GURPS® Fourth Edition

ACTION™ 5

DICTIONARY OF DANGER™

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STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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*Don't tell me
the moon is shining;
show me the glint of
light on broken glass.
– Anton Chekhov*

INTRODUCTION

To hold somebody's face to a table saw, force his head into a rolling mill, etc., grapple him as usual.

– GURPS Action 2: Exploits

And *then* what?

Exploits hints at many opportunities for heroes – and villains! – to put modern-world dangers to deadly use in action scenes. But while it mentions dispatching enemies using everything from car doors to hammer mills, it's light on the particulars. *GURPS Action 5: Dictionary of Danger* is your guide to the gory details.

This supplement's title hints at its gimmick (every action movie needs one!), which is that it organizes perils from A to Z. Each letter represents not a single, ultra-narrow Bad Thing, but a broad category of loosely related hazards. That's to minimize page-flipping: Most violence happens in specific environments tied to the plot, and the menaces lurking in the crime lord's stereotypical ethnic restaurant aren't the same as those waiting in his junkyard across town.

What do you do with this stuff? Call it "foreshadowing" or call it "Chekhov's gun," but in an action flick, it's a given that in a showdown at the steel mill, someone *will* have a fatal encounter with massive hammers or molten metal, and that if a sculpture bristling with pointy bits is sitting in front of the villain's headquarters, somebody – probably the villain – *will* end up impaled on it. The GM's job is to ensure that encounters take place around suitably perilous scenery, while the players'
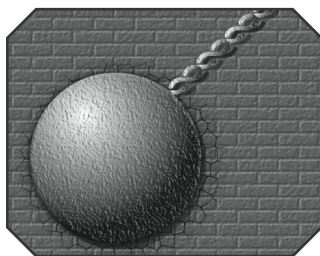
task is to illustrate just how unsafe those surroundings really are (to which end the key traits – especially *skills* – for doing so appear in **boldface,** as in *Exploits*).

Like most dangerous tools, this material comes with a warning: These rules simplify real-life complexities and adjust deadliness to satisfy the Rule of Cool. Handle with care unless running a *GURPS Action* game or an equally cinematic campaign – in *that* case, handle with extreme carelessness!

PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of *GURPS Action 5: Dictionary of Danger.* While the *stats* it assigns to hazards previously defined in other *GURPS* releases – notably *GURPS High-Tech* – are consistent with those supplements, the *text* doesn't come verbatim from those works.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sean Punch set out to become a particle physicist in 1985 and ended up as *GURPS* Line Editor in 1995. In that capacity, he has written, edited, or contributed to some 150 *GURPS* releases, revised the game into its fourth edition (2004), and been a regular contributor to *Pyramid* magazine. From 2008, he has served as the lead creator of the *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy* series, which led to his design of the *Dungeon Fantasy Roleplaying Game,* released in 2017. Sean has been a gamer since 1979, but devotes most of his spare time to Argentine tango (and occasionally tending bar). He lives in Montréal, Québec.

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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.

CHAPTER ONE
DANGER!

Now for the good stuff. Well, the *bad* stuff. But first, some words of wisdom on its use and abuse.

TAKE-OUT

When danger is something a fighter can wield – like a fire extinguisher or a fire *axe* – it usually takes one Ready maneuver to snatch it from a table, workbench, rack, etc. It must be within one yard, and no movement is allowed, not even a step. The GM may rule that preparing something ridiculously unwieldy (e.g., unrolling a fire *hose*) takes two or more Ready maneuvers.

Fast-Draw skill isn't applicable to random objects in the environment unless they're *a lot* like real weapons; e.g., a kitchen knife or screwdriver with **Fast-Draw (Knife).** But a *DX*-based roll against a suitable technical skill works the same way for non-weapons: **Chemistry** to seize a flask, **Machinist** or **Mechanic** to grab a tool, **Physician** to acquire a defibrillator, and so on. In all cases, success shaves off one Ready maneuver.

If the object is somehow secured – say, in a cabinet or latched in place – it calls for one *extra* Ready maneuver per step needed to liberate it. For instance, if you must smash the glass, pull the safety lever, open the box, and finally grab the fire axe, that's *four* Ready maneuvers. Success against **Forced Entry** shaves off one such Ready maneuver.

If skill rolls let you prepare the item with *no* Ready maneuvers, readying it is a free action!

THAT'S *GOTTA* HURT!

Representing every hazard realistically – or sufficiently *cinematically* – would fill many supplements. Consequently, this volume is quick and dirty, which may frustrate players who enjoy exploiting the scenery. The most likely complaint is inadequate damage, which the GM can dismiss by saying *this* example is small, weak, or annoyingly safe.

Which suggests that big, strong, or unsafe examples should hurt *more.* Here are some options:

Dramatic Danger: Its simple and fun to say that every scary-sounding qualifier adds +1 damage. For instance, an electrical generator that shocks for 1d+2 burn might be "overloaded," "rain-soaked," and/or "a dangerous Chinese knockoff," for 1d+3 to 1d+5 damage.

BAD Stuff: The current BAD might influence the damage of scenery linked to the main plotline; +1 damage per *full* -3 in BAD is recommended. Thus, if BAD is -10 in the final showdown, things in the villain's factory might be dramatically hot, sharp, and toxic, for +3 damage.

I Bypass the Safety! The GM may let heroes roll against *suitable* skills (GM's judgment) to add complementary skill bonuses (*Exploits,* p. 5) not to another skill but to damage. To do so, the PC must stand within a yard of the dangerous object or its controls and take at least one Ready maneuver – and they need a toolkit in hand to exploit **Armoury, Electrician, Electronics Repair, Machinist,** or **Mechanic.** For trivial proposals, like running scalding water so a mook shoved in a sink takes 1 point of burning damage while drowning, the GM can let one *further* Ready maneuver replace the skill roll, for +1 damage.

These possibilities might be exclusive, not cumulative; e.g., if the GM was too pressed to qualify all the reasons why something is dangerous, *BAD Stuff* could be an abstraction that replaces *Dramatic Danger,* while *I Bypass the Safety* may not count if the proposal duplicates a qualifier in *Dramatic Danger.* The maximum damage bonus is +4, which the GM may convert to +1d.

DELIVERY

Other hazards are part of the scenery: The GM says they're there at the start of a fight, and as most (sane) people avoid them, exposing enemies to such perils means forcing or tricking them into a danger zone. There are several ways to accomplish this. In all cases, if the hazard is ongoing, it affects the victim immediately on initial exposure and *again* at the end of any turn they remain in the threatened area.

Knockback

One of the most common ways to endanger someone. As *Knockback* (p. B378) explains, causes include:

● Crushing attacks, including *Cinematic Explosions* (**Exploits,** p. 38). Some less-lethal ammunition (beanbag and baton rounds) doubles its crushing damage for this purpose.
● Powerful cutting attacks *that fail to penetrate DR.*
● "Knockback only" attacks – notably *Shove* (p. B372), the **Push** skill (p. B216), and technological means, like high-pressure water from a pipe (*Perilous Pipelines,* p. 26) or fire hose (*Up to Code,* p. 34).
● *Slam* (pp. B371-372).

Manhandling

Another option is to frog-march someone into danger! Anyone who has grappled an enemy may try this on later turns;

each attempt counts as an attack, but one involving a Quick Contest, *not* attack and defense rolls. Each contestant uses the *highest* of ST, DX, or best grappling skill (**Judo, Sumo Wrestling,** or **Wrestling**). If the grapple is with **Arm Lock, Choke Hold, Leg Lock,** or a similar technique, the attacker can try that at +3, if better.

If the attacker *wins,* they may force their rival to step one yard in *any* direction – in this case, toward the hazard. The attacker moves, too, usually behind the victim.

Alternatively, the enemy might be pressed *against* or *into* danger within one yard (on a battle map, the hazard must be in the same or an adjacent hex), without stepping. Each victory exposes the victim for one turn. Any harm that results is normally to the torso; to endanger another body part, the attacker must declare this before attempting the Contest and then roll at a penalty: -1 for arm or leg, -2 for hand for foot, -3 for face or neck, -4 for skull.

In either case – forced step or being pressed – a *tie* has no special effect. A *loss* gives the victim their margin of victory as a bonus to attempts to break free on their next turn.

Judo Throw

A **Judo** throw (p. B203) can chuck an opponent into peril. Roll attack and defense as usual. If this works, and the area on the ground where the victim lands – or *would* land, if there weren't something in the way, or a sheer drop instead of ground! – is in the danger zone, that person is exposed to harm. They suffer any bad effects (like being incinerated or falling 23 stories) immediately.

Overshooting

A slam (pp. B371-372) is risky around hazards. If it misses or is dodged, the *attacker* must move at least two yards past the target, if enough movement remains. If that means running off a roof, in front of a truck, or into other peril, too bad! Cunning heroes who are *very* sure of their ability to dodge can stand in front of danger and try . . .

Trickery

A hero might use *Banter* (**Exploits,** p. 39) to convince a bad guy to blunder into harm's way. You must state your intention to lure your opponent into danger before you roll. If that person is *aware* of the peril, they roll IQ or Will at +1 if it would hurt a little, +2 if it would surely incapacitate them, +3 if it *might* kill them, or +5 if it *will* kill them.

Successfully *Drawing Aggression* induces a foe without a ranged attack to approach through or despite a danger that's *between* you. If a step would let them Attack, they'll do that. If you're more distant, they'll take a Move maneuver. And if you roll a critical success, they'll charge you with an All-Out Attack!

You can also try this if the danger is *behind* you and you're too distant for your rival to take out their aggression with an

Padre: It's not safe for you to be here.
Machete: I'm not looking for "safe."
– Machete (2010)

Attack maneuver. Taunting someone to close the gap with an ill-advised slam – one you had better dodge! – requires victory by 5+. *Exception:* Mooks who are inclined to slam anyway (GM's decision), like rugby and sumo thugs, do so on *any* victory.

Successfully *Uttering Threats* causes the enemy to back off . . . toward or into danger that's *behind* that person and further from you. They'll take one step back as part of their All-Out Defense maneuver. If you win by 5+, they flee, taking a Move maneuver to back away at half Move.

Safety First!

Known hazards may be screened off by railings, fences, ropes, parapets, window sills, etc. Any such measure *usually* does its job for those who bump into it due to knockback, a Judo throw, overshooting a slam, or being tricked into backing away. The victim must still roll at DX+4 to avoid pitching over the top, falling into danger regardless. Accidents happen!

Against *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5), a safety barrier merely gives the victim +2 in the Quick Contest. Losing means being lifted bodily over the obstacle!

And in attempts to goad someone into charging, the presence of a safety barrier – or a sign that reads DANGER!, or caution tape – means the victim is considered aware of the peril, getting +1 to +5. If you win anyway, they'll leap over the obstruction and into danger.

An obstacle lower than waist height has no effect unless the victim backs into it by being knocked back or tricked into retreating. Then it makes things worse. The victim

> must make a DX roll to stay standing – and if they took knockback that would already require such a DX roll, it's at an extra -2. Any failure means falling one *extra* yard in the direction of the danger.
>
> Of course if there's *nothing* in the way, an encounter with danger is assured, while if the barrier is full-height, it automatically prevents disaster . . . unless it breaks.

Wham!

There needn't be fire, whirling blades, or a 23-story vertical detour in somebody's path for stumbling around to be painful. Someone knocked back into a solid object or thrown into it using Judo takes thrust-1 crushing based on the ST of the person who sent them flying – or 1 HP per yard of knockback, if sent there by a gun, cinematic explosion, high-pressure jet, etc.

If they overshoot a slam and *run* into something solid, damage is thrust-1 crushing based on *their* ST.

And if they're manhandled and *propelled* into something massive, they take thrust+*1* crushing based on their attacker's ST. Their assailant further adds any damage bonus for **Brawling** – or the ST bonus for **Sumo Wrestling** or **Wrestling** read as a damage bonus, if better. Hit location is the torso unless the aggressor took the penalty to target a specific body part.

In all cases, the obstacle takes the same damage as the individual hitting it. If it breaks, the victim falls through and into any danger on the far side.

At the GM's discretion, characters slamming into dangerous objects may take bonus damage or suffer a damage type other than crushing.

A IS FOR ARCHITECTURE

Unless the action takes place in pristine wilderness, man-made structures won't be far away: Cities are packed with them, the loneliest *Farm* (pp. 13-14) has its barn, and a ship at sea (*Nautical,* pp. 23-24) amounts to a floating building. And as everybody learned as a child, it's dangerous to run indoors . . . or to clamber out windows, or to play on the stairs or the roof. Someone could get *hurt* that way!

Heights

Perhaps the top hazard buildings present is *falling*. Fighters on roofs, balconies, and skywalks, in open staircases, near gaping windows or elevator shafts, etc. risk this fate whenever any means in *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) moves them at least one yard past the edge. If the victim goes *just* far enough to end up over open space (always true for *Manhandling*, pp. 4-5), they get a DX roll to end up hanging by both hands. If they went farther (that is, two or more yards out into empty space), too bad!

Most bridges, balconies, staircases, observation decks, etc. have railings. Many (but not all) roofs have these or parapets. See *Safety First!* (p. 5). Elevator shafts, the sides of buildings under construction, and so on almost always lack safety measures. When a *low* obstacle trips somebody and they stumble an extra yard, this turns a not-quite-fall into a fall that allows a DX roll to catch the edge, or a certain fall into one that's too far from the edge to allow the DX roll.

Those who fail DX rolls to save themselves (or don't *get* a roll) fall all the way down. Splat.

Those who succeed end up dangling. They lose anything they were holding (roll 1d: 1 means it's right on the edge, 2-6 means it fell). While hanging, there's *no* defense against attacks on the hands. One crippled hand gives -4 to *Pull-Up* (***Exploits,*** p. 19); two means falling. Each pull-up attempt takes a Ready maneuver; success means being prone on the edge.

Damage from a fall is as per *Falls* (***Exploits,*** p. 19) – or *Falling* (p. B431), if the GM prefers complexity.

Falling Down the Stairs: If *Knockback* (p. 4), *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5), *Judo Throw* (p. 5), *Overshooting* (p. 5), or *Trickery* (p. 5) leading to backing off moves someone on a staircase *down the stairs* instead of *over a railing,* they may fall. With knockback, overshooting, or trickery, this happens only on a failed DX roll; roll at -2 on stairs, plus the usual penalty for knockback distance. With manhandling, this happens if the victim loses the Contest; if one contestant is on the stairs and the other isn't (say, they're on the landing), the person on the stairs rolls at -2. With a throw, this happens automatically. In all cases, treat as a fall from a height equal to the distance to the next landing – bouncing off hard treads isn't any less likely to kill or maim.

Doors

When someone is moved into a door using *Delivery* (pp. 4-6), the outcome depends on the door.

An *unlatched* door that swings outward does so, depositing the victim on the far side. Someone who's knocked back gets the usual DX roll to avoid falling down. Someone who is manhandled, overshoots, or is tricked is standing; someone who's thrown is lying down. This breaks the line of sight unless the door is transparent or has a window. If the attacker is standing within a yard or can step there after attacking, they may immediately roll vs. DX to grab the handle (in which case to get back in, the victim must *win* a Quick Contest of ST), or vs. DX or *DX*-based **Forced Entry** or **Lockpicking** to lock or latch it. On later turns – the attacker's or someone else's – either is a free action with a roll, a Ready maneuver without one.

An unlatched door that swings inward – or a *latched* one – is a solid obstacle. See *Wham!* (p. 6).

An *automatic* door counts as an unlatched one that swings outward if operational, as a solid obstacle if not.

A *revolving* door is a solid obstacle if not operational. If operational, the victim ends up sectioned off inside the door! If the attacker is within a yard or can step there after attacking, they may try a DX or **Forced Entry** roll to interpose a foot. On later turns (the attacker's or someone else's), this is a free action with a roll, a Ready maneuver without one. To get out, the prisoner must *win* a Quick Contest of ST; the jailer has +4. If there's a lock or latch, a roll to fasten this (as above) is possible instead.

An *elevator* door is a solid obstacle if closed. If open and the victim is shoved *out,* a DX roll lets the attacker in the elevator push a button to shut the door and escape. If the victim is shoved *in,* roll 1d each turn; on 1, the door shuts, sending that person for an unplanned ride. An attacker with **Serendipity** can declare the door shuts right away – and choose the next stop!

Those who are trapped by doors and want to use violence to escape should see *Doors* (***Exploits,*** pp. 20-21) or *Glass* (***Exploits,*** p. 21).

Slam! Someone within the doorway of a door that's free to move can be crunched between door and frame. This is an attack rolled vs. DX, **Brawling, Sumo Wrestling,** or **Wrestling.** It can target any hit location the GM agrees is in the doorway, at the usual penalty. The victim may either dodge or parry with a free hand, at penalties for posture if not standing. Damage is the attacker's thrust+1 crushing, plus the bonus for Brawling, or the ST bonus for Sumo Wrestling or Wrestling read as a damage bonus. A motorized door that drops down or rolls shut under its own power *usually* has a safety; if previously tampered with – using **Electronics Repair (Security)** – roll a Quick Contest between its HP and the *higher* of the victim's ST or HT, with it doing crushing damage equal to its margin of victory.

In Through the Out Door: Someone *behind* a door that's deliberately shoved or kicked toward them takes the attacker's thrust+1 crushing damage. Use the damage bonus from **Forced Entry,** not unarmed combat skills. Hit location is random.

Gettin' Medieval: Add +1 or even +2 (GM's option) to any damage from a door that's unusually heavy, studded, or anything of the sort. This often applies to the gates of castles adopted as mansions by wealthy villains, and to security doors.

Questionable Construction

Action stories love abandoned buildings, from houses to factories – where better to hide prisoners, drugs, or terrorist bombs? But such places are plagued with rot, rust, and damage from previous shootouts, which might be the cause or result of abandonment. And *that* means unstable floors, walls, and ceilings.

The GM determines the number, nature, and location of such hazards but *doesn't tell the players.* In an action scene, a *Per*-based **Architecture** or **Urban Survival** roll – at +2 for **Danger Sense** – spots such a risk at a safe distance. Roll once per danger. Mooks are unlikely to have the skills to spot such peril, but they receive a simple Per roll if they're in their established hideout.

A *known* danger can be avoided . . . or exploited! The methods under *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) can push, throw, or trick the enemy into the danger zone. When fighting on a battle map, alerted heroes can move such that unaware opponents must approach or retreat through the risky area; if not using a map, winning a Quick Contest of **Tactics** with the bad-guy leader guarantees that one known hazard per point of victory befalls the enemy.

Suggestions for effects:

Rickety Floors and Stairs: Roll vs. DX, at +1 for **Perfect Balance** but with any penalty the GM assesses for a notably unstable structure (say, -1 per point by which building HT has deteriorated). Failure by 1-4 means a leg goes straight through the floor; this does 1d-1 crushing to the leg and means being stuck there, effectively prone, until the victim takes two Change Posture maneuvers to pull free. Failure by 5+ means a one-story fall; see *Falls* (**Exploits,** p. 19). Critical failure means the *next* floor gives way when hit: a two-story fall.

Crumbly Moorings: The balcony, catwalk, fire escape, gallery, or ladder on which the victim is walking or climbing pulls free. There's no DX roll to avoid this, but there's a DX roll to grab onto something that's still suspended and dangle helplessly; see *Heights* (p. 6). Failure means a fall to the next story – a long drop, for a catwalk over a factory floor.

Sagging Ceilings and Loose Chandeliers: Dodge at -2 or take 1d crushing as large-area injury (p. B400) from falling debris. If the ceiling is high, made of concrete, etc., damage might be 2d or worse; the GM decides this when setting the scene. Ceilings may need "encouragement" to collapse; success at the roll to spot the danger reveals this, and lets the hero trigger a rubble shower by shooting at the ceiling. This is one way to hit an enemy behind cover!

Wobbly Walls: A nearby wall keels over, doing 1d-2 to 1d crushing, depending on the wall, as large-area injury (p. B400). The victim is stuck in place until they make a ST or **Escape** roll to get out; each attempt takes a Ready maneuver and costs 1 FP.

Furniture

Buildings often contain domestic furniture (chairs, tables, etc.), institutional fittings such as handcarts and steel shelving, or specialty items like sculptures. A list of every possible object would fill a (boring . . .) book.

If such an item is light enough that the attacker could shove it, use *Shoving Stuff into People* (**Exploits,** p. 37): Roll a **Boxing, Brawling,** or **Karate** punch or kick at -4. If you hit, damage is as for a punch or kick. Add +1 to damage if the object is hard (like most furniture) *or* heavy enough that the attack calls for two hands or bracing the entire body (not one hand or a swift kick), or +2 for both.

If it's too heavy to move *at all,* ramming somebody into it uses *Wham!* (p. 6).

If the attacker is strong enough to move it but the defender isn't, and the victim gets pinioned between it and an immovable object (like a wall), the victim is stuck until they succeed at a ST or **Escape** roll; each attempt requires a Ready maneuver and costs 1 FP.

B Is for *Botanical*

. . . and for *bush, blossom, bark,* and *bloom.* Wealthy criminals love nicely landscaped estates and corporate campuses (which also feature exploitable *Architecture,* pp. 6-7), drug lords fill fields and greenhouses with illegal crops (often offering the dangers of a *Farm,* pp. 13-14), and many a terrorist base is concealed in the jungle. All that greenery is beautiful, but that isn't the same as harmless – as the saying goes, "Every rose has its thorn."

Hitting a Snag

Thick growth – the sort commandos encounter on jungle raids – is bad footing: +1 movement point per yard (hex) to traverse; -2 to attack rolls, DX rolls to stay standing, and Acrobatics and Jumping rolls; and -1 on active defense rolls. Running through it (Move 3+) requires a DX-2 roll each turn, with failure meaning tripping and falling. Although such vegetation is obvious, *Overshooting* (p. 5) or *Trickery* (p. 5) can result in somebody blundering through it anyway, while *Knockback* (p. 4) or *Judo Throw* (p. 5) can mean being tossed into it.

A *Per*-based roll against **Naturalist, Survival** for the terrain, or another outdoor skill the GM deems appropriate may find denser vegetation, allowing these exploits:

Tangle: Thicket so dense that someone deposited there via *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) becomes entangled. They're grappled by the torso, and must break free from ST 8 (maybe higher, for cinematic jungle) to leave; each attempt requires a Ready maneuver. If knockback was involved, the DX roll to avoid falling down has an extra -2.

Strangle: Serious vines. Snapping off a length suitable for use with **Garrote** skill takes a Ready maneuver. Alternatively, using *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) within a yard of such vines (in the same or an adjacent hex) – at -1 in the Quick Contest for an arm or leg, -3 for the neck – lets the attacker wind them around a hit location. That body part is considered grappled, and the victim cannot use it or move away before getting disentangled, which calls for a free hand and *three* successful DX rolls; each attempt requires a Ready maneuver. If the neck was wrapped, the target also experiences *Suffocation* (p. B436) until they escape.

The Briar Patch

Other plants are *sharp.* Spotting these requires no roll – they're distressingly obvious.

Prickly Pests: Many plants have serrated leaves, small barbs, or thorns too short to reach vital areas. Someone deposited in these by *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) is inconvenienced much as per *Razor Wire* (**Exploits,** p. 20). Treat as *Tangle* (above), but each attempt to break free – successful or not – *also* inflicts 1d-3(0.5) cutting damage. This is typical of how roses, thistles, holly, chollas, etc. behave in action stories. Even in real life, such greenery is sometimes grown to conceal unaesthetic facilities, providing subtle security in the bargain.

Horrendous Horticulture: Then there are plants with thorns four to eight *inches* long. When someone first crashes into these by any means under *Delivery* (pp. 4-6), they suffer damage as described in *Wham!* (p. 6), except damage type is *impaling,* not crushing. After that, they work like *Tangle* (above), but each attempt to break free – successful or not – *also* inflicts 1d-3(0.5) impaling damage. This is typical of huge cacti and agaves, and trees like honey locusts and thorny acacias. Villains love landscaping with these because they look badass.

> *Beck: Is this the only road in and out?*
> *Declan: If you want to stay alive.*
> *Beck: Why is that?*
> *Declan: That, there! That's the jungle.*
> – **The Rundown** *(2003)*

Hey, That Stings!

Far too many plants irritate bare skin via stinging hairs, irritating saps, and so on. In **GURPS Action,** they come in three unpleasantness grades. Identifying these – whether to avoid or exploit them – requires a roll against **Naturalist, Poisons,** or **Survival** for the terrain.

Itchy: Anyone with bare skin who lands in a patch thanks to *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) – or who's touched on bare skin by someone wielding the plant as a weapon (hopefully with gloves) – must roll against HT at anything from +5 to -5, depending on the plant (or roll 2d-7). Failure means distracting itching that causes a *noncumulative* -1 to DX and IQ. This lasts for the rest of the combat. It endures for days in the real world, but can be neutralized by a **First Aid** roll after the fight. This is typical of poison ivy and nettles.

Painful: As *Itchy,* but the effect of a failed HT roll (again, possibly modified) is pain (p. B428): moderate (-2 to DX, IQ, skill, and self-control rolls), severe (-4), or terrible (-6). This *is* sometimes cumulative, with each exposure boosting the pain level and four exposures incapacitating the victim with agony (p. B428). Use this for most tropical stinging plants.

Deadly: As *Painful,* but in some cases the first failed HT roll leads directly to agony! Affected victims also suffer genuine injury – though rarely more than 1 point of toxic damage per exposure. While *almost* cinematic, this fits accounts of New Zealand's tree nettles and Australia's gympie-gympie, and suits plants found in illicit bio-tech labs (which might inflict more damage).

Sniffle

Not all plants are dangerous to everyone. If someone is known to have a bad reaction to a plant – a plot device that requires *Interviews* (**Exploits,** p. 16) with disgruntled ex-employees or ex-lovers, hacking into or stealing medical records, or a daring **Diagnosis** roll under false pretenses – this can be exploited. Exposure might cause anything from coughing or sneezing (p. B428) to heart attack (p. B429).

C Is for Chemicals

In action flicks, it's *de rigueur* for chases and fights in meth labs, hospitals (*Medical,* pp. 22-23), scientific facilities (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28), and especially *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) settings to take place around beakers, carboys, and even huge tanks full of noxious substances. One misstep or stray bullet means being doused with something that can spoil your entire life. Cleaners, demolition men, and medics sometimes capitalize on their knowledge of such things, "weaponizing" their specialized skills.

Identification

Action scenes are no place for careful analysis! If the chemicals are labeled, *quick* identification – resulting in knowledge of everything relevant under *Quantity and Form* (below) and *Effects* (below) – requires a *Per*-based **Chemistry** or **Hazardous Materials (Chemical)** roll.

If the scene includes chemicals used for specific purposes, *Per*-based rolls against skills for dealing with them will do; e.g., **Expert Skill (Military Science)** for chemical weapons, **Explosives (any)** for compounds that burn or blow up, or **Poisons** for toxins. Skills suited to the *setting* can work, too: **Mechanic** in the chop-shop, **Pharmacy** at the hospital, even **Streetwise** in a drug lab.

Lacking labels, educated guesses are possible *if there's context.* If the medic with **Chemistry** knows the lab's research, the demo man who has **Expert Skill (Military Science)** has been briefed on the terrorist plot, or the investigator using **Streetwise** is aware she's in a meth lab, a roll at -4 is possible.

Not rolling, failure at an applicable skill, or success at an inapplicable one means having no clue. Critical failure – *any* failure, for an inapplicable skill – means guessing wrong. Either way, it boils down to messing with things at random!

Quantity and Form

Real-life containers vary widely, but **GURPS Action** lumps them into four categories:

Vial: Small flask, test tube, or other container that can be snatched one-handed with a Ready maneuver (*Take-Out,* p. 4) and hurled at a single victim using DX-3 or **Throwing** on a later turn: Acc 0, Range ST×2, Bulk -2. If it hits someone (near-misses don't matter for quantities this small), roll 1d; on 1-4, it shatters, dousing them. Foolhardy heroes can use *Shoving Stuff into People* (**Exploits,** p. 37) to launch a vial from its resting place with one swift Attack, but it breaks and douses *them* on 1-4 on 1d! If the top is open, a straight DX roll can splash *just the contents* on someone within two yards (who may dodge).

Bottle: Large flask or reagent bottle. Treat as a vial, with these differences: It won't break against a person, so it requires a DX or **Throwing** roll to attack a floor (+4 to hit), wall, or other hard surface: Acc 0, Range ST, Bulk -4. Even then, it shatters only on 1-4 on 1d. It can also be smashed with an attack (preferably *ranged*) that does 3+ points of basic damage. Everyone within one yard of where the bottle breaks – on a battle map, the target hex and all adjacent hexes – is doused. If the top is open, splashing the contents on up to *three* foes within *three* yards calls for a DX roll per target (again, they may dodge).

Barrel: Carboy, drum, jerrycan, or similar mobile bulk storage. It can't be thrown or launched to useful effect. If *not* glass, a bullet that does 3+ points (plastic) or 6+ points (metal) of basic damage causes the contents to start spraying all over the place; for the rest of the scene, everyone passing within a yard is doused on 1 on 1d, +1 per added hole (e.g., 1-3 on 1d after three hits). Big glass vessels are surprisingly tough, but 12+ points of basic damage will burst one, dousing everyone within *two* yards – on a battle map, the target hex and two rings of surrounding hexes – and leaving a puddle that exposes the *feet* of anybody walking through that area later.

Reservoir: Tank, vat, or other static bulk storage. Getting doused generally involves falling in; see *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). The GM should set a damage limit for piercing the walls – *at least* 18+ points. A hole creates a pressurized jet that douses everybody in a yard-wide, three-yard-long area next to it. Sabotage, opening maintenance hatches, and other means might produce a deluge that douses much of the scenery, but this is a plot device that requires foreknowledge, equipment, and a roll against something like **Explosives** or **Machinist.**

The above rules assume liquids, which are the most fun in action scenes. But there are other states of matter:

Gases: Stored under pressure in containers that won't shatter. It takes 6+ points of damage to rupture vial- or bottle-sized vessels, 18+ for barrel-sized ones, and *at least* 27+ for reservoirs. Most can't easily be vented by turning a valve; to tamper with this in combat takes 1d Ready maneuvers and a *DX*-based **Hazardous Materials (Chemical)** roll. In all cases, once gas starts hissing out, it affects a large area quickly; assume that *in an action scene,* it reaches everyone within one, two, four, or eight yards for – respectively – a vial, bottle, barrel, or reservoir. It will eventually drift much farther; a reservoir could leave the heroes facing a major incident afterward! Many common gases are explosive or flammable, or poisonous if inhaled; some are poisonous by contact, or corrosive.

Solids: These are hard to exploit. In *vial* or *bottle* quantities, it's possible to "splash" them on someone nearby, as with a liquid. Hurling handfuls from a larger supply uses the rules for vials; those without gloves expose their own hands. When dumped from a great height or scattered with explosives, the resulting particulate cloud works like gas.

Effects

Rather offer lists of chemicals – the effects of which vary with concentration, purity, humidity, temperature, and so on – these generic rules aim to keep the action moving. They divvy up substances into a few broad classes with general guidelines.

Below, these categories are presented as a table to facilitate scenes where there are *so many* chemicals that the GM hasn't time to get specific – or where careless combatants are hurling and smashing unidentified containers at random!

Roll 3d, rerolling any result that doesn't suit the environment (like explosives in a pharmacy). Each entry also offers rules for randomly generating effects. The GM never has to roll and may always choose category and effects as the story demands.

3-4 – *Explosive.* Not munitions (**Heroes,** pp. 32-34) or the relatively stable explosives of *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26) and *Arson and Demolition* (**Heroes,** p. 26) – both expanded on in **GURPS High-Tech** – but compounds that blow up when hurled, shot, or abused, like fulminates and anything to do with hydrazoic acid. Forget about *dousing* the victim; these cause explosions that use the rules on pp. B414-415. Damage ranges from 3d to 6d×2 cr ex for a vial (for a random explosive, 2d *dice*), 6d to 6d×4 (or 4d *dice*) for a bottle. Fragmentation from glass is 1d-2 cut. Barrels and reservoirs are plot devices; even a smallish drum of something weak explodes for 6d×24 cr ex, probably killing everyone within eight yards (a good time to invoke *The Sound of Inevitability,* p. 36). Also common are solid particulate, vapors from spilled liquids, and gases that blow up if later exposed to sparks or flame; these do nothing initially, but a firing gun or a bullet striking metal in the affected area (as given in *Quantity and Form*) triggers an explosion of the size noted above.

5-8 – *Flammable.* Anyone doused with flammable liquid may catch fire if *later* ignited. Burning, incendiary, or explosive attacks will accomplish this – and if the container burst because of such damage, that counts! Per *Making Things Burn* (p. B433), Super-Flammable chemicals need *any* exposure (even zero damage), Highly Flammable ones require 1 point of damage, and Flammable ones call for 3 points. For random substances, roll 1d: 1 is Super-Flammable, 2-3 is Highly Flammable, 4-6 is Flammable. Treat solid particulate and gases as *Explosive* (above) instead, except the explosive damage is *burning* and not crushing.

9-10 – *Poisonous.* While substances that are rapidly deadly by injection exist, fast-acting contact poisons are rarer – the most realistic result is skin irritation (*noncumulative* -1 to DX and IQ for the rest of the fight). Terrorists and evil masterminds bent on world domination might store chemical weapons (use the rules for mustard or nerve gas on p. B439) or isolate stinging venoms (nature's chemical weapons) in bulk, and some exotic compounds found mostly in Internet

discussions could feature in a cinematic game. Solid particulate and gas are inhaled, and more plausibly swift-acting; they can poison everyone in the affected area (as given in *Quantity and Form*). To generate a *random* poison, roll 1d for a HT penalty to resist and 1d-2 (minimum 1) for *dice* of toxic damage if the HT roll fails. Optionally, when rolling damage dice randomly, treat a roll of 1 or 2 not as "the minimum 1d damage," but as a random affliction from pp. B428-429: choking, drunk, nauseated, retching, unconsciousness, etc.

11-12 – *Corrosive.* Acid, base, oxidizer, or anything else that dissolves people and gear. Use the rules in *Acid* (p. B428) in all cases. Being doused counts as being splashed: 1d-3 corrosion per exposure. Immersion in a reservoir does 1d-1 corrosion per second. There's some variability, from as little as 1 point/splash (1 point/second for immersion) to as much as 1d+1/splash (2d+1/second for immersion) for so-called "superacids" that can't realistically be stored in vials and bottles. If rolling randomly, save superacids for plot devices, start with standard damage, and roll 1d: 1-2 means -1 damage, 3-4 means no modifier, 5-6 means +1 damage. Clouds of corrosive particulate and gas do all kinds of horrible things on a long timescale; in combat, treat them as being splashed *each turn,* and require the HT roll to avoid eye damage noted on p. B428.

13-15 – *Harmless!* Many chemicals do nothing interesting. Even bottles with warning labels often have them only because it's better to be safe than sorry.

16-18 – *Roll twice, ignoring this result.* Far too many chemicals have multiple effects: Many explosive and flammable substances are at least mildly poisonous, almost all corrosive gases are also poisonous, and potent oxidizers are both corrosive and flammable (if not explosive). The GM is free to assess three or all four effects to plot-device chemicals. *Example:* Chlorine trifluoride is a stronger fluorinating agent than pure fluorine, a stronger oxidizer than oxygen itself, and prone to setting *everything* (sand, asbestos, water, people) on fire, and it and the results of these reactions are extremely toxic; it would realistically corrode and poison its victim, set them ablaze, and explode, but would *also* realistically need storage solutions that keep it from being easily abused.

D Is for *Devious*

Despite the GM's best efforts to describe a location's hazards using the other entries in this supplement – or to set a less-dangerous scene for a change of pace – quick-witted players *will* concoct schemes to wreak havoc using ostensibly innocuous items and safe environments. The GM *could* say, "It doesn't work," but it's more fun to roll and shout – or to be precise, to let the players roll to make the bad guys scream in pain!

Don't Try This at Home

If a *character* is good at something that fits the current scene, the *player* may want to show off the hero's skills. When that training has seen little use during the adventure – or the

entire campaign – the savvy GM will not merely permit but encourage this. The character points could've been spent on Guns and Karate, after all!

Looking for Trouble

The hero starts with a Concentrate maneuver to make a *Per*-based roll against a skill relevant to the situation – preferably one that *doesn't* facilitate mischief elsewhere in this supplement (Chemistry, Electrician, facility with dangerous tools, etc. allow no shortage of tomfoolery). This roll isn't for the skill's conventional applications; it's to recognize surroundings similar to those at headquarters, in a past career, or during training.

Some sample settings, with associated found on standard lenses and templates:

Academic (e.g., classroom or library): **Research, Teaching, Writing.**

Artistic (e.g., art-restoration shop, photo lab, or studio): **Connoisseur, Photography.**

Business (e.g., bank, office, or retail shop): **Accounting, Administration, Computer Operation, Merchant.**

Law-Enforcement (e.g., police station or prison): **Criminology, Law (Police), Savoir-Faire (Police).**

Neighborhood: **Area Knowledge** or **Current Affairs (Regional)** for *that area*.

Performance (e.g., theatre or TV studio): **Electronics Operation (Media), Propaganda, Public Speaking.**

Social (e.g., ballroom, bar, or casino): **Carousing, Dancing, Gambling.**

The player must explain *how the skill fits the scene* and *what they propose to do;* e.g., "My hacker has Administration because he spends all day in an office . . . and here we are, in the mob accountant's office. I'm looking for a copier or printer with a document feeder to stuff the crook's necktie into." Skipping either facet lets the GM impose -4 per omission (e.g., -8 if that player said, "I use Administration.") or simply deny the roll.

Any failure finds nothing. Success finds the proposed item or situation (one of the GM's choosing, if the player rolled at a penalty); the greater the margin, the better the find.

Causing Problems

Misuses of anything found can take *many* forms. The GM and player are encouraged to negotiate something amusing! Here are some suggestions.

In all cases below, where the effect references other rules – in this book, *Exploits,* or the *Basic Set* – and those require a skill roll, roll against the skill used in *Looking for Trouble* (above), but with the attribute base normally used in the adapted rules. For example, replace unarmed combat skills with *DX*-based **Merchant** when adapting *Wham!* (p. 6) or *Slam!* (p. 7) to crush a thief's fingers in a cash-register tray.

Take the Rest of the Day Off: The easiest option is to let the feat count as a watered-down version of one described elsewhere in this dictionary: at the bottom of the damage range, or at -1 *per die* if no range is specified. In the office, the coffee machine may get hot enough for *Heat* (p. 16), while a box of paper fasteners dumped on the floor could cause *Lacerations* (pp. 21-22); at the beauty salon, a hero who knows what's in the bottles could choose one that's slightly flammable or poisonous, per *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10); and at the friendly local games shop, *Slam!* (p. 7) might be toned down for the hand-crushing trick mentioned above. Critical success permits mid-range damage or removes the -1 per die.

Employer Liability Act: Damage isn't *automatically* weak. Many "safe" workplaces aren't; e.g., a plummeting floodlight at the theatre can inflict serious injury as per *Sagging Ceilings and Loose Chandeliers* (p. 7): 2d crushing (to the *skull,* on a critical success). The GM is encouraged to be generous if the hazard is really just one from another entry – especially *Architecture* (pp. 6-7), *Generic* (pp. 15-16), or *Tools* (pp. 33-34) – in an unexpected environment.

I'm Trying to Work Over Here: The thing found might cause a distraction rather than damage. One possibility is to allow a Feint made as a *DX*-based roll against the skill used to spot the opportunity: In a disco with flashing lights and loud music, a **Dancing-**based Feint can mean staying alive, while if the angry professor throws a sheaf of papers in an attacker's face, the GM may permit a Feint using DX-based **Teaching.** Another option is to allow *Banter* (*Exploits,* p. 39) with *IQ*-based rolls against unconventional skills; e.g., *Uttering Threats* with IQ-based **Dancing** to make someone hesitate and watch your slick moves, or *Drawing Aggression* with **Teaching** if that prof is in a classroom and taunts, "Ach, the only person ever to fail Physics for Dummies is back to fail again!"

'Cause Franklin Knows, Anything Goes: The GM is free to allow unorthodox skills – including many *not* found on lenses and templates in **Heroes,** but added on player whim or by modules in **GURPS Action 4: Specialists** – to work with *Flashy Fighting* (*Exploits,* p. 37), *Sneaky Fighting* (*Exploits,* p. 37), or *Using Your Head* (*Exploits,* p. 39). **Dancing** might replace Acrobatics on a slippery ballroom floor, **Performance** could work as Acting for playing dead on a suitably set and lit stage, and someone controlling a TV studio's cameras and PA system could use **Electronics Operation (Media)** or **Public Speaking** for *Analysis, Encouragement,* and *Spotting* (*Exploits,* p. 39).

SCROUNGING AND SEARCH?

Players of heroes with the **Scrounging** skill may ask to use that for *Looking for Trouble* (pp. 10-11) or other rolls this supplement requires to recognize exploitable perils. Be careful! Scrounging is common, Easy, and *already* indispensible on missions. It will devalue specialized skills if permitted in their stead. It's fair to allow it when the roll to locate unsafe stuff is a simple Perception roll, but not in place of other skills.

Search is rarely suitable – it's about taking time to inspect a package, person, vehicle, or room systematically. It may let a security officer spot a metal detector to misuse at the nightclub, or an X-ray machine to exploit at the airport, but it isn't *generally* applicable.

Fortunately, There's a Table Saw

As in a chase, exploitable perils in a fight require "Suitable scenery or Lucky Break" (*Exploits,* p. 32). If the GM describes surroundings that support the trick, great! If not, the player can invoke **Serendipity** or spend one character point for a Lucky Break that allows the attempt anyway, as described in *Player Guidance* (*Exploits,* p. 41). The gamer doing so must *describe* the serendipitous scenery; it has to make at least marginal sense, and it remains for the rest of the scene, exploitable by all.

This can even cancel failures at skill rolls to locate hazards, like those in *Looking for Trouble* (pp. 10-11): **Serendipity** or burning a point finds something exploitable regardless of the dice. **Luck** can also work by allowing a reroll, and is preferable because it "recharges" faster and costs no points to use.

E Is for *Electricity*

Practically all contemporary buildings (*Architecture*, pp. 6-7) and most *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) have electric power – and an *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) backdrop or *Worksite* (pp. 37-38) might boast extreme voltages or currents, and/or fewer safety measures than ordinary homes and cars. Because of this, electricity is arguably the most commonly abused hazard in action tales; every electrical fixture, outlet, and wire is a potential improvised weapon, and the laws of physics are bent in *shocking* ways.

Shocking Discoveries

Anybody can recognize a power cord or the prominent black-and-yellow ISO 7010-W012 "lightning bolt" symbol. Knowing where to cut into a wall to locate wiring – or identifying an *unlabeled* current source – requires a Concentrate maneuver and *Per*-based **Electrician** roll.

Electrifying Experiences

While there are countless ways to get zapped, the *results* are always some quantity of burning damage. In **GURPS Action,** only Tasers (**Heroes,** p. 32) and stun guns (**Heroes,** p. 33) harmlessly stun, because they're cinematically nonlethal.

In effect, then, **Action** treats all shocks as *Lethal Electrical Damage* (pp. B432-433). This is always *Localized Injury,* though: On top of burning damage, the shock triggers a HT roll at -1 per 2 HP of injury, with failure meaning being stunned and rolling vs. HT every turn to recover.

Unconsciousness for minutes and cardiac arrest – while realistic – are too final and *boring* for action heroes. Save them for situations where *Cannon Fodder* (**Exploits,** p. 38) is in effect: The shocked mook or henchman passed out or had a heart attack. If a player *wants* an NPC to drop faster (or deader) from the harsher reading of the HT roll, they can spend *two* character points on *Buying Lucky Breaks* (**Exploits,** p. 41).

The table below presents representative damage figures (roll vs. **Electrician** to assess these in advance). Roll for every turn of exposure, but always at least once even for brief shocks. Cinematic circuit breakers and GFCIs – unlike realistic ones – won't prevent this, but a hero being shocked can spend a character point to break the current after taking damage once, or two to have it happen so fast there's *no* damage.

Amount	Cause
1d-3 burn	Badly wired small electronics (e.g., radio); cattle prod; small vehicle battery.
1d burn	Large vehicle battery; *most* badly wired small appliances (e.g., can opener, shaver).
1d+2 burn	Badly wired small appliance with heating element (e.g. hairdryer, iron); household electrical outlet or light fixture; small portable generator or vehicle used as such.
3d burn	Badly wired large appliance (e.g., oven); electric security fence; household fuse box; large portable generator or vehicle used as such; residential mains.
6d burn	Electric chair; industrial mains; institutional fuse box; power supply for electric fence or huge machine.
6d×2 burn	Cross-country transmission line.
6d×3 burn	Electrical power plant; switching station.

Bad Wiring

The world according to action movies is full of unqualified electricians and pathetic safety standards. Any contact with an open fuse box, running generator, or equipment bearing an electrical hazard symbol means a shock. In electrical facilities – like power and switching stations – disaster lurks behind a flimsy fence (in action flicks, trapped-key interlocks are for wimps!). And electric security fences are *lethal,* even if realistic ones mostly work like stun guns.

Contact with these things is usually a result of *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) and tackling someone to bear them into danger are ill-advised: Both attacker and victim take damage!

Damage is per the table above. Unless the victim is wearing a full suit (dry suit, fireproof suit, NBC suit, specialized "arc flash" suit, etc.), DR is irrelevant. Metal never provides more than DR 1.

Heroes who've never experienced this kind of attack (as victim or attacker) must roll vs. **Electrician** to realize the dangers of holding onto someone who's being zapped, and the futility of DR.

Cash: You don't know anything about electricity, do you?

Tango: No.

Cash: As long as you're only touching one wire and you're not touching the ground, you don't get electrocuted.

*– **Tango & Cash** (1989)*

Bare Wires

Live electrical wires abound in action stories. They're most common on the *Worksite* (pp. 37-38), where apparently nobody knows how to install a circuit breaker (not that these break circuits in action cinema). They can also be created by taking an Attack to smash a light bulb or slash a power cord; the latter shocks the person doing the cutting, unless the tool has a nonmetallic handle (e.g., wooden axe haft).

Combat blades – from knives to katanas – typically have full tangs that conduct the shock. Remember this; it comes up later.

Readying a sparking cable, lamp, or whatever uses the rules in *Take-Out* (p. 4). The user is assumed to be holding onto the safe part. For anything that inflicts more than 6d damage (e.g., fallen transmission line), an **Electrician** roll warns there *isn't* a "safe part" – being fool enough to touch that without specialized protection means being shocked yourself.

After that, it can be used to attack people, causing the damage on the table with each hit. A wire uses DX in close combat, but someone with **Flail, Kusari,** or **Whip** can use it at a longer reach, at -1 per yard. A rigid lamp uses **Axe/Mace, Polearm, Spear,** or **Two-Handed Axe/Mace** at -1, depending on its size and esthetics.

If this is *parried,* and the parrying weapon is metallic, the target is shocked anyway; roll damage to the hand (split it between the hands, for two-handed parries). If the attack hits, it shocks the body part hit. DR *does* protect here, because contact is localized, and body armor, leather, etc. are insulators. Metallic armor still only gives DR 1, though.

Bathtub Accidents

A euphemism for things that aren't accidents: Someone is in water (puddle, pool, actual bathtub) when somebody else uses an Attack maneuver to dump in an electrical appliance or live wire. The only defense is to dodge and *retreat* or *drop:* out of or away from the water, which isn't possible if you're soaking in a pool or tub. This does injury to *everyone* in the water – even the one doing the shocking, if they're stupidly standing in the water – and DR doesn't matter unless it's a fully sealed dry suit, because water soaking through conducts the electricity.

A related trick popular on film is touching an electrical source to metallic scenery a foe is touching: steel catwalk, safety railing (not so safe now), bed frame (don't ask), etc. Such acts of improvised *parrilla* (look it up) work much like electrifying the water. It's usually easier to defend, though; one can often retreat off of or away from the metal. As well, the DR of the body part in contact – if that's "most of the body," use the rules for large-area injury (p. B400) – protects as it would against *Bare Wires* (pp. 12-13).

F Is for *Farm*

To idealists, farms symbolize life – they feed us. Yet we eat *dead* plants and animals, and it's farms that do the killin', as anybody who has ever visited one knows. Classic action stories cast trigger-happy ranchers as villains (for animals, see *Zoo,* pp. 41-42), while newer ones focus on the misuse of dangerous pesticides (*Chemicals,* pp. 9-10). Rural fight scenes happen in view of razor-sharp agricultural implements. And the bodies? Buried in the back 40.

The Old Ways

Agricultural settings offer a bumper crop of intimidating implements for heroes and (especially) bad guys to brandish as improvised weapons. *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30) and *Tools* (pp. 33-34) offer other suitable options. The stats below use the terms and notation on pp. B271-274.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Weight	ST	Notes
AXE/MACE (DX-5, Flail-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-3)						
Cattle Brand	1 point burn	1	0	2	8	[1, 2]
Sickle	sw cut	1	0	2	8	
or	sw imp	1	0U	–	8	[3]
BRAWLING or DX						
Captive Bolt Pistol	2d-1 cr	C, 1	No	6	10	[4]
BROADSWORD (DX-5, Rapier-4, Saber-4, Shortsword-2, or Two-Handed Sword-4)						
Scary Billhook or Machete	sw+2 cut	1	0U	4.5	11	
or	thr-1 imp	1	0U	–	11	
KNIFE (DX-4, Main-Gauche-3, or Shortsword-3)						
Small Billhook or Machete	sw-1 cut	C, 1	0	1.5	7	
or	thr-1 imp	C	0	–	7	

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Weight	ST	Notes
SHORTSWORD (DX-5, Broadsword-2, Jitte/Sai-3, Knife-4, Saber-4, Smallsword-4, or Tonfa-3)						
Billhook or Machete	sw+1 cut	1	0	3	10	
or	thr-1 imp	1	0	–	10	
SPEAR (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Staff-2)						
Hay Fork or Pitchfork	thr+3(0.5) imp	1*	0U	5	11	-2 to hit [5]
two hands	thr+4(0.5) imp	1, 2*	0	–	10†	-2 to hit [5]
TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)						
Hoe	sw cut	1, 2*	0U	3	8†	-2 to hit [2]
Rake	sw(0.5) imp	1, 2*	0U	3	8†	-2 to hit [2]
or	sw+1 cr	1, 2*	0U	3	8†	-2 to hit [2]
Scythe	sw+3 cut	1	0U	5	11‡	
or	sw+1 imp	1	0U	–	11‡	[3]
Shears	thr imp	1	0U	3	8†	-2 to hit
or	sw+2 cut	C	No	–	8‡	-2 to hit [6]
Shovel	sw+3 cut	1, 2*	0U	6	12‡	-2 to hit [2]
Sling Blade	sw+3 cut	1, 2*	0U	5	10†	
Sowing Hoe	sw+1 imp	1, 2*	0U	3	8†	-1 to hit [2, 3]

Notes

[1] Must be heated (a torch will do). *Electric* irons stay hot, but a power cord limits effective reach and can be cut (*Bare Wires*, pp. 12-13).

[2] Treat as *cheap* (p. B274).

[3] May get *stuck* (p. B405).

[4] For slaughtering livestock. Uses a blank cartridge (three turns to replace) to drive a bolt; pneumatic models that fire repeatedly are linked to a compressor or heavy (10-15 lbs.) tank by a hose. This model is non-penetrating; penetrating ones do piercing damage.

[5] Targets have -1 to Dodge, +1 to Block and Parry. Can strike to disarm (p. B401) *without* -2 to hit for a non-fencing weapon.

[6] If closed on neck, limb, or extremity. Crippling a limb or extremity amputates it!

Bloody Fields

Sowing and reaping by hand can't feed the world's billions. That task calls for *machines:* harvesters, seed drills, swathers, threshers, tillers, and as many specialized engines as there are crops and soil types.

What they all have in common is a terrifying capacity for *mangling.* They do harm most often when *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) sends somebody into their whirling maw. This inflicts thrust damage for *half* the machine's ST (round down) – its power must drive not just the dangerous bits but also its wheels or tracks, and ancillary machinery.

Small: Attachments pushed or pulled by the classic general-purpose farm tractor – a vehicle that makes economic sense for a family farm, urban botanical gardens, or a large private home. Wealthy villains might have small, *specialized* vehicles. ST/HP 55 (3d-1).

Big: Usually single-purpose gear for a large operation that's still recognizably a farm (red barn, workers in the fields, and so on). ST/HP 108 (6d-1).

Huge: Monstrous vehicles, often *stories* tall, used on factory farms where the nearest road or building could be completely out of sight, tens of miles away. ST/HP 146 (8d+1).

The Business End: The GM can choose each machine's damage type or roll 1d: 1-2 is *crushing* (e.g., threshing heads), 3-4 is *cutting* (e.g., for harvesting crops), 5-6 is *impaling* (e.g., long, spindly drills). If the motor isn't running, or the attachment is sitting in the field or hanging on the barn wall, use *Wham!* (p. 6) to chuck a foe into it; damage type is as usual for that machine.

He Done Got Chewed Up: Many farm machines – notably harvesters – are designed to pull things into them. If the GM decides one works like that (or on a roll of 1-2 on 1d), anybody who takes damage is likely to be caught up in it. If they can't break free from the ST used to figure damage, they take damage *every turn* until the machine is stopped by seizing control (it takes one, two, or three turns to mount a small, big, or huge model, and at least one to win a Quick Contest of DX, **Judo,** or **Wrestling** with a hostile farmer) or damaging it (all have DR 5, and stop at 0 HP).

He Don't Run So Fast: Farm machines have Move 1-4 (roll 1d-2, minimum Move 1) while their dangerous bits are functioning, so they're easily outrun. Still, people fall and get distracted. Treat running someone down as a *Ram* (**Exploits,** p. 33) doing the above damage *instead of* collision damage. Use **Driving (Agricultural)** to hit; this defaults to Construction Equipment or Heavy Wheeled at -2.

Be wary of any man who keeps a pig farm.
*– Brick Top, in **Snatch** (2000)*

G Is for Generic

Modern homes contain many objects and appliances that are generic in the sense of "basic" and "common." We remember the classic warning these spurred when we were youngsters: "Don't play with that! It isn't a toy!" This mantra inspired budding action heroes (and bad guys) to imagine what would happen if they *did* play with such things. This section discusses everyday items *not* more appropriate for the *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21) or workshop (*Tools,* pp. 33-34).

Bathtub: Slipping and falling in the bath isn't very action-y, but water-filled tubs *are* exploitable. They're why *Bathtub Accidents* (p. 13) are called that. In addition, a fighter who *wins* the Quick Contest in *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) can force the face of a foe kneeling or crawling adjacent to or in a bathtub, or lying in one, underwater, causing *Suffocation* (p. B436). Suffocation happens automatically to anybody *pinned* in the tub, unless their rival specifically opts to avoid this.

Camera: A camera – be it a cell phone or a fancy professional rig – isn't deadly, but pointing the flash at someone within a yard and firing it (an Attack at DX or *DX*-based **Photography**) can dazzle! A target who fails to dodge (or parry, in close combat) must roll vs. HT (at +1 for cool shades or +5 for goggles that give Protected Vision) to avoid blindness for seconds equal to margin of failure.

Curling Iron: A classic source of *Bathtub Accidents* (p. 13). Hot-styling damage to anything besides hairstyles is cinematic, but in **GURPS Action,** it can be used to attack with **Knife** at -1, for 1 point of burning damage.

Fan: Realistic household fans break when used as weapons. But a *cinematic* desk or stand fan with old-timey metal blades does 1d-4 cutting, while a tasteful wooden ceiling fan from Way Back When does 1d-3 crushing, if *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) brings somebody into contact with it. A ceiling fan can also be shot off its moorings (-5 to hit); a hit means it lands on the person below for 1d crushing, per *Sagging Ceilings and Loose Chandeliers* (p. 7).

Hairdryer: These are good for *Bathtub Accidents* (p. 13). They can also cause burns if held in place in close combat. This generally requires a pinned subject; against anyone else, roll vs. DX to hit, modified for hit location, and the victim may parry the dryer or dodge its jet. Exposure for 10 successive turns does 1 point of burning damage. Restart the counter each time the dryer does damage or misses – blow-drying someone to death takes *time.*

Hat Stand: Used by picking it up (a Ready maneuver) and holding it between you and an attacker. The goal is to push them back or snag them with hooks and projections. This is an attack using **Staff** at -2, but the target doesn't defend. Instead, a hit means they must *win* a Quick Contest to move closer; each party uses the *better* of DX or ST.

Iron: Inflicts 1d-3 burning damage if the heated surface is held against someone in close combat, an attack with DX or **Brawling** at -1. Whacking someone with the pointed beak doesn't burn and is awkward (DX or **Brawling** at -2), but grants +2 to punching damage. Either way, treat the attack as *armed;* the iron protects the hand.

Mirror: A door- or wall-mounted mirror allows *Dirty Tricks* (p. B405) when you're out of sight of someone and waiting for them to start combat with you. Roll a Quick Contest when your opponent opens the door, rounds the corner, or whatever: Your IQ or **Tactics** vs. their Per or *Per*-based Tactics. If you *win,* your rival believes your image is you and attacks it instead! Then on your turn, you can strike from your *true* location and they'll defend at -4 against the first attack only. If someone unluckily *breaks* a mirror, see *The Glint of Light on Broken Glass* (pp. 21-22).

Pillow: Held in two hands (a Ready maneuver to pick up), this allows a grapple of the face (at the usual -3 to hit) to cause *Suffocation* (p. B436) on future turns, until the victim breaks free. If someone is pinned, the attacker can take a turn to ready a pillow that's in reach (one yard) and mash it over their opponent's face for the same effect on later turns.

Sink: A water-filled sink lets an attacker who *wins* the Quick Contest in *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) force the face of an enemy standing or kneeling next to it underwater, triggering *Suffocation* (p. B436).

Spray-Can Flamethrower

With a ready lighter or other fire source in one hand and an aerosol can in the other, it's possible to blast fire at an opponent within one yard by making a **Liquid Projector (Sprayer)** roll at -2. They may dodge or block. A hit does 1d-2 burning damage. A can holds fuel enough for 1d-1 attacks (minimum one).

Television: Hoisting an old picture-tube television in both hands requires *two* Ready maneuvers; busting it over a foe's head afterward is an attack: Roll vs. DX or **Brawling** at -5. Ramming someone's head through such a TV screen within one yard is *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5), at -3 for targeting the head. Either does the damage in *Wham!* (p. 6): thrust+*1,* plus any skill bonus. Residual charge in the tube also means the victim must roll vs. HT or be stunned; roll vs. HT each turn to recover. As that person's head is now inside a TV, they're considered blind until they extricate it; this takes one Ready maneuver but requires a DX roll, with failure doing 1d-3 cutting to the face and critical failure meaning damage is to the *neck.*

Toilet: Winning the Quick Contest for *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) can force the face of a foe kneeling or crawling next to a toilet underwater, causing *Suffocation* (p. B436). In classic cinematic tradition, an optional DX roll lets the attacker flush the toilet. Success means a swirly that costs the victim 1 FP *extra* (this can't be repeated on a combat timescale), but failure means the victim gets the margin of failure as a bonus to attempts to break free on their next turn.

Vacuum Cleaner: "Power hickeys," while amusing, aren't useful. However, a Ready maneuver and a **Housekeeping** roll opens the outflow, allowing it to be directed at a foe within one yard by making a *DX*-based **Housekeeping** roll at -5 to target the face. The target must dodge or suffer from a major distraction on their next turn: -3 to attack and -1 to defend.

Washing Machine: Adults can't be stuffed into washers and dryers, even in cinematic combat. Treat a top-loader as a sink (above), but if it's running and the shutoff is bypassed (*DX*-based **Housekeeping** roll while manhandling someone), the churning suds cost the victim 1 FP *extra* due to suffocation every *other* turn (so winning the Quick Contest for four turns saps *6* FP, not 4 FP). A front-loader isn't useful for this, but being within a yard and not in front of it allows an attack at *DX*-based **Housekeeping** on a foe within a yard who *is* in front, who can only dodge *and* retreat; if this works, the water and laundry gushing out mean the target must roll vs. DX at -2 or fall down.

Wire Clothes Hanger: Bent into an "O" (one Ready maneuver) or straightened (three Ready maneuvers), this serves as an improvised garrote – an ordinary crushing one, not a wire one – that works at -2 to **Garrote** skill. A straightened hanger can also thwack for 1 point of crushing damage (use **Whip** skill and the rules for arm/hand wounds on p. B406), or jab for 1 point of impaling damage (use **Knife** at -2), at reach 1.

H IS FOR *HEAT*

We live in a technological world. We can debate whether that *actually* started with cavemen learning to make fire, but heat is never far from technology: myriad *Tools* (pp. 33-34) generate it; it's essential for many *Generic* (pp. 15-16) fixtures, to *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) processes, and in the *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21); and it's the explanation for both hot *Pipes* (p. 26) and cold ones. Modern heroes and villains have ample opportunity to broil one another.

Hot Stuff

Heat sources inflict burning damage once per turn (second) of contact. This is large-area injury (p. B400), except when a particular hit location is targeted. *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) leads to momentary exposure for a single damage roll unless it involves repeated turns of *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) – or a shove or throw that leaves the victim lying down *on* or *in* the hazard, crawling slowly or taking Change Posture maneuvers to escape.

The table below presents typical damage amounts *per turn*.

Amount	Cause
1 point burn	Dark-colored car in the sun*; household radiator*.
1d-3 burn	Hot machine-gun barrel*; hotplate*; running motor (car, heavy tool, etc.)*.
1d-1 burn	Just-lit woodstove*; ordinary fire (campfire, burning rubble, etc.); oven or stovetop on "low"*; overheated motor*.
1d burn	Fire with accelerants (e.g., gasoline).
1d+1 burn	Camp stove; housing* of furnace, incinerator, or kiln; oven or stovetop on "medium."
2d burn	Barbecue grill; blazing woodstove; hot coals; oven or stovetop on "high."
2d+2 burn	Interior of domestic furnace, incinerator, or small kiln.
3d burn	Interior of industrial kiln; molten metal; reactor shielding; thermite fire.
6d burn	Interior of huge foundry furnace; unshielded reactor.
6d×2 burn	Interior of *blast* furnace.

* Won't usually set fires, regardless of damage. All the rest will; see pp. B433-434.

Hot Times

Heat doesn't magically stop cold at some distance!

Sources that inflict 1d or more are hot enough that if you use *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) to push a grappled foe into them – so *you* are effectively a yard away while your opponent is in close combat with the hot stuff – *you* take 1 point of damage per die as large-area injury, though this radiated heat won't set you ablaze. For example, holding a mook over a camp stove does 1d+1 to him (and might set him alight) and 1 point to you, while if you stand next to an open blast furnace rather than throwing someone in from afar, your screaming victim suffers 6d×2 while you take 12 points.

Sources that do at least 3d are even more dangerous! At an effective *two* yards, they radiate 1 point of damage per 3d. Thus, manhandling a foe to within a yard of an open industrial kiln while you remain behind them at two yards means they take 3 points while you take 1 point; doing the same with that blast furnace means they're cooked for 12 points while you suffer 4 points.

To avoid self-injury, only hold enemies *against* heat sources that do less than 1d; drag foes to within one yard of those that do 1d or more but less than 3d; and satisfy yourself with manhandling victims to within two yards of dangers that do 3d or more. Or shove or throw them in from a safe distance.

I Is for *Industrial*

Factories, foundries, refineries, and similar facilities are among the most popular of action backdrops. Heavy machinery and tangled pipes and wires – their sprawl, their din, their *stench* – give bad guys the means to conceal or even manufacture contraband, stash abductees, and cover up torture and murder. Spies sneak in to steal industrial secrets; terrorists, to cause destructive spills, leaks, and explosions. Then the heroes arrive – or escape – and the surroundings color the violence that ensues.

Demanufacture

The definitive feature of industrial settings is massive machinery: benders, crushers, drop hammers, hydraulic presses, rollers, shredders, and countless other devices. Cranes, conveyors, and lifts move everything from raw materials to finished goods from process to process. Belts, linkages, and flywheels drive these and other systems, such as pumps and fans.

These mechanisms could inflict *any amount* of damage on unfortunates who stumble, fall, or are thrown into them by *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). If the GM has chosen what *type* of work the facility does, though, it's possible to arrive at numbers that fit players' expectations.

Cleanse Fold and Manipulate

If a machine's job is shaping other machines, total the DR and HP of the thing it works on, and then add 10%, rounding any fraction *up*, to find a ST score. For DR, see *Damage to Objects* (p. B483); most household goods have DR 2, guns and light tools have DR 4, and heavy tools have DR 6. For HP, consult the *Object Hit Points Table* (p. B558). If the device works on *vehicles*, read DR and HP from pp. B464-465, **Heroes,** p. 34, or Chapter 8 of **GURPS High-Tech.**

Examples: A factory that produces assault rifles (**Heroes,** p. 32) works on goods with the DR of a gun (DR 4) and the HP of an 8.9-lb. machine (HP 8); the sum is 12, so ST is 10% higher than that: ST 13.2, which rounds to ST 14. A production line for sports cars (**Heroes,** p. 34) has a ST that's 10% higher than DR 4 + ST/HP 57 = 61: ST 68.

Anyone caught up in industrial machinery – or a linkage providing motive power to it – may be mangled. If the machine works on the entirety (or nearly so) of the things it churns out, roll a Quick Contest between the machine's ST as calculated above and the *higher* of the victim's ST or HT. It inflicts damage equal to its margin of victory. This is *crushing* for something that bends, flattens, or rolls, or for a driving mechanism. It's *cutting* if the machine scores, shears, shreds, stamps, etc.

If the machine deals with only *part* of what it works on – or is a pump, fan, or other ancillary system – use (1d+2)×10% (that is, from 30% to 80%) of the ST of the whole thing, rounded *up*. Pumps tend to crush; fans usually cut.

Examples: Machines that produce parts of assault rifles have ST 5-12. Those that manufacture sports-car bits have ST 21-55.

Most machines *pull in* what they work on. Victims damaged by them are caught! If they fail to break free from the above ST on their turn, roll the Quick Contest again, and so on until the machine is shut off or destroyed (assume DR 6 and HP equal to ST).

Further Down the Spiral

Systems for moving stuff around can also be dangerous.

Convey My Deepest Condolences: Ordinary conveyors roll at Move 1-4 (roll 1d-2, minimum Move 1); cinematic ones can reach Move 5-8 (treat this as +1 to +4 with the justifications under *That's Gotta Hurt!,* p. 4). Pressing a foe into a belt or rollers with *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) in order to power-sand them does thrust crushing damage for the attacker's ST, plus half this Move rounded down, but always at least +1. That's thrust+1 at Move 1-3, thrust+2 at Move 4-5, thrust+3 at Move 6-7, or thrust+4 at Move 8. The weight of what the conveyor moves doesn't affect damage – but if that's heavier than a person, anybody knocked or thrown *onto* the conveyor is carried away at the system's Move and possibly dumped into another hazard before they can react (particularly if stunned by the blow that put them there)!

What Goes Up: Crane and derrick disasters are deadlier. As a *highly cinematic* estimate, assume the ST of a crane for the purpose of doing harm equals the HP of what it lifts. If the machine is maneuvered so its hook or other attachment bashes, gores, or plummets into someone – an attack that requires access to the controls and a **Driving (Construction Equipment)** or *DX*-based **Freight Handling** roll – it inflicts thrust crushing damage for its ST. The victim may dodge, and can retreat *or* drop for +3. It takes four Ready maneuvers to reposition the crane between blows.

Examples: A crane at the sports-car factory has ST 57, meaning it does a mighty 6d+1 crushing . . . every fifth turn.

Must Come Down: Things *suspended* at the factory can be dropped – another attack using **Driving (Construction Equipment)** or *DX*-based **Freight Handling** from suitable controls. Again, the target may dodge. Damage inflicted is based on height, as for *Falls* (**Exploits,** p. 19); a "standard" industrial story is 24' (8 yards), and a crane is rarely used for *less* than a story. If the load has HP 20+, multiply basic damage by 2 at HP 20-29, 3 at HP 30-39, 4 at HP 40-49, and so on, with each *full* 10 HP adding one to the multiple.

Examples: An assault rifle weighs 8.9 lbs., so 12 weigh 106.8 lbs. The GM decides 125 lbs. is "close enough" for a crateful. That's 20 HP. If this falls from three stories (24 yards) at the gun factory, it does 4d+2 crushing, ×2 for HP 20: 8d+4 crushing. Guns kill people, even without bullets.

Entertainment Through Pain

Aside from mechanical threats, tons (literally) of other disasters await at industrial facilities, including:

● *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10). Barrels of bad stuff of all kinds can be emptied onto people; use a crane or pour it off an upper level. Reservoirs are common, too, and often open at the top – don't fall in.

● *Electricity* (pp. 12-13). Powers most machines. Industrial current shocks for 6d burning. The GM may assume that cables – and *Pipes* (p. 26), for that matter – are unusually common and available, giving +1 or more to rolls to find ones suitable for misuse.

● *Heat* (p. 16). Used to cure paint and resin, fire ceramics, shape or melt plastic and metal, etc. Huge kilns and

crucibles do 3d burning, while furnaces do 6d or even 6d×2. Some might be emptied onto people using cranes.

● *Heights* (p. 6). As noted above, an industrial story is a long drop. Assume falling one story is 2d+2, two is 3d+3, and three is 4d+2 crushing.

● *Lacerations* (pp. 21-22). Massive stockpiles of glass await to be shattered! Sheets might be dropped from cranes – as might industrial quantities of nails and sharp scrap metal.

We kill the weak so the strong survive. You can't stop the New World. Your filthy society will never get rid of people like us. It's breeding them! WE ARE THE FUTURE!

– Night Slasher, in **Cobra** *(1986)*

J Is for *Junk*

Waste handling is among the 10 most dangerous occupations of our time. Society's leavings are often toxic (*Chemicals,* pp. 9-10), jagged (*Lacerations,* pp. 21-22), or biohazardous. Incinerators (*Heat,* p. 16), machinery for moving and compacting garbage, and the sheer mass of debris are also menaces. So are junkyard dogs (*Exploits,* p. 46) – and murderers who dispose of corpses at the dump. It's no wonder dirty, secluded dumpsites are among the 10 most popular action backdrops!

Dumpster Dangers

Action flicks love back-alley brawls set against backdrops of bags and bins of rubbish. Such scenes often begin with someone tumbling or jumping into a Dumpster or trash pile from a roof, fire escape, or window (*Heights,* p. 6). The garbage *might* break their fall – but not always. Roll 1d.

Modifiers: +1 if the area is institutional as opposed to domestic or commercial; e.g., outside a hospital (*Medical,* pp. 22-23), lab (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28), or prison. +2 in an *Industrial* (pp. 17-18), *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30), or *Worksite* (pp. 37-38) environment.

Then consult this table:

1-2 – *Soft Garbage. Halve* falling damage, which remains crushing, and round up. Then apply a DR of 1d-1 against it.
3-4 – *Hard Garbage.* Falling damage is unmitigated but remains crushing.
5 – *Sharp Garbage.* Falling damage is unmitigated and becomes *cutting.*
6+ – *Nasty Garbage.* Roll 3d on the *Effects* table under *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10). Also roll 1d for the fall itself: 1-2 means it's soft (**1-2** above), as the chemicals are viscous or in squashy plastic bottles or bags; 3-4 means it's hard (**3-4** above), as the toxic waste is in drums; 5-6 means it's sharp (**5** above), due to broken bottles.

The GM can instead choose a result that suits the scenario – it wouldn't do for the Dumpster outside the meth lab to contain anything *but* sharp, nasty garbage!

If rolling, heroes with **Luck** can request rerolls. Those with **Serendipity** can specify "soft garbage" – and exemption from *What's That Smell?* (p. 19) – even when that result isn't normally possible.

Time to Take Out the Trash: If *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) dumps somebody in refuse at ground level, roll on the table above and apply the result to the damage in *Wham!* (p. 6).

Both Eyes Open, Nose Pinched Shut: If someone vaults or clambers into a Dumpster using *Climbing* (**Exploits,** pp. 18-19) or *Parkour* (**Exploits,** pp. 19-20) for some reason, roll on the table. Soft garbage is completely safe. For hard garbage, roll 1d-3 crushing damage; the result can be 0 (*Damage Roll,* p. B378). For sharp garbage, damage is 1d-3 cutting, minimum 1. Nasty garbage remains nasty, and *What's That Smell?* (p. 19) remains gross.

Traveling Worst Class

Garbage eventually travels from that alleyway to the dump. Those who go along for the ride – usually no thanks to *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) – can end up badly mangled.

Using the lift or compactor on a trash truck – or halting one, to save an ally – takes a Ready maneuver and a **Driving (Construction Equipment or Heavy Wheeled)** roll, at -2 for unfamiliarity unless the hero's résumé includes "garbage man." Doing so requires access to the controls, one or more sets of which are on the *outside* of such a vehicle.

Fragrant Freight: An ordinary truck filled with rubbish – or the barge that's passing under the bridge in every action-movie foot chase (or used to smuggle drugs in real life) – is nothing but a moving Dumpster. Use *Dumpster Dangers* (above).

The Tip: For a truck that lifts and *empties* a Dumpster into it, roll 1d+4 for a "weight factor." The GM may assign this, with 5 or 6 suiting bins behind restaurants and shops, and 9 or 10 fitting big construction-site containers. Being under the garbage when it falls inflicts 1d+1 crushing *multiplied by this factor.*

I Have a Crush on You: The classic rear-loader with a hydraulic press *slowly* crushes victims to death with ST 2d+68; this can differ for two people in the same crusher. Roll a Quick Contest between this ST and the *higher* of each victim's ST or HT. Total large-area (p. B400) crushing damage equals the truck's margin of victory, but it's spread out evenly over 10 seconds (drop fractions). There's no getting out early . . . better hope a friend grabs the controls. It takes seconds equal to the time spent being crushed for the thing to open enough to get you out.

Bend, Fold, Spindle, and Mutilate

Garbage is often compressed or chopped up to make it more compact. This is bad if *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) pushes you in . . .

I Got a Bad Feeling About This: A stationary compactor uses *I Have a Crush on You* (above), but is more powerful: ST is 6d+64. Damage is still spread out over time, making rescue possible. *Killswitch* (p. 17) applies, usually from multiple locations, allowing DX rolls to save friends. (Car crushers stop not after fixed time but when the job is done, so a vehicle is doomed regardless of HP – but use this lesser damage for *people,* even those in cars.)

People Shredders: A shredder works like a compactor except that damage is *cutting;* apply a ×1.5 wounding modifier to each second's injury. For instance, if a HT 12 shooter is put in a ST 85 shredder and loses by 73, she suffers 7 points of cutting damage per second, meaning 10 HP of injury per turn.

Down in the Dumps

As ideas go, running around *on* garbage in a dump stinks. Make a *Per*-based **Urban Survival** roll (or Per-5 roll) – at +2 for **Danger Sense** – to spot danger to avoid or exploit via *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). Use *Questionable Construction* (p. 7), with these differences:

● Equivalents to *Rickety Floors and Stairs* require a roll for *Dumpster Dangers* (p. 18), which modifies the damage taken by legs that poke through, or in falls. It *is* possible to fall one or two stories into a grimy grotto.

● Equivalents to *Wobbly Walls* are trash, often stacked several stories high. If this falls on someone, it inflicts 1d *dice* – 1d to 6d – of large-area (p. B400) crushing injury. The victim is stuck until they *win* a Quick Contest of a ST or *ST*-based **Escape** vs. ST equal to the damage roll. Each attempt takes one turn and costs 1 FP.

● Equivalents to *Crumbly Moorings* and *Sagging Ceilings and Loose Chandeliers* aren't normally present.

> ### What's That Smell?
> When someone tangles with garbage via any of the possibilities under *Junk* (pp. 18-19), the GM may rule that injury comes with insult in the form of *Yuck* (pp. 40-41), unless the type of waste or how the victim encountered it clearly rules this out.

Fatal Attraction

Scrap yards use cranes with massive electromagnets to move big metal objects like crushed cars. Use *What Goes Up* (p. 17) and *Must Come Down* (pp. 17-18), with one extra option: An attack using **Driving (Construction Equipment)** or *DX*-based **Freight Handling** from the controls can *pick up* a vehicle whose HP don't exceed the crane's ST; the driver may defend with a vehicular dodge at (control skill/2) + Handling, plus any **Enhanced Dodge (Vehicular).** Once the vehicle is grabbed, it can be moved toward a hazard – crusher (*Bend, Fold, Spindle, and Mutilate,* above), pond of molten metal (*Hot Stuff,* p. 16), reservoir full of *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), etc. – or lifted up to be dropped. All at a stately Move 1, giving occupants time to open doors and jump into *Dumpster Dangers* (p. 18).

K Is for Kitchen

Kitchens can't match blast furnaces (*Heat,* p. 16) and factories (*Industrial,* pp. 17-18) for deadliness, but they're no less popular in action flicks. It's the rare martial-arts film that *doesn't* visit the service areas of an Asian restaurant – or upset a noodle cart, at least – and every foreign crime lord holds court in an "ethnic" eatery. Mixing heroes with bad guys in close quarters with fryers and cleavers is like pouring water on hot oil.

Yeah, Well . . . I Also Cook

The kitchen is a great place for *Take-Out* (p. 4). Here are a few popular menu items. The stats use the terms and notation from pp. B271-274.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Weight	ST	Notes
AXE/MACE (DX-5, Flail-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-3)						
Ice or Meat Mallet	sw+1 cr	1	0	2	8	
Rolling Pin	sw+1 cr	1	0U	3	10	-1 to hit [1]
Skillet	sw+2 cr	1	0U	5	12	-2 to hit

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Weight	ST	Notes
KNIFE (DX-4, Main-Gauche-3, or Shortsword-3)						
Big Fork or Skewer	thr-2 imp	C	-1	0.25	5	-1 to hit [1]
Carving or Utility Knife	sw-2 cut	C, 1	-1	1	6	
or	thr imp	C	-1	–	6	
Dough Cutter or Ulu Knife	thr cut	C	-1	0.5	5	-1 to hit [2]
Huge Chef's Knife	sw-1 cut	C, 1	0	1.5	7	
or	thr imp	C, 1	0	–	7	
Ice Pick	thr-1 imp	C	-1	0.25	5	
Kitchen Shears	thr-2 imp	C	-1	0.5	5	-1 to hit
Paring Knife	sw-3 cut	C	-1	0.25	5	
or	thr-1 imp	C	-1	–	5	
Pizza Cutter	thr-2 cut	C	-1	0.25	5	-1 to hit [1]
SHORTSWORD (DX-5, Broadsword-2, Jitte/Sai-3, Knife-4, Saber-4, Smallsword-4, or Tonfa-3)						
Cleaver	sw cut	1	0	2	8	
SMALLSWORD (DX-5, Main-Gauche-3, Rapier-3, Saber-3, or Shortsword-4)						
Spit	thr imp	C, 1	0F	1	5	-1 to hit

Notes
[1] Treat as *cheap* (p. B274).
[2] Gives the hand DR 4 on a roll of 1-3 on 1d.

Super-Size Me

Commercial and institutional kitchens feature bigger utensils; +1 damage is easy to justify! Add *about* 50% to weight and +2 to ST; e.g., a hefty marble rolling pin might do swing+2 crushing, weigh around 5 lbs., and require ST 12, while an intimidating cleaver does swing+1 cutting, weighs 3 lbs., and requires ST 10.

Ouch, Hot!

Kitchen tools often sit on hot stoves. Make a Per or *Per*-based **Housekeeping** roll to notice and avoid 1 point of burning damage to the hand by picking them up *carefully*. These acquire a linked 1-point burning attack for 1d seconds after they're taken off the heat.

Keep Fingers Away From Blade

Then there are the chef's equivalent of power tools. This list touches on the major food groups.

Blender or Food Processor: A hand forced inside via *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) takes 1d-3 cutting per second.

Dishwasher, Freezer, or Refrigerator: These machines aren't easily abused, but institutional versions offer heavy doors to use with *Slam!* (p. 7) after manhandling a hand or head into harm's way. A big restaurant dishwasher that's been running steadily does 1 point of burning damage to those held against it.

Garbage Disposal: Manhandling can shove a hand down one of these. It's *designed* to chop through bone, and inflicts 1d cutting per second. It's also designed to suck things in; victims must break free from ST 10 or continue to take damage until the hand is severed. Shoving someone's clothing in (-2 on the initial manhandling attempt) tightens it, restraining them; each turn the victim fails to break free from ST 10, the body

> *Jordan: You're not a cook.*
> *Ryback: Yeah, well . . .*
> *I also cook.*
> *– Under Siege (1992)*

part inside the clothing (e.g., neck for a necktie) takes crushing damage equal to the margin of loss.

Mixer: A *handheld* mixer can be used to chase people around, attacking at DX or *DX*-based **Housekeeping;** a hit is harmless unless aimed at a nose, finger, etc., which does 1 point of damage. A *stand* mixer requires manhandling, but is powerful enough to do 1d-3 crushing or cutting per second, depending on the attachment. It can also snag clothing as per a garbage disposal (above).

Spicy!

Many spices – cinnamon, black pepper, mustard, chili, hot curry powder, etc. – are irritants when ingested via routes besides the mouth (and sometimes even then). Quickly recognizing something suitable on the spice rack requires a *Per*-based **Housekeeping** roll.

Attacking with powder or hot sauce requires a DX or *DX*-based **Housekeeping** roll, at -5 for the face. The attack has Acc 1 and Max 2 (the GM may be generous with liquids in squeeze bottles, assigning Max 3-4 and allowing **Liquid Projector** skill). The target may block or dodge, but not parry.

Spices work like *feeble* self-defense spray: The victim must make *two* HT rolls: one to resist coughing (see *Afflictions,* p. B428), another to resist blindness (p. B124). Both effects endure for seconds equal to margin of failure. These HT rolls could have any modifier from +1 (stale pepper) to -4 (chili); the GM may choose this or roll 1d-5. Something exotic, like ghost chili, might be equal to real pepper spray: -4 to HT *and* a duration of minutes, not seconds!

Just Plain Hot

Hot Stuff (p. 16) covers most kitchen heat sources: Treat almost anything used for cooking (flattop, pizza oven, stove, etc.) as an oven or stovetop on "low," "medium," or "high" – or as a barbecue grill, if open flame is involved. Damage ranges from 1d-1 to 2d burning. For more variability, roll 1d: 1 is 1d-1, 2 is 1d, 3 is 1d+1, 4 is 1d+2, 5 is 2d-1, 6 is 2d. Exploiting heat requires *Delivery* (pp. 4-6), usually *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5).

Some special cases:

Griddle, Hotplate, Toaster, or Waffle Iron: If manhandling sticks a hand *into* or *onto* one of these or another hot small appliance, damage is 1d-3 burning per turn.

Hot Liquids: A pot of scalding liquid – coffee fresh from the coffee maker, boiling soup, etc. – does 1d-3 burning. Treat this as an attack at DX or *DX*-based **Housekeeping**, with Acc 1 and Max 3; the target may block or dodge, but not parry. Hits to the *face* (-5 to hit) also blind for 1d seconds. Hot *oil* is nastier: Damage is 1d+1, and on a face hit, the victim must roll vs. HT; success means 1d seconds of blindness, but failure or critical failure spells lasting or permanent blindness; see *Duration of Crippling Injuries* (p. B422).

Microwave Oven: Abuse requires manhandling a head or hand inside. Each turn this works, the attacker can try a *DX*-based **Housekeeping** roll to bypass the safety switch and nuke the victim. Success inflicts 1 HP of *direct injury* that turn; failure means the victim gets the margin of failure as a bonus to break free on their next turn.

L IS FOR *LACERATIONS*

Many entries in this dictionary will cut you – especially *Tools* (pp. 33-34), and stuff on the *Farm* (pp. 13-14) and in the *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21) – but sometimes bleeding takes center stage. It's as if action-movie directors think, "Hmm, a 23-story drop isn't impressive enough. Put a huge, razor-blade-shaped sculpture at the bottom." Certainly, because action heroes and their enemies gleefully exploit any edge they can, *every* jagged prop is a Chekhov's gun (well, Chekhov's *razor*).

Hard Crack

Want to tell the world your movie is an action flick? Toss somebody through a window. Cinematic glass can slice you up if it's in the shape of a broken bottle (see below), but not if you crash through it bodily – a trick made possible by *fake* glass, once made from sugar and now from resin.

And the GM *can* run things that way!

But in a gritty story, when someone collides violently with glass – meaning *Wham!* (p. 6) if traveling horizontally or *Falls* (**Exploits,** p. 19) for vertical misadventures – roll damage and compare it to the pane's DR and HP: DR 1, HP 3 for most plate glass, more for security glass; see *Glass* (**Exploits,** p. 21). If damage is less than DR + HP, the glass holds and the victim suffers crushing damage as usual.

When damage *equals* or *exceeds* the glass' DR + HP, though, the pane shatters. Roll 3d for the victim's fate:

3-4 – *Horrific accident!* Victim pierced by a huge fragment. Convert crushing damage to *impaling.* Roll 1d: On 1, injury is to the vitals; on 2-6, it's to the torso.
5-7 – *Messy accident.* Convert crushing damage to *cutting.*
8-10 – *Impact and minor cut.* Usual crushing damage *and* 1d-2(0.5) cutting to one randomly chosen hit location.
11-12 – *Impact and minor cuts.* Usual crushing damage *and* 1d-2(0.5) cutting to *two* randomly chosen hit locations.
13-14 – *Impact and major laceration.* Usual crushing damage *and* 1d+1(0.5) cutting to one randomly chosen hit location.
15-16 – *Impact and major lacerations.* Usual crushing damage *and* 1d+1(0.5) cutting to *two* randomly chosen hit locations.
17-18 – *Miraculous escape!* Glass breaks the impact or fall. Crushing damage equals DR + HP, no matter how big it should have been, and that's it – no bleeding.

Regardless of the roll, if the glass breaks, the victim's resting place and the ground one yard around it is (that person's hexes and all adjacent hexes) are now full of broken glass; see *The Glint of Light on Broken Glass* (below). The GM may extend this further for a single, huge pane undivided by muntins!

The Glint of Light on Broken Glass

Negotiating a floor strewn with sharp objects – broken glass, nails, sheet-metal burrs, etc. – is risky. Every turn, anybody moving on foot through the area takes damage to the feet for *each yard* crossed. *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) counts: If you stay standing, use the distance traveled; if you end up lying down, you receive a flat *four* doses of damage instead.

BOTTLE SERVICE

A liquor (or similar) bottle makes a serviceable club, dealing swing-1 crushing damage at reach 1 using **Axe/Mace** skill at -2. Roll 1d on any strike or parry; 1-3 means it's now a *broken* bottle. To deliberately break it with an attack (usually by cracking it on something hard – like a bar – to do swing-1 crushing *to the bottle*), assume DR 1 and HP 1-4, depending on size and thickness. For a random booze bottle at the pub, roll 1d-2 for HP (minimum HP 1).

A broken bottle does swing-3(0.5) cutting or thrust-1(0.5) impaling at reach C, using **Knife** skill at -2. It cannot parry. It breaks beyond all usefulness on 1-3 on 1d on any strike.

When a bottle shatters on an attack or parry, a 1 on the breakage roll inflicts thrust cutting damage on the hand, based on *your* ST. If grasping it and *trying* to break it, roll 1d; 1 means the same thing.

Regardless of how a bottle breaks, it scatters broken glass across a one-yard-wide circle (one hex). See *The Glint of Light on Broken Glass* (above) for effects.

Damage is thrust-3 cutting based on the *victim's* ST, to a randomly chosen foot – or, after falling down, to a random hit location. Minimum basic cutting damage is 1 point per attack (p. B378), DR protects normally, and maximum injury is 2 HP per attack.

Example: A mob thug with ST 13 (thrust 1d) and DR 1 Guccis staggers three yards through broken glass but doesn't fall. His feet take damage three times. Each roll is 1d-3 cutting vs. DR 1; 1-4 on the die means no injury, 5 means 1 HP of injury, 6 means 2 HP of injury.

He Got the Point

The "grand finale" of bloody ends is *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) into or a fall onto sharp scenery. This converts damage from *Wham!* (p. 6) or *Falls* (**Exploits,** p. 19) to *cutting* for, say, the cinematically sharp sickle of a Soviet-era sculpture, or to *impaling* for something like a wrought-iron fence topped with ominous spikes, or a lightning rod. This is never large-area injury; roll for a random hit location. Such outcomes are always gory, though, so if the body part is an extremity or limb, don't ignore injury in excess of a crippling wound – subtract the *full* amount from HP!

M Is for *Medical*

Gutless killers may stalk vulnerable heroes who are recovering in hospital. Medical facilities offer these murderers and their ostensibly unarmed targets many deadly toys, plus opportunities to misuse *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), inflict *Lacerations* (pp. 21-22), and exploit bad science (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28) and icky stuff (*Yuck,* pp. 40-41). Medics occasionally resort to such violence in the field; wicked doctors who delight in lobotomies and shock therapy, and the organ thieves of urban myth, *often* do.

ER & OR

Many tools go from lifesaving to lethal in untrained hands – or in the hands of those bent on mayhem. Most of these are obviously dangerous, but finding a specific item *stat* requires a *Per*-based **Diagnosis, First Aid, Physician,** or **Surgery** roll.

Bandages and Tourniquets: Cloth or elastic bandage (*not* gauze) can act as a garrote at *no* penalty to **Garrote** skill. So can a ready-made tourniquet.

Bone Saw: There's always one sitting around, even though they're not used all *that* often. An unpowered cutter is a specialized hacksaw, and portable; a powered one has a cord long enough to cross the room in which it's used. Use **Axe/Mace** at -3 or *DX*-based **Surgery** to hit with either in close combat. A manual one inflicts swing-3 cutting, and can parry; a powered one delivers a fixed 2 points cutting, and cannot parry. Crippling damage to a limb amputates it!

Cast: Someone with a limb in a cast can risk whacking people with it! This is a kick or punch at standard posture penalties (e.g., -4 when lying in bed, or -2 when sitting in a wheelchair), plus another -4 for bulkiness and the fact that the body part is healing from a crippling injury, so the *whole body* must be turned to deliver an attack. A hit inflicts +1 damage for hardness, and the body part has DR 2, but the patient must roll vs. HT after each blow; failure means any time spent healing is reset to zero.

Cautery: The wand or "pen" is useful within a yard or maybe two of the main unit. It gets *hot.* Roll vs. **Knife** at -2 or *DX*-based **Surgery** to hit in close combat. Damage is 1d-3 burning when abused as a weapon. Cannot parry.

Defibrillator: This requires a hand on each paddle, and *both* paddles must hit. This involves two DX-4 rolls (the -4 is for Dual-Weapon Attack) in close combat – but users with **Physician** skill may make two unpenalized *DX*-based rolls instead. A successful double hit counts as a jolt from a stun gun (**Heroes,** p. 33), but with a HT-4 roll. It has 20 "shots."

IV Stand: These hefty metal poles are ubiquitous in medical settings. Treat as a clumsy maul: -2 to **Two-Handed Axe/Mace** skill and only swing+1 crushing damage.

Needle: A hypodermic needle stick inflicts 1 point(0.5) impaling. The armor divisor means *any* DR stops it, and skin gets DR 1; the latter prevents injury but not injection. Eyes have DR 0. Large-bore needles, like those intended for tracheotomies, do thrust-3 impaling (maximum 1d-2 imp). A needle attached to a full syringe may inject a follow-up attack (*Pharmacy,* below). Needles use **Knife** skill at -1 in close combat, and cannot parry. Pushing the plunger immediately after a successful stab (rather than slowly) calls for a *DX*-based **Pharmacy, Physician, Poisons,** or **Surgery** roll.

Scalpel: A scalpel is small but *razor-sharp.* Use **Knife** or *DX*-based **Surgery** to hit in close combat. Damage is thrust-1 cutting (maximum 1d-2 cut). A scalpel cannot parry, and is so light that if parried by anything but bare hands, it breaks on 1-3 on 1d.

Surgical Laser: Useful only within two yards of the machinery to which it's attached. Use **Knife** at -2 or *DX*-based **Surgery** to hit at reach C, 1. Damage is 1d-3 tight-beam burning, and *can* be parried (by parrying the wielder's *hand*). Cannot parry.

Pharmacy

While medical drugs can be dangerous if misused, even over-the-top movies rarely depict attackers forcing somebody to swallow a pill or liquid – or putting an anesthesia mask on someone – and *then* waiting for the effects to kick in. It's too silly.

Hypodermics (*Needles,* above), on the other hand, are menacing. In an action scene, a *Per*-based **Pharmacy, Physician,** or **Poisons** roll finds something of use. Roll at full skill if searching among labeled vials or syringes, or at -4 to guess from context (the sign on the door, how a patient is prepped, etc.). The latter is typical when examining loaded syringes, which aren't often labeled.

Success finds something that inflicts *fatigue* or *toxic* damage, as the searcher desires. Roll 1d for the HT penalty to resist (HT-1 to HT-6). A failed HT roll costs the victim 1d FP or HP. Critical success on the search – or **Serendipity** – gives a choice between "hard to resist" (a fixed HT-6 roll, but the usual 1d FP or HP) or "strong" (random HT penalty, but 2d FP or HP).

Any failure on the search – or not rolling – means grabbing drugs at random. Roll 1d: 1-4 finds something with no useful short-term effects, 5 gives something that does 1d FP, 6 yields something that does 1d HP. The resistance penalty for the latter two remains random (roll 1d).

If what's found is a vial, not a filled syringe, it takes *four* Ready maneuvers to prepare in *two* hands: one to grab the vial, one to pick up a syringe, one to insert the syringe into the vial, and one to draw the drug into the syringe. A *DX*-based **Pharmacy, Physician,** or **Poisons** roll shaves off one Ready maneuver, as does a **Fast-Draw (Medical Gear)** roll; success at both reduces the needed time to *two* seconds.

Radiology

Almost the only way to get somebody into an imaging device is through trickery, with a couple of *cinematic* exceptions.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging Scanner: The danger here is the powerful magnet. In action movies, switching this on requires a **Diagnosis** or **Physician** roll; each attempt is a Concentrate maneuver. Once activated, anything ferromagnetic in the room – steel, for instance – is pulled toward the device. Anybody with holstered weapons (guns, knives, etc.), buckles, or other steel firmly attached to them must roll a Quick Contest vs. ST 10 or be dragged a yard toward the machine; anybody *holding* such gear must win a Quick Contest vs. ST 12 or lose the item. Articles like that are never kept *in* the room, but a handful of small metal objects tossed in there (an attack) means everybody is whacked for 1d-1 damage – usually crushing, but possibly *cutting* for something like scalpels!

X-Ray Machine: Someone can be moved in front of an X-ray source – or a "nuclear medicine" device – via *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). If they stay put, or if the attacker has a colleague at the controls, the victim can be irradiated. Take a Concentrate maneuver and make a **Diagnosis** or **Physician** roll to turn on the equipment in a hurry. Realistically, even gross misuse wouldn't accomplish much in combat time, but *Radiation* (pp. B435-436) doesn't suit **GURPS Action.** Action-movie X-rays fry people: 1 HP of *direct injury* per second.

Harry: I'm going to kill you pretty soon.

Samir: I see. How, exactly?

Harry: First I'm going to use you as a human shield. Then I'm going to kill this guard over here with the Patterson trocar on the table. And then I was thinking about breaking your neck.

*– **True Lies** (1994)*

N Is for Nautical

The sea is a harsh mistress – toy with her and you'll end up drowned, broken against the rocks, or eaten by Big Fish (*Zoo*, pp. 41-42). While such forces of nature aren't the focus of this work, cunning or desperate heroes and villains sometimes use the ocean's might as a weapon, maneuvering foes into danger. Deliberately misusing technology intended for work or survival on or near the water is even more common in action stories.

In the Drink

Using *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) to put somebody in the water is a matter of making sure they run out of land before they run out of movement. Around scenic lighthouses and piers – or aboard ship – *Safety First!* (p. 5) applies. On the docks or in the middle of nowhere, railings are unlikely.

Shallow water is bad footing: +1 movement point per yard (hex) to cross; -2 to attack rolls, DX rolls to remain standing, and Acrobatics and Jumping rolls; and -1 on active defense rolls.

Deep water (over a person's head) is the focus of these rules. Anyone pushed, thrown, or tricked into it must roll vs. **Swimming** (p. B354) at once, with doubled encumbrance penalties (making life difficult – and short – for those weighed down with kit) and *without* +3 for entering intentionally. Failure costs 1 FP and means further rolls every five turns (see *Suffocation,* p. B436). The victim can do nothing but struggle until a roll succeeds.

Some wrinkles:

Fatal Waves: Rough water can give up to -5 to Swimming rolls; the GM may choose this or roll 1d-1 for penalty size (0 to -5). *Any* penalty means a risk of being swept off the rocks or overboard by waves. A *Per*-based **Scuba, Survival (Island/Beach),** or **Swimming** roll ashore – or **Boating** or **Seamanship** roll at sea – identifies danger zones to avoid or exploit. Use *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) to put someone there. The GM rolls 1d each turn for those at risk; a roll less than or equal to the penalty size indicates a wave, and the victims must *win* a Quick Contest vs. ST (10 + penalty size) or end up in the water. Near shore, each turn in the water means being pummeled against rocks for thrust-3 crushing for this ST. For instance, if the penalty is -2, a wave with ST 12 strikes on 1-2 on 1d, and anyone it sweeps up is at -2 to Swimming and bashed for 1d-4 crushing per turn.

Slippery Surfaces: Even *without* waves, water can make decks and rocks dangerously slick. Make a Per roll – or the *Per*-based roll noted for *Fatal Waves* (above), if better – to notice such areas, either to avoid or exploit. They cost +1 movement point per yard (hex) to cross, and give -2 to attack rolls, DX *and* ST rolls to stay standing or avoid getting swept into the water, and -1 on active defense rolls.

Icy Waters: In chilly water, apply the effects of the first minute of *Thermal Shock* (p. B430) immediately: Roll vs. HT, with success sapping 1 FP and failure costing FP equal to margin of failure.

Cement Shoes: To attach something *heavy* to somebody (to drown them!), first take a Ready maneuver to grab a line affixed to an anchor, departing submarine, etc. Whipping it around someone from 1-4 yards away is an attack at -4; use **Kusari** for a chain, **Whip** for a rope. To wrap it around someone in close combat, attack using **Knot-Tying**; your foe may dodge or parry. The target can detach this if they have a free hand and take a Ready maneuver to make a DX roll – but if they can't or won't, or fail, or if your allies act first, the weight may drag them to their doom! There are endless options, from a *DX*-based **Seamanship** roll to drop anchor to a ST roll to shove a heavy object off a pier. If this works, the victim is dragged under and makes all associated Swimming rolls at -6 for Heavy or -8 for Extra-Heavy encumbrance; even if they succeed, the DX roll to get free is at -2 underwater.

Getting Out: Someone failing Swimming rolls can only thrash and struggle. Someone who makes a roll can get out if there's a gentle slope, ladder, safety line, or similar – but this *still* occupies five seconds.

Kelly was a seaman, and his life on the water followed a strict routine, which meant observing all the safety rules that had been written in the blood of less careful men.

– Tom Clancy, **Without Remorse**

Shipboard Screw-Ups

Action heroes board cruise ships captured by modern-day pirates, freighters used by smugglers, and yachts owned by wealthy criminals. Seagoing vessels are dangerous places, offering:

- Ladders (*steep* "staircases") and upper decks to fall from. Accounting for pipes and wiring, 4 yards/deck is typical, so being shoved down a ladder means 2d-1 crushing. See *Heights* (p. 6).
- Hatches heavy enough to do +1 damage to those they crush. See *Slam!* (p. 7).
- Cranes that can suspend one-ton tunas (HP 25), hoist lifeboats (HP 50-60), or shift cargo containers (HP 155-165). See *What Goes Up* (p. 17) and *Must Come Down* (pp. 17-18).
- Ways to end up overboard. See *Heights* (again), *Fatal Waves* (p. 23), and *Cement Shoes* above).
- Slick decks. See *Slippery Surfaces* (p. 23).
- Propellers to butcher swimmers. See *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37).

Some additional possibilities:

On the Ropes: Ships have lines for all manner of purposes: attaching anchors (rodes), dragging (tow cables), mooring (docklines), trawling (warp wires), and more. Someone deposited in tangled ropes via *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) is grappled by the torso, and must break free from ST 8 to leave; each attempt requires a Ready maneuver, and if knockback was involved, the DX roll to avoid falling down has an extra -2.

Winched and Lynched: Lines are often attached to powered winches. *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) can hold a foe against the rapidly spooling line to give a nasty case of rope burn; this does thrust crushing damage for the attacker's ST, at +1 to +3 (1d/2, rounded up). An attacker can use **Knot-Tying** or *DX*-based or **Freight Handling** or **Seamanship** in the manhandling attempt to get the victim pulled by the line rather than damaged; a winch has ST comparable to a crane (at least ST 20), which is the ST to use if the victim wants to resist being pulled, tries to break free, or ends up strangled or mangled (Quick Contest between this and the *higher* of the victim's ST or HT, inflicting crushing damage equal to margin of victory).

Net Loss: Fishing vessels may carry *nets*. Being shoved into a net works like *On the Ropes* (above). Dropping a net on someone from an upper deck or crane is worse: The victim requires at least one free hand, and must make three successful DX-4 rolls, to get free. Each attempt is a Ready maneuver, during which time no other actions are possible.

Boom! Sailboats – like yachts – have not just lines but also dangerous booms. If swinging around unsecured, these can be dodged. To use that in combat, spot the boom before your victim does and make sure they don't see it coming and dodge – a dirty trick (p. B405) that involves *winning* a Quick Contest of *IQ*-based **Boating** or **Seamanship** vs. the better of their Per or *Per*-based **Boating** or **Seamanship**. If a boom is secured, a Ready maneuver and **Boating** or *DX*-based **Seamanship** roll can free it to hit someone. A boom does thrust crushing damage based on 1/2 of the vessel's ST/HP if it has one mast, 1/3 if two, or 1/4 if three.

Diving Dooms

Spy and commando stories feature 3D battles underwater, with spearguns, propellers, and maybe sharks. Some related gear is dangerous *out* of the water.

Air Tanks: If the valve (-9 to hit, DR 6, HP 6) is shot off a scuba tank, the cylinder becomes a dangerous projectile – everybody at Close or Short range (***Exploits,*** p. 31) has a 6 or less chance of being hit. Unless dodged, the tank inflicts 3d crushing damage to a random hit location. Shooting the body of the tank (-2 to hit, DR 6, HP 13) can produce similar results, but in cinematic tradition, roll 1d: On 1, it *explodes* for 6d×5 cr ex! **Luck** allows rerolls of random hits or explosions; a use of **Serendipity,** or *two* character points, can specify that a specific foe is hit by a tank, or that the tank blows up.

Diving Chambers: These allow divers to adapt to the depths, and take a while to be dangerous in real life. In action movies, they make people puff up and burst. Use *Doors* (pp. 6-7) to lock someone inside. It then takes a **Scuba** skill roll to operate the machinery – a Ready maneuver. After that, victim(s) must roll vs. HT every turn, at +2 for civilian gear, -2 for naval equipment, or -4 for deep-sea exploration tech. They suffer HP of injury equal to margin of failure. Death means exploding messily.

O Is for Ordnance

GURPS has volumes packed with weapons, including many that go BOOM – but not everything that explodes is designed for combat. Mines (*Resource Extraction,* pp. 28-30) and construction sites (*Worksite,* pp. 37-38) use explosives, too. At the small end of the scale are the poppers and bangers Mom and Dad warned would blow your fingers off. In **GURPS Action,** "designed for combat" is merely a matter of perspective, especially if the squad includes a demolition man!

Snap, Crackle, and Pop

Small, over-the-counter fireworks aren't *that* dangerous and are found everywhere, especially in Chinatown (a common stop for **GURPS Action 3: Furious Fists** heroes). Large pyrotechnics can cause real harm.

Firecracker: Firecrackers start at 1d-5 cr ex and range up to 1d-3 cr ex for huge ones like the "M-80." Crushing damage can be 0 (*Damage Roll,* p. B378) – and as damage is small and falls off rapidly with distance, assess it only if the firecracker *hits* somebody (use DX-3 or **Throwing**). Alternatively, attempt *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) while holding a lit firecracker, at -2 to put it in a hand and hold it closed, -4 to poke it into a nostril or ear. Treat the blast as a contact explosion (maximum damage), not an internal explosion. A firecracker in the ear *will* deafen that ear, giving Hard of Hearing (p. B138), or Deafness (p. B129) if both ears are done; this lasts (20 - HT) minutes, and the victim must roll vs. HT after the fight, with critical failure making the disadvantage permanent.

Lots *of Firecrackers:* If a *string* of firecrackers is lit, treat this as a constant 1d-5 cr ex in a one-yard circle (hex), even if not touching them, for 10 seconds – there isn't *much* chance of harm, but crackers are hopping all over! If a *crate* takes burning damage at the firecracker factory, the result is a full-on 1d crushing explosion every second for *30* seconds.

Roman Candle: This shoots small "stars" (fireballs). The number of projectiles varies widely – the GM may just roll 3d – and they are shot at a fixed rate of one every two seconds, with no way to control this. A tube held in hand can be pointed, allowing attacks at **Guns (Grenade Launcher)** (defaults to DX-4) at -2, with Acc 0, Bulk -1, and a maximum useful range of 10 yards. A hit does 1 point(0.5) burning; treat DR 0 clothing as DR 1, which prevents harm, but exposed skin takes damage. Some models shoot exploding stars; treat this as a linked 1d-5 cr ex. Holding onto the hot tube means the *attacker* suffers 1 point of burning damage to the hand per 10 stars fired.

Bottle Rocket: These use **Guns (Rocket Launcher)** (defaults to DX-4) at -4, with Acc 0, Bulk -1, and a maximum effective range of 20 yards. A hit does 1d-4(0.5) crushing. The little "pop" at the end is a linked 1d-4 cr ex. Critical misses have the usual results *plus* 1 point burning to the attacker's hand.

Timing? Lighting a fuse is a Ready maneuver for someone holding a lighter, smoking a stogie, or otherwise carrying flame. Pyrotechnic fuses are slow and safe by design. To tinker with one so a device goes off when desired requires an **Explosives (Fireworks)** roll when lighting it. Failure – or not rolling – means a delay of 1d seconds. A Roman candle star or bottle rocket isn't impact fused, and shouldn't explode when it hits, but **GURPS Action** ignores this.

Ooh! Ah! Most fireworks used for professional displays are mortars that lob good-sized shells. Hitting anyone requires access to the firing system (i.e., control panel) *and* a victim in the right spot. Use *Per*-based **Artillery (Cannon)** or **Explosives (Fireworks)** to identify a threat area; make a *DX*-based attack roll to shoot. At close range, the usual effect is 1d+1(0.5) cr – but a use of **Serendipity,** or *two* character points, can specify a freak burst that does 2d+1 burn ex, 2d+1 cr ex, or even one linked to the other (the *GM* specifies which, or rolls 1d: 1-3 is burning, 4-5 is crushing, 6 is both).

Flare Flair

Flares are common improvised weapons!

Hand Flare: The classic road flare works like a baton with reach 1. Use **Shortsword** at -2 to hit. Damage is 1d-4 burning. Though solid enough for parrying, it breaks as if cheap (p. B274).

Things That Aren't Supposed to Go Boom

Below are other things that blow up in action movies. These can inflict a lot of damage – when making something cinematically explosive, also allow *Cinematic Explosions* (**Exploits,** p. 38)!

Chemicals (pp. 9-10): See *Effects* (pp. 9-10) to blow up explosive chemicals.

Propane Tanks: A fuel cylinder has DR 6. Pierced by non-crushing damage, it will leak gas. If there's fire within a yard – or the tank is in a fire when damaged – it'll explode! (Using **Serendipity** or spending *two* character points sets off a blast *without* fire.) A camp-stove canister does 4d×2 burn ex, larger ones used by RVs and grills do 6d×5 burn ex, and huge storage tanks do 6d×24 burn ex or more. In all cases, fragmentation is 1d cutting.

Wrecked Vehicles: Unlikely to blow up in reality, these explode readily on film! If a vehicle that consumes flammable fuel is *already* incapacitated – see *Damage and Wipeouts* (**Exploits,** p. 35) for how this usually happens – shooting the fuel tank may detonate it. This is an attack at -3. On a hit, ignore damage but roll vs. the vehicle's HT, at -3 for a burning or explosive attack. Failure means a 6d×(HP/10) crushing explosion, rounded up; e.g., a sports car with ST/HP 57 explodes for 6d×6 cr ex. Fragmentation is 1d cutting.

Signal Flare: Whether shot from a single-use launcher (Acc 0, Bulk -1, -2 to skill) or a flare pistol (Acc 1, Bulk -2, no skill penalty, three seconds to reload), an aerial flare uses **Guns (Grenade Launcher).** At up to 10 yards, it goes *thwack:* 1d-2(0.5) cr for the disposable, 1d-1(0.5) cr for the pistol. Beyond that, to 70 yards for the disposable or 300 yards for the pistol, it has a linked 1d burning attack. Although it burns for a total of 10 seconds, it won't stick into or onto a target unless the shooter uses **Serendipity** or spends *two* character points. It reliably – if cinematically – ignites flammable *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), gasoline, etc. at *any* range, though.

Big Bada-Boom

Construction and mining explosives are stable . . . except in the movies. If violence breaks out in a scene featuring *Blowing Stuff Up* (**Exploits,** pp. 24-25) or *Bomb Disposal* (**Exploits,** p. 28), with charges *already* in place, people who know where the explosives are – roll *Per*-based **Engineer (Combat)** or **Explosives (Demolition or EOD)** if unsure – may shoot at them to detonate them prematurely. Treat this as an attack at -3, using the *lower* of the shooter's **Guns** and *DX*-based **Engineer** or **Explosives.** Roll 1d per hit; on 1, the explosives go off! Using **Serendipity** or spending *two* character points guarantees it.

P Is for *Pipes*

. . . and *plumbing, pump,* and *pressure.* Ordinary buildings (*Architecture,* pp. 6-7) have pipes for water and heating (*Heat,* p. 16). *Medical* (pp. 22-23) and research setups (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28) circulate other substances, notably *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10). *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) sites have all of the above, at extreme temperatures and pressures. Canny action heroes might press opponents against hot or cold pipes, or break open conduits and direct the withering flow at their enemies.

Running Hot and Cold

Most pipes aren't dangerous unless you collide with them: *Wham!* (p. 6) applies, and the GM might assess +1 damage for bouncing off a steel tube – or a cast-iron radiator – rather than the wall behind it. There are exceptions:

Hot: Hot pipes *should* be insulated, but sometimes the ducts exist for heating, other times infrastructure is in disrepair (common in the "abandoned" facilities beloved by villains), and in rare cases the heat is too intense to contain. Treat this as *Hot Stuff* (p. 16): Momentary contact does damage once, *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) can hold someone there for repeated doses. Burning damage per second is 1 point for household hot-water pipes, 1d-3 for industrial hot-water or household steam pipes, 1d-1 for industrial steam pipes, and from 1d (heavy water) to 3d (molten lead, glowing cheery red) for coolant pipes carrying heat away from a reactor. This won't set fires.

Cold: Freezing pipes are rarer, and *usually* insulated as part of refrigeration systems. If bare, they work as hot pipes, doing thermal damage that's treated as burning but incapable of setting fires. Almost all common refrigerant lines would do 1 point, but big industrial ones might manage 1d-3. While exotic cryogenic conduits are *always* insulated, those exposed by previous damage could inflict 1d-1 or 1d.

Perilous Pipelines

The other way pipes enter into action scenes is by being broken and their contents directed at enemies.

Combat Plumbing: Pipes can have any DR and HP, but in a hurry, DR 6, HP 6 works for homes and small vehicles (e.g., cars); DR 8, HP 8 for institutions, light industry, and large vehicles (e.g., warships); and DR 22+, HP 22+ for heavy industry and massive infrastructure. Pipes in disrepair are weaker!

To gauge how tough a pipe is – or to spot unmaintained pipes – make an **Urban Survival** or *Per*-based **Machinist** roll. Any attack that reduces a pipe's HP to 0 breaks it. *Forcing* (**Exploits,** p. 21) works, too; **Forced Entry** gives its usual bonus in the Quick Contest, and grabbing (or being cuffed to . . .) and *hanging* from a pipe overhead or high on the wall gives its own +2.

Hosed! Once a pipe breaks, it can be grabbed in two hands (a Ready maneuver unless hanging from the pipe) and used to hose people down! A loose pipe has enough "give" to be pointed at anyone in front of it, but the more rigid it is (higher DR), the harder. Any **Liquid Projector** skill works, at -1 per DR 3 or fraction thereof; e.g., -2 around the house, -3 at the factory, or -8 to maneuver tubes big enough to crawl in. This is a jet (a melee attack) with reach dependent on pressure; the GM may set this or roll 1d. The target may dodge. If the pipe is hot or cold *and* uninsulated, *you* take the damage in *Running Hot and Cold* (above) each turn – it applies once, but if it's enough to cripple a hand, *both* hands are crippled. Effects of being hosed depend on the contents:

● *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) produce their usual effects. *Poisonous* glop delivers one dose per turn. *Corrosive* substances produce the effects of a splash, typically 1d-3 corrosion, each second. *Flammable* liquids just make the recipient prone to catching fire later – but any flammable stuff ignited by fire anywhere along the stream changes the effects to those of a flamethrower that does 1d to 3d burning (1d/2 *dice,* rounded up), as large-area injury (p. B400), with unsealed DR counting at 1/5 value. *Explosive* liquids are rarely pumped around, but explosive gases (e.g., propane) can be set off later by flames or gunfire, for a crushing or burning explosion of 6d to 6d×4 (or 4d *dice*), after which the pipe behaves like a flamethrower.

● *High-pressure liquids* do knockback; roll 1d to 6d (1d *dice,* if choosing randomly) and treat this as "knockback only" damage (p. B378). *High-pressure gases* aren't likely to do this (they *can* if the GM wants!), but the target suffers from a major distraction on their next turn: -3 to attack and -1 to defend.

● *Hot* and *cold* things do the damage under *Running Hot and Cold* – but as with flaming stuff, this is large-area injury and unsealed DR protects at 1/5 value.

Effects *aren't* exclusive! For instance, exotic reactor coolant might be corrosive, poisonous, high-pressure, and *hot.*

Q Is for Quantum

. . . and *quark, quackery,* and *questionable science.* Other entries describe the more-or-less realistic side of laboratories: Biology suggests *Botanical* (p. 8), *Medical* (pp. 22-23), *Yuck* (pp. 40-41), and/or *Zoo* (pp. 41-42); chemistry, *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10); and physics, *Electricity* (pp. 12-13). *Heat* (p. 16) and – hopefully – safety measures (*Unsafe,* pp. 34-35) abound. Amateurs work in their *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21), while sprawling research facilities border on *Industrial* (pp. 17-18). But far-fetched MacGuffins need something extra!

To answer the inevitable question: Yes, doubtful science and engineering suit action movies – consider *Live Wire* or *Eraser.* They aren't just for bad guys, either; while Bond villains love death rays, killer satellites (repeatedly . . .) and orbital bases, and "atomic" and "nuclear" everything, it's 007 who packs lasers and super-magnets in his wristwatch thanks to an entire branch of MI6 devoted to implausible inventions. Such craziness fits right into a genre whose differences from the realistic technothriller include amendments to the laws of nature that allow a hero to blow up a car with a bullet and then outrun the supersonic blast front!

When using these elements to add danger, keep STEM in mind. This isn't "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics." Not exactly.

Story

Link the treacherous technology or infernal machine to the adventure. It's most often the fulcrum of a villainous plot. The heroes – perhaps the world – may witness its effects early in the story, as a senator explodes, a death ray vaporizes the Eiffel tower, or Los Angeles experiences a tremor, but they can *interact* with it and try to stop the countdown only in the finale, when BAD is at its worse.

Alternatively, put the heroes on the side that controls the MacGuffin. They're trying to protect or recover a double-edged development from criminals bent on exploiting it for profit, spies who want to steal it, or terrorists seeking to use it for, well, *terror.* This customarily comes with a hackneyed "If it were to fall into the wrong hands . . .". While action-movie boffins are smart enough to build, say, a solar-powered heat ray to provide clean energy, they realize its potential as a weapon only after things go wrong.

The difference is that heroes are likely to receive a briefing on or even a crash course in "good guy" tech, but are on their own coping with stuff developed (not just stolen) by bad guys. That, and the BAD – it might be just as *big* in either case, but it's unlikely to affect PCs' rolls to use a friendly MacGuffin.

Techno-Babble

Come up with a few words to describe the technology. This suggests probable effects and applicable skills.

Skills should ideally be *obscure, rarely used* ones the heroes have – especially PCs in geeky supporting roles (hacker, medic, and wire rat). This may explain why the team was assigned the mission! Here are suggestions based on skills found on lenses and templates in **Heroes** (if using **Specialists** or custom characters, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to match keywords to abilities):

Accelerator/Generator: **Electrician, Hazardous Materials (Nuclear).**

Atomic/Nuclear/Radiation: **Explosives (Nuclear Ordnance Disposal), Hazardous Materials (Nuclear), NBC Suit.**

Bioengineered/Genetic: **Diagnosis, Expert Skill (Epidemiology), Hazardous Materials (Biological), NBC Suit.**

Cybernetic/Robotic: **Computer Hacking, Computer Programming, Expert Skill (Computer Security).**

Mind Control: **Brainwashing, Pharmacy (Synthetic).**

Mutant (Animals): **Animal Handling (any), Hazardous Materials (Biological).**

Mutant (Plants): **Hazardous Materials (Biological), Naturalist.**

Secret Formula: **Chemistry, Hazardous Materials (Chemical), NBC Suit, Pharmacy (Synthetic), Poisons.**

Super-Weapon: **Armoury (Heavy Weapons), Artillery (any), Expert Skill (Military Science).**

Don't *dismiss* widely used skills, though! Many a plot turns on schemes employing conventional technologies in unconventional ways. For instance, if evil conspirators are stealing missiles using powerful transmitters, **Electronics Operation (Communications)** and **Electronics Repair (Communications)** are relevant.

Once you have your words, drop them into a one-sentence teaser: "Doctor Yes has developed a mind-control ray – a specialized particle accelerator that induces quantum entanglement between his brain and the victim's!"

Exploitation

Using the chosen skills in chases and fights – rather than in technical sequences better covered by *Hacking* (**Exploits,** p. 13), *Repurposing* (**Exploits,** p. 13), *Sabotage* (**Exploits,** p. 25), *Bomb Disposal* (**Exploits,** p. 28), *WMD* (**Exploits,** p. 29), or *Outbreak!* (**Exploits,** p. 40) – involves two steps:

Look for a Big Red Button: To exploit a MacGuffin, the heroes must know *where it's controlled from* and *where the danger is.* These are separate *Per*-based rolls, possibly against different skills; e.g., **Armoury** or **Artillery** to identify the super-weapon's firing system, but **Expert Skill (Military Science)** to posit where the death ray will hit. There's rarely a penalty – not even BAD – because control panels and charred test areas have a certain sameness about them. Shouting such information to teammates is a free action. But BAD *does* affect the quality of henchman who must be dispatched before trying to use the controls.

Stand Back – I'm Using Science! Most MacGuffins require potential victims to be in a specific danger zone. This is typically achieved using *Delivery* (pp. 4-6), but the GM may reward the players for their success so far by having a few hostiles already in the threat area. Unleashing hell could be a Ready maneuver involving a standard IQ-based roll or an Attack requiring *DX*-based use. If the apparatus isn't something on which the PCs have been briefed, there's a penalty:

Semi-Hard Science

The GM may adapt *Quantum* to real-world technology – say, realistic particle accelerators and the big lasers in experimental fusion reactors. **Current Affairs (Science & Technology)** usually suffices for identification rolls. Abuse is hard, not because these systems are unusual but because they fail safe; if any roll to exploit them fails, the device shuts down for the rest of the scene. Effects won't be as *deadly* but can still be *cinematic;* e.g., that particle accelerator might use the rules for magnetic resonance image scanners (p. 23) at higher effective ST.

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from -2 for an unfamiliar use of known technology, through -4 for what's essentially a new specialty of an existing skill (e.g., using any conventional **Artillery** skill to shoot a beam), to -6 if the skill effectively replaces a basic attribute for default use of some unknown Hard science skill (e.g., using **Electrician** to mess with a particle accelerator or **Explosives (Nuclear Ordnance Disposal)** to play with a reactor). If the penalty is less severe than BAD, the GM is welcome to use BAD instead.

Quick Gadgeteers: Hackers and wire rats with **Quick Gadgeteer** are more adaptable. *If* a hero's advantage covers the skills to use the technology (computer skills for **H4xx0r,** electronics skills for **Solder and Duct Tape**), *ignore* the penalty!

Mayhem

Effects on victims *could* be anything. Some ideas:

Creatures and Robots: Beasts escape their cages – or robots are hacked – and go after their former masters. For abilities, see *Zoo* (pp. 41-42) for animals, *Robots* (**Exploits,** p. 46) for machines. The mad-science kinds are tougher than normal, though, boasting higher ST/HP, defenses, DR, damage, etc.

Death Rays: These customarily kill outright! But as NPCs may turn them on PCs, it's more sporting to assess damage that would slay most ordinary folks (6d works) and hope the villain doesn't double-tap. Alternatively, invoke *The Sound of Inevitability* (p. 36).

Mind Control: Thought-control beams, madness-inducing "therapy" machines, and so on rarely provide direct control – that would be too easy. Instead, they inflict unpleasant conditions from pp. B428-429: agony, daze, hallucinating, paralysis, seizure, etc. Any resistance roll may be against Will rather than HT, and at -4 or worse.

Particle Accelerators and Weird Radiation: Strange radiation should be at least as bad as a microwave oven (p. 21) or an X-ray machine (p. 23): 1 HP of *direct injury* per turn. Most mad science is deadlier, requiring penalized HT rolls (HT-4 or worse) or *contested* HT rolls (against 10 + absolute value of BAD), with margin of failure or loss as injury.

Pathogens and Poisons: Follow the advice in *WMD* (**Exploits,** p. 29) and assume short-term exposure produces a "mild case": The target is reduced to 1 FP and 1 HP (keep current FP or HP, if worse), and has -5 to all success rolls. Any resistance roll is against HT, at -6 or worse.

R Is for *Resource Extraction*

In some action stories, villains go to the source in their pursuit of riches: strip-mining precious metals, running blood-diamond operations, fueling "evil empires" with oil, and so on. In other yarns, heroes receive missions such as recovering offshore platforms – or stolen radioactive ore – from terrorists. Such adventures wouldn't be the same without close encounters with *Tools* (pp. 33-34), oversized *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37), specialized versions of *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) and *Worksite* (pp. 37-38) hazards, and more.

Logging

Adventure stories depict lumberjacks as either honest workers, menaced by corporate scum engaged in takeovers and union-busting . . . or destroyers of the environment, and thus enemies of tree-hugging heroes. Either way, green soon becomes red.

Alongside the specialized dangers below, *Botanical* (p. 8) applies in deep woods, and wood chippers are really *People Shredders* (p. 19).

Putting the "Axe" in "Action"

Not *all* lumberjacks are okay. Some love to fell foes like trees.

Saws: Big crosscut saws aren't useful melee weapons – but if *Wham!* (p. 6) tosses somebody into one that's firmly wedged in a tree, damage becomes *cutting*.

Everything Else: These stats use the terms and notation on pp. B271-274.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Weight	ST	Notes
AXE/MACE (DX-5, Flail-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-3)						
Forestry Hook	sw-1 imp	1	0U	3	10	-2 to hit [1]
Hatchet	sw cut	1	0	2	8	
BRAWLING-2, KARATE-2, or DX-2						
Climbing Spurs (Kick)	thr+1 cut	C, 1	No	4	–	-2 to hit [2]
SPEAR (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Staff-2)						
Peavey	thr+2 imp	1*	0	5	10	-2 to hit [3]
two hands	thr+3 imp	1, 2*	0	–	10†	-2 to hit
TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)						
Broad Axe	sw+3 cut	1, 2*	0U	6	11‡	-3 to hit
Chainsaw	sw+1d cut	1	0U	25	11‡	-2 to hit [4]
Felling Axe	sw+3 cut	1, 2*	0U	5	11†	
Splitting Maul	sw+4 cut	1, 2*	0U	8	12‡	-3 to hit

Notes

[1] May get *stuck* (p. B405). Use these stats for bailing, cargo, and longshoreman's hooks, too.

[2] The -2 to hit *adds* to the -2 for kicking. **Brawling** and **Karate** bonuses increase damage. If you miss, roll vs. DX to avoid falling.

[3] Spear with pivoting hook. Can also grapple at the same reach, but at -5 to skill.

[4] Has armor divisor (0.5) when striking or parrying anything *hard* (*not* flesh, wood, plaster, etc.). Crippling damage to a limb amputates it! If it fails to penetrate DR, roll 1d: on 1-2, nothing happens; on 3-5, it stalls and must be restarted; on 6, the chain snaps, breaking the saw.

Timber!

Lumberjacks also like to fell trees on foes.

If a Tree Falls in the Woods: Chopping or sawing through a tree in combat time Ain't Gonna Happen, but a *small* tree that's mostly cut through can be toppled onto someone. Damage is 1d to 6d crushing (1d *dice*, for a random tree). The shove counts as an attack. Roll vs. ST, at -1 per 1d damage, to set the tree in motion; add +1 or +2 for **Forced Entry** at DX+1 or DX+2, and +4 if making an All-Out Attack. On any success, roll DX or *DX*-based **Survival (Woodlands),** at -1 per full 2d damage, to hit the target. That person may dodge, but at -2; falling trees are notoriously unpredictable.

Log Rolling: Piled-up logs on trucks or ready to be loaded can be loosed if not well-secured. Make a *Per*-based **Freight Handling** roll – at +2 for **Danger Sense** – to spot an exploitable situation. Quickly releasing the menace is an attack at *DX*-based **Freight Handling; Driving (Heavy Wheeled)** works, too, for a log-laden truck. This roll is at -4 for those who aren't familiar with forestry, -2 for those who are. Success means everyone alongside the load (length is typically six to 14 yards, or roll 2d+3), for any distance the GM likes (logs can roll *far*), experiences 1d *dice* – 1d to 6d – of large-area (p. B400) crushing injury.

Pick-Up Sticks: Logs are hoisted onto and off of trucks, so *What Goes Up* (p. 17) and *Must Come Down* (pp. 17-18) are

> *Do not operate unless you have extraordinary cutting needs.*
> *– Warning decal, Husqvarna 3120 XP chainsaw*

relevant. Although there's no such thing as a "typical" log, cranes easily transported into the woods are suited to logs with HP 145 *at most,* setting an upper limit on crane ST and damage from falling objects. But even a wimpy logging crane has ST 80 – be careful out there!

Mining

Mineral extraction is as unsafe as it is lucrative. Bad guys are drawn to the wealth – and to the ease with which henchmen can arrange "accidents" for heroes.

Dig

Getting ore out of the ground is the first step. Don't forget *Big Bada-Boom* (p. 26) for blasting!

Pickaxe: This classic makes a clumsy-but-deadly weapon. Many designs exist, from eight to 15 lbs. in weight, sporting axe, adze, or pick heads – usually two *different* blades.

All use **Two-Handed Axe/Mace** at -3. Treat as a great axe (sw+3 cut) for an edge, a warhammer for a spike (sw+3 imp). Turning it to strike with the other blade is a Ready maneuver.

Mining Machines: At the other end of the scale are machines used to strip away rock and earth wholesale: cutters, excavators, shearers, etc. They might have one huge blade, *several* blades, or drill-like heads with sharp studs; use the rules in *Bloody Fields* (p. 14) for all of these. While there *are* small ones (ST/HP 55, 3d-1 damage) for use in tunnels, there's no upper limit – but 45,000-ton machines with four-story blades are best treated as "Dodge or die!" plot devices. Damage is almost always cutting (well, "shredding"). Most machines would toss a puny human away, not trap them; instead of *He Done Got Chewed Up* (p. 14), assess knockback in a random direction using *full* damage. Finally, these monsters move *very* slowly while operating: Move 1.

Ore Conveyor: Ore is often conveyed on belts. Use *Convey My Deepest Condolences* (p. 17) for someone pressed into such a thing; high-volume mines run belts at Move 6-8 (thrust+3 or thrust+4 crushing). All shift tons of rubble, so they'll *definitely* transport a person! The hazard at the end is a fall, either onto a rock pile (*Falls,* **Exploits,** p. 19) or into an *Ore Crusher* (below).

Dug

Once ore is extracted from the Earth, valuables must be extracted from the ore. As well as the specialized hazards below, barrels of poisonous and/or corrosive *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) are used – leaving *lakes* of the stuff on site.

Rocking Out: Make a straight Per roll to spot piles of ready-to-tumble rocks – they're hard to miss! **Danger Sense** gives +2. If noticed, brusque *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) puts a foe in a place where arrival triggers a mini-rockslide: 1d crushing, as large-area injury (p. B400), and the victim is stuck until they succeed at a ST or **Escape** roll; each attempt takes a Ready maneuver and costs 1 FP.

Ore Crusher: Use *I Got a Bad Feeling About This* (p. 19). Typical ST is unchanged, and there's always a *Killswitch* (p. 17), but damage doesn't stop: Roll a Quick Contest between the machine's ST and the *higher* of the victim's ST or HT, divide the margin of victory by 10, and assess this much large-area injury (p. B400) every turn until rescued or dead; e.g., a HT 12 wheelman in a ST 85 ore crusher loses by 73, and so receives 7 points of crushing damage per second.

Drilling

Oil and natural gas are inherently dangerous! They're flammable *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) – and gas is also explosive. Pipes carrying them add high pressure to the mix; see *Perilous Pipelines* (p. 26). On offshore platforms, *Nautical* (pp. 23-24) horrors abound.

Here are further worries:

Derrick-Do: Casings, collars, drill bits, jars, and pipes are hoisted around, so *What Goes Up* (p. 17) and *Must Come Down* (pp. 17-18) apply. A *typical* 31' length has HP 71, so use that for the ST of the *smallest* crane and the HP of *likely* falling objects.

Pipes Revisited: Stacks of pipes work like stacks of logs; see *Log Rolling,* p. 29. Use *Per*-based **Freight Handling** or **Machinist** – at +2 for **Danger Sense** – to spot the hazard, and a *DX*-based roll against this skill to release it. The attack roll is at -4 for those who aren't familiar with drilling, -2 for those who are. Typical pipe length is 10 yards. Being hit means 1d *dice* – 1d to 6d – of large-area (p. B400) crushing injury.

> ### Cave-In!
>
> In a mine, a *Per*-based **Geology** or **Prospecting** roll (roll vs. Per at -5 for the unskilled) – at +2 for **Danger Sense** – can spot an instability overhead. To exploit this when someone walks under it, or is put there with *Delivery* (pp. 4-6), shoot the ceiling or set off an explosive (remember: **GURPS Action,** not **GURPS Mining**). This loosens rubble that does 3d+3 large-area (p. B400) crushing to the victim, who's stuck until they *win* a Quick Contest of ST or *ST*-based **Escape** against ST equal to the damage roll; each attempt takes one turn and costs 1 FP.

S Is for Sports

Sports are healthy, but the same cannot be said of getting whacked with balls, pucks, and similar projectiles, or the implements used to launch them – or of many other things around the gymnasium, playing field, or arena. Opponents ranging from streetfighters to wealthy equestrians may challenge heroes to not-so-friendly contests. Some action plots *revolve* around athletics, especially in martial-arts flicks and in stories involving illegal betting on anything from sandlot baseball to the Super Bowl.

Batter Up!

Many sports and games – all-American heroes enjoy baseball or football, while posh crime lords prefer golf – involve whacking balls, pucks, and similar defenseless objects. The sticks used for this can *hurt.* Other athletic implements are *meant* for hitting people, or aren't, but perform the task admirably. (When the "sports" are martial arts, use unarmed combat plus the weapons on pp. 20-22 of **Furious Fists.**)

The terms and notation below are explained on pp. B271-274. Someone who knows a **Sports** or **Combat Sport** skill may roll against it *to attack* (only!) with suitable equipment. High-tech sporting gear is often *light,* leading to low required ST; remember that maximum useful ST is three times this.

Sports Gear Table

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Weight	ST	Notes
AXE/MACE (DX-5, Flail-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-3)						
Baseball Bat	sw+1 cr	1	0	2	8	[1]
Cricket Bat	sw+1 cr	1	0	2.5	9	[1]
or	sw+1(0.5) cr	1	0	–	9	[1, 2]
Dumbbell	sw+2 cr	1	0U	3	10	-1 to hit
BROADSWORD (DX-5, Rapier-4, Saber-4, Shortsword-2, or Two-Handed Sword-4)						
Pool Cue	sw cr	1	0	2	9	-1 to hit [1]
or	thr-1 imp	1	0	–	9	-1 to hit
SABER (DX-5, Broadsword-4, Main-Gauche-3, Rapier-3, Shortsword-4, or Smallsword-3)						
Saber (Fencing)	sw-3 cr	1	0F	2	8	
or	thr-1 cr	1	0F	–	8	[3]
SMALLSWORD (DX-5, Main-Gauche-3, Rapier-3, Saber-3, or Shortsword-4)						
Épée	thr-1 cr	1	0F	1.5	5	[3]
Foil	thr-2 cr	C, 1	0F	1	5	[3]
SPEAR (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Staff-2)						
Javelin	thr imp	2, 3*	0U	1.8	6	-1 to hit [4]
two hands	thr+1 imp	2, 3*	0	–	6	-1 to hit
STAFF (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Spear-2)						
Ice-Hockey Stick (Wooden)	sw+1 cr	1, 2	+2	1.5	6†	-1 to hit
or	thr+1 cr	1, 2	+2	–	6†	-1 to hit
TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)						
Barbell	sw+4 cr	1, 2*	0U	12	13‡	-2 to hit
Golf Club, Iron	sw+1 cr	1, 2	0U	1.5	10†	-2 to hit
Golf Club, Putter	sw cr	1, 2	0U	1	10†	-2 to hit
Hammer	sw+5 cr	1, 2*	-2U	16	16‡	-2 to hit [4]
TWO-HANDED SWORD (DX-5 or Broadsword-4)						
Shinai	sw+2(0.5) cr	1	0	1.8	3†	
or	thr+1(0.5)cr	1	0	–	3†	
WHIP (DX-5 or Kusari-3)						
Rat-Tail	sw-5(0.5) cr	1	-2U	0.5	4	[5]

Notes

[1] Often swung *two*-handed: +1 damage.

[2] Using the flat of the bat doubles DR vs. damage *and* doubles damage used to determine knockback (only).

[3] If the button is removed, thrust damage becomes *impaling*.

[4] Track-and-field equipment, not true weapons of that name. Can be thrown; see p. 32.

[5] Towel twisted into a whip; +1 damage if wet. Cannot entangle, but *can* be cracked and *can* make someone drop an item; see p. B406.

Fore!

The projectiles whizzing around fields, arenas, and games room can be dangerous. The ranges below are for stinging uncooperative targets in combat – not benchmarking award-winning feats – while the skills mentioned are often combat skills. Athletes with suitable **Sports** skills may use those to hit (*only*), at no *extra* penalties beyond those for ranged combat. They also get +1 or +2 to ST, for both range and damage, at skill DX+1 or DX+2.

Most of these items are *made* for passing or throwing on the run, and are pebbled, rubberized, or stitched to assist with this. Bulk is -1 unless noted.

Baseball: Hurled with **Throwing:** Damage thr-1 cr, Acc 1, Range ×6/×10. Tossed in the air and slugged with bat, use **Axe/Mace** at -2: Damage thr cr, Acc 0, Range ×8/×12.

Basketball: Hurled with **Throwing:** Damage thr-2(0.5) cr, Acc 0, Range ×1.5/×2.5. *Double* damage for knockback purposes only.

Billiard Ball*: Hurled with **Throwing:** Damage thr-1 cr, Acc 1, Range ×4.5/×9.

Cricket Ball*: Hurled with **Throwing:** Damage thr-1 cr, Acc 1, Range ×4.5/×9. Tossed in the air and batted, use **Axe/Mace** at -2: Damage thr cr, Acc 0, Range ×6/×11.

OTHER FUN AND GAMES

While the most interesting things in athletic settings are improvised weapons, *Climbing* (**Exploits,** pp. 18-19) and *Parkour* (**Exploits,** pp. 19-20) experts might exploit the *environment itself* to engage in *Athletics in Combat* (**Exploits,** p. 37). For instance:

● Balance beams and tightropes allow *Balancing.*
● Icy rinks permit *Skidding* – and those who know **Skating** or **Sports (Ice Hockey)** may use that skill.
● Springboards and trampolines give bonuses to distance when *Jumping.* Springboards give +1 or +2 yards; trampolines, from +2 to +4 yards.
● Vertical ropes enable *Climbing, Rappelling,* and *Swinging.*

Many activities also offer obstacles – boards at the rink, guardrails at the racecourse, hurdles on the track, turnbuckles in the ring – to throw people into or over with *Delivery* (pp. 4-6), likely with an eye to doing harm (*Wham!,* p. 6).

Football: Hurled with **Throwing:** Damage thr-2 cr, Acc 2, Range ×4/×6. The pointy ball is made for this, and kicking is *less* effective; use DX, **Brawling,** or **Karate** at -2 (like any kick): Damage thr-2 cr, Acc 0, Range ×2.5/×3.5.

Golf Ball*: Hurled with **Throwing:** Damage thr-1 cr, Acc 1, Range ×6/×10. Dropped on the ground and hit with club, use **Two-Handed Axe/Mace** at -2: Damage thr cr, Acc 1, Range ×15/×20.

Hockey Puck*: Dense, narrow, and extremely unsafe. Slapped along the ground or ice using a hockey stick, use **Staff** or **Two-Handed Axe/Mace** at -2: Damage thr+1 cr, Acc 1, Range ×4/×6. Steel practice pucks (2 lbs.) are *deadly:* Damage thr+2 cr, Acc 1, Range ×1.5/×2.5, Bulk -2.

Medicine Ball: Massive (14-lb.) but soft ball. Hurled using *two hands* with **Throwing:** Damage thr+1(0.5) cr, Acc 0, Range ×0.4/×0.7, Bulk -8. *Double* damage for knockback purposes only.

Shot: As in "shot put." The *16-lb.* metal or metal-weighted ball is launched with **Throwing:** Damage thr+2 cr, Acc 0, Range ×0.6/×1.2, Bulk -8.

Soccer Ball: Hurled with **Throwing:** Damage thr-2(0.5) cr, Acc 0, Range ×2.5/×3.5. The ball is made to be kicked; use DX, **Brawling,** or **Karate** at -2 (like any kick): Damage thr-1(0.5) cr, Acc 1, Range ×4/×7. These stats also work for dodge balls or kick balls.

* A practical fist load in unarmed combat: +1 to punching damage.

Track and Field

Archaic ranged weapons adapted for sports can still kill. Most come in many different weights – these are just examples.

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Notes
THROWN WEAPON (AXE/MACE) (DX-4)									
Hammer	sw+3 cr	0	×1/×1.5	16	1	T(1)	13†	-8	[1]
THROWN WEAPON (DART) (DX-4 or Throwing-2)									
Lawn Dart	thr imp	1	×2.5/×3.5	1	1	T(1)	6	-2	
THROWN WEAPON (DISC) (DX-4 or Throwing-2)									
Discus	thr+2 cr	2	×4/×6	2	1	T(1)	6	-3	
THROWN WEAPON (SPEAR) (DX-4, Spear Thrower-4, or Thrown Weapon (Harpoon)-2)									
Javelin	thr imp	1	×4/×6	1.8	1	T(1)	6	-8	[2]

Notes

[1] Metal ball on a steel wire with a grip. User may take one or two All-Out Attack maneuvers before throwing not to attack, but to spin and develop momentum. Each turn adds +1 to damage and *doubles* range, to a maximum of sw+5 cr and Range ×4/×6.

[2] *Extremely* long and aerodynamic, with a grip; this greatly assists range but makes it bulky. No barbs.

Warning: Not a toy for use by children. May cause serious or fatal injury. Read instructions carefully. Keep out of reach of children.

– Warning, JARTS™ lawn-dart package

T Is for *Tools*

Everything in a workshop or toolbox is potentially dangerous! Action flicks just *love* to depict menacing goons and resourceful heroes turning tools on one another. Suitable implements are usually found around the *Farm* (pp. 13-14) and *Worksite* (pp. 37-38), at *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) and *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30) facilities, and in *Nautical* (pp. 23-24) environments, and are used to repair *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37). Domestic equipment is described under *Generic* (pp. 15-16) and *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21).

Handcrafted

Any tool *could* maim someone who's unable to fight back; e.g., you could slowly drill their head with a bit and brace, or remove a limb with a hacksaw. *This* table limits itself to equipment that requires only a second or two of contact in melee combat. The terms and notation are explained on pp. B271-274.

Weapon	Damage	Reach	Parry	Weight	ST	Notes
AXE/MACE (DX-5, Flail-4, or Two-Handed Axe/Mace-3)						
Crowbar	sw+2 cr	1	0U	3	10	-1 to hit
Cutting Torch	1d+3(2) burn	1	No	7	10	-2 to hit
Hammer	sw+2 cr	1	0U	3	10	
Mallet	sw+1 cr	1	0U	3	10	
Tire Iron	sw+1 cr	1	0	2	10	-2 to hit
Wrench	sw+2 cr	1	0U	3	10	-2 to hit
BOXING, BRAWLING, KARATE, or DX						
Gimlet	thr-1 imp	C	0	0.25	–	-1 to hit [1]
KNIFE (DX-4, Main-Gauche-3, or Shortsword-3)						
Awl or Punch	thr-1 imp	C	-1	0.25	5	-1 to hit
Box Cutter or Utility Knife	sw-3 cut	C, 1	-1	0.25	5	[2]
Chisel or Screwdriver	thr-2 imp	C	-1	0.25	5	-1 to hit
Heat Gun	1 point burn	C	-1U	2	8	-2 to hit [3]
Pocket Torch	1d-2 burn	C	No	0.25	5	-2 to hit
Power Drill	1d+2(2) pi++	C	-1U	2	8	-2 to hit [3, 4]
Soldering Gun	1d-3 burn	C	-1U	1	6	-2 to hit [2, 3]
Spike or Big Nail	thr-2 imp	C	-1	0.1	4	-1 to hit
SPEAR (DX-5, Polearm-4, or Staff-2)						
Post-Hole Digger	thr+2 cut	1, 2*	0U	12	13†	-4 to hit
TWO-HANDED AXE/MACE (DX-5, Axe/Mace-3, Polearm-4, or Two-Handed Flail-4)						
Bolt Cutters	Spec.	2	-1U	15	13‡	-2 to hit [5, 6]
Circular Saw	sw+3(2) cut	1	-1U	10	11‡	-3 to hit [3, 5]
Grinder or Sander	1 point cor	1	-1U	10	11†	-3 to hit [3, 7]
Plasma Torch	3d+6(2) burn	1	No	35	11†	-2 to hit [8]
Rotary Hammer	2d+2(2) pi++	C	-1U	10	11†	-3 to hit [3]
Sledgehammer	sw+4 cr	1, 2*	0U	15	13‡	-2 to hit

Notes

[1] T-shaped, held with point projecting between knuckles. Skill bonuses increase damage.

[2] Treat as *cheap* (p. B274).

[3] Power cord limits effective reach and can be cut (*Bare Wires,* pp. 12-13).

[4] May get *stuck* (p. B405). Can be freed in one turn without a ST roll by reversing motor.

[5] Crippling damage to limb or extremity amputates it!

[6] Roll to hit hand or foot at the usual -4. This counts as a grapple. If victim fails to break free, an Attack maneuver *next* turn inflicts 8d(2) cutting.
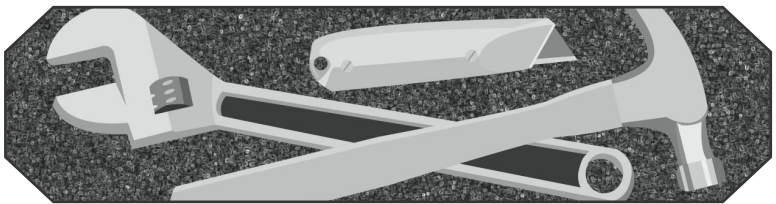
[7] Keep track of total damage; each 5 points reduces DR by 1.

[8] Attached to non-portable tanks or compressor by a hose, limiting effective reach.

Nailed!

Nail guns are perennial cinematic favorites! They're effectively firearms. Terms and notation follow pp. B278-279.

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Notes
GUNS (PISTOL) (DX-4 or most other Guns at -2)										
Nail Gun	2d-1 pi-	0	5/25	8	1	50(3)	11†	-4	2	-4 to hit

Raw Materials

Workshops hold not just tools but also the materials they're used on: boards, planks, posts, rods, etc. Rather than list them all on tables, make a **Scrounging** roll to find an object equivalent to a specific kind of club, mace, or stick. Failure finds nothing like that; success by 0 finds something clumsy (-2 to skill), success by 1-4 finds something less clumsy (-1), and success by 5+ or critical success finds something perfect (no penalty). **Scrounging** can also find a bolt, nut, end cap, or large piece of hardware to pelt at enemies using **Throwing:** Damage thr-2 cr, Acc 0, Range ×0.5/×1, Bulk 0.

Danger: Keep Hands Away

Large tools require potential victims to be brought to them. Most such equipment has a *Killswitch* (p. 17).

Big Saws: Bandsaws, radial arm saws, table saws, and so on require *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). This usually means a single second of damage – though *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) can hold a victim against the blade for longer. While these tools vary in size and purpose, all inflict cutting damage, and most have armor divisor (2). The GM decides if they're small, as in a basement workshop or for fine cabinetry (1d+3 cut); medium, as in a commercial shop or lumber store (3d+2 cut); or large, *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) machinery by another name (5d+2 cut). Crippling damage to a limb or extremity amputates it!

Drill Press: This is a power drill in a handy stand. Use *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) to hold someone in it and bore them to death. Damage is 1d+2(2) pi++ per second.

Lathe: A lathe can become lethal (lathal?) by accident, but usually this involves using *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) to press someone into a turning workpiece. This might do thrust-1 crushing per second for a blunt wooden object (which is essentially punching the victim for the aggressor), or 1d+3 cutting per second for a jagged metal one (which acts like a saw). Also roll 1d each turn. On 1, clothing gets caught in the mechanism and is quickly wound tight; the victim must break free from ST 12, and if they fail, the body part inside the clothing takes crushing damage equal to the margin of loss that turn.

U Is for *Unsafe*

"Unsafe" describes everything in this book, but here we explore the most perverse: Abusing measures intended to *improve* safety. Suitable equipment is common wherever other hazards lurk – particularly in *Industrial* (pp. 17-18), *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30), and *Worksite* (pp. 37-38) settings menaced by *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), *Electricity* (pp. 12-13), *Heat* (p. 16), and *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26). It's also built into *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) and carried by fire engines and ambulances (see also *Medical,* pp. 22-23).

Up to Code

Many buildings – especially public and *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) ones, and labs (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28) – feature safety equipment. An **Urban Survival** or *Per*-based **Hazardous Materials (any)** or **Professional Skill (Firefighter)** roll can locate something useful in a fight. See *Take-Out* (p. 4) for complexities that could delay gleeful misuse.

Emergency Shower: Found where *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) are. If someone is beneath it, yanking the handle is an attack at unmodified DX. Being drenched is a minor distraction (-2 to attack, -1 to defend) for as long as the victim remains under the shower, minimum one turn. That person is now standing in water, ready for *Bathtub Accidents* (p. 13).

Fire Axe: Uses **Two-Handed Axe/Mace** at *no* penalty. Treat as a great axe (sw+3 cut) or warhammer (sw+3 imp); switching takes a Ready maneuver. A typical model weighs 8 lbs.

Fire Blanket: Pulled from its container with a Ready maneuver, this is a serviceable net (p. B411) that can be tossed over somebody up to two yards away. Few modern-day people, even action heroes, have **Net** skill; roll vs. DX-6 to try this, or at full *DX*-based **Professional Skill (Firefighter).** If the victim fails to dodge or parry, they cannot see, move, or act until they make three successful DX rolls; each attempt is a Ready maneuver.

Fire Extinguisher: Built to be easy to aim, these use **Liquid Projector (any)** at +4, or full DX. Discharging one in someone's face (-5 to hit) causes a major distraction on their next turn (-3 to attack, -1 to defend) and means they must roll vs. HT; on any failure, they're blinded for seconds equal to margin of failure. A *large* extinguisher (20 lbs.) has Range 3, Shots 20; a *small* one (8 lbs.), Range 2, Shots 8; a *mini* model (2 lbs.), Range 1, Shots 2.

Fire Hose: Once unrolled (at least two Ready maneuvers, plus another to turn on the water), these work like high-pressure pipes (*Perilous Pipelines,* p. 26). Residential and commercial models do 1d to 3d of "knockback only" damage (p. B378); if choosing at random, that's 1d/2 *dice,* rounded up. Industrial ones inflict 4d to 6d (+3d). Use **Liquid Projector (Water Cannon),** other **Liquid Projector** at -4, or DX-4 to hit.

What Does This Button Do?

Combat around and between vehicles is common, but sometimes the battle is *inside* a ride; see *Passenger Actions* (**Exploits,** p. 33) for an example. Ostensible "safety features" may be weaponized in such circumstances.

Airbag: Using fancy driving to trigger just the passenger airbag without crashing is *exceedingly* cinematic; the driver or pilot must make a vehicle-operation roll (**Driving, Piloting,** etc.) at -6. Reaching under the dash and fooling with wires is equally cinematic; anyone in reach can try a *DX*-based **Mechanic** roll at -6. Either is an Attack maneuver. Success means the relevant airbag deploys, preventing the person it "protects" from doing anything but try to free themselves, which requires a DX-2 roll; each attempt takes one Ready maneuver. Someone who isn't seated and belted in place – like a boarder – also takes 1d+1 crushing damage (roll 1d: 1-4 is torso, 5 is face, 6 is *skull*).

Ejection Seat: Firing someone else's ejection seat is an attack using vehicle-operation skill (**Driving, Piloting,** etc.) or *DX*-based **Mechanic.** The other party may try a *Per*-based roll against such a skill to notice; the customary tiger-striped lever labeled "PULL TO EJECT" gives +5, letting the unskilled try a full Per roll, though things are more subtle in spy cars. Success allows an attempt to parry the attacker's hand. Otherwise, the seat fires and the person in it is *ejected* from the action. In airplanes at altitude, or for "zero-zero" seats built for ejection at ground level, that's a matter of spending the rest of the scene taking a rocket-assisted trip, parachuting to the ground, and getting disentangled; this can hurt, so roll vs. **Parachuting,** with failure or critical failure costing, respectively, 1d or 6d HP. In grounded older aircraft, or a spy car where the operator can deactivate the parachute – or if the ejectee wasn't strapped in – skip straight to the 6d HP.

Seatbelt: If someone is belted in, this can be used to help restrain them. Roll for the initial grapple at -2; the target may defend normally. If the grapple works, this lets a one-handed grapple count as two-handed (+5 to ST vs. attempts to break free), leaving the other hand free for grabbing controls, punching, etc.

You see the gear lever here? Now, if you take the top off, you will find a little red button. Whatever you do, don't touch it.
– Q, in **Goldfinger** *(1964)*

911

Ambulances, fire trucks, and similar rescue vehicles carry gear that's the opposite of safe in malicious hands: Fire axes, extinguishers, and (on pump trucks) hoses that do 4d to 6d of knockback-only damage are described in *Up to Code* (p. 34). There are bolt cutters, crowbars, torches, wrenches, and other *Tools* (pp. 33-34); chainsaws (p. 29); and air tanks (p. 24). And more specialized equipment.

Aerials, Ladders, and Towers: Many fire engines feature hooks, hoses, and platforms on specialized cranes. These use *What Goes Up* (p. 17); to attack, roll against *DX*-based **Professional Skill (Firefighter),** or **Driving (Construction Equipment or Heavy Wheeled)** at -2. The crane's ST is *1/3* of the truck's, rounded down; rigs have ST/HP 68 to 104 (or roll 7d+61), so that's ST 22 to 34, doing 2d to 3d+2 crushing. Some are highly responsive, taking *one* Ready maneuver to reposition between blows! *Must Come Down* (pp. 17-18) isn't relevant – such cranes aren't equipped to drop things.

Go-Bar: A *huge* crowbar (17 lbs.). Uses **Two-Handed Axe/ Mace** at -2 and functions as a maul (sw+4 cr).

Jaws of Death: The so-called "jaws of life" are giant, hydraulically powered "pliers" that open and close with devastating force. If open, *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) can maneuver someone inside. The aggressor or an accomplice can then roll vs. **Forced Entry** or *DX*-based **Professional Skill (Firefighter)** to start them closing; this is an attack. The victim has four turns to escape; otherwise, they suffer 6d×5(2) crushing, which is usually fatal (though so is being held down and stabbed for four turns).

Rescue Axe: Uses **Axe/Mace** at *no* penalty. Treat as an axe (sw+2 cut) or pick (sw+1 imp); switching takes a Ready maneuver. Typical models weigh 4-5 lbs.

Searchlight or Floodlight: Rescue scenes regularly feature huge lamps. Pointing one at someone is a ranged attack using DX, with Acc 12, Range 200 (or more!). Tracking the target is a new attack each turn – but after an Aim maneuver, Acc assists *all* attacks until the victim gets out of sight. While the rolls succeed, the subject is blinded when facing the light; after turning away, getting behind cover, or taking out the light, they must make a HT roll or remain blinded for another 1d seconds.

Turbo Extinguisher: This rare *jet-powered* water cannon does 8d of knockback-only damage with an impressive Range 75/150. Use the rules for fire hoses, but the operator must be at the controls (not holding a hose). This stream is so forceful that out to seven yards, 1/5 of the damage roll, rounded down, applies as crushing damage; e.g., 28 points for knockback also removes 5 HP of skin.

V Is for Vehicles

Being struck by a moving vehicle is *obviously* bad, so this section shines its headlights on other forms of offensive driving – and on how heroes and their rivals can exploit the unsafe environments outside and around vehicles to slaughter one another. For hazards stemming from specialized accessories attached to vehicles (e.g., whirling blades), see the environments where such machinery is found: *Farm* (pp. 13-14), *Junk* (pp. 18-19), *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30), *Unsafe* (pp. 34-35), etc.

Engines of Destruction

What makes vehicles terrifying isn't only their mass, but the impressive motive force needed to propel it. The machinery that generates this is the ultimate origin of collision damage, and *direct* encounters with it can be just as deadly! To learn *how* deadly:

1. On the table below, look up the number of *primary,* external motive systems – jets, propellers (aircraft or marine), rockets, rotors, tracks, etc. – the vehicle has and find the associated multiplier. For this purpose, ignore small attitude, maneuvering, or vernier thrusters, tail rotors, and so on.

Number	1	2	3	4	6	8
Multiplier	1	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.3

2. Apply the multiplier to vehicular ST/HP, dropping fractions, to get *effective* ST.

3. Find thrust damage for effective ST.

4. Assign a damage type: *crushing* for tracks; *cutting* for fans, jet intakes, propellers, rotors, or screws; *burning* for jet nozzles or rockets.

Example: A small jet with ST/HP 84 and two turbofans uses ST 58 to inflict damage. Thrust for ST 58 is 6d+2. Being sucked into a fan therefore does 6d+2 cut; standing right behind the exhaust does 6d+2 burn.

For the secondary thrusters, rotors, etc. ignored above, roll damage, divide by three, and drop fractions; e.g., on a light helicopter (ST/HP 47) with one main rotor that does 5d+1 cut, a roll that would let this rotor inflict 18 points lets the tail rotor do 6.

But how to *use* this?

Victim, Meet Engine: If a vehicle is turning or running its engines in place, or moving so slowly the GM rules it can't ram people for damage, you can still use *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) to throw your enemy under tank treads, shove them into a jet intake, or whatever. They'll take damage as above. *Manhandling* (pp. 4-5) is possible but risky – if you lose the Quick Contest, *you* must roll Dodge or be the one hit!

Engine, Meet Victim: If you're at a vehicle's controls and want to avoid a collision that could damage your ride, or are pivoting slowly and unable to ram, you can turn the vehicle to chop or broil someone outside. This attack is trickier than ramming; roll vs. vehicle-operation skill (**Driving, Piloting,** etc.), at -2 if your victim is in front of you or -5 if you must put them behind you (as with exhaust). On a hit, the victim must dodge or take damage as above.

Engine Inspection: If engine workings are exposed, or if you're fighting in an engine room, next to churning cams and pistons, you can use *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) to put someone in the moving mechanism. Damage is based on ST/HP adjusted for the number of *motors,* using the same multipliers used for external motive systems. It's usually crushing – but no part of a *rocket* does anything but burning damage! For contact with components of a power plant other than moving parts, use *Hot Stuff* (p. 16) and *Running Hot and Cold* (p. 26); e.g., any motor casing might do 1d-3 to 1d-1 burning, and nuclear reactors can manage 3d burning.

One-Way Trip: Jet intakes, and marine propellers in water, generate powerful suction, while victims of reciprocating machinery may get wrapped around shafts. In these cases, those who can't break free from the ST the machine uses to inflict damage take damage *every turn* until it's stopped – whether by destroying it or making a vehicle control roll from the bridge, cockpit, or control room. Some vehicles also have a *Killswitch* (p. 17).

GREATEST HITS

Being run down is the #1 way to get maimed by a vehicle. In **GURPS Action,** use *Ram* (**Exploits,** p. 33): Roll against vehicle-operation skill (**Driving, Piloting,** etc.) to hit. The target may dodge. A hit does thrust crushing damage based on vehicular ST/HP.

This simpler replacement for the detailed **Basic Set** collision rules (pp. B430-432) is reasonable when vehicles moving at typical urban speeds (25-30 mph, or Move 12-15) strike pedestrians failing to escape at Move 1-7. For instance, an SUV with ST/HP 68, closing at Move 5-14, does 3d to 10d (average 23 damage) using the full rules, a flat 8d-1 (average 27) under the simple ones; for a heavy motorcycle with ST/HP 36, the comparison is 2d to 5d (average 12) versus 4d-1 (average 13). Close enough – although **Action** exaggerates low-speed hits and tones down high-speed ones to make vehicles dramatically dangerous yet keep heroes alive.

Playing in Traffic: Delivery (pp. 4-6) can push or trick someone into traffic, onto train tracks, etc. just as a speeding vehicle arrives. A player can use **Serendipity** or spend one character point for a Lucky Break to ensure there's a vehicle – or to fall between tracks or wheels, avoiding all damage! Vehicles moving at a good clip should be deadlier, so calculate damage as in *Wreck* (**Exploits,** p. 35): Add the speed bonus to *each die.* That SUV with Top Speed 50 (about 100 mph) and speed bonus +8 thus does 8d+63, which is equivalent to 26d, or damage for a little over 75 mph in the detailed system.

The Sound of Inevitability

At the damage levels of high-speed hits – or even low-speed ones from semis (11d), APCs (12d), locomotives (16d), or tanks (18d), never mind *ships* (6d×12 and up) – the difference between systems is that between "dead" and "deader." Not everybody has **Serendipity,** or points for Lucky Breaks. That's fine when it's NPCs getting squashed, but when it's heroes, allow a Dodge roll even if "Nobody could avoid that!", and permit **Luck** for the attempt.

If all else fails, consider having the hero be pushed or dragged, but not killed. They miss *this* scene. They awaken in another ZIP Code at -1×HP. They spend the remainder of this adventure phoning in from hospital and enjoying *Medical* (pp. 22-23) mishaps. *But they don't die.*

This advice holds whenever *anything* that does 6d×2 or more damage – blast furnace, explosion, etc. – would insta-kill a PC.

Driving Dangerously

Vehicle crew have many combat options:

- Mangling people in motors. See *Engines of Destruction* (p. 36).
- Misusing safety gear. See *What Does This Button Do?* (p. 35).
- Running people down. See *Ram* (**Exploits,** p. 33) and *Greatest Hits* (p. 26).
- Slamming body parts in doors, which do +1 damage if they're heavy enough to seal against water or pressure, as on ships and aircraft. See *Slam!* (p. 7).
- Using dangerous attachments; e.g., *Bloody Fields* (p. 14) and *Mining Machines* (p. 30).

Here's another possibility:

Buckle Up! A vehicle's operator can abruptly alter speed or attitude in order to harm hostile passengers. Make a roll against vehicle-operation skill (**Driving, Piloting,** etc.), at a bonus equal to Handling (Hnd) and a penalty up to one equal in size to the vehicle's speed bonus (**Exploits,** p. 34), chosen by the operator; e.g., for a sports car with Top Speed 75 and speed bonus +9, the driver may choose from -1 to -9. Critical failure means a wreck (**Exploits,** p. 35); failure means the stunt doesn't work and the operator must use their next turn to regain control (a Move maneuver, allowing no other action), or suffer a wreck on that turn instead. Any success does 1d damage plus a bonus equal in size to the chosen penalty (so 1d+1 to 1d+9 for that sports car). *Everybody* aboard suffers this, but those properly belted in get DR 5 and those braced for it (like the operator) get extra DR equal to half their ST, rounded down; no other DR counts.

Pilot: Excuse me, Captain. This may seem silly, but can you fly?

Harry Callahan: Nope. Never had a lesson.

*– **Magnum Force** (1973)*

W Is for Worksite

Action-movie villains gravitate to the construction and freight-handling businesses. This could be a testament to the days of organized crime controlling labor unions, a nod to earlier times when crooked bosses *broke up* unions, or because cargo containers and concrete simplify corpse disposal. It helps that worksites are unsafe places, filled with dangerous *Architecture* (pp. 6-7), *Tools* (pp. 33-34), *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37), and more. *Junk* (pp. 18-19) and *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30) describe related risks.

Movement

Simply moving through a worksite can be hazardous to your health.

High Steel: Falls (**Exploits,** p. 19) are a constant risk when moving around buildings under construction or open-framed cranes at loading areas. Roll for *Balancing* (**Exploits,** p. 19) *at the start of every turn;* action heroes use **Acrobatics** but workers may substitute *DX*-based **Professional Skills.** Either have -2 for a narrow, rigid beam. This -2 modifies all other rolls to avoid falling, too, such as for knockback. Failing any such roll means falling as described in *Heights* (p. 6), with the DX-based "saving roll" but *without* the backup of *Safety First!* (p. 5).

Tricky Chuting: Delivery (pp. 4-6) into a construction chute means falling, but friction against the sides halves damage. A successful DX or **Acrobatics** roll to brake with hands and feet means *no* damage. Damage is crushing, and never reduced by the hard materials on typical worksites.

Work in Progress: Construction sites feature temporary and unfinished work, such as brick walls with unset mortar. *Questionable Construction* (p. 7) applies. A *Per*-based roll against a fitting trade skill (**Carpentry** for wood, **Masonry** for stone, **Machinist** for steel, etc.) can spot the telltale signs.

Machinery

Much of the gear used for heavy labor resembles *Industrial* (p. 17) equipment; e.g., conveyors for cargo or bags of cement use *Convey My Deepest Condolences* (p. 17). Construction sites also feature shovels (p. 14), pickaxes (pp. 29-30), and everything in *Tools* (pp. 33-34), notably nail guns, post-hole diggers, sledgehammers, torches, and power tools.

There are distinctions, however, and new threats. Anything powered has a *Killswitch* (p. 17).

Deconstruction: Wrecking balls use *What Goes Up* (p. 17) with effective ST/HP 80 to 183 (or roll 5d×4+60). Swung along an arc totally clear of obstacles, they'll shove even the strongest person aside (a Quick Contest of ST, if you insist) rather than do damage – small consolation if pushed to your death. Dropped vertically, or used to ram someone into an obstacle, they do harm as usual. For demolition with explosives, see *Big Bada-Boom* (p. 26).

Dozed, Dug, and Forked: Pushing people into the blades of bulldozers, excavators, forklifts, loaders, etc. uses *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). *Attacking* someone requires a roll against **Driving (Construction Equipment);** *DX*-based **Freight Handling** also works, for machines specifically designed for loading and unloading. Results depend on the vehicle. Hitting someone with a machine that happens to have a blade in front is a *Ram* (**Exploits,** p. 33) – but attacking at -2 might let a bulldozer do cutting damage or a forklift inflict impaling damage. Anything with an "arm" inflicts thrust crushing damage for *half* its ST/HP. All these machines vary widely in size; a warehouse mini-forklift could have ST/HP 62; a monstrous Cat D11 dozer has ST/HP 245!

Heavy Lifting: Steel beams, shipping containers, prefabricated concrete sections, etc. are *massive. What Goes Up* (pp. 17-18) and *Must Come Down* (pp. 17-18) apply. A *wimpy* crane would use 70 for its ST when hitting people and for the HP of falling objects, making it utterly lethal.

Jackhammer: While "portable" in the sense that a strong person can maneuver it with great effort, this is hefty, bulky, and tethered by a heavy hose or power cable. It takes ST 21 to *wield* one in combat, and **Two-Handed Axe/Mace** would be at -8 against a moving foe! However, if someone is lying down within one yard (its hex or any adjacent hex on a battle map), it can be angled to attack; this requires only ST 15, is at just -4 to hit (plus -1 per missing ST point, as usual), and does 7d(2) pi++.

Stand Clear of Door: Big gates onto the site, and huge warehouse doors, are metallic, motorized, and *heavy* – perhaps only DR 5, but with HP 35-37 if they block traffic in one direction, or HP 44-46 if they control two lanes (or access for huge machines). They do damage via the Quick Contest in *Slam!* (p. 7).

> *I promise I will never even **think** about going up in a tall building again. Oh, God. Please don't let me die.*
>
> *– McClane, in **Die Hard** (1988)*

Materials

Heavy materials themselves can pose a danger. They can tumble from heights (*Must Come Down,* pp. 17-18) and more.

Big Stacks: Over-tall or poorly secured heaps of cement bags, cinderblocks, planks, and so forth can be toppled. A *Per*-based **Freight Handling** roll – at +2 for **Danger Sense** – spots a promising hazard. Any action that dumps the cargo on someone is an attack at *DX*-based **Freight Handling;** for loads on

trucks, **Driving (Heavy Wheeled)** also works. Those without construction skills roll at -4, those with applicable training are at only -2. Success means everyone alongside suffers 1d *dice* – 1d to 6d – of large-area (p. B400) crushing injury. Area of affect is variable: A teetering tower of standard pallets would spill along a line a yard wide but many yards long; a giant spool of wire might roll even farther; and anything long and cylindrical works like logs (p. 29) or pipes (p. 26).

Cement: Realistic cement mixers don't pour fast enough to affect combat. In action flicks, using *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) to put someone under the spout – or an attack using **Driving (Construction Equipment)** from the controls of such a truck – is a common trick. The victim becomes stuck, unable to act until they can make a ST or *ST*-based **Escape** roll. Each attempt takes one turn and costs 1 FP – and *if the cement keeps pouring,* repeated attempts have a cumulative -1. A victim who's *lying down* can be buried; they roll at -4 to escape, and three successive failures means *Suffocation* (p. B436) starts. Use the same rules if someone is shoved into wet cement.

Rebar: Steel reinforcing bars pose an impalement risk, which is why they're capped on *safe* sites. Action movies scoff at such cautiousness! *He Got the Point* (p. 22) applies. Damage from falling onto or being shoved into the protruding rods is impaling, but at -1 per die because the ends are *somewhat* blunt.

Rubble: The foot of a construction chute conveying waste materials from upper stories isn't a safe place. If *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) puts someone there at a busy worksite, random junk inflicts 1/4 of the falling damage (***Exploits,*** p. 19) for the chute's height, rounded down. Assume 3.5 yards per story; e.g., alongside a 20-story tower, that's 70 yards, so falling damage is 7d+2 cr and rubble does 1/4 of that per turn.

What a Pane: Windows use *Hard Crack* (p. 21) whether or not they're installed – but glass that *isn't* in a frame can strike side-on, acting like a guillotine. Use *Heavy Lifting* (above) or *Big Stacks* (above) to unload glass on someone. The difference is that the hit does *cutting* damage.

X MARKS THE SPOT

X isn't *for* anything, but customarily indicates a key location – in this case, where a deadly MacGuffin (e.g., killer satellite) will strike. The challenge? Luring bad guys into danger at the right moment. When the heroes engage in penny-ante trickery, see *Devious* (pp. 10-11) or a specific threat (e.g., rotten floors invoke *Architecture,* pp. 6-7); when they can control when and where the MacGuffin strikes, use *Quantum* (pp. 27-28). X is the "nuclear option."

Fifty Tons of Weapons-Grade Plot Devicium

Nothing is as satisfying as turning the tables on the Evil Mastermind and putting the bad guys in the crosshairs of something big, inevitable, and deadly (hereafter the "Plot Device") – something more final than the onrushing trains, teetering towers of pallets, and pools of toxic waste that Perception-based rolls reveal. We're talking about dangers *the*

heroes are aware of ahead of time and *their rivals* can't simply notice and duck. This requires two things:

1. *Massive, unobvious danger.* Anything from a time bomb hidden in a trashcan to an orbital strike. The heroes *can* set it up using such skills as **Explosives** or **Traps,** or "call it in" by *Pulling Rank* (**Heroes,** pp. 24-25). Or the Plot Device might be a neutral or enemy scheme the GM provides. What it *can't* be is the result of invoking Serendipity or *Player Guidance* (p. B347), however many character points the players offer to pay.

2. *Knowledge of what the Plot Device is, and where and when it will strike.* If the heroes set it up, they know! Otherwise, they must find out in order to exploit it, using *Gathering Intelligence* (**Exploits,** pp. 11-14), *Social Engineering* (**Exploits,** pp. 15-17), or *Grabbing the Goods* (**Exploits,** pp. 23-24), depending on whether it's a question of snooping, asking, or stealing files. Discovering *what, where,* and *when* could be three separate "side quests."

Hybrids are possible. For instance, if the heroes learn of a killer satellite and where its controls are, they might sneak in and adjust where and when it strikes – that's partly their setup, partly the enemy's.

> *The satellite is at present over . . . Kansas. Well, if we destroy Kansas the world may not hear about it for years. Perhaps New York?*
> *– Blofeld, in **Diamonds Are Forever** (1971)*

You Are Cordially Invited to Die

Exploiting the Plot Device isn't just a question of "Stand under this wrecking ball or next to this propane tank." That kind of thing gives would-be victims Sense rolls to *see* the threat – or at least hear the crane or hissing pipes – and Dodge rolls to dive for cover. Use the rules for another kind of hazard.

It isn't a question of *Delivery* (pp. 4-6), either. Judo throws allow defenses; knockback, overshooting, and trickery are unpredictable; and while manhandling can drag foes into danger, you don't want to be in close combat when X Marks the Spot. At any rate, these tricks work on just *one* bad guy at a time – what's wrong with a bullet?

If the heroes have set a trap – or know where danger is scheduled to strike from over the horizon, 15,000 feet, or orbit – they'll want to ensure the bad guys are there in force. This means ensuring the ultimate (or at least penultimate) showdown takes place in the right location. There are several ways to do this.

Accidentally on Purpose

The PCs can discuss their next move in a place known to be bugged or "have ears," let a thief steal a briefcase containing misleading papers, or talk in front of a prisoner and then permit them to escape. Such ruses require previous intelligence gathering or social engineering to learn where their rivals are operating, or *Live Capture* (**Exploits,** p. 24) for the prisoner.

Because the heroes are *helping* the enemy learn their (apparent!) plans, the bad guys' rolls against Electronics Operation, Filch, Lockpicking, Observation, etc. are at +4 and never contested. If there's *any* doubt – say, the prisoner is an idiot – the squad can grant a further +1 to +6 to their rivals' rolls, though this is risky.

Whether the forces of villainy take the bait boils down to a Quick Contest of the PCs' disinformation skill vs. the opposition's effective Intelligence Analysis skill, which is the better of the Big Boss' actual skill or 10 + absolute value of BAD. The heroes' skill is usually **Acting** (to deliver a canned speech in a bugged room or in front of a prisoner) or **Writing** (for misleading documents). The bad guys get a bonus equal to any deliberate bonus given earlier ("Too easy – it's a trap."), and *another* +5 if the heroes are trying to turn the villains' Plot Device against them. This +5 *doesn't* apply when the squad learns of the Plot Device and secretly changes when and where it will strike!

Hold off rolling until just before the fight is supposed to begin, and roll *in secret*. If the PCs *win*, the bad guys arrive as desired. If they *tie*, nobody shows up. If the heroes *lose*, they're the ones set up – they're ambushed driving to the showdown, the battlefield is booby trapped, or, if the enemy controls the Plot Device, it's primed to fry the PCs.

Everybody Knows You've Been Discreet

The heroes can get word out in less-targeted ways. The two most likely are:

I Heard it Through the Grapevine: If the enemy has street connections, getting word out might involve talking to the right, wrong people. Use *Accidentally on Purpose*, but the Quick Contest is between the heroes' and villains' **Streetwise** skills. Again, use 10 + absolute value of BAD for the bad guys, if better – and again, the enemy gets +5 if the PCs are trying to hoist them with their own petard. The good guys can claim bonuses for *Bribery* (**Exploits,** p. 15) *if* they cough up the cash to bribe the Big Boss (they have to push the message all the way to the top). This method can be less work and more reliable than the previous one . . . except that on a tie, instead of nothing happening, law enforcers or unrelated criminals take an interest and show up to cause trouble. Never trust crooks.

Fake News: If the heroes employ news or social media, use *Accidentally on Purpose*, but the Quick Contest is now between the heroes' **Propaganda** and the villains' effective Intelligence Analysis. The bad guys still get +5 against being tricked into facing their own Plot Device. **Computer Operation** (for social media), **Electronics Operation (Media)** (for doctored images or video), **Public Speaking** (for speeches), and **Writing** (for written articles) are all complementary skills for the PCs. This, too, can be easier, but a tie means innocent bystanders – bloggers, journalists, Anti-Death Satellite flash mob, etc. – turn up to complicate the heroes' lives, while on a *loss*, such people are there to get slaughtered when the good guys walk into an ambush.

Throw Down

The heroes can straight-up challenge the bad guys! This only works if the opposition is known rather than a shadowy conspiracy. That knowledge usually involves yet more intelligence gathering and social engineering.

Again, use *Accidentally on Purpose*, but now the Quick Contest between the heroes' and villains' **Tactics** skills, as each side *expects* a trap and is calculating whether it can outmaneuver the other. Once more, use 10 + absolute value of BAD for the bad guys, where better – but now they get +*10* if the PCs are trying to turn their own Plot Device against them, because they don't merely expect a trap but *have* one, one they probably want to use themselves!

However, give the bad guys -1 per humiliation they've suffered at the heroes' hands on this adventure, to a maximum of -10. The GM decides what counts. Beating up a few thugs doesn't rate; defeating the evil karate master in his own dojo does. Just sneaking into the crime lord's villa doesn't qualify; taking pictures of his tasteless wardrobe and posting them online does. And so on.

If the heroes *win*, they get their way. If they *tie* or *lose*, the bad guys set them up.

Make Some Noise

Most risky is simply going into the danger zone and doing something the enemy can't miss. The heroes might stealthily set a bomb, or radio for an airstrike, and then shoot into the air – or even call in that airstrike with visible smoke or flares. If the villains control the Plot Device, the PCs may need to do little more than deliberately fail **Stealth** rolls.

Whether the bad guys fall for this is another matter. If the enemies available to notice the commotion *don't* know the risk – because the Big Boss didn't tell them about the Plot Device, or because it's the heroes' setup – they'll turn up. That may seem generous, but it isn't. First, the squad has *given up* tactical surprise. Second, roll 3d; on 3 + absolute value of BAD or less (e.g., 9 or less at -6), some mook radios or phones headquarters, allowing the Big Boss to send reinforcements or activate the Plot Device at the cost of a few goons. Finally, even if the Big Boss is present, they'll hang safely back and let their thugs do the fighting.

If the enemies in the area *do* know about the Plot Device, because it's theirs, they also know the heroes are in the target area. Unless they have a pressing reason not to (perhaps they have just one shot and need it to level New York), they'll use the Plot Device. When in doubt, roll against 9 + absolute value of BAD (e.g., 15 or less at -6).

This is a *bad idea* except when the heroes have set a trap and want to reduce the size of the mook legions!

Spring the Trap

This is the easiest part. If the bad guys fall for the setup, roll 1d+1. That's how many turns of combat the PCs must fight before the Plot Device wins the battle for them. No one can use Luck to reroll this – it's too large-scale. But anyone can use a variant form of *Player Guidance* (p. B347) to reduce the time at the cost of one character point per turn.

Whether the Plot Device endangers the heroes is up to the players. They can venture as close to danger as they wish, ensuring the mooks stay closer, or hang back and snipe, which means their fish might not stay in the barrel.

Y IS FOR *YUCK*

Vats and *Pipes* (p. 26) are sometimes filled not with dangers like *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), but with something *disgusting*. Someone might drown in gunk if they can't swim, or fall ill after the closing credits, but that isn't the objective. Gross-out "hazards" let the heroes show their quality by embarrassing but not killing less-villainous foes – or by not seeking murderous vengeance when *they* get slimed. They're also fitting fates for comic-relief characters on both sides!

Damaging Dignity

Exploitable foulness tends to come in three forms:

Vile Vials: Vials, bottles, and barrels of nasty stuff can be chucked and burst to make life disgusting. Such attacks use the rules in *Quantity and Form* (p. 9) – it's the *effects* that differ. This is typical of such small pleasures as jars of weapons-grade kimchi, jugs of sour milk, and urine samples – oh, and rotten eggs (treat as hurled vials).

Putrid Pipelines: If something gross is being pumped around, handle the attack using *Perilous Pipelines* (p. 26).

Biohazard?

Action-movie "reality" rarely has exposure to hospital specimens or untreated sewage infect people. The grittiest stories *might* veer in that direction, but nobody falls ill from *Staphylococcus aureus* (or whatever) on the timescale of a short combat or even a Bullitt-caliber chase. If the GM wants humiliated heroes or recurring villains to suffer, use a "generic" illness equal to a mild flu (p. B443): a 24-hour delay, followed by six HT-2 rolls at 12-hour intervals to avoid 1 point of toxic damage per cycle. Save the lethal plagues for *WMD* (*Exploits,* p. 29) and *Outbreak!* (*Exploits,* p. 40) scenarios.

Sewage is rarely at dangerous temperatures or pressures, but the same cannot be said of strong-smelling food being cooking or fermented in industrial quantities, which may add injury to insult.

Rancid Reservoirs: Basins of stink around the *Farm* (pp. 13-14), ponds and reservoirs at sewage-treatment facilities, tanks at food-producing factories (which sometimes add the hazards of *Heat,* p. 16), and not-too-toxic *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) and *Mining* (pp. 29-30) effluent. Making victims take a swim uses *Delivery* (pp. 4-6).

A spewing pipe or festering reservoir of unpleasantness requires no roll to detect; a small vial or rotten egg might. If someone is searching for disgusting stuff, make a *Per*-based roll against a skill suitable to the environment; e.g., **Housekeeping** in a kitchen or **Hazardous Materials (Biological)** in a hospital. **Acute Taste and Smell** bonuses apply.

Revolting Results

In ascending order by seriousness, effects of exposure are:

Humiliation: Victims with disadvantages triggered by disgusting things (particularly Mysophobia and Squeamish) or insults (Bad Temper, Berserk, Selfish, etc.) must attempt an immediate self-control roll. They may have up to -5; optionally, roll 1d-1 for the size of the penalty (0 to -5). Anyone trying to resist *Banter* (**Exploits,** p. 39) targeting their predicament resists at the same penalty, even if they have no associated mental problems (e.g., covering a mook with sewage makes it easier to draw their aggression *or* intimidate them into slinking off); this lasts for the rest of the scene. Suitable disadvantages without self-control rolls grow one step more severe; for instance, Shyness worsens from Mild to Severe while reeking of fish guts. Penalties and severity increases *aren't* cumulative with repeated exposures.

suffocation even if the victim doesn't drown. Septic-tank gases are the classic example. For these, *Suffocation* (p. B436) sets in immediately even the hazard is too shallow for drowning. To end this effect, get out! That takes one turn if standing in gunk, a few turns if lying down and forced to Change Posture first, or five seconds if swimming. Don't combine this FP loss with that for drowning in deep goo; suffocation costs a flat 1 FP per second and the Swimming rolls merely determine how long it takes to escape.

Sickening Suggestions

Anybody who remembers childhood should have *no* problem dreaming up gross-outs. Here are a few starters, which often overlap.

Compost: Organic matter – usually *Botanical* (p. 8) or *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21) waste – left to rot and liquefy for easier disposal or use as fertilizer.

Fermented Food: Fermentation yields many stinky foods (below), but also delicacies not famed for their stench in their polished form. Factories hold quantities large enough to drown in. Beer and wine are among the most famous examples; the production process reeks, and alcohol fumes above the colossal vats can make victims *tipsy* (p. B428) on a failed HT roll, *drunk* on failure by 5+.

Fish: Things like fish guts – found in *Nautical* (pp. 23-24) settings – and the pureed whole fish used to make processed foods are widely considered disagreeable.

Hospital Specimens: If it comes out of the human body, someone at a *Medical* (pp. 22-23) facility wants samples for testing. Even the least-malodorous excretions tend to squick people enough to cause humiliation.

Manure: Unlike human waste, the animal kind is often kept around the *Farm* (pp. 13-14) for use as fertilizer. Piles might not pose a drowning risk, but the GM may require a ST roll to break free if shoved in.

Sewage: From toilet to treatment facility, this isn't pleasant. Often pumped through *Pipes* (p. 26) – and large tanks have asphyxiating gases sitting on top.

Spoiled Food: Rancid meat, rotten eggs, sour milk, moldy potatoes . . . all excellent for pelting at enemies, if only to humiliate them. Sniff around the *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21) for it.

Stagnant Water: Standing water can grow foul with bacteria, bugs, and decomposing organic matter. Like sewage, it can have dangerous gas atop it.

Stinky Food: Surströmming, kimchi, particularly fragrant cheese, etc. technically isn't spoiled (above), but might as well be.

Affliction: Along with humiliation, some revolting substances cause mild *Afflictions* (pp. B428-429) on a failed HT roll. Roll just once per fight, on first exposure. Ordinary awfulness is resisted at +1 to +5, while truly vile stuff gives from -1 to -5; to choose at random, roll 2d-7. The classic result of failure is *nauseated* for minutes equal to margin of failure, with failure by 5+ or critical failure causing *retching*. Fetid fumes might leave someone *coughing* instead.

Drowning: Those pushed into liquids and unable to touch bottom must roll against **Swimming** (p. B354), with doubled encumbrance penalties and *without* +3 for entering intentionally. Factories and treatment plants often use agitators, centrifuges, or pumps to mix, separate, or move things around, giving up to -5 more (or roll 1d-1 for penalty size). If the goo triggers disadvantages or afflictions, roll to resist those first; they can *further* penalize Swimming (e.g., being nauseated gives -2). Failure costs 1 FP and means further rolls every five turns (see *Suffocation*, p. B436); the victim can do nothing but struggle until a roll succeeds. Success lets the swimmer clamber out, which takes five seconds.

Asphyxiation: On top of all this, reeking ponds and tanks – not mere vials or pipes – may sometimes cause

Z IS FOR ZOO

Turning dangerous animals loose is something bad guys do more often than good guys – but when scumbags have treated critters poorly for the story's duration, it's a fitting fate to end up caged or swimming with their long-suffering victims. And in action tales set in the wilderness, canny jungle commandos and similar outdoorsy heroes often exploit nature, red in tooth and claw, for a kill both more and less subtle than a hail of bullets.

How Dangerous?

Descriptions of any significant number of dangerous animals would fill a book; that's appropriate for **GURPS Bestiary** but not **GURPS Action.** The goal here *isn't* to provide full stats for animals – it's to cover what happens to those shoved into jaws that bite and claws that catch. The table below gives strictly basic information for the usual suspects.

Creature: The general animal type. In some cases, this is broad and vague!

ST/HP: How strong the animal is, which matters most if it grabs you. A range means the entry covers everything from small to huge species. If defeating the animal becomes important (say, to free someone from its jaws), assume it gives up and goes away after sustaining this much total injury.

Damage: Simplified damage: thrust-1 (like a claw or bite), at +1 per die for predators, because they have Brawling.

Creature	ST/HP	Damage	Notes
Alligator	19	2d cut	[1, 2]
Bear	14-22	1d to 2d+1 cr *or* cut	[1]
Bull	27	3d-2 cr *or* imp	[3]
Chimpanzee	11	1d-1 cr *or* 1d-2 cut	[2, 4]
Crocodile	22	2d+1 cut	[1, 2]
Elephant	45	5d-1 cr	
Gorilla	15	1d+1 cr *or* 1d cut	[2, 4]
Hippo	39	4d cr	
Horse	18-25	1d+1 to 2d+1 cr	
Jaguar	14	1d cut	[1]
Killer Whale	30	3d+2 cut	[1]
Komodo Dragon	13	1d cut	[1, 2]
Leopard	13	1d cut	[1]
Lion	16	1d+1 cut	[1]
Mountain Lion	12	1d-1 cut	[1]
Orangutan	12	1d cr *or* 1d-2 cut	[2, 4]
Ostrich	13	1d-1 imp	
Pig	15	1d cr	
Rhino	28	3d-2 cr	
Shark	19-38	2d to 4d+3 cut	[1]
Tiger	17	1d+2 cut	[1]
Wolf	10	1d-2 cut	[1]

Notes

[1] Damage includes Brawling bonus.

[2] Has a nasty tendency to *hold on,* doing damage each turn, unless victim breaks free from listed ST or the animal is wounded to 0 HP.

[3] Impaling initial charge, crushing trample afterward.

[4] Arm ST 3 makes "punch" deadlier *and* increases ST when grappling.

Don't Feed the Animals

The main way to get someone eaten or mauled by a beast is to use *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) to put them in danger. Two moves are common in action flicks.

Keep Hands Away from Bars: If the animal is caged or behind a tall fence, the goal is to shove or hurl an enemy *against* the enclosure, where an enraged beast awaits. Roll 1d versus the number of times someone has crashed into the bars; on 1 the first time, 1-2 the second, and so on, the occupant is riled up enough to lunge. Heroes *can* rattle cages to increase the odds; this is an Attack maneuver that works automatically, but roll as usual to see whether the cage-rattler is attacked. A safer option is to use **Serendipity** or spend *two* character points to specify the critter is ready *now.* Those sent front-on into biting or clawing range are hit unless they dodge; those tossed with their back to the barrier get no defense. In addition to doing damage, if a creature tends to hold on (note [2] under the table) rather than just nip, it grapples the victim and inflicts damage on later turns!

Welcome to the Shark Tank: If the enclosure has an opening, someone can be shoved to fall down into this from above – or forced through a door and locked inside (*Doors,* pp. 6-7). In that case, the animal attacks every turn. Technically, it *might* miss, and it *could* dodge attacks on it. In **Action,** speed things up by assuming that with All-Out Attack (Determined), it won't miss, but also won't dodge. Victims may dodge as usual on the beast's turn, and on their own turn may either attack the critter, do an All-Out Defense, or waste time trying to escape. Most animals are too fast to flee from on home ground!

Seeing Red

If a dangerous animal is out in the open, someone may take a Concentrate maneuver to roll vs. **Animal Handling** and draw the beast toward an enemy. This is an *incredibly* risky proposition: -5 to skill. As it's the rare action hero who has **Animal Handling (Big Cats)** or whatever, the roll usually has another -2 to -6 default penalty; see p. B175.

On any success, the animal goes for the intended victim as the person who caught its eye ducks carefully to one side. On failure by 1-4, the animal doesn't seem to notice (but if it would attack someone at random, it still does). On failure by 5+ or critical failure, it goes after the troublemaker!

Once the animal arrives, treat the situation like *Welcome to the Shark Tank* (above), with the difference being that there's no enclosure, so the victim may have more options – perhaps including *leaving* the area and shutting in the beast.

Not the Bees!

Knocking someone into an insect hive or piranha tank works like any use of *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). After that, use the rules for swarms (p. B461). Assume nasty bugs (ants, bees, wasps, etc.) do 1 point of toxic damage per turn, while biting animals (bats, rats, piranha, etc.) inflict a collective 1d cutting. Ignore DR. If the *intended* victim goes down, the swarm goes after the nearest person – friend or foe.

Crazy Like a Snake

Small, venomous animals like snakes and octopuses can be as harmless or deadly as the GM likes. As a guideline, if the rules for tossing enemies to beasts indicate someone would be bitten, ignore biting damage and worry about venom. To generate a random venom, roll 1d-1 for the HT penalty to resist and then 1d/2 (rounded *up*) for *dice* of toxic damage if the HT roll fails – that is, it's a HT to HT-5 roll to avoid 1d to 3d damage. Don't worry about cycles or accumulated effects; treat each dose as a one-off attack.

Chapter Two
STYLE AND USAGE
or, Picking Your Perils

*Dictionaries often conclude with a grammar primer: guide-lines for **using** all those words. We'll honor this custom, looking at how to weave this supplement's dangers into the game while respecting the conventions of action fiction and the structure of* **GURPS Action.**

The GM can fling this entire dictionary into the game haphazardly, but it's less jarring – and thus more fun – when menacing scenery has ties to the plot (*Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept It,* below), setting (*Location, Location, Location,* pp. 44-47), or heroes (*A Very Particular Set of Skills,* pp. 47-48). Because such connections aren't always obvious, the main aim of this discussion is to help the GM choose *appropriate* dangers. Players may find it useful, too; *A Very Particular Set of Skills* and *Setting the Scene* (p. 45) offer hints as to what abilities to use, and when.

> *A lot of action movies today seem to have scenes that just lead up to the action.*
>
> *– Jason Statham*

YOUR MISSION, SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO ACCEPT IT

The strongest inspiration for hazards is the team's mission. The GM should ask these questions: What are the heroes trying to accomplish? Who are their opponents, and what are *they* attempting to do? What dangerous stuff does that imply – and *not* imply?

For instance, if the heroes are tasked with foiling a terrorist plot to blow up an oil rig and contaminate their homeland's shores, the dangers under *Nautical* (pp. 23-24), *Big Bada-Boom* (p. 26), *Pipes* (p. 26), and *Drilling* (p. 30) are *de rigueur* – with *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) released if the mission fails. Incidental dangers could arise as the story develops; e.g., an oil rig needs a *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21), and may even boast a recreation room for *Sports* (pp. 30-32). *Botanical* (p. 8) and *Farm* (pp. 13-14) are probably a reach, though!

It's impossible to anticipate *every* conceivable plot, but *Campaign Types* (**Heroes,** pp. 5-6) offers broad inspiration.

Brotherhood in Blue: Action cops get into chases where *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) are a threat. Big-city plots unfold in back-alleys full of *Junk* (pp. 18-19) and *Yuck* (pp. 40-41),

and in buildings with dodgy *Architecture* (pp. 6-7), especially if run-down or under construction (implying *Worksite,* pp. 37-38) – and even ordinary homes hold the threat of the *Generic* (pp. 15-16). Ethnic mobs love ethnic restaurants, leading to *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21) combat. Specific crimes suggest other menaces; e.g., *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) for drug labs, *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26) for bomb scares, and *Sports* (pp. 30-32) for illegal betting. And police officers often end up in *Medical* (pp. 22-23) settings, to question victims of violent crime or *as* victims of violence. Avoid things not native to urban areas – *Botanical* (p. 8), *Farm* (pp. 13-14), *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30), etc. – unless the heroes' beat is unusual, like a port or harbor with *Nautical* (pp. 23-24) dangers.

Caper: Crooks are the flipside of cops, so everything noted for **Brotherhood in Blue** applies – while "lovable criminals" are rarely drug lords or mad bombers, they may have to cut deals with such scum, bringing in the associated hazards. Capers are often complex heists that involve sneaking in via rooftops and elevator shafts, cutting power, and then getting away at high speed, making *Architecture* (pp. 6-7), *Electricity* (pp. 12-13), and specialized *Tools* (pp. 33-34) and *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) relevant. These schemes are first and fore-most clever, which brings the *Devious* (pp. 10-11) and *Generic* (pp. 15-16) into play, and means no danger is strictly off-limits. In rare cases where the job is a violent one, it's *extremely* likely that *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40).

Commandos: Elite troopers traipse about in jungles full of *Botanical* (p. 8) hazards, scuba dive in *Nautical* (pp. 23-24) environments, and generally get parachuted into the great outdoors, where the occasional *Zoo* (pp. 41-42) scene is fitting. If operating in built-up areas, add *Architecture* (pp. 6-7) to the list. Commandos are often tasked with planting *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26) and tackling *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40) scenarios. As they use and confront *serious* weapons, improvisations of the *Devious* (pp. 10-11), *Generic* (pp. 15-16), *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21), *Sports* (pp. 30-32), or *Yuck* (pp. 40-41) variety are unlikely except when off duty. On the other hand, they are conversant in the violent use of their own *Medical* (pp. 22-23) supplies, *Tools* (pp. 33-34), and *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37).

Mercs: The **Commandos** notes apply if the team is para-military, while **Brotherhood in Blue** is better inspiration for domestic operators. Either way, mercenaries are usually less lavishly outfitted than government-backed soldiers and cops, and so may creatively misuse *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), *Generic* (pp. 15-16) hardware, *Sports* (pp. 30-32) equipment, and *Tools* (pp. 33-34), and mess with makeshift *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26).

Adventures inspired by the evening news might see guns hired to defend power plants (*Electricity,* pp. 12-13), cash crops (*Farm,* pp. 13-14), factories (*Industrial,* pp. 17-18), aid workers (*Medical,* pp. 22-23), profitable *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30) sites, development projects (*Worksite,* pp. 37-38), or even big game (*Zoo,* pp. 41-42) in Third World hellholes.

Spy vs. Spy: Being up to the challenge of any conceivable mission by virtue of their cinematically broad skill sets, super-spies may abuse or face *every* danger in the course of a career – or even a weekend! They are inevitably *Devious* (pp. 10-11), love to exploit the *Generic* (pp. 15-16), and are the only heroes who *routinely* confront mad science (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28) – and in sillier campaigns, improbable stuff like shark tanks (*Zoo,* pp. 41-42). They're exceedingly likely to encounter a wide range of *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) on a single adventure, sometimes within a single chase scene: sports cars, trains rattling across Old Europe, fighter jets, mini-subs, tanks . . . Their own transport is traditionally rigged to be *Unsafe* (pp. 34-35) when needed. And in the best secret-agent stories, *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40).

Task Force: This is the gritty version of **Spy vs. Spy,** so start there and lose the shark tanks. As the challenge is to do the best you can with limited resources, the **Mercs** notes often apply. Most tales of the super-covert favor bleak backdrops, meaning encounters at isolated *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) sites and facilities that handle *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), *Junk* (pp. 18-19), and *Yuck* (pp. 40-41). Being plausibly deniable means killings have to look accidental – falls (*Architecture,* pp. 6-7), faulty wiring (*Electricity,* pp. 12-13) and appliances (*Generic,* pp. 15-16), overdoses (*Medical,* pp. 22-23), drownings (*Nautical,* pp. 23-24), crashes (*Unsafe,* pp. 34-35, or *Vehicles,* pp. 35-37) – and bodies must disappear, often on the *Farm* (pp. 13-14) or *Worksite* (pp. 37-38). It also means *avoiding* attention-grabbing *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26) and *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40) situations, and bizarre *Quantum* (pp. 27-28) scenarios.

Troubleshooters: The need for subtlety makes this look like **Task Force** – just with less murder, because the PCs are PIs, corporate security staff, and bodyguards, not ultra-covert agents. The heroes could be contracted to work for any profit-making institution; e.g., an *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) plant, R&D (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28) facility, or *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30) site. A fun twist would be a series of diverse jobs which pose peculiar hazards: One adventure might have them protecting a star athlete (*Sports,* pp. 30-32) or *racehorse* (*Zoo,* pp. 41-42) from criminals bent on fixing a match, the next could see them figuring out who's tampering with vats at a prestigious winery (*Yuck,* pp. 40-41), and the one after that may involve investigating noises in somebody's steam tunnels (*Architecture,* pp. 6-7, *Heat,* p. 16, and *Pipes,* p. 26). It's action, so things *will* turn violent!

Vigilante Justice: The **Brotherhood in Blue** notes apply here, too. As the focus is on gritty, street-level justice, include ramshackle *Architecture* (pp. 6-7) in the slum, hazardous *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) at the meth lab, *Junk* (pp. 18-19) and *Lacerations* (pp. 21-22) in the glass- and needle-strewn alleyways, and lots of *Medical* (pp. 22-23) situations involving gang violence and overdoses. Vigilantes are rarely subtle – many *want* to send a message – so expect *Heat* (p. 16) and fire,

homemade *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26), *Sports* (pp. 30-32) using bad guys' heads as balls, and *Tools* (pp. 33-34) and *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) used as weapons. "Unsubtle" isn't "grand scale"; there may be labs but there won't be mad science (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28), and *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40) scenarios are limited to traps (gangs don't have killer satellites).

War Against Terror: The terrorists' plots dictate many of the dangers: If tampering with the water supply, expect *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) and *Pipes* (p. 26); if it's the electrical grid, see *Electricity* (pp. 12-13); if they're crashing planes into buildings, *Architecture* (pp. 6-7) and *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) are involved; if they're planting bombs, that's *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26) and *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40); and so on. The closer the squad gets to the bad guys, the more the danger is clear and present. Terrorists also require isolated locales to plot, train, and store weapons, which may send agents to the woods (*Botanical,* p. 8), *Farm* (pp. 13-14), an abandoned *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) facility, a scrap yard (*Junk,* pp. 18-19), or a half-finished office building (*Worksite,* pp. 37-38). Those in the movies like *Nautical* (pp. 23-24) settings, entering the country illegally by ship.

> *The most dangerous moments come from boredom. It's usually best to cut down on the waiting by planning two stunt sequences at once.*
> – Tony Scott

Location, Location, Location

The mission's broad strokes don't dictate every possible danger! As *Exploits* shows, an action plot could involve the heroes learning about a job, traveling to a key location, snooping, asking questions, stealing documents or abducting bad guys, and getting away . . . and what they learn from those they spy on, interrogate, or abduct, or from the codes they break or files they snatch, might lead them to the *next* task, locale, person, or object. Along the way, they may be caught, chased, or attacked, conceivably ending up injured and in hospital – or captured.

In short: Most adventures visit a number of important sites – and several secondary ones! – not all of which are evident from a one-line synopsis.

Consider again the mission to foil a terrorist plot to blow up an oil rig. That's clearly a **War Against Terror** (above) adventure, so on top of the hazards of oil rigs, bombs, and pollution, there are those of the terrorists' base; if the bad guys intend to clamber around pipes, an *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) site seems fitting. How did the heroes learn of the plot or the base? Perhaps from a cook from the terrorist's homeland, subdued in a fight that started in the *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21) of the stereotypical ethnic restaurant and ended in an alleyway full of *Junk* (pp. 18-19). Another sympathizer might try to assassinate the antiterrorists while off-duty, forcing them to get *Devious* (pp. 10-11). And after finally defeating the terrorists on the rig, perhaps the leader spills the beans on a wealthy backer, forcing the agents to contend with some vertical *Architecture* (pp. 6-7) at the *Worksite* (pp. 37-38) of the skyscraper the high-roller is building – where the fanatical villain leaps to death by *Lacerations* (pp. 21-22) and tries to take a do-gooder with him.

Phew!

SETTING THE SCENE

Location, Location, Location (pp. 44-47) covers choosing dangers to suit a scene. After that, it's time to get specific: Where are the hazards? How easy are they to notice and exploit?

There are several options here, each of which suggests a particular approach – and some details differ depending on whether you're using a battle map. We'll follow two examples: a factory and a barn.

Obvious dangers. If it's far-fetched that anyone in possession of their faculties would overlook something, alert the players the moment the heroes encounter it – which might be before the action – using words that make the danger clear. On a map, mark it clearly (perhaps with a hazard symbol, if you're good at drawing or have stickers!). *Examples:* "The factory floor is littered with sharp metal burrs. The furnace's heat is stifling," or, "As you enter the barn, a combine harvester roars to life!"

*Obvious things that aren't obviously **dangerous**.* This is the case when closer examination – and possibly a Per-based roll – is needed to realize something in plain sight is exploitable. If describing the scene, mention the item without details or significance. On a map, sketch a vague placeholder for the heroes to inspect. *Examples:* "There are pipes overhead, and a red box to your left labeled **In Case of Emergency**," or, "There's a tool bench at the back of the barn, with jugs and drums stacked beside it."

Unobvious dangers. Secretly note these and their locations, but don't mention them or mark them on a map. Only the characters of players who ask for *and succeed at* suitable Per-based rolls get to know about them. This makes sense when the hazard is hidden, or intrinsic to the place's structure ("hidden in plain sight"). *Examples:* A *Per*-based **Electrician** roll to locate high-voltage cables on the factory wall, or a *Per*-based **Architecture** roll to notice the sagging hayloft, waiting for someone to shoot at it and drop bales on a mook.

Borderline cases are inevitable! For instance, in an *immense* factory, that box of emergency equipment might require a Per-based roll to notice at all, and *then* time to walk over and inspect it. On the other hand, the GM could mention metal-sheathed electrical conduits along with the pipes, handing out a free clue.

There's no sin in leaving details to chance. Many hazards suggest optional rolls for considerations like damage dice or the ST/HP of machines. The GM can decide or roll in advance – or roll only when somebody exploits the situation. For example, the GM may already know the jugs and drums in the barn hold harmful chemicals, but roll the *type* of chemicals when someone examines them.

It also isn't a crime to change your mind, revealing hazards the players are overlooking but which you *want* to see used, or adding ones that would make the scene cooler. Assume the heroes were distracted – probably by immediate danger, like armed mooks or that combine harvester. Just avoid ad-libbing situations only bad guys can exploit!

Heroes might get a pass in a couple of situations:

Asking. You can't think of *everything*. If a player's proposal makes sense and won't break the game, allow it on a successful Perception roll. This is a situation where permitting **Scrounging** is fair (*Scrounging and Search?*, p. 11). *Examples:* "I look for an iron rod" in that factory full of metalworking equipment, or "I check for a hay fork" in the barn's hayloft.

Serendipity or Lucky Break. If the proposal is borderline but consistent with the scene, allow it in exchange for a use of **Serendipity** or for character points: one point if it merely lets somebody try something, two if it works automatically or dooms an NPC (even a mook!). *Examples:* "I bet a forklift is idling in the corner" in the factory, or "The commotion angers the bull outside, who charges in."

Such changes in scenery remain for everyone! If a hero can grab an iron rod, or dash for the forklift or hay fork, so can a villain. If the bull charges and, instead of paying two points to have it gore a mook the player pays one to try **Animal Handling,** *and fails,* the sinister farmhand can roll to turn the beast on the PCs.

This underlines a final detail: The skills to spot something aren't always those to exploit it. A hero may roll vs. *Per*-based **Chemistry** to notice toxic pesticide in the barn, but dousing foes with it requires DX-based rolls.

Here are the dangers of a dozen *generic* locations that suit many kinds of action stories:

Airport: Mob ambassadors from the Old Country, foreign spies, and other jet-setting villains have to get from A to B; common criminals and terrorists alike may hope to hijack planes; and the heroes could be attacked while traveling to their next destination. The leading danger at the airport is *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) – specifically, planes. Jet-fuel-filled tanker trucks add flammable *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) to the cocktail, while baggage-handling machinery offers almost *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) conveyors and other mechanisms. Safety gear – up to and including fire trucks – is just waiting to be rendered *Unsafe* (pp. 34-35). And if terrorists have a bomb, or a scheduled plane crash, *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40).

Backwoods: Cinematic commandos seem fated to end up in swamp or jungle, police or security officers may find themselves tracking a fugitive through the boondocks, and NPCs who value secrecy – spies, would-be informants, anyone who fears assassination – might lie low in the back of beyond, forcing the heroes to seek them there. Secret bases of all kinds, from black-ops facilities to terrorist training camps, are often in the middle of nowhere, too. The classic dangers here are plants (*Botanical*, p. 8) and animals (*Zoo*, pp. 41-42). As well, a *Farm* (pp. 13-14) or *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30) facility could border or be on the way to the wilderness, or be reachable only by crossing it.

Bad End of Town: Stories involving crime and law enforcement are often set in parts of town sensible folk avoid; unsafe neighborhoods are great places for terrorists and spies to operate unnoticed; and *any* action plot could involve interacting with scum who frequent seedy bars, strip clubs, and rooms by the hour. Merely passing through poses the risk of being jumped by bad guys. This is where to find *Questionable Construction* (p. 7) in the shape of rundown buildings; *Junk* (pp. 18-19) in forms ranging from disgusting alleyways through Dumpsters to junkyards; *The Glint of Light on Broken Glass* (pp. 21-22); and *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37) such as noisy elevated trains and stinky garbage scows.

Country Club: Bad people aren't confined to bad neighborhoods! The masterminds in action stories are often *rich:* corrupt businessmen and politicians, successful crime lords, power-players who finance terrorism, jet-setting spy-movie villains, and so forth. When they play, it's at exclusive clubs. The well-manicured grounds may cultivate *Botanical* (p. 8) dangers to keep out the riffraff, and be large enough to require serious machinery for maintenance (*Bloody Fields,* p. 14). The dining area needs a well-appointed *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21). The stereotypically well-heeled enjoy golf, fencing, and billiards (*Sports,* pp. 30-32). And if yachts can tie up nearby, expect *Nautical* (pp. 23-24) hazards.

Docks: Most international cargo travels by ship. That includes cars, electronics, food, fashion knockoffs, and contraband: drugs, stolen goods (often cars again), weapons, and more. Then there are spies and terrorists bent on sneaking into the country by sea. And *then* there's trafficking in *people,* from illegal-but-innocent immigrants to victims of the slave trade. A trip to the waterfront suits any action story! The most important hazards here are *Nautical* (pp. 23-24), plus *Worksite* (pp. 37-38) dangers like cranes, forklifts, huge stacks of goods, and heavy warehouse doors. Don't overlook *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37), though – even a moored vessel is quite capable of crushing the unfortunate.

Home: Everybody lives somewhere, including heroes and their opponents. All it takes to work a home into the story is to have the PCs stalked after hours or pay a "social call" on a bad guy. The classic dangers are slamming doors and flying furniture (*Architecture,* pp. 6-7), misuses of everyday items (*Generic,* pp. 15-16), and all the knives and hot stuff in the *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21). Hobby equipment might lead to *Devious* (pp. 10-11) ideas or the creative use of *Sports* (pp. 30-32) gear. The barbecue out back is among the *Things That Aren't Supposed to Go Boom* (p. 25). And if the place is an actual *mansion* – say, the arch-villain's posh residence – add everything under *Country Club* to the list.

Hospital: The moment a PC is badly injured – by crooks, enemy soldiers, rival spies, or any other opponent who won't stop at insults – you have an excuse to visit a *Medical* (pp. 22-23) facility, with all the dangers that implies. Big-city hospitals are usually towers (*Heights,* p. 6) with physical plants where *Electricity* (pp. 12-13), *Heat* (p. 16), and *Pipes* (p. 26) are hazards. Nearly all health-care facilities store *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) and things to make you say *Yuck* (pp. 40-41). The latter may or may not be the same as the *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21), depending on how you feel about hospital food. In most jurisdictions, such places must be *Up to Code* (p. 34).

Industrial Wasteland: A vast tract of polluted land that offers machinery that blocks lines of sight, a din that drowns out gunshots and screams, and odors that mask drugs, explosives, and decaying corpses . . . it's the ideal hiding place for villains in any action story. In some cases, it's *part* of the plot – especially if it's the target of espionage or terrorism, or where contraband is being produced, not merely hidden. *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) dangers are obvious but the other possibilities are endless: *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), *Electricity* (pp. 12-13), *Heat* (p. 16), *Pipes* (p. 26), and borrowings from *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30) and *Worksite* (pp. 37-38). The pollution itself is, of course, *Junk* (pp. 18-19) or *Yuck* (pp. 40-41).

Military Base: If the heroes are commandos, mercenaries, or ordinary soldiers, this is part of *most* adventures. If not, it's still a worthy destination: the team might be here for special training; mobsters or terrorists could sneak in to steal materiel; and spies or other terrorists may *target* such a place. Also, no action story ever has suffered from including explosions and fighting, even if it's only exercises! Real weapons – not improvised ones – pose the greatest threat here, but don't overlook *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26) accidents, *Nautical* (pp. 23-24) ones at a naval station, or fighter jets, tanks, and other scary *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37). *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40) is plausible, too . . . say, by tricking bad guys onto a testing range.

Offices: If the bad guys are at all organized, they'll have administrative needs, met by anything from a back room at the chop-shop to a skyscraper financed with dirty money. Heroes who work for an organization – police force, intelligence service, anonymous voice on the intercom, etc. – need offices, too. Papers and paychecks are hardly the pinnacle of peril, but they're playgrounds for the *Devious* (pp. 10-11). Office buildings are often *Up to Code* (p. 34) and offer *Architecture* (pp. 6-7) to abuse (elevators, windows for leaping stockbrokers, desks and file cabinets to upend on people, etc.), and some floors may be under construction, *Die Hard*-style; see *Tools* (pp. 33-34) and *Worksite* (pp. 37-38).

Small Business: With sporting-goods stores, gun shops, and car dealerships, the trick is keeping action heroes away! More prosaic businesses serve as fronts, laundering mob money or offering a base to anyone from outlaw bikers to terrorists. And everyone – PC or NPC – visits gas stations, eateries, and convenience stores. *Devious* (pp. 10-11) deeds are certain, but not the best part. For each business, pick a hazard or three that matches its stock in trade: farm tools (*The Old Ways,* pp. 13-14) and pesticides (*Chemicals,* pp. 9-10) at a feed shop; light *Industrial* (pp. 17-18) machinery and *Tools* (pp. 33-34) at a garage; the *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21), *Bottle Service* (p. 21), and pool tables (*Sports,* pp. 30-32) at a biker bar; and so on.

Tunnels: It's an axiom of action fiction that if it's possible to skulk through sewers, steam tunnels, or a subway, somebody will do it. There's no such thing as a "generic" tunnel, but most carry utilities, usually power lines (*Electricity,* pp. 12-13) or *Pipes* (p. 26), and of course trains are dangerous *Vehicles* (pp. 35-37). Beyond that, tunnels feature hazardous *Architecture* (pp. 6-7) – especially heavy doors and unheralded drops – and require constant maintenance, implying unsafely stored *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) and *Tools* (pp. 33-34), and *Worksite* (pp. 37-38) hazards. Swarms of rats (*Zoo,* pp. 41-42) are more horror than action, but why not?

A VERY PARTICULAR SET OF SKILLS

One last way to seed a story with danger is to tempt the players with chances to use their characters' abilities creatively. It may seem forced to add hazards solely to let PCs show off, but remember: *Action is about the heroes!*

Action is *also* about dramatic necessity. The heroes won't resort to makeshift measures if they have perfectly good guns, or at least knives – or if they can walk up and karate-chop the villain. When including hazards with the hope of seeing them used, put them in scenes where the good guys are disarmed or out of ammo, or can't risk shooting, or where only off-the-wall tactics can succeed (say, shooting the ceiling to collapse it on the heads of mooks behind heavy cover).

Here are ideas for each profession in **Heroes** and **Furious Fists.** Characters built with **Specialists** require more flexibility from the GM; start by looking at their skills.

Assassin: Snipers love to shoot at everything that doesn't respond well to being shot: unstable ceilings (*Questionable Construction,* p. 7, and *Cave-In!,* p. 30), compressed-air tanks (p. 24), propane and gas tanks (*Things That Aren't Supposed to Go Boom,* p. 25), explosives (*Big Bada-Boom,* p. 26), etc. When perched up high to snipe, shoving foes from *Heights* (p. 6) is popular, too. Assassins who use poison are at home around *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) and *Medical* (pp. 22-23) facilities.

Big Guy: A strong fighter who's skilled at grappling craves chances to use *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) . . . meaning nearly every letter in this dictionary has something to offer! Other ways to let the hero show some muscle are to include *Doors* (pp. 6-7) to slam into people (or obstruct), massive *Furniture* (p. 7) to shove into foes, trees to knock over (*Timber!,* p. 29), and *Tools* (pp. 33-34) too heavy for anybody else to wield – including the jackhammer (p. 38).

Cleaner: **Housekeeping** makes the cleaner at home in household (*Generic,* pp. 15-16) and *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21) environments, but don't forget their other specialized skills: **Chemistry** and **Hazardous Materials (Chemical)** are valuable around *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10). **Freight Handling** works not just with bodies but also with cargoes (e.g., *Log Rolling,* p. 29, and *Pipes Revisited,* p. 26), cranes (*What Goes Up,* p. 17, *Fatal Attraction,* p. 19, etc.), and loading machinery (*Dozed, Dug, and Forked,* p. 37). Cleaners are also the only heroes likely to be good at **Animal Handling** (*Zoo,* pp. 41-42).

Demolition Man: Explosive *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) – and all forms of *Ordnance* (pp. 25-26) – are essential. If the demolition man has real explosives, these can be useful for triggering a *Cave-In!* (p. 30), but what's more interesting is to let the hero set traps when *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40).

The demo man's knowledge of structures makes abusing *Questionable Construction* (p. 7) easy. And around anything nuclear, this hero is the only one who can bank on **Explosives (Nuclear Ordnance Disposal);** see *Quantum* (pp. 27-28).

Face Man: Face men aren't specialists at *particular* hazards, but they're the heroes most likely to make *Trickery* (p. 5) work when trying to convince someone to stumble into almost any kind of danger, and also the ones best cut out for the ruses in *You Are Cordially Invited to Die* (p. 39). They have one of the broadest skill sets, too, so the GM should be prepared for *Devious* (pp. 10-11) suggestions from the player.

> *I write my own action. There's a scene in The Island – a highway chase where a pile of train wheels fall off a truck and smashes into the oncoming cars. That thought came to me as I was driving next to a truck carrying rail wheels. My mind is very fertile, so I'm like, "That's very dangerous!" I sent someone out to do research and found out those train wheels weigh a TON each . . .*
>
> *– Michael Bay*

Fast Guy: A crazily agile hero who's skilled at grappling will use *Judo Throw* (p. 5) to toss people to their doom, and stand wherever the charging foes he dodges will end up *Overshooting* (p. 5) into danger – numerous entries suggest one or the other! With DX 16+, also expect to see default weapon skills used to wield many *Tools* (pp. 33-34), including ones native to the *Farm* (pp. 13-14), *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21), gym (*Sports,* pp. 30-32), and *Worksite* (pp. 37-38).

Hacker: This hero isn't great at exploiting real-world dangers. At best, they cook up something *Devious* (pp. 10-11) on occasion, using digital gadgets to distract ("Beep-Beep-Beep") or turning office machinery against enemies. On the other hand, computerized *Quantum* (pp. 27-28) threats are easily meat for the hacker, and hacking a killer satellite (or whatever) so *X Marks the Spot* (pp. 38-40) where the bad guys are standing is a classic bit.

Infiltrator: The infiltrator is extremely agile, comfortable around *Heights* (p. 6) and sure-footed when playing *Other Fun and Games* (p. 32) or clambering around *High Steel* (p. 37). Rivals who can't keep up are fated to fall down – *way* down. This hero is also a **Forced Entry** specialist who can exploit anything that can be shoved or broken off into someone: *Doors* (pp. 6-7), loose pipes (*Combat Plumbing,* p. 26), teetering trees (*Timber!,* p. 29), etc.

Investigator: The investigator is more thinker than doer, most likely to use their broad skill set to be *Devious* (pp. 10-11). That said, be aware that the Per-based rolls many sections propose to spot exploitable dangers are usually against Average skills, so Per 17+ means the investigator without the right skill still succeeds on 12 or less! They can share this information with the teammate best-suited to exploit it. The investigator is also the hero most likely to learn *what, where,* and *when* in situations where the enemy has *Fifty Tons of Weapons-Grade Plot Devicium* (pp. 38-39).

Medic: It doesn't take a brain surgeon to know that a medic is at home with *Medical* (pp. 22-23) dangers! Many *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10) and forms of *Yuck* (pp. 40-41) are up their alley, too – and medics are the heroes most likely to have **Naturalist** and find creative uses of *Botanical* (p. 8) threats. Finally, a lot of mad-science menaces (*Quantum,* pp. 27-28) call for a medic's "wet science" knowhow.

Ninja: The advice for the *Fast Guy* (above) and *Infiltrator* (above) largely goes for this hero, too: The ninja is a sufficiently competent grappler to take advantage of *Judo Throw* (p. 5), dexterous enough to wield anything that looks like a melee weapon, and nimble enough to exploit *Overshooting* (p. 5), mess with *Heights* (p. 6), and play *Other Fun and Games* (p. 32).

Shooter: **Gunslinger** aids with anything that shoots: flare pistols (*Flare Flair,* pp. 25-26), nail guns (p. 34), etc. The advice on shooting hazardous objects given for the *Assassin* (p. 47) holds, but the shooter *tends* to get closer to the mark – so while shooting ceilings to drop them on people, or windows to create cut hazards (*The Glint of Light on Broken Glass,* pp. 21-22), are fine, it's risky to target explosives and gas cylinders. Finally, shooters are the only heroes likely to be *good* at the **Liquid Projector** specialties that make *Spray-Can Flamethrower* (p. 15) and *Hosed!* (p. 26) fun.

Traceur: The traceur is wonderful around *Heights* (p. 6), at playing *Other Fun and Games* (p. 32), and at negotiating *High Steel* (p. 37). They're *also* a martial artist who can grapple foes to use almost every form of *Delivery* (pp. 4-6). The implications of this combination are obvious. **Urban Survival** is mandatory for this hero, meaning they'll often spot exploitable dangers in built-up areas; for examples, see *Questionable Construction* (p. 7), *Down in the Dumps* (p. 19), *Combat Plumbing* (p. 26), and *Up to Code* (p. 34).

Weapon Master: If armed with their weapon of choice, this hero probably won't *want* to improvise. If not, they'll seek the implement that's most similar; for options, see *Farm* (pp. 13-14), *Kitchen* (pp. 19-21), *Bottle Service* (p. 21), *ER & OR* (p. 22), *Resource Extraction* (pp. 28-30), *Sports* (pp. 30-32), *Tools* (pp. 33-34), and *Unsafe* (pp. 34-35). But as physically strong martial artists with mandatory grappling skills, they *can* use *Delivery* (pp. 4-6) to great effect. And if they have their weapon, they might just shatter bottles of *Chemicals* (pp. 9-10), cut *Pipes* (p. 26), and so on.

Wheel Man: Vehicles (pp. 35-37)! If it rolls, floats, or flies, the wheel man can maim foes with it. That includes the specialized vehicles discussed in *Farm* (pp. 13-14), *Junk* (pp. 18-19), *911* (p. 35), *Worksite* (pp. 37-38), etc. And cranes, basic rules for which are under *What Goes Up* (p. 17) and *Must Come Down* (pp. 17-18). And, for sailors, the stuff in *Nautical* (pp. 23-24). Oh, and don't overlook *What Does This Button Do?* (p. 35) to turn airbags and ejection seats into weapons – or *Tools* (pp. 33-34), around the garage.

Wire Rat: The wire rat isn't a harmless mouse. That sky-high **Electrician** skill is downright scary around *Electricity* (pp. 12-13), and all those technical skills suggest many *Devious* (pp. 10-11) possibilities. Perhaps most important, though, is this hero's ability to deal with the stuff under *Quantum* (pp. 27-28) – odds are that if the adventure involves a control panel, the wire rat is the one figuring out how to use it to do Bad Things.

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I always try to find something that makes a scene feel real, and what makes things feel true to me is usually something anomalous, a component you would never expect to find, so it doesn't look manicured or perfect. This can be a location, a gesture, an expression, a thought in somebody's head.

– Michael Mann

Good action films – not crap, but good action films – are really morality plays. They deal in modern, mythic culture.
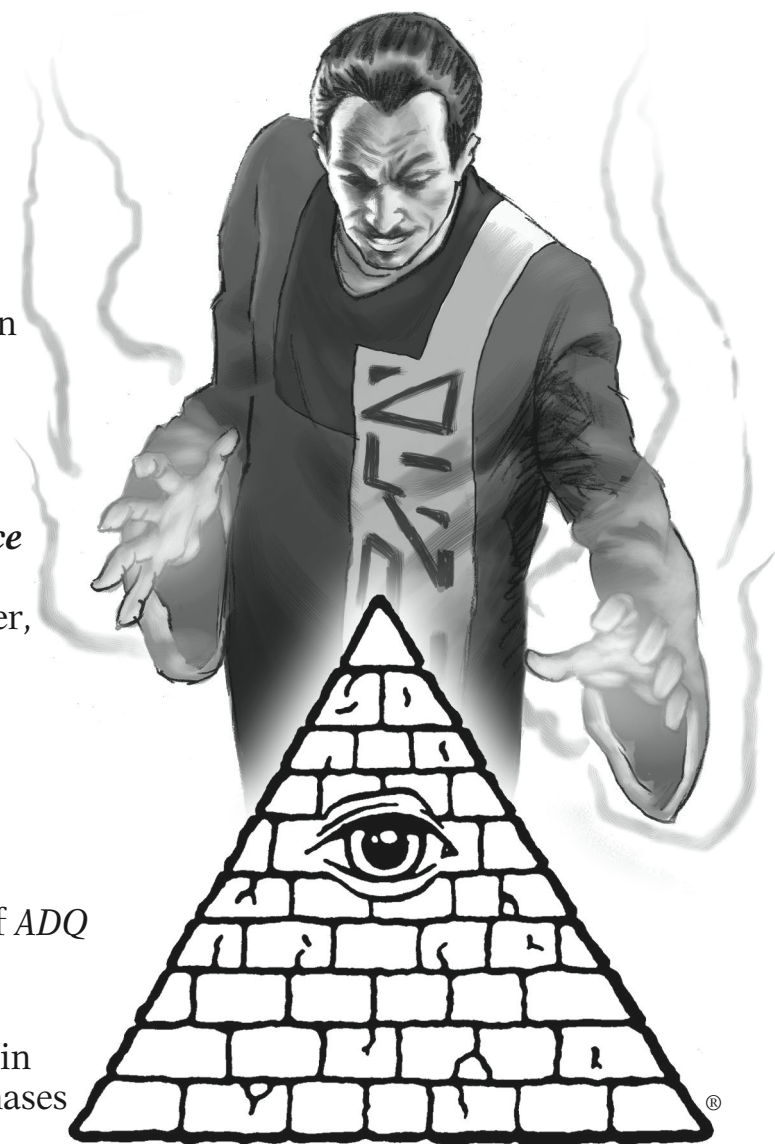
– Sylvester Stallone