PUTTING THE "RIPPER" BACK IN "RIPPERDOC"
alternative rules for cyberware implanation
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SORRY, WE'RE OUT OF THAT MODEL -

Is cyberware becoming a problem in your games? In character creation, are players pushing characters to the edge of cyberpsychosis and beyond? As the game progresses, are PCs using their ill-gotten gains to load up on everything up to and including Full Conversions?

Cyberware doesn't have Availability Codes. As far as I'm concerned, it should; there's no point to designating a piece of cyberware as "black market" if there are no restrictions on who can purchase it, and no way to tell how hard it is to find on the open market. It's easy to apply Availability Codes to cyberware, and you can use the codes to determine what cyberware players can purchase during character creation. This will vary according to each individual GM's ideas of legality and accessibility in his campaign. Though wolvers might be so popular that every booster on the street sports a pair, they might be illegal enough to require a Rare rating, forcing characters to acquire connections and purchase them during the course of a game rather than starting off with them at character creation.

If you'd prefer not to mess with Availability, you can bring an oft-ignored paragraph of the CP2020 rulebook to bear:

"Each type of cyberwear has a Surgery Code. This code represents the minimum level of medical care requied to install the cyberware, the length of surgical time required, the cost of the surgery, the damage taken in surgery, and the Difficulty of the installation procedure."

- Cyberpunk 2020, p. 75

There's a reason for Surgery Codes, folks, and they become extremely important when a character is getting cyberware anywhere, much less through an underground establishment. My best advice for GMs who'd like to restrict what cyberware their players buy is to USE the Surgery Codes! Apply damage! Make 'em pay for the surgery and the speedhealing drugs afterwards! Have the 'docs roll the Difficulty!

WHY THEY CALL THEM "RIPPER" DOCS -

Which (finally) brings us to the point of this article. While Difficulties are given for each surgery (Negligible is Easy, Minor is Average, etc), nowhere does the book mention what happens if the ripperdoc flubs his Surgery roll. The GM should privately determine the TECH and Med Tech skill of the 'doc performing the surgery. Difficulties are as listed in CP2020, p. 75 and 80. Normal task modifiers apply: if the 'doc is drunk, add +4, if the 'doc's never seen the part you're trying to get him to implant, add +2, if the operation is being performed in the dimly lit back room of a bar with people kibbitzing all around, add +6 (or more!)

Other modifiers also apply, depending on the operating conditions. "Operating Conditions" describes a bunch of factors, like the sterility of the operating environment, the upkeep of the surgical equipment, the ready availability of drugs and revival gear should the patient kick it, etc. Operating conditions can raise or lower the difficulty of an operation and are rated as follows:

Excellent operating conditions = -5 to the total difficulty of the operation.
Good operating conditions = -3 to the total difficulty of the operation.
Average operating conditions = No modifier.
Poor operating conditions = +3 to the total difficulty of the operation.
Horrible operating conditions = +5 to the total difficulty of the operation.

Also, for every level the current operating facility is below the one required, add 3 to the difficulty (equivalent to "Don't have the right tools," from CP2020 p. 42). For instance, wolvers require a "full hospital with surgery center." Attempting to implant wolvers in a "drop-in bodyshop" would increase the difficulty by 6, making it a Very Difficult (26) task -- not impossible for an expert, but tough for the staff of the average on-the-mall clinic.

A couple of examples:

Cyberpsycho goes to a local ripperdoc to have a set of wolvers implanted. When 'Psycho arrives, the "operating room" consists of a filthy pool table under a flickering incandescent lamp. Roaches scurry around the base of the dented anaesthesia canister, and a half-eaten burrito sits cheek and jowl with the scalpels on the instrument tray. The doc's of average ability (+4 Med Tech) and TECH (6), but he's on his fifteenth operation today, and he's damned tired. Horrible Operating Conditions is +5, Tired is +4, drop-in clinic when a full hospital is required is +6, all added to a Major Surgery Code difficulty of 20 equals a full difficulty of 35. Ouch.

On the other end of the spectrum, Golden Boy the Eurosolo checks into an exclusive Swiss clinic to get a cybereye installed. Need we say that the operating room is state-of-the-art? The medtech is legendary (Med Tech +8, TECH 9) and has been scrubbing to Vivaldi for the last half hour. Excellent Operating Conditions is -5 to the total difficulty, dropping it to Average (15). The tech's already got a base 17, so unless he fumbles, Golden Boy's going home with a smile on his face.

WHEN THE DOC'S HAD ONE TOO MANY -

Well, when the 'doc fails his roll, problems result. These range from a simple operation failure ("I'm sorry, sir, but the contract clearly states that there are no refunds,") to nasty side effects ("I'm sorry, sir, but the contract clearly states that the clinic is not liable for malpractice,") to outright death ("I'm sorry, sir, but the release form clearly states that the deceased remits ownership of his organs to the clinic.").

Note that these effects are in addition to normal surgery damage. Which effect occurs could depend on the GMs whim or the amount the 'doc failed his roll by, with each point subtracting 10% from the following table.

01 - 05 :   Death. Once the operation is completed, have the character make a Death Save. If the save fails, the character dies. If the player wants to be pissy, inform him that he went straight to Death State 10 while the surgeon was frantically searching for a clamp. You get what you pay for, chombatta.

06 - 10 :   Cyber-rejection. The character's body refuses to accept the cybernetics. Unfortunately, nobody realizes this until the character is well into his recuperation. 2D10 days after receiving a piece of cyberware, the character must make a BOD Save (roll under his BOD on 1d10, applying wound penalties if he hasn't healed yet!). If the save fails, the character must make a Death Save once per hour until the cybernetics are removed. If the save succeeds, the cybernetic will NOT function normally, the character will NOT heal normally, and he will take an additional 2 points of damage daily until it is removed or the character dies.

11 - 20 :   Major infection. The flesh around the cybernetics is inflamed and painful. Blood poisoning has set in, along with other untoward effects. No additional damage is taken, but normal healing does NOT proceed, and each day REF, BOD, and MA are reduced by one point until the character gets medical attention. If any stat reaches 2, Death Saves due to wound shock, fever, and general debilitation will be required each day. If any stat reaches zero, the character dies. Band-aid type treatment (drug store antibiotics, First Aid) can stabilize the character ONCE for 1D10/2 days, but cannot cure the infection.

21 - 30 :   Permanent and unnecessary scarring. Depending on the location of the implant, certain stats will be affected. Facial implants like cyberoptics or tech hair may reduce ATT by 1D6/2 points, cyberarms could drop REF by the same amount, and cyberlegs would reduce MA.

31 - 35 :   Permanent neural or biochemical side effect causes brain damage. Drop INT, REF, EMP, or TECH by 1D6/2 points, according to the GM's whim or the location of the implant.

36 - 45 :   Chronic pain, which persists until the implants are taken out. A pain editor or the appropriate drugs will temporarily prevent this side effect. Otherwise, increase the difficulty of all tasks attempted by the character by 5. Forever.

46 - 70 :   Operation failure. For some reason, the implant just refuses to take. The character is back where he started, plus surgery damage, less operation costs, and possibly without an important piece of his anatomy (in the case of a cyberoptic or cyberlimb). Refunds are unlikely, although he'll probably retain the cybernetic if he purchased it along with the surgery or supplied it to the clinic for the operation.

71 - 80 :   Temporary but debilitating bruising and swelling. Halve REF, MA, and ATTR until the surgery damage has healed. Note that this is in addition to any other stat penalties incurred by the sugery damage itself.

81 - 90 :   Minor infection. Surgery damage heals at half its normal rate.

91 - 00 :   No serious problems, although the character will suffer from mild soreness and aches until the surgery damage has healed. Subtract 1 from REF