

# I DIDN'T REALISE THAT VIOLIN WAS LOADED

GADGETS IN SPYCRAFT, BY JON ANDERSEN.

*'I compressed a high-glide tacticaliber parachute in the lining of my jacket. Just in case. Don't worry, though – my belt hyper-extends into a tandem sling. Just loop it around your waist; it'll hold us both.'*

*'Thanks.'*

*'You don't have to thank me. It's my job to keep you safe.'*

– Marshall and Sydney, Alias

From James Bond's flashy laser watch and history's humble poison-tipped umbrella to the mobile-phone holdout pistol and the surveillance cat, gadgets are an inescapable facet of espionage. Of course, gadgetry isn't just limited to the covert duties of spies; who can forget the pulp fantasy of Dick Tracey's two-way video watch, or the plethora of improbable devices lurking in Batman's utility belt, or even Angel's spring-loaded stakes. So much of what was once science fiction has become science fact, but the fantastic allure of exotic, clandestine devices remains.

It's a guiding Crafty Games philosophy to emphasise the archetypal capabilities of *characters* over their tools. This promotes personal heroism and avoids situations in which losing a single item can leave the team at a significant disadvantage or worse, throw off the balance of the entire game. The designers also realise that players love their toys, though, and that beyond making their jobs easier, fantastic gizmos are just plain *fun*.

So, you've got your hot little hands on the brick that is the *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook* (well, it's more like a paver, really), and you want to tackle the super-science of Gadgets. This article assumes you're already familiar with the game's default gear system: Common Items are small-scale everyday things that provide at best only minor game mechanical benefits, whereas gear picks comprise the truly useful items in each character's arsenal. Picks are further subdivided by type (Electronics, Gadgets, Resources, Security, Tradecraft, Vehicles, and Weapons), as well as Caliber (I to V). Among these, Gadgets are unique in that they aren't actually *things*, they're *effects*. It's this absence of form that makes Gadget picks particularly potent, as they give you access to *every other gear category* – but always at a cost.

## 'PAY ATTENTION, 007!'

As outlined in *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*, the gadget construction process can be illustrated with a simple formula: **Gadget = Housing + Effect**. What causes the effect is purely a matter of setting fluff; an exploding cigarette does the same thing whether it's a micro-grenade, an experimental bioform, or an angry fire elemental bound to a fetish.

Each gadget's Housing limits the number of effects it can hold – check out the chart in the Gadget section of the Gear chapter for details (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 278*) – though this can be modified by certain feats and gadget-oriented characters like the Inventor (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 75*). Something else

to watch for: when a gadget incorporates an existing item, it also incorporates *all* of that item's statistics, including weight and depending on the GC's leniency, possibly its mass as well. Items folded into gadgets are usually miniaturised, but not always as much as might be assumed. On the surface, you might assume you can shrink a small tank into a suit of armour to imitate Tony Stark's shenanigans, but it's not that simple. Reducing a gear item's size by 2 or more categories might reduce its weight by half, let's say, but half of 1 ton is still 500 kilograms, and in the example that's 500 kg of armour that poor old Kevin still has to try and walk around in.

The GC is the final arbiter of what you can and can't get away with, and it's entirely possible that if he's like me he'll hand-wave some or all of these restrictions to get the flavour he and the other players want. But don't count on it. Remember the following few simple rules, though, and the sky is pretty much your limit. These lessons will ensure the greatest degree of compatibility between the tables and the real fuel in the game's engine: your imagination.

## 'WE HAVE THE TECHNOLOGY'

As mentioned in the Rulebook, the human body is a perfectly valid Housing, and when used as such it's subject to the same restrictions that affect Gadget Mechanisms. However, what many people tend to overlook is that the body doesn't have to be viewed as a single Medium-sized object: it's can alternately be

seen as a collection of Small, Tiny, Diminutive, Fine, and even Nuisance sized *components*. This deconstructionist method can similarly be applied to other Housings, which explains how Q squeezes more than four tricky gizmos into Bond's latest car.

Let's take a look at Bond's most iconic vehicle, the Aston Martin DB5. It falls into the 'classic sports' category as a *Spycraft* vehicle and so it's a mere Caliber I Vehicle pick. The first time we're introduced to it in the films, we're told it contains the following:

- Radio telephone concealed in door compartment
- Tracking system
- Passenger ejector seat
- Armaments drawer under front driver seat
- Retractable tire slashers
- Oil slick nozzle from rear driver's side light cluster
- Caltrops from the rear passenger's side light cluster
- Smoke screen released through the exhaust pipes
- Revolving number plates ('BMT 216A,' for the UK, '4711-EA-62' for France, and 'LU 6789' for Switzerland)
- Retractable rear bulletproof screen
- Front and rear extending over-rider rams
- Two front firing .30 calibre Browning machine guns behind the front indicators

That's a hefty 12 effects we need to account for. Let's look at them in order.

First up, the 'radio phone as an advanced feature' is really a product of its time; today it's just a car phone, which is essentially just a mobile phone, and therefore a Common Item. If the game's set in the 60's, though, you'd be looking at a Caliber II Electronic pick for a satellite (backpack) radio with the car's door becoming the Housing. Alternately, you could use an Electronics pick for the radio and a separate Caliber I hidden

compartment Gadget Mechanism to store the rig in the door, allowing you to go mobile with the gear should something unfortunate happen to your car.

At either Caliber II or IV, the tracking system is simply a tracer bug Electronics pick, which gives you the receiving gear as well. The first one goes in the dashboard Housing and the receiver goes in your pocket.

The Aston Martin, being a Standard Ground Vehicle, has a crew of 1 (the driver). The *ejection seat (EJS)* quality simply describes the number of seats that can be jettisoned rather than their position, which neatly accounts for the passenger ejector seat, and this article offers a new upgrade to add this quality to most vehicles (*see page 17*).

For the armaments drawer, you have two options: either a hidden compartment to stash your personal weapon(s), or a bag full of guns Resource pick to offer that little something extra when the team's in a pinch. Of the two, I'd go with the latter simply to cover for any teammate who loses or goes dry with his main sidearm.

The oil slick, caltrops, and smoke screen all sound like distinct items, but they all perform the same mechanical function, at least in a chase – they force a Predator to make a saving throw or crash. We can pick up a vehicle defence system Mechanism with a Caliber I pick, and with three uses it nicely accounts for all three items. Stick it in the rear bumper.

Like the countermeasures, the revolving plates are somewhat counter-intuitively simple. You could go with a Caliber IV cover identity, which breaks down into 3 Caliber I versions of the same, but that option's really expensive. All this gadget really does is try to Bluff observers into believing that the silver Aston Martin you're driving isn't the silver Aston Martin they're

looking for, so all you really need is a skill check (Bluff) Mechanism with a minimum Caliber of I, housed in the number plates. Three uses, three plates in addition to the one it starts with.

We can cross off two more with a single device: the bumper and the rear bullet proof screen are both essentially covered by the emergency service package (police) upgrade, which takes up two upgrade slots and costs just one Caliber I Vehicle pick. There is, however, an alternative. Look at the way the chase Conflict works (*see the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook, page 364*) – specifically, we're interested in the Impact and Defence Advantages, which correspond to the over-rider ram and bullet shield, respectively. The former item is meant to reduce the damage of a collision while the latter makes it less likely for the driver to suffer an attack; similarly, the intended effect of tire-slashers lines up nicely with the Crisis Advantage. The effectiveness of all these options depends on the result of a Drive check, so we can go with the skill boost (Drive) Mechanism. Though a more expensive option than the upgrade, this is potentially more desirable for low-level characters whose GCs enforce result caps, as a happy side effect of the Mechanism boosting your ranks in the skill is that it also raises the cap. Also, with a mere four points granting each additional Advantage beyond the first, even an additional +2 to the result or +5 to the cap could be vital to victory. Unless your chases are astoundingly long, the 10-minute duration ensures the effects apply for the whole Conflict. House this one in the car's chassis and we can move on.

Finally, we have the machine guns, which is simple: install a Caliber I hidden turret Mechanism in the front of the car and use it to contain a Caliber IV Miniaturised Browning 30-06.

So, at an absolute bare minimum, our signature vehicle

contains three Caliber I, two Caliber II, and one Caliber IV Gadget Mechanisms, as well as three Caliber I Vehicle picks. This can be further decreased to two Caliber II and two Caliber IV Gadget Mechanisms, plus one Caliber IV Vehicle pick, due to the previously mentioned exchange rate of one Caliber IV pick for 3 Caliber I picks in any category. While that might look like a lot of big numbers, especially at Level 1, it's easily achievable in the right game.

For instance, in a campaign featuring the *big budget* campaign quality (see the *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*, page 406), the Caliber of each pick each character gains increases by 1. With this in hand, a Faction Wheelman with a Charisma of 12 could score his sweet ride at Level 1. All he'd have to do is devote the two points of Wealth he gets from his class and Charisma bonus to Possessions, which would give him a score of 3, or a base of one Caliber III, one Caliber II, and three Caliber I personal gear picks. *Big budget* increases this

### EJECTOR SEATS (NEW VEHICLE UPGRADE)

This upgrade applies the *ejection seat (EJS)* quality to any non-animal vehicle that possesses seats. This upgrade may be applied to a vehicle any number of times, up to the number of seats it possesses.

When applying this upgrade during a mission, the following statistics apply.

**Cost:** 2

**Street Value:** \$12,000 (ground vehicles), \$15,000 (air vehicles), or \$12,000 (water vehicles)

**Time:** 2 days/×2 (all vehicles)

**Complexity:** 20/+1 (all vehicles)

to one Caliber IV, one Caliber III, and three Caliber II picks (enough for all the Gadgets save one Caliber I or II pick), and assuming an (average) Caliber III mission the remaining picks are handled with the Wheelman's Charisma pick from Faction and class-granted Vehicle pick, the latter of which is improved by one Caliber due to the *custom ride* ability (see the *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*, page 50).

Increasing your starting Charisma to 14 or higher changes everything (and really, who doesn't think Bond's Charisma is at least 14?). This allows you to pour more Wealth points into Possessions so more and more of those picks can be covered before you hit the briefing table. Things get even easier if there's an Intruder on the team and he's willing to use his *gear prep* ability to make the vehicle a reality. Like *custom ride*, *gear prep* increases the Caliber of a single pick by 1, but unlike *custom ride* it may be applied to a pick from any gear category (see the *Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook*, page 37).

The Intruder also makes an excellent option for a character looking to score the gadget-laden Aston; in fact, it makes a slightly better choice as its class-granted mission gear pick is from the Gadget category, which frees the character up to be freelance if he likes (as Vehicle picks are available to both Faction and freelance characters). This build denies you the *driven* core ability, but scores you *dextrous*, which is almost as good (the Drive skill's key attribute is Dexterity, and double action dice will help when making ranged attacks with that machine gun). Fortunately, the Intruder also shares a number of the Wheelman's class skills; Drive being the most important, of course, but Electronics and Mechanics are helpful for maintenance, and Acrobatics, Athletics, and Tactics come up more often in vehicles than you might think. Plus, you can always multi-class into Wheelman come Level 2, a transition made painless by *Spycraft's* lack of multi-classing penalties.

There you have it! Affordably slick, Bond-esque badassery straight out the door!

## 'MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE'

The Aston Martin is a reasonable example of a significant gadget package, but for all that it's still a relatively straightforward project to assemble. Let's take a look at the next step in Gadget complexity – the Proteus modification. It's the *Spycraft* mechanic that lets you pull off things like Bond's roadster-come-submarine, Scaramanga's flying car, the signature vehicle from *Viper*, and the amazing conversions from *M.A.S.K.*, *Transformers*, and *Robotech*. Though shape-changing mecha is somewhat outside the scope of the core rules, we can still work with concepts they represent – one vehicle or thing becoming another.

The Proteus Mechanism's Caliber is equal to the highest of the forms, so if you had a Caliber III vehicle that could shift into a Caliber I vehicle, the package would consist of a Caliber III Gadget pick and a Caliber I vehicle pick. The core espionage rules don't allow for shifting between Size categories (so a Huge plane can become a Huge helicopter, but not a Large one), but there's nothing restricting the transformation to just one category.

Let's take a crack at making ourselves a set of Cyclone Veritech Ride Armour, the signature human technology from *Robotech's* Third Generation (otherwise known as *Genesis Climber Mospeada*). For those new to the concept, it's a motorcycle that transforms into powered armour. At its absolute simplest implementation, we're looking at a touring motorcycle (Caliber I Vehicle pick) as the Housing and a set of riot armour (Caliber IV Security pick) as the Proteus modification. However, this doesn't really do full justice to the Cyclone concept, so let's consider a more elaborate take on our gadget.

Picking the Cyclone battlesuit apart, we find the rider dressed in a body-stocking upon which are mounted chest, groin, forearm, and lower-leg armour pieces, along with a full-face helmet, which gives it the look of a Spartan from *Halo*. We can get the same effect with a suit of moderate armour: a Caliber III Security pick for some modular tactical armour and the limb guards, plus an additional upgrade cost of 4 for personal tailoring, weight reduction, and camouflage (although not strictly necessary, these are highly recommended). That translates to a total of one Caliber III and two Caliber I Security picks.

By comparison, the motorcycle is a simple Caliber I Vehicle pick. Though the speed of a racing bike is attractive, you're slightly better off picking up the touring bike instead, since it comes with a free upgrade. Complement the base model with an off-road suspension, camouflage paint scheme, and four extra loads of fuel, and you're looking at an upgrade cost of 3, for a total cost of 3 Caliber I Vehicle picks.

Then there's the helmet, with stays the same regardless of form. A Caliber I Security pick gives us a modern ballistic helmet and a set of tactical glasses to represent the faceplate. Install a miniaturised headset radio (with a Caliber I, III, or IV Gadget pick, though we'll go with the lowest of those for this example), a  $\times 1.5\text{--}4$  thermal sight (with a Caliber I Gadget pick), and an emergency (police) services package (an upgrade acquired with a Caliber I Vehicle pick), which gives us a video recorder, limited satellite radio, and limited radar.

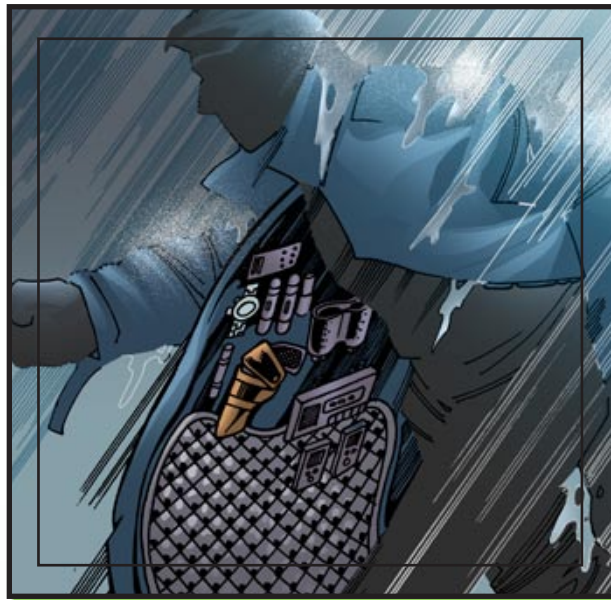
The riot armour remains the highest Caliber gear in the package (at IV), so it determines the Caliber of the Proteus modification. All told, the package requires one Caliber IV Gadget pick, one Caliber III Security pick, three Caliber I Security picks, two Caliber I Gadget picks, and one Caliber I Vehicle pick. With pick conversions,

this can drop to one Caliber IV Gadget pick, two Caliber III Security picks, two Caliber I Gadget picks, and one Caliber I Vehicle pick. More difficult to acquire than the Aston, but still possible under the right circumstances.

## 'WHERE DOES HE GET ALL THOSE WONDERFUL TOYS?'

Most players and situations aren't likely to require wildly capable cars or transforming cycles; most of the time, one or two discreet, single-function gadgets are plenty. For those who just want a few new affordable toys for their war chest, here are a few possibilities.

**Auto-Lock Pick, Electronic:** This is perhaps the signature item of the modern techno-thriller, a gadget capable of bypassing or disabling complex security devices at the touch of a button.



**Housing:** Common item, typically a mobile phone or jewellery.

**Mechanism:** Skill check (Electronics/Disable) (Calibers I-V)  
**Additional Rules:** Using this gadget requires contact with the lock, either by placing the device's Housing against it or using jumper leads, per the GC's discretion. The character suffers no penalty for using this gadget without an Electronics kit.

**Auto-Lock Pick, Mechanical:** This real-world brute force device quickly hammers through mechanical locks, making it a favourite of law enforcement professionals and high-end criminals.

**Housing:** None (pistol-grip version) or Common Item (pen version)

**Mechanism:** Skill check (Security/Disable) (Calibers I-V)  
**Additional Rules:** Using this gadget requires direct contact with the lock. The character suffers no penalty for using this gadget without an Electronics kit.

**Bad Apple:** Modern chemistry makes it a simple process to lace any edible item with a wide variety of powerful toxins.

**Housing:** Common item (food)

**Mechanism:** Acid attack (Calibers I-V)

**Additional Rules:** The victim suffers the gadget's damage 1d4 minutes after he eats the gadget. Damage inflicted by this gadget is applied directly to the victim's wound points.

**Bag, Escape:** You know how it goes – you're minding your own business, stealing someone else's secrets when their goons take exception and suddenly there's all manner of sealed exits and gunplay. This innocuous backpack disguises a diverse collection of gadgets gathered for just such an occasion. The bag's material blocks extra-low and extra-high frequency EM radiation,

shielding the wearer from x-ray and heat sensors, and rip cords positioned at the bag's bottom allows the agent to release caltrops to slow down foot pursuers. A grapple gun hidden within a pocket along the top of the bag allows for easy access by simply reaching over one's shoulder, and though the bag's interior appears normal, a Tiny pocket is located in the lining where purloined objects and documents can be hidden (or if the agent is captured, destroyed).

*Housing:* Common Item (backpack)

*Mechanism:* Grapple gun (Caliber III miniaturised Security pick), hidden compartment (Caliber I), low-grade incinerator (Caliber II), sensor mask – x-ray and heat (Calibers I or IV), vehicle defence system (Caliber I)  
*Additional Rules:* None

**Cloak, Immolation:** When you need to send a message in a hurry, there's always that old chestnut: light yourself on fire and run into a crowd. It's amazing just how scary a walking roman candle making pronouncements of inevitable doom can be.

*Housing:* Common Item (cloak)

*Mechanism:* Damage resistance (Fire) (Caliber III), skill check (Intimidate/Domination) (Calibers I–IV)  
*Additional Rules:* The wearer can shrug the cloak off with 1 half action, suffering no additional damage in the process.

**Coat, Parachute:** This device is great for agents afraid of flying or heights generally, as well as those who expect to make precipitous exits from tall structures. As the name indicates, it's a parachute hidden in an unassuming coat, with a rip cord situated in a concealed pocket.

*Housing:* Common Item (any torso clothing of at least 1/4-in. in thickness)

*Mechanism:* Tandem parachute (Caliber I miniaturised Vehicle pick)

*Additional Rules:* None

**Coat, Death:** Sometimes clothes can be more than a fashion mistake. At the push of a button, this coat's lining unleashes inward-pointing jets of fire, lighting the wearer up like it's Guy Fawkes' Day.

*Housing:* Common Item (coat)

*Mechanism:* Incinerator (Calibers II or IV), remote detonator or timer (Caliber II)  
*Additional Rules:* None

**Fingerprints, Fake:** Biometric security has made life a lot more complicated than it really needs to be. Where once there were only lockpicks, now agents must worry about bypassing fingerprint and retina scanners. This device is the eggheads' response: a thin layer of transparent film worn over an agent's fingertip, concealing his real print with a false one. This gadget and its cousin, the fake retina lens, are often used in conjunction with a prepared cover identity.

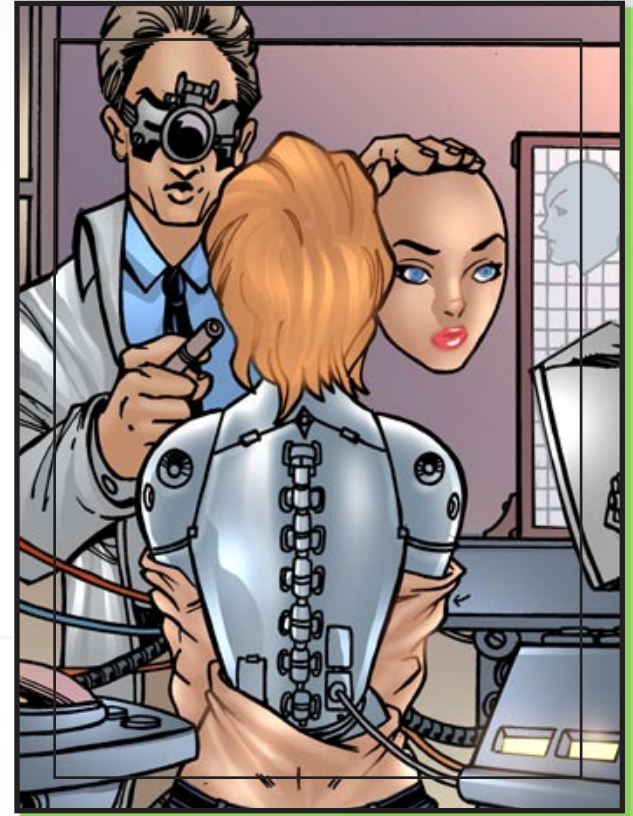
*Housing:* Common Item (fingerprint film)

*Mechanism:* Skill check (Bluff/Deception) (Calibers I–IV)  
*Additional Rules:* None

**Gloves, Stun:** There's nothing quite like being able to deliver a debilitating shock without an obvious weapon on your person. Best of all, stun gloves can be disguised to go with nearly any outfit, taking the form of leather driving gloves, elegant companion pieces to a sleek evening gown, or anything in-between.

*Housing:* Common Item (gloves) or punch gloves (Caliber I Weapon pick)

*Mechanism, variant 1:* Melee stun gun (Caliber I miniaturised Weapon pick) or ranged stun gun (Caliber I



miniaturised Vehicle pick)

*Additional Rules:* Both versions can be installed in the same set of gloves but only one may be used for each attack. Switching between melee and ranged versions requires 1 free action.

**Golden Gun:** This simple-yet-stylish one-shot/one-kill weapon is notorious for its use by a certain charismatic assassin of the late 1960s. When not being used to murder hapless agents, it can be separated into a cigarette lighter (the gun's chamber), a cigarette case (the grip), a cuff link (the trigger), and a pen (the barrel), all made from gold.

*Housing:* Caliber I kit (personal grooming appliances)  
*Mechanism:* Proteus modification (Smith & Wesson Ladysmith (Caliber II miniaturised Weapon pick with detailing upgrade)  
*Additional Rules:* None

**Hat, Chakram:** Another staple of 60's espionage fiction, this headgear has been responsible for countless unexpected decapitations.

*Housing:* Common Item (bowler)  
*Mechanism:* Laser attack (Calibers I–V), battery life boost (Calibers I–III)  
*Additional Rules:* The hat doesn't emit any energy; the laser damage is merely the best way to achieve the desired effect for this iconic weapon.



**Playing Cards, Razor:** In Soviet Russia, you don't cut cards, they cut you! Each slice of this lethal deck is stamped on a ceramic plate that's perfectly balanced for throwing.

*Housing:* Common Item (deck of cards)  
*Mechanism:* Shrunk (Caliber II miniaturised Weapon pick with four reloads, as well as the ceramic and wicked upgrades)  
*Additional Rules:* None

**Sword, Ancestral:** Beautiful and deadly, this weapon inspires all who witness its exquisite precision.

*Housing:* Calibers I–IV Weapon (commonly a sword)  
*Mechanism:* Skill boost (Resolve/Morale) (Calibers I or III), custom handle, deadly precision, and detailing upgrades  
*Additional Rules:* Though not a classic gadget in the espionage sense, this item is a great example of how the gadget rules can be used to simulate a variety of other effects in play.

**Tattoos, Yakuza:** Being a made man sometimes means being a marked one too. The more elaborate the tattoo, the higher your rank – and inherent danger.

*Housing:* Self (tattoo)  
*Mechanism:* Skill check (Intimidate/Domination) (Calibers I–IV), skill check (Impress/Influence) (Calibers I–V)  
*Additional Rules:* Another example of the gadget system supporting concepts outside super-science.

**Watch, Garrotte:** This highly useful assassination weapon houses a spool of wire around the inner case, the end usually disguised as a false button or knob. Near future versions may utilize monofilament wire to sever rather than choke.

*Housing:* Common Item (typically a watch)  
*Mechanism, variant 1:* Garrotte (Caliber I miniaturised Weapon pick) or laser attack (Calibers I–V miniaturised Weapon pick)  
*Additional Rules:* None

**Watch, Laser:** A perennial favourite, this gadget has saved the life of many an agent. It should be emphasised that this item is usually a *tool*, not a weapon – or so the home office says.

*Housing:* Common Item (typically a watch)  
*Mechanism, variant 1:* Skill check (Athletics/Smash) (Calibers I–V), skill boost (Security/Disable) (Calibers I or III), battery life boost (Calibers I–III); alternately, laser attack (Calibers I–V), battery life boost (Calibers I–III)  
*Additional Rules:* None

**Wardrobe Malfunction:** Sometimes sudden, inexplicable humiliation is enough to get the job done. One push of a button and with a harmless flash, the wearer's entire ensemble vanishes, leaving them stark naked. For best effect, use in crowded areas away from podiums.

*Housing:* Common Item (clothing)  
*Mechanism:* Self-destruct (Calibers II or IV), remote control (Caliber II)  
*Additional Rules:* None

*Alias:* 'The Abduction' written by J.J. Abrams, Alex Kurtzman-Counter and Roberto Orci.