# Impossible Missions

## A free espionage role playing game by Tom McGrenery

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# Introduction

*Impossible Missions* is an espionage role-playing game based especially on a certain well-known TV series of the late 1960s. In it, players take on the roles of agents from the Impossible Missions Force (IMF) - a crack government organisation employed only when all other routes have failed.

# Inspiration

TV - Mission: Impossible, The X-Files, The Man from U.N.C.L.E., Moon Over Miami

Films - Mission: Impossible, M:I 2, Topkapi, The Italian Job, any Bond film, The Sting, Bullitt (although presented from the other side, this is typical IMF-style).

Books - The Complete Mission: Impossible Dossier, any book of illusion-style magic tricks, The Care of Time by Eric Ambler, Virtual Light by William Gibson

# Organisation

The IMF is constructed along the cell structure. The ordinary members of the cell (three or more) will know the other members by name, and little or nothing more. This is for your own safety.

The team leader, who may or may not be a field agent, will receive instructions from a drop-point designated via a telephone call. Except in the rarest of circumstances, this will be the only contact any of the team will have with higher command. Some team leaders will have more than one team under their control. This is to be avoided where possible, but may in some cases be the only option. Again, the only IM agents known to an operative will be those within his own cell. For all you know, yours may be the only cell in the IMF.

The IMF is different to most intelligence organisations in that, once your orders have been given, there are no required procedures for your fulfilment of the mission. Use whatever means you deem necessary. Success is all that matters.

# Missions

The missions in which the IMF is typically engaged are of an extremely sensitive nature. Therefore, success will almost never come from the barrel of a gun. Subtlety is the IMF's watchword. If the mission could be solved as easily as pulling a trigger, it would have been one of the ordinary government agencies which would have performed it. Bear this in mind.

Due to the constraints placed on IMF missions, and the pressure to avoid an international incident in many cases, planning is of the utmost importance. Make back-up plans for when things do not go as expected. Even the tiniest flaw, especially early on in the mission, can snowball into a disaster of epic proportions.

When in preparation for a mission, always ensure that your plan is based around your team's abilities, not some perceived ideal. A plan that drastically over-extends its

practitioners' abilities is one that will fail. A technical expert cannot be expected to maintain an elaborate disguise merely because the team's master of disguise is on some other business. If the deception using the disguise is very important, and the technical expert is the only operative available to do it, try to find a way to undertake that part of the plan using that agent's skill.

Always back up your cover identities. Without some kind of "impartial" source to verify the integrity of an identity, or detail of identity, you cannot expect a person to believe in that identity.

An excellent example of this occurs in a mission undertaken by an exceptionally successful IMF team. The team required the president of a small South American nation to believe that one of their members (actually 30, and in disguise as a television interviewer) was aged 70, but had achieved her youthful looks through a potent beauty treatment. Obviously, this could not be accomplished simply by having the agent in question say "Oh, incidentally, I may look very young, but I'm actually a pensioner." Instead, another agent removed a local history book from the President's personal library, and replaced it with one which was identical, with the exception that it contained a recently-taken photograph of the "interviewer" agent, with a caption claiming it to be forty years old. Once this was "accidentally" brought to the attention of the President, it formed a perfect back-up to the idea of the agent's advanced age, since it was assumed to be a book which the President had owned for a long time. All that was required after that was for the President to see the agent in question in her "natural" state (actually the work of make-up) and the deception was complete.

# Characters

Characters in Impossible Missions are defined by five attributes (descriptive statistics which all people have), and myriad skills (learned aptitudes which a person does not automatically possess).

### Attributes

The five attributes are as follows (abbreviations in parentheses):

*Agility (AGL)*

This attribute is used when speed, dexterity or grace are required. Actions using Agility might include running quickly, dodging a falling rock or swerving to avoid a car crash.

*Strength (STR)*

Covers brute strength and endurance. Uses of Strength might include running for a long time, lifting a large rock or resisting the damage from being hit by a car.

*Perception (PER)*

Perception is the attribute which governs a character's alertness and awareness. Examples of using Perception are hearing faint running footsteps, noticing an unusual

rock or memorising a car's number plate as it speeds away from an accident.

### Intelligence (INT)
This describes both academic knowledge and knowledge of the world. Using Intelligence, a character could work out how long it would take him to run to the nearest town, identify a particular kind of rock, or know what kind of car he was looking at.

### Charisma (CHA)
Charisma is a character's social ability. Charisma could be used to persuade a fugitive not to run away, tell which geologist is lying about his find, or lead a strike in a car factory.

Each attribute has a rating, from 1 to 6, higher numbers being better. At the time of creation, a character has 17 points to divide between his attributes.

## Skills
Theoretically, there is no limit as to how high a skill rating may go. However, starting characters may have no skill at a level higher than 5. Also, a starting character may not have a skill rating higher than that of the skill's related attribute. The related attribute is listed alongside the skill in brackets. Where two related attributes are given, you may use whichever is higher.

Starting characters have 20 points to spend on skills.

## Skill List
### Awareness (PER)
Awareness is usually rolled by the GM, to see if a character spots something at least partially hidden, or unobtrusive.

### Computers (INT)
Covers the use, design and programming of computers. Often used in conjunction with Electronics (for hardware).

### Cooking (PER)
The ability to create pleasing meals.

### Demolitions (AGL/INT)
The ability to make and set explosives effectively. This is a dangerous skill to use - failure can sometimes result in severe injury.

### Disguise (PER)
Disguise is used when you want to make someone look like someone else. When creating a disguise, make a Disguise roll. The result is the disguise's Quality. If detailed information on the person mimicked is available, add 1 to the Quality. To see through a disguise, a character must make an Awareness roll with a difficulty equal to the disguise's Quality.

### Drive (AGL)
The ability to drive ground vehicles. Ordinary driving does not usually require a roll - only chases, bad weather and other adverse conditions cause enough of a problem to make a Drive roll necessary.

### Electronics (INT)
Covers the design, implementation and repair of electronic devices.

### Etiquette (PER/CHA)
The ability to blend in with, and appear pleasing to, society. Important at Central American embassy functions.

### Fighting (STR/AGL)
Fighting covers all combat which does not involve a projectile weapon. The base difficulty to hit someone in a fight is 1, plus any successes they may have obtained by dodging. To dodge, a character takes an action and makes an AGL roll.

### Foreign Language (INT)
A measure of fluency in a language other than your mother tongue. All Impossible Missions player characters are assumed to be able to pick up enough of a foreign language for each mission, but where extra fluency is required, this skill is used. One language must be picked each time this skill is bought. Special Rule - When speaking in a foreign language, the character's player must adopt an appropriate accent (this usually means a slightly dodgy Eastern Bloc accent).

### Forgery (PER/INT)
The ability to make counterfeit documents. The result of a Forgery roll is the item in question's Quality. The Quality is the difficulty for any Awareness roll to spot its falsity.

### Guns (AGL)
This skill is used when operating any kind of missile weapon. In addition to any dodging (see Fighting), the base difficulty of any Guns roll is determined by range. At Point Blank range (3 metres or less), the difficulty is 0. At Short range (The listed range for the weapon) it is 1. At Long range (twice that listed) it is 2, and at Extreme range (four times that listed), it is 4.

### History (INT)
Knowledge of history. That's it. More useful than it sounds.

### Intrusion (AGL/PER)
Used for breaking into things, such as houses, banks, safes, embassies - you know the drill.

### Manipulation (CHA)
Persuading others to do what you want. The difficulty level is the subject's PER.

### Maths (INT)
Advanced mathematical knowledge.

### Mechanics (INT)
Used for the design and manufacture (and sometimes use) of mechanical devices.

## Medicine (INT)

The ability to diagnose and treat physical ailments. When you are trying to heal someone, roll Medicine. The result is the number of wound levels removed. Emergency first aid suffers a -2 modifier to the result. The time taken for the healing process is up to the GM.

## Mimicry (PER)

See Disguise above. However, Mimicry is used to impersonate the mannerisms, voice, etc. of a person, rather than their looks. Mimicry is often used in conjunction with Disguise.

## Performance (PER/CHA)

This skill governs a character's showmanship, from introducing a conference to playing a musical instrument. A speciality should be picked when this skill is bought. Activities outside this speciality but within Performance suffer a -2 penalty to the roll's result.

## Photography (PER)

The ability to take clear, accurate and aesthetically pleasing photographs or films. Can be used for surveillance purposes.

## Pilot (AGL/PER)

When this skill is bought, you must decide which specialisation your character has - Ships, Boats, Aeroplanes, Helicopters, Spacecraft, etc. Only this type of vehicle can be piloted using this skill. Any other type requires another Pilot skill, or defaulting to an attribute.

## Politics (INT)

Covers the knowledge of the political process.

## Psychology (PER/INT)

An understanding of the human mind. This skill may be used to determine a person's feelings, neuroses, whatever.

## Science (INT)

Governs knowledge of a field of science. Upon taking this skill, the player must choose some appropriate speciality, such as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Biochemistry, Astrophysics, Cybernetics, etc. Other specialities must be bought as separate skills.

## Sincerity (CHA)

Sincerity is used whenever a character wants someone to believe that they feel other than they do. Uses include telling a convincing lie, acting and other subterfuge.

## Stealth (AGL/PER)

Used when a character wishes to be undetected. Examples include walking silently, camouflage, etc.

## Survival (STR/INT)

The ability to keep oneself alive under adverse conditions. Applies equally to most types of terrain (though not, say, the surface of the Moon).

## Actions

When a character wants to do something, they may be required to make a skill or attribute roll. Just roll a number of ordinary, six-sided dice equal to the relevant skill or attribute number. Count up the number of dice that score 4 or more - this is the roll's result. If the result is greater than or equal to the difficulty level, the action has succeeded.

### "What if I don't have that skill?"

Easy. Use the related attribute instead, but the difficulty level goes up by one. You may always default to an attribute if you want.

## Time

When lots of things are going on at once, you may wish to split up time into "turns" - small segments of about five seconds each. Everyone gets one action or passion per turn. An action can be whatever the GM decides is one discrete "thing". A passion, obviously, means you don't do anything.

Time is also split into two categories - Prep Time and Mission Time. Prep Time is where you get ready for the mission. Mission Time is when you're actually in the field. Why this is important will become apparent later.

### Doing more than one thing at once

Okay, so I lied to you above. You can take two or more actions in one turn, or at the same time if you're not using turns. For every extra action you take, 1 is added to the difficulty of every action.

## Damage

Sometimes, characters will get hurt. The source of the damage is given a damage rating. When a character takes damage, that character rolls their STR. The result of this is subtracted from the damage rating. If this leaves anything, that number of dice are rolled.

The highest dice in the damage roll is the result. If this is a 6, roll that dice again and add the second roll to the first. If more than one die comes up 6, roll each, taking whichever is higher.

Then apply the damage result to this chart:

| Roll | Effect | Wound Level |
|------|--------|-------------|
| 1-3 | Flesh wound (no penalties) | 1 |
| 4-6 | Light wound (+1 difficulty on all rolls) | 2 |
| 7-9 | Serious wound (+2 difficulty) | 3 |
| 10-11 | Deep wound | 4 |
| 12 | Dead | 5 |

Wound levels are cumulative. Thus if a character suffering from a flesh wound subsequently takes a light wound, his health goes to having a serious wound.

If a character using guns took an action to aim, or a character doing damage in some other way has a large

amount of control over his victim, he may alter the number rolled on the above chart up or down by 2. Consecutive actions spent aiming may add 1 each time to this amount, up to a maximum of 5.

Oh, yes. You may have noticed that any hit whatsoever can potentially kill a character. You may well want to avoid violence in this game.

### Armour

Being armoured consists of traditional armour, as well as being otherwise protected. When a character is armoured, they receive an Armour Rating. This AR is added to their dice in STR rolls to resist damage. That's it.

*Damage Ratings*

| Occurrence | Damage |
|---|---|
| Punch/Kick | STR/2 |
| Knife/Club | (STR/2)+1 |
| Sword | (STR/2)+2 |
| Bow and Arrow | (STR/2)+2 |
| Crossbow | 5 |
| Pistol | 5 |
| Sniper Rifle | 7 |
| Shotgun | 6 |
| Assault Rifle | 8 |
| Submachine Gun | 6 |
| Falling | 1 per 5 feet |
| Catching Fire | 4 per turn until extinguished |
| Hit by car | 1 per 5 mph |
| In car crash | 1 per 10 relative mph |

### Guns

Please note that this detail is mainly for flavour. Impossible Missions isn't a gun-intensive game. Play Cyberpunk if you want that. Or, better still, Feng Shui.

| Name (Type) | Range | Ammo | Action |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ruger Blackhawk (pistol) | 15m | 6 | Revolver |
| Glock 17 (pistol) | 15m | 17 | Semi-auto |
| MAS FR-F1 (sniper rifle) | 120m | 10 | Bolt-action |
| SIG-Sauer SSG2000 (sniper rifle) | 120m | 4 | Bolt-action |
| Mossberg Model 500 (shotgun) | 50m | 6 | Pump-action |
| Luigi Franchi SPAS 12 (shotgun) | 50m | 8 | Semi-auto |
| AK-47 (assault rifle) | 100m | 30 | Selective |
| Beretta Model 90 (assault rifle) | 110m | 30 | Selective |
| Skorpion vz68 (submachine gun) | 20m | 20 | Selective |
| Stor Z84 (submachine gun) | 25m | 25 | Selective |
| Crossbow | 15m | 1 | Single shot |
| Shortbow | 30m | 1 | Single shot |

## Mission Points

Mission Points are little packets of luck or skill that help characters to complete a mission.

Starting characters have 10 points to split between the three categories. These are:

### Insight (or "Phelps") Points

These are spent (usually in Prep Time) to automatically grant the character greater insight, for example to find the easiest way into a building, or discover what motivates somebody.

### Deceit (or "Hand") Points

These are spent, naturally enough, when the character needs someone to be deceived, e.g. for a guard to decide an office doesn't need to be checked, or for an enemy to view the character as a friend.

### Tech (or "Barney") Points

These are spent to provide the character with gadgets. In Prep Time, spending 1 point provides a gadget of "reasonable" size, using normal technology. 2 points are required for an unusually advanced or large gadget. In Mission Time, a Barney Point can be spent to produce a small gadget that the character "just happened to bring along", e.g. tiny motion sensors to tell when a guard is coming.

The use of Mission Points completely circumvents any roll that may have been made.

## Impossible Missions Character Templates

Example characters created using the rules above.

**Concept: Team Leader**
AGL 2, STR 3, PER 4, INT 4, CHA 4
Skills: Awareness 3, Etiquette 2, Foreign Lang. (choose one) 3, Foreign Lang. (choose another) 1, Forgery 2, Intrusion 1, Manipulation 2, Politics 2, Psychology 2, Sincerity 2
Mission Points: Phelps 6, Hand 3, Barney 1
Description: This character co-ordinates the team's efforts and is the mainstay of the mission.

**Concept: Deep Agent**
AGL 2, STR 2, PER 4, INT 3, CHA 6
Skills: Awareness 1, Etiquette 2, Foreign Lang. (pick one) 2, Foreign Lang. (pick another) 2, Intrusion 2, Manipulation 3, Performance 2, Photography 2, Sincerity 4
Mission Points: Phelps 3, Hand 5, Barney 2
Description: This agent goes in first and sets up a cover identity before the rest of the mission commences. When the action starts, this agent works from behind enemy lines.

**Concept: Impostor**
AGL 3, STR 2, PER 5, INT 4, CHA 3
Skills: Disguise 5, Foreign Lang. (select one) 3, Intrusion 3, Manipulation 2, Mimicry 4, Sincerity 3
Mission Points: Phelps 2, Hand 7, Barney 1
Description: This agent takes on the role of other people in order to inveigle himself into the enemy ranks. He sows disorder and confusion.

**Concept: Technician**
AGL 3, STR 3, PER 3, INT 5, CHA 3
Skills: Computers 4, Demolitions 4, Electronics 5,
Mechanics 3, Photography 2, Science (Chemistry) 2
Mission Points: Phelps 2, Hand 1, Barney 7
Description: This agent maintains most, if not all, of the
team's technical needs.

**Concept: Back-up Agent**
AGL 4, STR 5, PER 3, INT 3, CHA 2
Skills: Demolitions 3, Drive 2, Electronics 3, Fighting 3,
Foreign Lang. (designate one) 3, Guns 2, Pilot (designate
type) 1, Survival 3
Mission Points: Phelps 3, Hand 2, Barney 5
Description: This agent helps out the others with their
jobs, but his most important time is when things go
wrong. When this occurs, the back-up agent has the
support skills to get the team out of harm's way.

# Equipment Catalogue

A list of stuff you might want to use. None of these are
'gadgets'. Players must invent these for themselves.

*Audio Bugs*
Tiny microphones with radio transmitters. Batteries last
several days. Range about a quarter of a mile.

*Audio/Video Bugs*
As Audio Bugs, only bigger and transmit pictures as well.

*Biohazard Suit*
A plasticy overall thing complete with boots and gloves.
Oh, and a gas mask. Provides full protection from
poisonous gases, bacteria, whatever.

*Briefcase Pistol*
A pistol built into a briefcase. Neat, eh? Difficulty of
shots go up by 1, but otherwise is  the same as a normal
pistol.

*Bug Detector*
A device that detects radio transmissions. Range about ten
feet.

*Bullet-proof Case*
An Armoured briefcase (AR 2). Good for protecting vital
documents.

*Camouflage Clothing*
Adds 1 to result of Stealth rolls when in appropriate
terrain for camouflage worn.

*Electronic Lockpicks*
A small set of tools used to bypass electronic card or
keypad locks.

*First Aid Kit*
A set of bandages, ointments and so forth. Use of a first
aid kit in an emergency reduces the result penalty to -1.
Can only be used twice before it needs replenishing.

*Flak Vest*
Armour Rating 2. Not concealable.

*Gas Mask*
A mask, which filters out toxic gases. Reduces field of
vision.

*Geiger Counter*
A hand-held gauge that measures levels of radiation.

*GPS*
This is a portable device that receives information from
satellites comprising a Global Positioning System. This
gives the unit's precise geographical co-ordinates.

*Hands-Free Radio*
A concealable radio unit. The wearer has an earphone in
one ear and the microphone on his lapel. Used by
presidential bodyguards and the like. Voice-activated
on/off switch.

*Headset Microphone*
A set of earphones with integral microphones. These
microphones face forwards, enabling the wearer to hear
more clearly. Using these reduces difficulty of hearing
Awareness rolls by 1. This only applies if the sound is in
front of the wearer.

*Infrared Camera*
A camera which takes pictures in the infrared spectrum.

*Infrared Goggles*
A pair of goggles that allow the wearer to see in the
infrared spectrum. The wearer sees a clear monochrome
image of his surroundings in any conditions, provided
there is a source of IR light.

*Infrared Torch*
A torch which emits infrared light. When used in
conjunction with IR goggles or cameras, the IR torch
provides the same amount of light as a normal torch, but
is undetectable to humans without the necessary
equipment.

*Jammer*
Can jam radio frequencies.

*Kevlar Vest*
Concealable body armour. AR 3.

*Laptop Computer*
A portable computer. Comes with case and modem.

*Laser Eavesdropper*
The laser eavesdropper fires a low powered laser beam.
When pointed at a window, the laser can read the
vibrations caused by sound striking the glass. This
enables it to reproduce the sounds inside the room for the
benefit of the wielder. It must be kept very still, and has a
10km range.

*Laser Sight*
A low-power laser that projects a small red dot on whatever the gun it is mounted on is pointing at. When used alongside an aiming action, a laser sight reduces the difficulty of a Guns roll by 1.

*Lockpicks*
Small bits of metal used to open locks without the key.

*Lockpick Gun*
A pistol-shaped thing that is plugged into a lock. It picks the lock automatically. Usually only used by police. Treat the gun as if it had a level 1 Intrusion skill, but only for picking locks. Doesn't work on electronic locks.

*Micro Camera*
A really small camera.

*Mobile Phone*
Just a cellular phone. Still, handy sometimes.

*Nightvision Goggles*
These amplify existing light, enabling the wearer to see in all but total darkness. Unfortunately, they also restrict the wearer's peripheral vision.

*Radiation Suit*
A lead-lined set of overalls which protects its wearer from harmful levels of radiation. It is fully filtered and enclosed.

*Radio*
This is a big, powerful radio that is kept stationary. Range about 100 km.

*Satellite Link*
A portable satellite dish that allows its user to send and receive signals to and from an orbiting satellite.

*Scrambler*
Attached to a radio transceiver, the scrambler allows encrypted messages to be sent. These messages will only be understood if the receiver has the same setting on his scrambler as the sender. Unscrambling takes about ten minutes without the correct unit, and a difficulty 3 Computers roll.

*Shotgun Microphone*
A parabolic microphone with a cone-shaped listening area. It is very sensitive over long distances and can be used to pick out what one person in a crowd is saying.

*Silencer*
A silencer can be attached to any semi-automatic or automatic firearm. When this is done, an Awareness roll must be made to notice the gunshot. The difficulty is 1 for every 5m away the listener is.

*Starlight Camera*
A camera that intensifies visible light, allowing it to take pictures in darkened conditions. Total darkness will still disable it, however.

*Starlight Scope*
Used when there is minimal light. Works as per a standard telescoping sight but takes no account of lighting conditions.

*Starlight Telescope*
This telescope intensifies light in the visible spectrum, allowing its user to see up to 14 miles away in minimal light. Monochrome images only.

*Tape Recorder*
A high-quality recorder with the ability to record from many different sources (good for use with bugs).

*Telescope*
Lets you see a long way. Range depends on how much you spend. 10 miles is good.

*Telescopic Sight*
A telescopic sight reduces the apparent distance to a target. The Range of any use of Guns with a scope is reduced by one band, down to a minimum of Short.

*Thermo Graphic Camera*
A camera which takes pictures in the heat spectrum. Red equals hotter, blue equals colder.

*Torch Mount*
A mall torch that attaches to the barrel of a gun. It is wired to the trigger. As long as you keep your finger on the trigger, the light stays on.

*Tranquilliser*
A drug used to sedate the target. Once the tranquilliser has been introduced into the target's body (dart guns are the most fun way to do this), he must succeed in a STR roll every five minutes. The difficulty is 0 the first time, 1 the next, and so on. When he fails, he falls unconscious for half an hour.

*Underwater Camera*
A waterproofed camera.

*Video Camera*
Of the sort used by professionals. Also available are the unusual variants as for a still camera.

*Video Recorder*
As for a tape recorder, only with images and sound. Good for use with video bugs.

*Wiretap*
A small electronic device that can be attached to a phone line. The user can then eavesdrop on any telephone conversation transmitted through that wire.

*Wiretap Detector*
A device which scans a phone line to see if it's being tapped. It only indicates the presence of a tap, not its location or ownership.

## GM's Guide

Impossible Missions requires a very different adventure format to most RPGs. Due to the constraints of the genre, it is almost impossible to run a game on the fly. A freeform scenario, such as escaping from a compromised safe-house, might be managed, but other than that, you should follow these guidelines for presenting a mission. The best way to illustrate the process is to show an example mission. These sections are boxed.

### The Tape

Kick off Prep Time with the basic mission briefing. Props are especially good to have here. Find interesting photos of people and present them to the players as the major non-player characters (NPCs).

If you have a tape-recorder you can put the mission briefing on, so much the better. Also, if there is a team leader, try to include that agent's name in the briefing.

> "Good morning. The man you are looking at is Jean-Jacques Poiccard, an international arms dealer. He has recently stolen from this country a specimen of a new and lethal chemical weapon - Antronin. He plans to sell this specimen to this man - General Borograv, head of the Ruritanian army's biochemical weapons facility.
>
> Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to prevent General Borograv from obtaining the Antronin.
>
> As always, should you or any of your IM force be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions.
>
> This tape will self-destruct in five seconds."

As you can see from the example above, the briefing should contain only the barest bones of the mission. It is up to the players in Prep Time to research the rest of the mission.

### Prep Time

Prep Time is used to plan the mission. To this end, you should work out the 'perfect' way to accomplish the mission. Be warned, the players will almost never actually use this method. It is still an important step, as it allows you to work out the mission Hooks. Hooks are the little pieces of information that allow the plan to be worked out. Incidentally, make sure every player has a notepad and pencil. They'll need it - if they forget the plan, they'll be in real trouble.

To decide on the Hooks, look at your perfect solution and figure out how the agents find out what they need to know, and which of these things help them accomplish the mission. Make a list of the Hooks. Some will require Phelps points to be spent on them to discover. These are the very arcane Hooks that are difficult to discover, but help enormously. A few should be free - that is, if the players ask about them in the right direction, just give them the snippets.

A Hook that was free would be, for exmple, "What time does the museum close?", while one costing a Phelps point might be "What time does the guard change on the museum's priceless exhibit?"

During Prep Time, the players may ask any number of questions of the GM, representing their characters finding things out. Try to guess what questions they may ask and prepare for them, but even if they come up with something unexpected, give them an answer. Be prepared, however, for them to exploit a weakness in a quick decision.

If the players are being really dense and don't come up with a plan after (say) half an hour, give them a few pointers. Bear in mind that half the fun of this game is in the intricate planning, so let them dawdle a bit when they want to.

While we're on the subject of intricate planning, you should be doing some too. It's a heavy workload, but if you have the time, actually do write down how long it takes for guards to do their rounds, how many sets of keys there are to the safe, who has them, etc. It can really be worth it once you get into Mission Time.

> The Perfect Solution :
>
> The agents exchange General Borograv's medicine with a tranquiliser, which also makes him feel very ill. This leaves him bed-ridden for the duration of the mission. When Poiccard arrives at the General's country villa for the exchange, they "ambush" him "unsuccessfully", making him paranoid about agents in the field after the Antronin.
>
> An agent in the house, masquerading as a doctor, tell Poiccard that he may not see the General, but if he will wait a few hours, the General may be well enough to speak to him.
>
> As Poiccard waits in the villa, agents "accidentally" reveal themselves in the surrounding hills - a figure here, the flash of sunlight on glass there, making him feel trapped. The 'doctor' increases his fears by telling him he thought he saw someone, too.
>
> The 'doctor' tells Poiccard by evening that the General is still unwell, but he should be better by morning. Poiccard is quite welcome to stay the night. If Poiccard tries to leave, his car has "broken down". The 'doctor' tells him they'll call someone in the morning.
>
> Poiccard is still reluctant, saying he is afraid his 'valuables' will be stolen. The 'doctor' tells him that he can use a safe in the house, and that he can put in his own combination if he wishes. A camera hidden in a painting in Poiccard's room reveals his combination. Unfortunately for Poiccard, the rug on which the safe rests conceals a trapdoor. An agent opens the trapdoor, takes Poiccard's safe with the Antronin inside, and

replaces it with one that is identical, except that the canister within holds nothing but WD40.

When the General gets up in the morning, the tranquiliser having worn off, he is less than impressed by Poiccard's display."

Go through each part of the solution, finding the Hooks. Then deicde how much each Hook will cost in Phelps points. Some Hooks will cost another kind of point as well as Phelps - this is for highly specialised knowledge. Use them sparingly.

General Borograv needs painkillers every day for his joints (0 pts)
General Borograv buys his medicine from a local chemist's every Monday. (1pt)
The General's usual doctor is on holiday for the next two weeks. (1 pt)
Jean-Jacques Poiccard has mild paranoia. (1 pt)
Poiccard has no other buyer lined up for the Antronin than the General. (1 pt)
The guest bedrooms at the General's villa are on the ground floor (0 pts)
Every room on the villa's ground floor contains a trapdoor. (1 pt)
The General has a painting by Monet hanging in every room of the house (0 pts).
The General has a bodyguard of six Ruritanian Fusiliers. (0 pts)
The General has twenty servants at the villa (0 pts)
The General does not like people to see him when he is ill - it shows he has a weak side (1 pt).
Poiccard has a fear of being killed while travelling (1pt).
The design of the Antronin canister (0 pts).

Simple, really. Where there is no clear evidence to suggest a course of action in the solution, make one up.

*The Setback*
Nothing ever goes according to plan. Not only do the players have every opportunity to screw things up through their own stupidity, but sometimes things happen that they didn't plan for. You shouldn't over-use this device, but players can't plan for everything.

Hearing that the General is ill (whether this is true or not), Captain Undaate comes from the local garrison to visit the General. He demands to see him, and is curious about both Poiccard and any agents that are at the villa.

*Other Preparation*
Don't forget that you can spend Hand and Barney points in Prep Time too. Allow players to fabricate disguises, forged documents and weird gadgets before they go into the field, but after they've made their plans.

This mission doesn't require much by way of technology or disguise. The only things players might want would be - camouflage fatigues and other army gear for the "ambush", fake ID for the 'doctor', a replica Monet print, a safe identical to that in the house, and a canister like that

containing the Antronin.

Don't forget to detail the NPCs.

Jean-Jacques Poiccard, international arms dealer
AGL 2, STR 2, PER 3, INT 4, CHA 4
Skills: Etiquette 3, Guns 2, Manipulation 4, Politics 2, Science - Chemistry 2, Sincerity 3

General Borograv, elderly soldier
AGL 1, STR 2, PER 2, INT 3, CHA 4
Skills: Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Fighting 2, Guns 4, Manipulation 4, Survival 3

Captain Undaate, loyal officer
AGL 3, STR 3, PER 2, INT 3, CHA 3
Skills: Awareness 2, Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Fighting 3, Guns 3, Manipulation 2, Survival 3

Ruritanian Fusilier, military drudge
AGL 3, STR 3, PER 3, INT 2, CHA 2
Skills: Awareness 1, Drive 2, Fighting 2, Guns 3, Survival 2

That's it. Now it's into

**Mission Time**
This is where the plan gets put into action. My only pointers here are to keep track of two things- time (both real and game time) and people (where they are and what they're doing). Do this and your games will run like clockwork. If only.

Villa set-up:

The Fusiliers patrol a circuit round each floor, passing any one point on their route (the details of which are up to you) every fifteen minutes. The guard changes every hour. There are always two fusiliers on duty at any one time (three during the day - the third is at the gate). The villa is surrounded by hills covered in mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland. Everyone in Ruritania speaks Russian.

**Wrapping Up**
At the end of a mission, you may well want to distribute experience points. The base formula I use for this is as follows (though you may completely disregard it- that's your prerogative):

Successful mission - 1 pt
Used Mission Points well - 1 pt
Exceptional role-playing - 1 pt
Good Plan - 1 pt

That's it. Experience points are spent as follows - to improve a skill (or buy a new one), spend experience points equal to the new rating of the skill (ie. if increasing a skill from 1 to 2, pay 2 points). For attributes, pay twice the new rating of the attribute. Don't forget, attributes can't go above six. For Mission Points, pay twice the new rating of that category.