The problem of lucky action

It is widely accepted that intentional action is intimately bound up with exercising control over one’s action. In fact, prominent causal theories of action devote a lot of energy to characterizing what it is to exercise sufficient control for an agent to act intentionally. But it is noteworthy that one can be very lucky and yet successful in performing some intentional actions. As being lucky undermines the exercise of control, this puts considerable pressure on the idea that intentional action and exercising control are as intimately intertwined as they are widely thought to be. I suggest a way to solve the problem of lucky intentional action. This requires relativizing the kind and degree of control that is required for intentional action to the act-type that the agent is attempting to token in her intentional action. This solves the problem of lucky action, I claim, but it does so at the cost of calling the reductive ambitions of causal theories of action into question.