are identical to the silent suit (see the *Gear* section of the future SRD).

**Purchase DC:** 20.

**Restriction:** Restricted (+2).

## Evasive Stand

You're constantly in motion, twisting and weaving to avoid attacks, even when standing from a prone position.

**Prerequisite:** Swift Stand, Defense Bonus +3.

**Benefit:** Standing up from a prone position does not provoke an attack of opportunity from opponents that threaten you.

## High Ground Attack

Your training and experience in combat has taught you how to take advantage of a battle when holding the high ground.

**Benefit:** When you are on terrain that is higher than your opponent you gain a +2 bonus to melee attack rolls and a +1 bonus to ranged attack rolls.

## Improved Shadow Dash

A combination of experience and instinct has made you a master at remaining hidden while moving swiftly through darkened areas.

**Prerequisites:** Shadow Dash, Stealthy, Strike from the Shadows, Hide 8 ranks.

### ShadowShield Case File #1425: Genetics Laboratory Ship Infiltration

Moreau Station, an illegal genetics research facility on the edge of explored space, is an enemy of ShadowShield and the civilized systems of the galaxy, the station known for the creation of dangerous genetic materials and augmented criminals. ShadowShield has identified that an illegal genetics laboratory ship, in the guise of a bulk freighter, will be entering the Galkka system for refueling. This will be your opportunity to sneak onboard the ship and gather as much information as possible before the ship leaves the system.

You'll be able to enter the ship through a maintenance hatch adjacent to the fuel tanks – ShadowShield has managed to place its staff in charge of the refueling facility – and should be able to do so without being spotted. According to intel the genetics laboratory is on the third level. You will have exactly one hour before the refueling process will be completed.

**Kink:** An accident in the lab has resulted in the release of several dangerous, unstable genetic research subjects. The lab has been sealed and you'll need to sneak past guards, enter the lab, and grab the computers' data while fighting off the crazed, violent research subjects.

**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. When running or charging in a shadowed area you may attempt Hide checks at a -5 penalty. Attacking while hidden is still practically impossible (-20 penalty).

## Improved Shadow Grab

By surprising opponents you're able to subdue them quickly – and silently – by snatching them from the shadows.

**Prerequisites:** Shadow Grab, Move Silently 8 ranks.

**Benefit:** Your circumstance bonus to grapple checks when using the Shadow Grab feat is equal to the total ranks you possess in Hide and Move Silently. If you win the first grapple check against an opponent that you have grabbed from the shadows you automatically inflict a number of points of nonlethal damage equal to your Hide or Move Silently ranks – your choice.

## Instinctive Hide

When startled, your first instinct is to vanish into the shadows.

**Prerequisites:** Stealthy, Hide 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** At the start of any encounter in which you are unaware – if you are adjacent to to any dark, shadowed square – you may instantly make a Hide check at a -10 penalty to disappear into the shadows. If this check is successful than your opponents have spotted you but you've managed to hide yourself before they could take advantage of the situation and you end the surprise round in the shadowed square. If this check fails then the surprise round continues as normal *and* your opponents gain a +2 circumstance bonus to attack rolls during this surprise round.

## Reverse Grapple

When grappled by an opponent, you can immediately reverse the situation.

**Prerequisites:** Improved Grapple, Bluff 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** When resisting a grapple, the instant your opponent wins the initial grapple check, you may make a Bluff check against your opponent's Sense Motive. If you succeed, you reverse the situation and have managed to successfully grapple your opponent. You may not use this feat on grapple attempts that you initiate.

## Shadow Grab

You're patient enough, and stealthy enough, to strike from the shadows, grappling unsuspecting opponents.

**Prerequisites:** Improved Grapple, Strike from the Shadows.

**Benefit:** Whenever you are in a square adjacent to an opponent, bathed in shadows, and the opponent is unaware of your presence then you may make a grapple attempt on that opponent as a move action. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity and you automatically succeed on the melee touch attack to grab the unsuspecting opponent. Additionally, you

gain a circumstance bonus equal to your Hide ranks on the first grapple check that you make with the grabbed opponent.

## Silent Drop

When you drop to the ground you land silently, allowing you to take an opponent by surprise.

**Prerequisites:** Silent Step, Stealthy, Climb 4 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** A character that drops from any height, when the landing point is not within the field of vision of his opponents, may land without making any sound at all. At a height up to 10-feet the character automatically lands silently while heights over 10-feet require the character to make a successful Move Silently check (DC equal to the number of feet that the character dropped from) in order to land silently. This Move Silently check must be made after the character makes his Reflex save to reduce damage suffer in the fall – if the Reflex save fails then the character suffers a penalty on his Move Silently check equal to the amount by which his Reflex save failed.

## Spectacular Leap

You've invested long hours of training into your ability to jump from a running and standing start.

**Prerequisites:** Acrobatic, Jump 6 ranks, Tumble 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** You gain a +4 bonus on all Jump checks. This stacks with the +2 bonus gained from the Acrobatic feat for a total bonus of +6.

## Surprise Advantage

You react swiftly in almost any situation and are able to take advantage of the few seconds during which your opponents are surprised.

**Prerequisites:** Alertness, Cautious, Combat Reflexes.

## ShadowShield Case File #1498: Sabotage the GravProjector

An enemy shipyard, site of the design and construction of some of the most powerful starships ever seen in the galaxy, is reportedly nearing completion of the installation of a GravProjector into a superheavy warship. Your mission is to get onboard the orbital construction facility, locate the GravProjector, and sabotage the weapon before the work is completed. There are multiple ways of sabotaging the weapon, from simply destroying it to removing key components, but ShadowShield has a specific method of sabotage in mind: install a computer virus into the weapon's main systems. If you can successfully install this virus then ShadowShield will be able to assume control of the weapon and overload its gravitic capacitors which should lead to the destruction of both the weapon and the warship.

**Kink:** Unfortunately, the weapon system is so carefully guarded that the only place from which the virus can be installed is the warship's bridge. You must not only infiltrate an enemy facility that is swarming with guards and sentry robots, but also make your way onto the bridge of an active, important warship. While you can opt for one of the other methods of sabotage the weapon, your superiors will not look favorably upon the simpler options.

**Kink:** The GravProject isn't actually here, having been installed on a different warship a few weeks ago. The primary task now is to determine exactly which starship is equipped with this weapon.

**Benefit:** During any surprise round in which you are aware of your opponents you may take both a move *and* an attack action.

## Swift Stand

You're quick and nimble, able to leap to your feet effortlessly and in a split second.

**Prerequisite:** Nimble.

**Benefit:** Standing up from a prone position is a free action.

## New Cybernetics

The following cybernetic enhancements include both items specifically useful to stealth action and cybernetics with a wider purpose.

## Facial Mask (PL 6)

The recipient's flesh is separated from his skull and replaced with a flesh-like substance that is stretched over a micro-mechanical system linked directly to the user's brain. With a simple thought the recipient can reconfigure his facial structure, commanding the micro-mechanical system to modify his cheeks, forehead, and chin.

**Benefit:** A character outfitted with a facial mask may, as a free action, change his facial appearance. This system grants the recipient a +5 equipment bonus to Disguise checks.

**Type:** Internal.

**Hardness/Hit Points:** –/2.

**Base Purchase DC:** 15.

**Restriction:** Illegal (+4).



## Fastdraw Holster (PL 6)

A concealed holster is installed in the recipient's forearm that quickly ejects a pistol into the recipient's hand.

**Benefit:** Drawing a pistol with a fastdraw holster is a free action. It requires a full-round action to return the weapon to the concealed holster.

**Type:** Internal.

**Hardness/Hit Points:** -/3.

**Base Purchase DC:** 14.

**Restriction:** Military (+3).

## Auto-Grapplers (PL 7)

Cable-like whips are implanted in the recipient's back and arms where they remain retracted until activated. Once engaged, the whips snake out, attempting to latch onto whatever the recipient is holding onto.

**Benefit:** As a free action, at any point during a grapple check, the recipient may activate this cybernetic enhancement. The cable-like whips grant the recipient a +6 equipment bonus to grapple checks. The whips remain extended until they miss their target (the recipient loses the grapple check), whatever they are holding is released by the recipient's hands, or the recipient orders them to retract (also a free action).

**Type:** Internal.

**Hardness/Hit Points:** 3/10.

**Base Purchase DC:** 32.

**Restriction:** Military (+3).

## Slick Skin (PL 7)

Special implants beneath the skin, each filled with an oily substance that is manufactured by an array of nanites, allow the recipient to make it difficult for others to maintain a hold on him.

**Benefit:** The recipient may, as a free action, activate this cybernetic enhancement, instantly covering his skin with a slippery substance that

## ShadowShield Case File #1832: Destroy Sensitive Intelligence

Just as you're completing a mission on an enemy world a new mission order comes in. An allied cloakship was flying surveillance over a nearby mecha production facility when it's systems failed and the cloaking device shut down. Enemy missile batteries immediately attacked and were successful in bringing down the cloakship. The burning wreckage, now within a dozen miles of your present location, is equipped with data recorders that must be physically destroyed *before* an enemy patrol secures the crash site and assumes control of the wreckage.

**Kink:** The pilot of the starship was an enemy agent that intentionally deactivated the cloaking device. When you reach the wreckage he is in the process of preparing the data recorders for easy retrieval by approaching enemy forces. If you relay this information to your superiors they will want the traitor brought in for questioning.

Decide what you'll do quickly, because the enemy troops are fast approaching.

makes it more difficult for others to grapple him. Opponents suffer a -6 penalty to grapple checks and touch attacks against a character with slick skin. This slippery substance is reabsorbed by the body within a few seconds and the substance is not generated on the hands or feet - the recipient's ability to grasp items and maintain balance is unaffected by this cybernetic enhancement. If the character is wearing clothing the penalty to grapple and touch attacks is reduced to -4 while in anything but full body armor or spacesuit - characters so outfitted are not protected by this item - the penalty is reduced to -2.

**Type:** Internal.

**Hardness/Hit Points:** -/4/

**Base Purchase DC:** 22.

**Restriction:** Restricted (+2).

## Sound Suppression System (PL 7)

This small implant, surgically installed into the recipient's spine, envelops the recipient's body in a sonic energy field when activated.

**Benefit:** As a free action, the recipient of this implant can activate a sonic energy field that cancels almost all sound the character produces. When activated the character gains a +10 equipment bonus

to Move Silently checks. The implant carries enough power to function for 12 rounds after which point it must be shutdown and allowed to recharge, requiring one hour.

The system is most frequently used by cyberops and infiltration specialists.

**Type:** Internal.

**Hardness/Hit Points:** -/5.

**Base Purchase DC:** 28.

**Restriction:** Military (+3).

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