

WILD SIDE

THE CYBERPUNK SOURCEBOOK FOR THE STREET

BENJAMIN WRIGHT • MIKE ROTHER

WILDSIDE

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DEDICATIONS

To our Parents: Thanks for your support, encouragement and understanding (the four years of college education didn't hurt either).

Mike Pondsmith: Thanks for *Cyberpunk*, and for giving a bunch of wet-behind-the-ears college sophomores a chance, even if it took them four years to say thank you.

Jeff Hexter: You've always been there for us and we'd never trade you in for a better model.

Derek Quintanar: Thanks for keeping us sane during all the crises.

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Dylon Abend: To the CyberGreek - the Canary Island award.

Thierry Pons: Thanks for the good research.

Mike MacDonald: A hell of a guy, but not much of a radar detector.

Thanks to all our friends at the University of Rochester and the URSGA, for the good gaming and great times.

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INSIDE WILDSIDE

By Benjamin Wright
and Michael Roter

Welcome to the Wildside. You now stand at the gates to the underground... and as you meander through the pages of this book, you'll get the inside story on all the deals, scams, rackets and lowlife that make up *Cyberpunk*. The Wildside is the prototypical gray area, where nothing is simple and desperation meets decadence. This is the stuff of the Street, the dominion of the Fixer and the essence of *Cyberpunk*. The Wildside has always been at the beating heart of the dark future, but so far it has been relegated to half-written codes. It has never been thoroughly explored and the systems which make it work have never been named, published or explained. Until now. Why? Because it's not pretty. This stuff is grungy, nervous, illegal, confused, jury-rigged, menacing, claustrophobic and disturbing. Most people want glamour and action out of their endeavors, but there's more to *Cyberpunk* than that. If you don't want to know, don't bother reading any further. Like they say on the Strip, "If you're squeamish, don't kick the beach rubble."

Some people may wonder why this book is needed; after all, everyone knows that street lowlife is an integral part of *Cyberpunk* and Fixers are just thieves and drug dealers, right?

No. Although it may be perfectly clear to your average *Cyberpunk* player that the underground exists, some players fail to grasp all its subtleties and nuances. The underground can be difficult to understand, therefore some role-players try to gloss over its intricacies. Now they no longer have to. Despite the number of Fixer characters that are out there, less has been said about this role than any other in the *Cyberpunk 2020* rules. Perhaps the greatest misunderstanding of these characters is the equa-

tion of Fixers with thieves; this is a bland oversimplification. Fixers are the brains behind the operation while others perform the hands-on dirty work. Fixers work with people; they are go-betweens, masterminds and negotiators. If they can, they hire other characters to carry out missions. This fact should help highlight the important idea that Fixers are everywhere: they own the nightclubs of which edgerunners are so fond; they buy restricted weapons and sell restricted cyberware, and perform all the other duties which keep covert capitalism alive. Beyond this, Fixers have many roles in the "legitimate" world, managing the careers of big-name Rockers, acting as political favor brokers, hiring themselves out as media talent scouts and even being your local Avon lady! No matter what position they fulfill, Fixers can add new dimensions to a *Cyberpunk* game.

New dimensions are what *Wildside* is all about. *Cyberpunk* may be full of creative violence, but it is a world where bullets can cut through armor like cheesecloth and dying is not only inevitable—it's easy. In such an environment, combat is an obstacle, not a goal. There are so many role-playing possibilities in *Cyberpunk*

Well Excuse Us! Some gamers may feel betrayed when they see that this supplement refers back to the pages of other *Cyberpunk* products. We feel that it is impossible to work in a vacuum. If we weren't able to include references to other supplements, we would be wasting space with repeated information... the only other option would be to make every game a standalone product with no supplements at all. Besides, most of these references are small and are only included for your convenience, usually to provide extra information. If you don't have one of the supplements which Wildside mentions, there are many options:

- 1) Go buy the supplement.
- 2) Borrow a friend's copy of the supplement.
- 3) Go to your local gaming store and look up the reference.
- 4) Make it up. Who's gonna know?

2020 that it seems a shame to devote all attention to corporate extractions and gang shoot-outs. As the authors of this book, we hope you will use its information to expand your gaming horizons. If you think freelancing for the corporations as a black ops team-for-hire is tough, try establishing and running a successful smuggling operation! Go ahead and try anything and everything in your games... play a heavily-sculpted exotic Fixer, run a gambling casino as a Bookie-business adventure, or set up a "raid & trade" campaign in orbit. Why not do all three? Check out the edges of *Cyberpunk* and see what you find.

Don't be trapped by any bounds, even the ones in this book. If there's something you don't like, ignore it. If certain rules would walk all over your character or campaign, pretend you never read it or rewrite it to suit your purposes. After all, rules should always be secondary to role-playing. However, be warned that even one rules change in your game can disrupt the balance of a campaign. Like all things in *Cyberpunk*, a pebble thrown into a pond makes waves. Technologies used to make weapons will trickle down to the general public and show up in toasters, so remember the law of cause and effect: every effect has its CAWS.

WHAT MAKES A FIXER TICK?

The following was downloaded from the files of the School of Human Sciences at the University of Hamburg in Germany. It contains excerpts from a lecture by the University's Dr. Jürgen Zielger, Chief of the Department of Modern Anthropology and Sociology, entitled "Behavior Patterns of the North American Fixer." The lecture was given at an international Sociology conference held at the Matsuyama Institute of Higher Learning in Osaka, Japan. This written transcript was translated from German—audio, video and braindance recordings are also available.



"...North America has always been noted for its high crime rate. A natural but nonetheless disturbing result of this century-long trend of civil rebellion is the evolution of the so-called Fixer. For those members of my audience who may not be familiar with the term, a Fixer is an independent street operative who specializes in the exchange of goods—any type of goods, be they found, bargained for or stolen—for as great a profit margin as possible. This lecture centers mostly on the North American Fixer, but as my honorable hosts can attest, the phenomena is not limited to the Americas ..."

"...The subject of interview #23 hails from Quebec. He has spent the last 15 years on the streets of Providence, RI, in the northeastern region of the United States of America. During his career, #23 has been a drug dealer, a trafficker in stolen goods and, most recently, a trader in highly illegal software. #23 has

told me of his desire to move into the smuggling of stolen human organs.

Interviewer: "Your life style must be very exciting? I've seen many popular braindance chips and videos highlighting life on the American streets."

#23: "Exciting? I don't think you really understand what's here, gato."

I: "Please, enlighten us."

#23: Excitement - yeah, I guess. If living in a sewer is your idea of excitin'.

I: "But, what about the romance, the adventure?"

#23: "Adventure? You want the fairy tale, don't you? Here's the facts: every day you wake up and look over that edge, into that hole in yourself, and every day it grows a little bit larger..."

I: "How clever, an allusion to Nietzsche, no doubt."

#23: "Who?"

I: "Excuse me. You were saying something about a 'hole.'"

#23: "Yeah, the hole in your heart

— the hole in your soul."

I: "What exactly does that mean?"

#23: "It means that one day you walk up and put 3 nines in a brat who ain't even old enough to shave just 'cause he's in your way."

I: "nines?"

#23: [makes a gun out of his hand by pointing with his index finger and dropping his thumb] "Bang!!"

I: "Uh..."

#23: "The hole, gaijin. It means that soap-opera love is too good for ya now. Best you can hope for is a hot night with some cold fraulein between the sheets ... All shake, man, no heat."

I: "Er.... how is your dinner?"

#23: "Well, I'll say this much, it's not like my usual grub-time."

I: "Why would that be?"

#23: "For once, I don't hafta worry whether the knife or the fork would make a better weapon, if there was trouble..."

