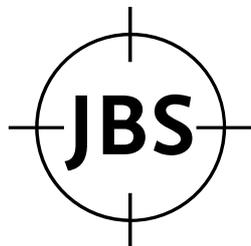


The Hero with Mad Skills

James Bond and the World of Extreme Sports

DAVID M. PEGRAM

In the 2007 Matchstick Productions film, *Seven Sunny Days*, professional skier and BASE jumper Shane McConkey created a near shot-by-shot remake of the James Bond ski chase from *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977). The original featured stuntman Rick Sylvester (as James Bond) skiing off the top of Mount Asgard, in Canada, to what appears to be certain death. But, in the midst of freefall, Sylvester kicks off his skis and then opens a Union Jack parachute, in what has become one of the “most iconic” scenes in the cinematic history of James Bond (Ajay Chowdhury qtd. in Murphy 2013). In *Seven Sunny Days*, McConkey’s jump is more daring. As he flies off the edge of the cliff (shot in Norway, rather than Canada), he completes three full somersaults in midair before deploying his chute, in a demonstration of how far extreme sports had come in the thirty years since the Sylvester’s jump. The recreation of Sylvester’s stunt was McConkey’s homage to the cinematic moment that inspired him the most: “That was the coolest stunt I’d ever seen,” he recalled, crediting Sylvester’s jump for giving him the idea to sky dive and BASE jump in the first place (McConkey 2013). That a James Bond film should have such an influence on a skiing “legend” (Blevins 2009) suggests, perhaps, a significant connection between the Bond franchise and the world of extreme sports. On the surface, the connection is purely convenient, a means by which action and narrative suspense is created within the films



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(it is no wonder, for instance, that the 2002 spy film *XXX* featured an extreme athlete, played by Vin Diesel, being trained as a secret agent). But extreme sports plays a deeper role in the Bond films, more generally, as I will argue. This article presents the case that James Bond's extreme athletic and technical skills are a significant contributing factor to the film audiences' perception of the character as an archetypal male hero.

James Bond has always been a unique case when it comes to archetypal theory, due, in small part, to the largely unexplored connection between writer Ian Fleming and psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Carl Jung. Before writing his first Bond novel, *Casino Royale* (1953), Fleming translated into English one of Jung's lectures on the alchemist Paracelsus, having received written permission from Jung himself to do so. The reason for Fleming's interest in this obscure lecture – the translation of which was never published – is open to considerable debate. However, Philip Gardiner has suggested that Fleming, like Jung, took a particular interest in the concept of alchemy, or the transmutation of base material to something more precious, as a way of understanding the apotheosis of the human soul (2008, 70). Gardiner argues that James Bond's physical travail throughout the films figuratively embodies the apotheosis of man: "Is he not tortured before he can then reunite and be reborn?" (71), he notes, referring to the process by which Bond is often physically tortured, his body put through grueling punishment, before he ultimately defeats his oppressors and absconds with the girl. (This pattern is most noticeable in Martin Campbell's film of *Casino Royale* [2006]. Directly following the scene of LeChiffre's assault on Bond's genitals, Vesper Lynd eludes to feeling "reborn" at the sight of Bond. The suggestion, here, is that Bond has undergone a tortuous transformation from near-castration to apotheosis, in which his masculinity is figured as the site and object of this transformation). But Bond can also be seen as an embodiment of certain Jungian ideas: as a spy, he is a man living in the "shadows," struggling to achieve self-actualization due to unresolved childhood trauma (*Skyfall* 2012). If Jung were to analyze Bond, he would likely reach the same conclusion that Vesper Lynd does in the film *Casino Royale*: that Bond is an orphan with several deep-seated complexes. More importantly, however, Bond functions as a Jungian archetype, as a mythic hero who borders on the superhuman. According to Jung, what humans seek in a "hero" is a superman, a "quasi-human being" who symbolizes the ideas, forms, and forces which "grip and mould the soul" (1976, 178). The archetypal hero, like other archetypes, manifests itself in "myth and fairytale" (1969, 4). Traditionally, Jung explains, the hero's objective is to overcome evil or "the

monster of darkness” (1969, 167). This may explain why Anthony Horowitz, author of the Bond continuation novels *Trigger Mortis* (2015) and *Forever and a Day* (2018), suggests that Bond “can only be understood and appreciated in the context of myth and legend” (2008, n.p.). Bond is a modern version of Joseph Campbell’s traditional hero, a figure with “exceptional gifts” (2008, 29) who battles “fabulous forces” until a “decisive victory is won” (23). Bond also represents in Campbell’s terms an “eternal” or “universal” figure, a “source through which society is reborn” (15).

In recent years, the concept of the archetypal hero has become intertwined with that of the archetypal warrior. In some circles, the terms “hero” and “warrior” are synonymous. For instance, Carol S. Pearson suggests that courage and the motivation to defeat one’s enemy are specific traits of the warrior archetype (1989, 18). This corresponds to Herbert Sussman’s concept of the warrior, as one who displays “physical courage” and “martial prowess, especially with hand weapons such as the sword, developed through long training” (2012, 16). In both cases, the traits once attached to the hero have now been attached to the warrior. Thus, to all intents and purposes, James Bond is both archetypal hero and modern warrior. However, Bond’s brand of heroism extends beyond a mere physical prowess. Lisa Funnell and Klaus Dodds argue that part of Bond’s appeal is the “privilege” with which he makes his way through the world: “He can move, act, and perform; gain access to spaces, places, and resources, and use his intersectional and social capital in ways most people cannot” (2017a, 1). Bond is also appealing because he is “attractive, suave, courageous, and self-confident,” qualities that we “easily recognize and admire” (Allison and Goethals 2011, 32). Michael Dirda seems to agree, describing Bond as “debonair” and “cosmopolitan.” Dirda further suggests that what is different about Bond is his ability “to perform even the most difficult task with flair, grace, and nonchalance” noting that he “always looks cool” (2008). Indeed, men admire Bond’s coolness so much that websites such as “Bond Lifestyle” and “The Bond Experience” offers buyers the opportunity to style themselves after Bond, with options to purchase items of clothing, gadgets, and other accessories. Among the items featured on the “Bond Lifestyle” website is the fitness equipment that Bond uses in *Skyfall* and the brand of swimming trunks Bond wore in *Casino Royale*, reminding the viewer that Bond can be viewed just as much as an athlete as he can a spy. Indeed, in addition to skiing, which he performs during number of his cinematic outing, Bond exhibits a mastery of many different sports, including golf (in *Goldfinger* [1964]) and fencing (in *Die Another Day* [2002]). It is also, perhaps, unsurprising that Daniel Craig once

said of English footballer, Steven Gerrard that “[he] would make a good Bond” (Chase 2012). Given that athletes often demonstrate warrior-like qualities through acts of “courage, discipline, and skill” (Goodman et al 2002, 381), and that sport is one of the primary arenas in which men establish or perform a masculine identity (Messner quoted in Robinson 2008, 40), it would seem to follow that Bond, as an icon of British masculinity and, simultaneously, a parody of its fragility, should be an adept sportsman, as both Bond and sport have crystallised within the popular imagination certain ideas of what it means to be masculine, or to be a man. Like many athletes, the character of James Bond (not to mention the actors who have played him on screen) has influenced the socially discursive role of heroism and the ways in which heroics is conceived within the cultural imaginary (Creedon 1994, 4). Bond’s links to extreme sports, then, offer a means by which such heroics are interrogated and, as is often the case, reinforced.

The question of what exactly constitutes an “extreme” sport is one that is open to interpretation. In general, though, two important criteria are followed: firstly, the activity must pose a serious risk of injury or death if the equipment or the participant fails; secondly, the participant is primarily facing off against laws of nature, particularly gravity. Using these criteria, activities such as scuba diving, hang gliding, and rock climbing would be included in the category of extreme sport. So too would freestyle motocross (FMX), rallycross, air racing, and high-altitude sky diving. As Funnell and Dodds point out (2017b, 1), James Bond is an accomplished extreme athlete, and his acts of courage, discipline, and skill are usually displayed in tandem with his performance of an extreme sport or with extreme risk-taking. This is unsurprising, as James Bond is a gambler. When the reader is first introduced to the character in the novel *Casino Royale*, we see him within the “smoke and sweat of a casino” (2012, 1), where winning and losing, according to Bond, “was one’s own fault. There was online oneself to praise or blame” (41). It is also no surprise that Bond’s introductory scene in the film *Dr. No* (1962), the first Bond film in the series, is set at a baccarat table. Indeed, Bond’s penchant for gambling and for taking risks (both calculated and uncalculated) can further be seen in *Thunderball* (1965, playing baccarat opposite Largo), *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971, craps), *Octopussy* (1983, backgammon), *The Living Daylights* (1987, blackjack), and *Casino Royale* (poker). In each case, Bond shows that he is willing to take risks, and, ultimately, his skill (or luck) usually allows him to overcome the odds of whatever situation he finds himself in. But no matter how skilled Bond may be at a poker table or on a ski slope, disaster is always a potential outcome. Loic Jean-Albert, one of the inventors of the modern wingsuit, pro-

fesses that “[s]kill can never eliminate risk” (quoted in Chalmers 2014, 54). However, it seems that in Bond’s case, it does. Risk-taking has value in the Bond films precisely because of its association with masculinity, or with performances of masculinity. Research suggests that men are more prone than women to engage in risky behaviors (Byrnes et al 1999, 377) and that testosterone might be a factor in this (Apicella et al, 2008). Furthermore, Kay and Laberge have concluded that risk-taking is commonly understood as a signifier of toughness (quoted in Laurendeau 2008, 297). Taking this into consideration, it is no wonder that Bond is viewed as “an iconic representation of modern masculinity” (Hoxha 2011, 193).

But there is more to Bond’s risk than its associations with gender politics or his performance of masculinity. Fearlessness is one of Bond’s primary characteristics. Death does not seem to concern or faze him. In the film of *Casino Royale*, Bond tells M, rather matter-of-factly, “I understand that Double-0s have a very short life expectancy,” an acknowledgement which helps the viewer to situate Bond’s self-awareness and his status as a warrior. According to Moore and Gillette, “[w]hat enables a Warrior to reach clarity of thought is living with the awareness of his own imminent death. The Warrior knows the shortness of life and how fragile it is” (1990, 82) – a comment which chimes with Bond’s frequent recklessness and risk-taking. When Bond is in pursuit, he voluntarily risks his life while utilising skills that he has acquired through (what we presume to be) years of training: skiing, BASE jumping, and hang-gliding, to name a few. Bond’s role as aggressor is tied to the ease with which he adopts the risk necessary to master and employ these skills in the line of duty. This is very much in line with Moore and Gillette’s understanding of the warrior as taking an “offensive” position, one who advances aggressively, as Bond does, rather than remaining defensive or reactionary (79). That the Bond films fuse extreme sports and the warrior archetype in its presentation of Bond as an aggressive risk-taker is understandable, given that many of his most dangerous activities are associated with military exercises, particularly scuba diving and sky diving, and given his experience and technical skill as a former royal Navy Commander.

Bond is first presented as an extreme athlete in the film *Goldfinger* (1964), when, in the opening sequence, he is seen in scuba equipment emerging from the water (before famously stripping off his wet suit to reveal a freshly-pressed white tuxedo jacket). However, it is not until the next film, *Thunderball*, that Bond is seen to actively participate in this extreme sport, when his skills as a scuba diver are put to the test. Unlike the opening of *Goldfinger*, in which Bond is seen swimming along the surface of the water, his dives in *Thunderball* are not casual

excursions: he flirts with danger when searching the hull of Emilio Largo's yacht (for signs of stolen nuclear missiles), swimming with sharks (while investigating the stolen Vulcan bomber airplane), and participating in an underwater battle between Largo's men and Navy SEALs. In each instance, Bond's dives are a voluntary risk, but he nevertheless takes the offensive. At the time of *Thunderball's* release, popular television shows such as *Sea Hunt* (1958-61), *The Aquanauts* (1960-61), and *Assignment: Underwater* (1960-61) had already enjoyed successful runs earlier in the decade, and the craze for scuba diving had reached its popular apotheosis at the end of the 1950s, when *Sports Illustrated* featured it on its cover twice, in both 1958 and 1959. While the Bond films certainly have been known to appropriate popular trends in contemporary culture, the opposite is also true: *Thunderball's* scuba diving scenes in turn have left a lasting impression on the sport, inspiring those who practice it. For instance, the scene in which Bond is shown to roll backwards into the water from the edge of his boat has now become standard divers' maneuver known as the "James Bond Entry" or the "James Bond Roll." Diving enthusiasts have even created videos for YouTube showing themselves attempting to replicate this maneuver, to varying degrees of success ("Fail Compilation"). Moreover, the prop of the Vulcan bomber plane which Bond dives down to in the film remains to this day on the sea floor, just off the west coast of New Providence Island, in the Bahamas, alongside another mock-up airplane prop from the non-Eon-produced James Bond film, *Never Say Never Again* (1983), which was a remake of *Thunderball*. Together, these props are known as "The James Bond Wrecks," and the site on which they are located has become a popular location for divers. Bond's enthusiasm for water sports may also explain why he is not only an expert scuba diver but also an accomplished water skier, which can be seen in *Licence to Kill* (1989) when he water skies behind a taxiing water plane, as well as a surfer, which is seen in the opening sequence to *Die Another Day*. In the latter sequence, Bond and two other operatives surf the waves towards a North Korean air base – which, in reality, was filmed in Peahi on the north shore of Maui, in Hawaii, with extreme surfers Laird Hamilton, Dave Kalama, and Darrick Doerner completing the stunt work. Peahi (also fittingly known as "Jaws") is notorious among the surfing community for having some of the world's largest and most dangerous waves. According to professional surfer Shane Dorian, "[t]he worst-case scenario at Jaws is definitely death" (qtd. in Gilman 2016).

But Bond's extreme sporting pursuits are not confined to the ocean; in plenty of other instances, Bond is shown to have proficiently mastered a variety

of extreme sports on land and in the air, too: he hang glides to get a better look at Kananga's estate in *Live and Let Die* (1973); completes a high altitude sky dive (HALO jump) in *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997); climbs the face of a Las Vegas hotel penthouse (a sport known as buildering) in *Diamonds Are Forever*; and scales a cliff on his way to a monastery hideout in *For Your Eyes Only* (1981), in another stunt performed by Rick Sylvester. Perhaps the most spectacular of Bond's on-land extreme sports, though, is the bungee jump he undertakes from the top of a Russian dam at the beginning of *GoldenEye* (1995). The jump was filmed at the 720-foot high Contra Dam in Switzerland and performed by British stuntman Wayne Michaels. Today, tourists can do the "James Bond Bungee Jump," a commercial phenomenon which might go some way to support the argument that human exposure to risk-glorifying media leads to risk-taking inclinations (Fischer et al 2011, 701). Since *GoldenEye's* release, over 20,000 thrill-seekers and Bond fans alike have made the jump (Linning 2014)

Of course, Bond is also a master of various motor vehicles – although cars and motorcycles are not ordinarily considered to be instruments of extreme sports, unless they are used across multiple surfaces and/or for high-speed jumps. In *The Man with the Golden Gun* (1974), Bond's high-speed pursuit of Scaramanga through the streets of Bangkok and its surrounding countryside leads to one particularly memorable such stunt: a 360-degree barrel-roll or spiral jump over a river. As Bond backs up the car (an AMC Hornet, no less) in preparation for the jump, he asks his disapproving passenger, the buffoonish Sheriff Pepper, if he has "[e]ver heard of Evel Knievel." By December of 1974, when *The Man with the Golden Gun* was released in cinemas, the American daredevil and stunt performer Evel Knievel had been performing motorcycle jumps for nearly ten years, and was just three months shy of attempting a rocket jump over the Snake River in Idaho. Though Knievel is often regarded as the inspiration for this particular Bond stunt (most likely because of Bond's line), he never actually completed an automobile flip. In actuality, the inspiration for the barrel-roll jump came from "The American Thrill Show", a travelling stunt show organised by Jay Milliger. In 1970, Milliger purchased the rights to the barrel-roll stunt from a team of Calspan engineers who had designed it using a computer simulation programme. In December 1972, Milliger premiered "stunt driving's most difficult feat" ("The Beat of Life" 1979) at the Houston Astrodome, with driver Bruce Canton in an AMC Javelin. Afterward, the stunt became a staple in Milliger's travelling show. It is not until the non-Eon Bond production, *Never Say Never Again*, in 1983, though, that Bond first performs his own Knievel-like motorcross stunts,

and not until *Tomorrow Never Dies*, in 1997, that the stunt first appears in an official Eon Bond production. Moreover, it is not until *Quantum of Solace* (2008) that Bond is first seen using motorcross skills to pursue (rather than evade) an enemy. In this brief scene, Bond uses a stolen motorcycle to perform a jump from a Haitian loading dock onto a boat moored nearby. In the next film, *Skyfall*, Bond's use of motorcross is much more extensive, as the pre-title sequence shows him pursuing a suspect through the streets of Istanbul and through and above the Grand Bazaar. On his bike, Bond races up staircases, completes a two-story jump through a broken window, and cuts across narrow rooftop ledges. As with the hiring of professional surfer Laird Hamilton for the opening sequence of *Die Another Day*, the Bond producers continued the practice of utilising the expertise of extreme sportsmen and -women to achieve the best possible effects for the films' stunt sequences. For *Skyfall*'s bike chase, producers hired professional FMX rider Robbie Maddison, one of the most highly proficient extreme bikers, thus further solidifying the connection between Bond and the world of extreme sports. Maddison has been called a "modern day Evel Knievel" ("Robbie Maddison" 2014). In 2007, on the 40th anniversary of Knievel's famous (and ill-fated) Caesar's Palace fountain jump, Maddison successfully attempted his own Las Vegas stunt: a 322-foot jump that set a world record. The following year, he completed a daring 96-foot vertical jump to the top of the Arc de Triomphe at the Paris Hotel. Despite these accomplishments, Maddison still considered the stunt work for *Skyfall* to be "challenging" (quoted in Parsons 2012), an admission which not only vindicates the producers' choice of hiring professional extreme sports stars to complete the films' taxing stunts, but one which also suggests that the Bond films are deliberate in their efforts to push the boundaries of what is achievable for even the most daring of sportsmen and -women.

Research suggests that BASE jumpers, those who parachute or fly with the aid of a wingsuit from a cliff edge or other fixed structure, for instance, participate in such risky activities because of the "adrenaline rush" they receive from it, which is often accompanied by a feeling of uniqueness and the sense that they are "cheating death" (Allman et al 1999, 239-40). The thin line between life and death which is often thread in this and other extreme sports Bond practices is known colloquially as the "edge." According to Steven Lyng, the term "edgeworker" is used to describe a professional extreme sports star who tests the limits or boundaries of their own performance (1990, 859). Edgeworkers lay claim to possessing the ability to maintain control over a given situation that verges on complete chaos. This transcends activity-specific skills such as those needed to

drive a car, ride a motorcycle, or fly a plane, and pertains specifically to those situations most people would regard as entirely uncontrollable (859) – such as free-falling from a plane or from a great height. From this standpoint, James Bond might be considered an edgeworker, especially since he must often maintain control of situations under greater duress than that of most extreme athletes. Bond’s ability to evade bullets, diffuse bombs, and navigate his threatening environs, all the while offering a casual and disarming quip, suggests that he “transcends the everyday and becomes a heroic individual” (Held and South 2006, 13), one who is capable of performing great feats whilst under the most intense scrutiny and pressure. In these instances, Bond evinces two important skills which demonstrate his efficacious as an edgeworker: he is able to make “split-second decisions and act decisively” (Moore and Gillette, 82-83). When Bond’s pursuits involve motor vehicles, his adaptability and split-second decision-making become all-the-more complicated by the need to operate and control a machine. In this way, Bond’s personal ingenuity must necessarily be complemented by his technical skills, and his ability to make use of machinery and equipment he happens upon.

In *Tomorrow Never Dies*, for example, Bond is chased through the streets of Saigon on a motorcycle, while also handcuffed to the Chinese spy, Wai Lin. At one point, the two are trapped on the top floor of a building, and Bond must make an improbable escape. He accelerates the bike (a BMW MC 1200), crashes through a window, soars over the rotating blades of a hovering helicopter, and lands on a rooftop below – a stunt which takes a great deal of preparation (and computer graphic ingenuity), but one that is presented to the viewer as the manifestation of Bond’s quick improvisational skills and his ability to control vehicles and machinery to his own end. In this sense, the motorcycle he uses to make this jump becomes the object by and through which Bond projects his own escape; it becomes an extension of himself. Similarly, in the pre-title sequence of *Quantum of Solace*, Bond is pursued by car across multiple terrain. This chase is reminiscent of the types of racing seen in rallycross, with many tight turns and an emphasis on the driver’s steering and skill, as opposed to the vehicle’s outright speed. In the same film, Bond is chased through the air by plane, and his maneuvering of the plane he has commandeered is also reminiscent of the many turns and ascents accomplished by pilots at Air Flying events, such as those at the Red Bull Air showcases. This chase culminates in Bond and Camille’s swift exit from the crippled plane by parachute – a stunt which has its counterpart in a number of earlier Bond films, including *The Living Daylights*, when Bond parachutes out

of a Land Rover as it plummets off a cliff edge, and *Moonraker* (1979), when Bond escapes a speed boat via hang glider, as the boat veers over the edge of Iguazu Falls in Brazil. In both of these instances, Bond must act quickly and instinctively to avoid certain death, but each instance also solidifies the idea that the Bond films “push forward spectacularity over credibility and increase the overall level of suspension of disbelief” (Savoye 2013, 85).

There is no greater example of this “spectacularity” than in *Die Another Day*, when Bond uses the cowling and parachute from a rocket-powered speed car to skim the surface of an avalanche-induced wave in Iceland, speed flying his way over and around numerous icebergs. Not surprisingly, the scene has become one of the more laughable moments in the Bond franchise. *Variety* film critic Todd McCarthy called it “patently absurd” and “a total turn-off” (2002). Nevertheless, it is another example of Bond’s ability to escape certain death and do so using recognisably extreme athleticism. Various forms of such speed flying have existed in one form or another since the seventies: for example, speed flyers have traditionally used small parachutes to glide down slopes (such as hillsides) in close proximity to the ground. A combination of running, jumping, and gliding propels the participant down the slope and across other surfaces. By 2000, around the time that *Die Another Day* was in pre-production, the concept of speed flying had been modified to incorporate skiing; participants now glided along the surfaces of steep slopes, using skis to help them navigate, in what is known as “speed gliding.” The poor special effects aside, perhaps *Die Another Day* was simply ahead of its time, conceptually, for four years after the film was released, Francois Bon and Antoine Montant completed a death-defying speed-glide down the north face of the Eiger, a mountain in the Bernese Alps – a feat that was very similar to Bond’s speed-glide across the waves and ice.

That Bond’s tsunami ride in *Die Another Day* is similar to real-life stunts performed on ice is not at all surprising: Bond’s extreme athleticism is usually connected to his mastery of skiing – and for good reason. As CNN contributor Chris Murphy has noted, “[g]iven that skiing is a high-octane preserve of the lone wolf, often associated with glamorous and sophisticated circles, it is inconceivable Britain’s premier spy would be at a loss on the slopes” (2013). The first Bond film to feature skiing was *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* (1969). The first ski sequence is the result of Bond’s escape from Blofeld’s headquarters, which takes him down one of Murren’s ski runs at night. At one point, Bond loses a ski and must continue skiing on one leg through rugged terrain and between trees. In the second ski segment, Bond is joined by love interest Tracy di Vincenzo, and the two must

not only cope with Blofeld's henchman carrying loaded weapons, but also an avalanche that Blofeld has set off to entrap them. Upon the film's release, one critic noted that the ski chases were "breakneck, devastating affairs" (Weiler 1969). Most of the chase sequences were filmed by Willy Bogner Jr., a former alpine skier who had recently turned his attention to filmmaking. Actor George Lazenby, who played Bond in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, called Bogner "one of the most spectacular skiers I've ever come across" ("Inside *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*" 2000). Bogner shot many of the film's ski action, often using a hand-held camera and skiing backwards in order to capture the perfect shot. Bogner's work on *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* effectively demonstrated the importance of capturing the "performance" of skiing on film; it was one thing to show the characters skiing, but, as Bogner's work illustrates, it was quite another altogether to capture so artfully and thrillingly the sport of skiing itself. Indeed, Robert Sweeny has noted that Bogner's camera work on this film not only elevates skiing from an extreme sport to a form of performance art, but that the "violent, reckless activities" of the sport itself reinforce Bond's masculinity (2008, 143-44). There is certainly a link made in the Bond films between Bond's skiing ability and his prowess as a hyper-masculine male figure; Bond's performance on the slopes mirrors his performance as a physically able man. Furthermore, Hoxha notes that Bond's masculinity is created, in part, not only by the stunts and special effects, but also through the "technical effects" of cinema, such as "camera angles and line of vision" (194). In essence, the ski sequences in *One Her Majesty's Secret Service* serve as examples of a "gender performance", as defined by Judith Butler (1990, 25), that shape James Bond's persona as a masculine "icon of adventure" (Lindner 2003, 1). Bond's performance on the slopes is thus analogous to his performance of masculinity.

This analogy can be seen most clearly in *The Spy Who Loved Me*, the pre-title sequence of which juxtaposes Bond's amorousness (he is first seen in bed with a woman) with his capacity to perform extreme stunt work on the ski slopes – culminating in the aforementioned, iconic BASE jump performed by Rick Sylvester. Bond's sexual performance is tied to his physical abilities on the slopes, which, in turn, is directly tied to his national heroics (as his parachute unfurls to reveal a giant union jack pattern). In a retrospective piece on the film, Gerardo Velaro suggests that this scene is "the most exciting ski chase ever filmed," with Sylvester's stunt described as a "stunt for the ages where the possibility of death can be felt all over" (2014). Similarly, in *For Your Eyes Only*, Bond's skiing abilities are further put to the test, in an extensive, seven-minute chase se-

quence. The chase was filmed in Cortina, using some of the facilities from the 1956 Winter Olympic Games. Again, Willy Bogner was employed to enliven the ski-chase sequence. For Bogner, the challenge was to “top the sequences” he had completed on previous Bond films (“Inside *For Your Eyes Only*” 2000). At first, Bond is pursued by assassins, some of whom are on motorcycles, and he performs the customary jumps and spins to elude them. But then the chase breaks from convention: whereas the ski sequences in *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service* and *The Spy Who Loved Me* occur in remote locations, the chase in Cortina occurs in and around groups of tourists. After trying to ditch his pursuers by making a run down a ski jump, Bond has to dodge not only bullets but a beginners’ ski class and a crowded restaurant deck. In *A View to a Kill* (1985), Bond uses both skis and a snowboard, which not only adds variety to the chase sequence but demonstrates yet again Bond’s instinctive ability to adapt to his circumstances and to contemporary popular trends (the use of The Beach Boys’ “California Girls” over the chase sequence suggests the cultural connection between snowboarding and surfing, both of which were growing in popularity at the time). Finally, when Bond takes to the slopes in *The World Is Not Enough* (1999), he and Elektra King are chased by parahawks, motorised buggies that have been fitted with parachutes to provide lift. The parahawks add a new dimension to the otherwise familiar ski chase, during which grenades are dropped on Bond from above. During each of these moments, Bond’s coolness under pressure is indicative of his abilities as an edgewalker, as one who literally walks the line between the ski slopes and the many precipices of the mountains he assails.

In 2015, skier and BASE jumper J.T. Holmes completed a speed glide down the Eiger, similar to the run made by Bond and Montant. But Holmes upped the ante in one main regard: he skied off the edge of the Eiger and then parachuted down to the bottom of the mountain range – in much the same way that Shane McConkey did in his 2007 recreation of Rick Sylvester’s jump in *The Spy Who Loved Me*. During the jump, Holmes was fitted with a GoPro camera that captured every second of his run. GoPro’s technology has led to the development of point-of-view cinematography the likes of which Willy Bogner Jr. could only dream of when he filmed the ski chases for *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*. That GoPro’s corporate slogan is “Be a hero” is further indicative of the overlay between extreme sports and heroic masculinity. Holmes’ run down the Eiger was featured on a *60 Minutes* segment entitled “Taking on the Eiger,” during which Holmes makes reference to what he views as the two mindsets a BASE jumper possesses: “There’s the Evel Knievel, which is kinda kamikaze [...] And then

there's the James Bond. And Bond is composed and dialed". When segment host Anderson Cooper asks Holmes "which one are you?", Holmes is seen to smile with delight and answer without hesitation: "I'm Bond" ("Taking on the Eiger"). In this moment, Holmes inadvertently aligns James Bond with the desires of the extreme athlete – to *be* James Bond – once again underlining the mutual, symbiotic nature of the relationship between the thrill-seekers who desire to emulate Bond and the figure of Bond himself, who is not just a thrill seeker but a thrill promoter.

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