## Synthesis and biophysical characterization of oligonucleotides modified with O2'-alkylated

## RNA monomers featuring substituted pyrene moieties

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## ELECTRONIC SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

General experimental section	S2
Discussion - synthesis and characterization of 7-NP-PyCH <sub>2</sub> OH (Scheme S1)	S3
Discussion - synthesis and characterization of 7-tBu-1-OMe-5-PyCH <sub>2</sub> OH (Scheme S2)	S6
MALDI-MS of modified ONs (Table S1)	S9
Representative thermal denaturation curves (Figure S1)	S10
DNA-selectivity of <b>B1-B6</b> ONs (Table S2)	S11
Discrimination of singly mismatched RNA by B2 ONs (Table S3)	S12
Discrimination of singly mismatched RNA by B6 ONs (Table S4)	S12
Absorption spectra of V1-V5 and duplexes with cDNA/cRNA (Figure S2)	S13
Absorption spectra of <b>Y1-Y5</b> and duplexes with cDNA/cRNA (Figure S3)	S14
Absorption maxima for U/V/Y-modified probes and duplexes with cDNA/cRNA (Table S5)	S15
Fluorescence spectra of U-modified ON and duplexes with cDNA/cRNA (Figure S4)	S16
Fluorescence spectra of V-modified ON and duplexes with cDNA/cRNA (Figure S5)	S17
Fluorescence spectra of Y-modified ON and duplexes with cDNA/cRNA (Figure S6)	S18
Fluorescence spectra of <b>B2:B5</b> probe duplexes (Figure S7)	S19
Thermodynamic parameters - enthalpy (Table S6)	S20
Thermodynamic parameters - entropy (Table S7)	S21
Additional background discussion regarding the $\Delta G_{rec}^{293}$ term.	S22
Electrophoretograms from annealing of Y2:Y5 or V2:V5 probes with DH1 (Figure S8)	S23
References	S24
<sup>1</sup> H, COSY, <sup>13</sup> C, DEPT, HSQC and HMBC spectra of labels and nucleosides	S25

General experimental section. Analytical grade reagents and solvents were obtained from commercial sources and used without further purification. Petroleum ether of the distillation range 60-80 °C was used. Solvents were dried over activated molecular sieves: THF (3Å); CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 1,2-dichloroethane, N,N'-diisopropylethylamine and anhydrous DMSO (4Å). Water content of anhydrous solvents was checked on Karl-Fisher apparatus. Reactions were monitored by TLC using silica gel plates coated with a fluorescence indicator (SiO<sub>2</sub>-60, F-254) that were visualized a) under UV light and/or b) by dipping in 5% conc.  $H_2SO_4$  in absolute ethanol (v/v) followed by heating. Silica gel column chromatography was performed with Silica gel 60 (particle size 0.040–0.063 mm) using moderate pressure (pressure ball). Evaporation of solvents was carried out under reduced pressure at temperatures below 45 °C. Following column chromatography, appropriate fractions were pooled, evaporated and dried at high vacuum for at least 12h to afford the obtained products in high purity (>95%) as ascertained by 1D NMR techniques unless otherwise mentioned. Chemical shifts of <sup>1</sup>H NMR (500 MHz), <sup>13</sup>C NMR (125.6 MHz), and/or <sup>31</sup>P NMR (121.5 MHz) are reported relative to deuterated solvent or internal standard (80% phosphoric acid for <sup>31</sup>P NMR). Exchangeable (ex) protons were detected by disappearance of signals upon D<sub>2</sub>O addition. Assignments of NMR spectra are based on 2D spectra (COSY, HSQC and, in key instances, HMBC) and DEPT-spectra. Quaternary carbons are generally not assigned in <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectra but their presence was verified from HSQC and DEPT spectra (absence of signals). MALDI-HRMS spectra of compounds were recorded on a Waters Q-TOF Premiere mass spectrometer using 2,5-dihydroxybenzoic acid as a matrix and polyethylene glycol (PEG 600) as an internal calibration standard.

Discussion - synthesis and characterization of 7NP-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH. A reaction sequence entailing Friedel Crafts acylation of 4,5,9,10-tetrahydropyrene, reductive decarbonylation, aromatization, and regioselective Rieche formylation at the 1-position was expected to afford 7-NP-PyCHO, which upon reduction could afford the key label 7-NP-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH (Scheme S1). Two key literature findings motivated our approach: 1) 4,5,9,10-tetrahydropyrene is known to undergo regioselective Friedel-Crafts acylation at the 2-position<sup>S1</sup> (i.e., 7-position in the final label), and 2) Rieche formylations of pyrene are known to occur at the 1-position<sup>S2</sup>; the steric bulk of the 7neopentyl group was expected to prevent formylations at the 6- or 8-positions. Indeed, we were able to proceed as planned and telescoped the first four steps to afford 7-NP-PyCHO in 27% overall yield, which was reduced to 7-NP-PyCHO in 99% yield. The 1,7-disubstituted nature of 7-NP-PyCHO (and the subsequent downstream products) was corroborated by NMR data. Briefly, H6 and H8 appear as two singlets at 8.0-8.1 ppm in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum (establishing 7-substitution), while H2 and H3 appear as mutually coupling doublets (J = 9.2 Hz) at ~8.4 ppm and ~8.2 ppm, respectively. H4/H5 and H9/H10 also appear as coupling doublets. Importantly, crosspeaks between the aldehyde proton (~10.76 ppm) and C2 (~131.3 ppm) and C10a (~131.1 ppm) are observed in the HMBC spectrum (establishing 1-substitution).



Scheme S1. Synthesis of 7NP-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH. Reagents and conditions: (a)  $(CH_3)_3CCOCl$ , AlCl<sub>3</sub>, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0 °C to rt, 2.5 hours; (b) CF<sub>3</sub>CO<sub>2</sub>H, Et<sub>3</sub>SiH, rt, 30 min; (c) DDQ, benzene, reflux, 4 hours; (d) Cl<sub>2</sub>CHOCH<sub>3</sub>, TiCl<sub>4</sub>, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, 0 °C to rt, 3 hours; (e) NaBH<sub>4</sub>, THF, rt, 14 hours. DDQ = 2,3-dichloro-5,6-dicyano-1,4-benzoquinone.

**7-***neo***-pentyl-1-pyrenecarboxaldehyde (7-NP-PyCHO)**. Anhydrous aluminium chloride (3.00 g, 22.6 mmol) from a brand-new bottle was added to an ice-cold solution of 4,5,9,10-tetrahydropyrene  $1^{S3}$  (4.50 g, 22.6 mmol) in anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (60 mL) under an argon atmosphere. Pivaloyl chloride (2.80 mL, 22.6 mmol) was added while maintaining the temperature at 0 °C. After ended addition, the reaction mixture was stirred at 0 °C for 30 min and then at room temperature for 2 h. At this point ice-cold water (80 mL) was added and the mixture extracted with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (150 mL). The organic phase was evaporated to dryness to afford an off-white solid (~3.6 g), which was used in the next step without further purification.

To the crude product from the previous step was added triethylsilane (11.9 mL, 74.4 mmol) and trifluoroacetic acid (9.24 mL, 124 mmol) and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for 30 min, at which point  $CH_2Cl_2$  (80 mL) was added. The organic phase was washed with water (3 × 30 mL), evaporated to near dryness, and the resulting crude purified via

silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether) to obtain a white solid (~3.0 g), which was used in the next step without further purification.

The crude product from the previous step was reacted with DDQ (8.13 g, 35.8 mmol) in refluxing benzene for 4h. Following cooling to room temperature, the reaction mixture was filtered through a celite pad and washed with benzene. The filtrate was diluted with additional benzene (200 mL) and washed with 10 % aq. NaOH ( $3 \times 50$  mL) and water ( $2 \times 50$  mL). The organic phase was evaporated to dryness and the resulting residue purified by silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether) to furnish a white solid material (~2.6 g), which was used in the next step without further purification.

Titanium tetrachloride (2.01 mL, 17.8 mmol) was added dropwise over 1 h to an ice-cold solution of the crude product from the previous step and dichloromethyl methyl ether (1.10 mL, 12.2 mmol) in anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (100 mL). After ended addition, the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for an additional 2 h at which point the mixture was slowly poured into ice-cold water, and extracted with CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>. The organic phase was evaporated to dryness and and the resulting residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography (1-2% EtOAc in petroleum ether, v/v) to afford **7-NP-PyCHO** (1.80 g, 27% over four steps) as a bright yellow solid material.  $R_f = 0.6$  (50%, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> in petroleum ether, v/v); MALDI-HRMS *m/z* 323.1398 ([M+Na]<sup>+</sup>, C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>20</sub>O·Na<sup>+</sup>, Calc. 323.1406); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>):  $\delta$  10.76 (s, 1H, CHO), 9.38 (d, 1H, J = 9.3 Hz, H10), 8.38-8.39 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz, H2), 8.26 (d, 1H, J = 9.3 Hz, H9), 8.19-8.21 (d, 1H, J = 7.8 Hz, H3), 8.16-8.18 (d, 1H, J = 8.8 Hz, H5), 8.03-8.07 (2s + d, 3H, J = 8.8 Hz, H4, H6, H8), 2.95 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 1.02 (s, 9H, (CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>)  $\delta$  193.3 (CHO), 138.8 (C7), 135.6 (C3a), 131.3 (C2), 131.1 (C10a), 131.0 (C9), 130.9 (C5), 130.7 (C5a), 130.2

(C8a), 129.5 (C6), 129.2 (C8), 127.6 (C5a1), 127.3 (C4), 124.9 (C1), 124.6 (C3), 123.1 (C10), 122.8 (C3a1), 50.9 (CH<sub>2</sub>(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 32.5, 29.7 ((CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>).

7-*neo*-Pentyl-1-pyrenemethanol (7-NP-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH). NaBH<sub>4</sub> (0.27 g, 7.19 mmol) was added to a room temperature solution of 7-NP-PyCHO (1.80 g, 5.99 mmol) in anhydrous THF (20 mL) and the reaction mixture was stirred for 14 h. The reaction mixture was then diluted with EtOAc (~100 mL), which was followed by a separation of layers. The organic phase was washed with 10% aq. NaHCO<sub>3</sub> (~50 mL) and brine (~50 mL) and evaporated to dryness. The resulting material was purified via silica gel column chromatography (1% MeOH in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, v/v) to afford compound 7-NP-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH (1.79 g, 99%) as a pale yellow solid.  $R_{\rm f} = 0.5$  (10%, MeOH in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, v/v); MALDI-HRMS *m/z* 325.1555 ([M+Na]<sup>+</sup>, C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>22</sub>O·Na<sup>+</sup>, Calc. 325.1563); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ 8.33-8.36 (d, 1H, *J* = 9.3 Hz, Ar), 8.22-8.24 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.8 Hz, Ar), 8.16-8.19 (d, 1H, *J* = 9.3 Hz, Ar), 8.07-8.13 (m, 3H, Ar), 8.05 (br s, 1H, Ar), 8.04 (br s, 1H, Ar), 5.47 (t, 1H, ex, *J* = 5.7 Hz, OH), 5.24 (d, 2H, *J* = 5.7 Hz, CH<sub>2</sub>OH), 2.91 (s, 2H, CH<sub>2</sub>C(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 0.99 (s, 9H, (CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>CCH<sub>2</sub>)); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) δ 137.3, 135.8, 130.3, 129.9, 129.7, 127.4, 127.3 (Py), 127.0 (Py), 126.9 (Py), 126.7 (Py), 125.2 (Py), 124.4 (Py), 123.9, 123.3 (Py), 122.5, 61.3 (CH<sub>2</sub>OH), 49.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>C(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>), 31.8, 29.3 ((CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>CCH<sub>2</sub>).

**Discussion** – **synthesis and characterization of 7-tBu-1-OMe-5-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH**. A synthetic route to 7-*tert*-butyl-1-methoxypyrene - a late stage intermediate towards 7-tBu-1-OMe-5-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH - and its reactivity in electrophilic aromatic substitution reactions, was previously established in the literature.<sup>S2</sup> Rieche formylation of 7-*tert*-butyl-1-methoxypyrene, followed by reduction of the aldehyde afforded 7-tBu-1-OMe-5-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH as the only isolated regioisomer in 24% yield

over two steps. The 5-position is reactive due to the electron-donating character of the methoxy group.<sup>S2</sup> The substitution pattern for 7-tBu-1-OMe-5-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH was established by structural elucidation of downstream product **2Y**. Briefly, C2 – which is ortho to the methoxy group – appears at high field in the <sup>13</sup>C NMR (~108.5 ppm) and correlates with H2 (~7.7 ppm) in the HSQC spectrum. The proton at the 2-position appears as a doublet (J = 8.5 Hz) that couples with H3 at ~8.18 ppm, which excludes a 1,3-substitution pattern between the methoxy group and the (original) formyl group. H4 – correlating with C4 (~127.4 ppm) in HSQC, which in turn has a cross-peak with H3 in the HMBC spectrum – appears as a singlet in the <sup>1</sup>H NMR spectrum (~8.06 ppm), thus establishing the 1,5,7-substitution pattern and 5-formylation. This assignment is further substantiated by a cross-peak in the HMBC spectrum between C4 and the protons of the OCH<sub>2</sub>-linker at the 5-position (~5.30 ppm).



Scheme S2. Synthesis of 7-tBu-1-OMe-5-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH. Reagents and conditions: (a) Cl<sub>2</sub>CHOCH<sub>3</sub>, TiCl<sub>4</sub>, CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, rt, 2h; (b) NaBH<sub>4</sub>, THF, rt, 18 h.

**7-tert-butyl-1-methoxy-5-pyrenemethanol (7-tBu-1-OMe-5-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH)**. TiCl<sub>4</sub> (2.5 mL, 22.1 mmol) was added dropwise to an ice-cold solution of 7-*tert*-butyl-1-methoxypyrene<sup>S2</sup> (3.2 g, 11.1 mmol) and dichloromethyl methyl ether (1.6 mL, 17.7 mmol) in anhydrous CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> (100

mL). After ended addition, the reaction mixture was warmed up to room temperature and stirred for 2 h, at which point it was carefully poured into ice-cold water. Following extraction with  $CH_2Cl_2$  and evaporation of the organic phase to near dryness, the resulting material was purified by silica gel column chromatography (0-50% benzene in pet. ether, v/v) to afford a crude product (~2.5 g), which was used in the next step without further purification.

The crude product from the previous step was split up into a ~0.5 g and ~2.0 g batch, which were reacted separately in substantially similar fashion. Describing the latter, NaBH<sub>4</sub> (0.27 g, 7.00 mmol) was added in several portions to a solution of the crude product (~2.0 g) in THF (60 mL) and the reaction mixture was stirred at room temperature for ~18 h, at which point aq. NaHCO<sub>3</sub> and CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub> were added. The layers were separated, and the organic phase was washed with brine, evaporated to dryness, and the resulting crude subjected to silica gel column chromatography (0-5% EtOAc in pet. ether, v/v) to afford 7-tBu-1-OMe-5-PyCH<sub>2</sub>OH (0.84 g, 24% combined yield from 7-tert-butyl-1-methoxypyrene from the two batches).  $R_{\rm f} = 0.7$  (2.5%, MeOH in CH<sub>2</sub>Cl<sub>2</sub>, v/v). MALDI-HRMS *m*/z 341.1535 ([M+Na]<sup>+</sup>, C<sub>22</sub>H<sub>22</sub>O<sub>2</sub>·Na<sup>+</sup>, Calc. 341.1517); <sup>1</sup>H NMR (DMSO-*d*<sub>6</sub>): δ 8.31-8.33 (m, 2H, Ar), 8.24-8.26 (br s, 1H, Ar), 8.20-8.23 (d, 1H, J = 8.5 Hz, Ar), 8.10-8.13 (d, 1H, J = 9.0 Hz, Ar), 8.07 (s, 1H, Ar), 7.68-7.71 (d, 1H, J = 8.5Hz, Ar), 5.40 (t, 1H, J = 5.5 Hz, OH), 5.13 (d, 2H, J = 5.5 Hz, CH<sub>2</sub>OH), 4.14 (s, 3H, CH<sub>3</sub>O), 1.55 (s, 9H, C(CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>3</sub>); <sup>13</sup>C NMR (DMSO-d<sub>6</sub>) δ 153.0 (C), 148.6 (C), 134.2 (C), 131.1 (C), 129.4 (C), 126.7 (CH), 125.8 (CH), 124.5 (CH), 124.2 (C), 124.0 (C), 122.6 (C), 121.1 (CH), 120.3 (CH), 118.9 (C), 117.8 (CH), 108.5 (CH), 61.7 (CH<sub>2</sub>OH), 56.1 (CH<sub>3</sub>O), 35.1 (C), 31.6 (CH<sub>3</sub>).

A trace amount of an unidentified impurity with the following signals in the <sup>13</sup>C NMR spectrum was observed  $\delta$ : 126.8 (CH), 125.4 (CH), 125.1 (CH), 121.5 (CH), 117.0 (CH), 108.6 (CH). This impurity did not impede - and was removed during - the subsequent step.

ONs	Sequence	Calc. <i>m</i> / <i>z</i> [M+H]	Found $m/z$ [M+H]
V1	5'-G <u>V</u> G ATA TGC	3039	3039
<b>V2</b>	5'-GTG A <u>V</u> A TGC	2968	2968
<b>V3</b>	5'-GTG ATA <u>V</u> GC	2967	2968
<b>V4</b>	3'-CAC <u>V</u> AT ACG	3039	3039
V5	3'-CAC TA <u>V</u> ACG	3039	3039
Y1	5'-G <u>Y</u> G ATA TGC	3055	3056
Y2	5'-GTG A <u>Y</u> A TGC	2984	2984
<b>Y3</b>	5'-GTG ATA <u>Y</u> GC	2984	2984
Y4	3'-CAC <u>Y</u> AT ACG	3055	3056
Y5	3'-CAC TA <u>Y</u> ACG	3055	3056
Y6	$3'$ -CAC $\underline{\mathbf{Y}}A\underline{\mathbf{Y}}$ ACG	3286	3287

Table S1. MALDI-MS of ONs modified with monomers V or Y.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> For structure of monomers V and Y, see Figure 1 in the main manuscript.



Figure S1. Thermal denaturation curves of V- or Y-modified duplexes and reference duplexD1:D2. For experimental conditions, see Table 1.

Table S2. DNA-selectivity of B1-B6 ONs.<sup>a</sup>

			$\Delta\Delta T_{\rm m}/{\rm mod}$ (DNA-RNA) [°C]			
ON	Duplex	<u>B</u> =	$\mathbf{U}^{b}$	V	Y	
B1 D2	5'-G <u>B</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC TAT ACG		+7.0	+14.5	+9.0	
B2 D2	5'-GTG A <u>B</u> A TGC 3'-CAC TAT ACG		+9.0	+12.5	+11.5	
B3 D2	5'-GTG ATA <u>B</u> GC 3'-CAC TAT ACG		+8.0	+5.5	+11.5	
D1 B4	5'-GTG ATA TGC 3'-CAC <u>B</u> AT ACG		+8.0	+6.0	+4.0	
D1 B5	5'-GTG ATA TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>B</u> ACG		+10.5	+9.0	+7.0	
D1 B6	5'-GTG ATA TGC 3'-CAC <u><b>B</b></u> A <u><b>B</b></u> ACG		+7.3	-	+6.5	

<sup>a</sup> DNA selectivity defined as  $\Delta\Delta T_m/mod$  (DNA-RNA) =  $\Delta T_m/mod$  (vs DNA) -  $\Delta T_m/mod$  (vs RNA). <sup>b</sup> Data from reference S4 are included to facilitate comparison.

Table S3. Discrimination of singly mismatched RNA targets by V2, Y2 and reference strands.<sup>a</sup> V2 and Y2 display less efficient discrimination than D1 or U2, especially when a mismatched rC is opposite of the modified monomer.

			RNA: 3'-CAC U <u>B</u> U ACG				
		_	$T_{\rm m}$	[°C]	$\Delta T_{\rm m}[^{\circ}{\rm C}]$		
ON	Sequence	<u>B</u> =	А	С	G	U	
D1	5'-GTG ATA TGC		26.5	<-16.5	-4.5	<-16.5	
<b>U2</b> <sup>b</sup>	5'-GTG A <u>U</u> A TGC		31.0	-17.5	-3.5	-9.5	
V2	5'-GTG A <u>V</u> A TGC		24.5	-11.0	-2.5	-8.5	
Y2	5'-GTG A <u>Y</u> A TGC		21.5	-9.0	-4.0	-9.0	

<sup>a</sup> For conditions of thermal denaturation experiments, see Table 1.  $T_{\rm m}$ 's of fully matched duplexes are shown in bold.  $\Delta T_{\rm m}$  = change in  $T_{\rm m}$  relative to fully matched DNA:RNA duplex. <sup>b</sup> Data from reference S4 are included to facilitate comparison.

**Table S4**. Discrimination of mismatched DNA targets by **Y6** and reference strands.<sup>a</sup> **Y6**, with two modifications positioned as next-nearest neighbors, discriminates DNA targets with a single central mismatched nucleotide opposite of the central adenosine residue with similar efficiency as reference strand **D2**, but lower efficiency than **U6**.

			DNA : 5'-GTG A <u>B</u> A ACG					
			$T_{\rm m} [^{\circ}{\rm C}]$	$\Delta T_{\rm m}$ [°C]				
ON	Sequence	<u>B</u> =	Т	А	С	G		
D2	3'-CAC TAT ACG		29.5	-17.0	-15.5	-9.0		
U6 <sup>b</sup>	3'-CAC <u>U</u> A <u>U</u> ACG		43.5	-24.0	-17.0	-14.0		
¥6	3'-CAC <u>Y</u> A <u>Y</u> ACG		30.5	-15.0	-12.0	-10.0		

<sup>a</sup> For conditions of thermal denaturation experiments, see Table 1.  $T_{\rm m}$ 's of fully matched duplexes are shown in bold.  $\Delta T_{\rm m}$  = change in  $T_{\rm m}$  relative to fully matched DNA:DNA duplex. <sup>b</sup> Data from reference S4 are included to facilitate comparison.



Figure S2. Absorption spectra of single-stranded probes (SSP) V1-V5 and their corresponding duplexes with cDNA/cRNA. Spectra were recorded at T = 5 °C using each strand at 1.0  $\mu$ M concentration in  $T_m$  buffer.



**Figure S3**. Absorption spectra of single-stranded **Y1-Y5** and their corresponding duplexes with cDNA/cRNA. Spectra were recorded at T = 5 °C using each strand at 1.0 µM concentration in  $T_m$  buffer.

			$\lambda_{\max}[\Delta \lambda_{\max}]$ (nm)								
		<u>B</u> =		Ub			V			Y	
ON	Sequence	_	SS	+cDNA	+cRNA	SS	+cDNA	+cRNA	SS	+cDNA	+cRNA
B1	5'-G <u>B</u> G ATA TGC		350	353 [+3]	352 [+2]	356	360 [+4]	357 [+1]	355	356 [+1]	357 [+2]
B2	5'-GTG A <u>B</u> A TGC		348	353 [+5]	352 [+4]	354	360 [+6]	357 [+3]	355	355 [±0]	355 [±0]
B3	5'-GTG ATA <u>B</u> GC		350	353 [+3]	352 [+2]	355	359 [+4]	357 [+2]	356	357 [+1]	357 [+1]
<b>B4</b>	3'-CAC <u>B</u> AT ACG		350	352 [+2]	352 [+2]	358	358 [±0]	358 [±0]	355	355 [±0]	355 [±0]
B5	3'-CAC TA <u>B</u> ACG		349	353 [+4]	352 [+3]	357	358 [+1]	358 [+1]	356	355 [-1]	357 [+1]

**Table S5.** Absorption maxima in the 340-365 nm region for single-stranded (SS) U/V/Y-modified ONs and the corresponding duplexes with cDNA or cRNA<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Measurements were performed at 5 °C in  $T_m$  buffer using a spectrophotometer and quartz optical cells with a 1.0 cm path length. <sup>b</sup> Data from reference S4 are included to facilitate comparison.



**Figure S4**. Steady-state fluorescence emission spectra of U-modified ONs and their corresponding duplexes with DNA/RNA targets. Spectra were recorded at T = 5 °C using  $\lambda_{ex} = 350$  nm and each strand at 1.0 µM concentration in  $T_m$  buffer. Spectra were previously reported in reference S5 (used with permission from the Royal Society of Chemistry) and are included to facilitate comparison.



Figure S5. Steady-state fluorescence emission spectra of single-stranded probes (SSP) V1-V5 and their corresponding duplexes with cDNA/cRNA. Spectra were recorded at T = 5 °C using  $\lambda_{ex}$ = 350 nm and each strand at 1.0 µM concentration in  $T_{m}$  buffer.



Figure S6. Steady-state fluorescence emission spectra of single-stranded probes (SSP) Y1-Y5 and their corresponding duplexes with cDNA/cRNA. Spectra were recorded at T = 5 °C using  $\lambda_{ex} = 350$  nm and each strand at 1.0  $\mu$ M concentration in  $T_{m}$  buffer.



**Figure S7**. Steady-state fluorescence emission spectra of **B2** and **B5** ONs, the corresponding duplexes with cDNA, and double-stranded **B2:B5** probes with +1 interstrand zipper arrangements of the pyrene-functionalized monomers. Spectra were recorded at T = 5 °C using  $\lambda_{ex} = 350$  nm and each strand at 1.0 µM concentration in  $T_m$  buffer. SSP = single-stranded probe. Probe **V2:V5** displays a broad unstructured band at ~ 490 nm, indicative of a pyrene-pyrene excimer, which requires co-planar stacking of the pyrene moieties. No evidence of excimer formation is observed for **Y2:Y5**, presumably because the 1-methoxy and 7-*tert*-butyl substituents preclude pyrene-pyrene stacking. While it was not pursued in the present study, the excimer signal of **V2:V5** likely could have been used to monitor recognition of isosequential dsDNA targets in a similar fashion as described for other Invader probes.<sup>S6</sup>

			Δ			
Probe	Zipper	Sequence	upper strand vs cDNA	lower strand vs cDNA	probe duplex	∆ <i>H<sub>rec</sub></i> (kJ/mol)
<sup>ь</sup> U1 U5	+4	5'-G <u>U</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>U</u> ACG	-281±4 [+25]	-299±2 [+7]	-279±1 [+27]	+5
<sup>b</sup> U1 U4	+2	5'-G <u>U</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC <u>U</u> AT ACG	-281±4 [+25]	-300±7 [+6]	-248±8 [+58]	-27
<sup>ь</sup> U2 U5	+1	5'-GTG A <u>U</u> A TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>U</u> ACG	-305±1 [+1]	-299±2 [+7]	-244±3 [+62]	-54
<sup>b</sup> U2 U4	-1	5'-GTG A <u>U</u> A TGC 3'-CAC <u>U</u> AT ACG	-305±1 [+1]	-300±7 [+6]	-296±6 [+10]	-3
<sup>ь</sup> U3 U5	-1	5'-GTG ATA <u>U</u> GC 3'-CAC TA <u>U</u> ACG	-270±7 [+36]	-299±2 [+7]	-280±5 [+26]	+17
<sup>b</sup> U3 U4	-3	5'-GTG ATA <u>U</u> GC 3'-CAC <u>U</u> AT ACG	-270±7 [+36]	-300±7 [+6]	-309±4 [-3]	+45
V1 V5	+4	5'-G <u>V</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>V</u> ACG	-278±6 [+28]	-273±3 [+33]	-225±5 [+81]	-20
V1 V4	+2	5'-G <u>V</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC <u>V</u> AT ACG	-278±6 [+28]	-288±28 [+18]	-251±2 [+55]	-9
V2 V5	+1	5'-GTG A <u>V</u> A TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>V</u> ACG	-340±6 [-34]	-273±3 [+33]	-273±4 [+33]	-34
V2 V4	-1	5'-GTG A <u>V</u> A TGC 3'-CAC <u>V</u> AT ACG	-340±6 [-34]	-288±28 [+18]	-291±5 [+15]	-31
V3 V5	-1	5'-GTG ATA <u>V</u> GC 3'-CAC TA <u>V</u> ACG	-289±5 [+17]	-273±3 [+33]	-228±3 [+78]	-28
V3 V4	-3	5'-GTG ATA <u>V</u> GC 3'-CAC <u>V</u> AT ACG	-289±5 [+17]	-288±28 [+18]	-246±3 [+60]	-25
Y1 Y5	+4	5'-G <u>¥</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>¥</u> ACG	-302±2 [+4]	-319±5 [-13]	-273±3 [+33]	-42
Y1 Y4	+2	5'-G <u>Y</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC <u>Y</u> AT ACG	-302±2 [+4]	-317±3 [-11]	-265±4 [+41]	-48
Y2 Y5	+1	5'-GTG A <u>Y</u> A TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>Y</u> ACG	-326±1 [-20]	-319±5 [-13]	N/A	N/A
Y2 Y4	-1	5'-GTG A <u>Y</u> A TGC 3'-CAC <u>Y</u> AT ACG	-326±1 [-20]	-317±3 [-11]	-279±2 [+27]	-58
Y3 Y5	-1	5'-GTG ATA <u>Y</u> GC 3'-CAC TA <u>Y</u> ACG	-275±1 [+31]	-319±5 [-13]	-272±2 [+34]	-16
Y3 Y4	-3	5'-GTG ATA <u>Y</u> GC 3'-CAC <u>Y</u> AT ACG	-275±1 [+31]	-317±3 [-11]	-212±9 [+94]	-74

**Table S6**. Change in enthalpy upon duplex formation ( $\Delta H$ ) and change in enthalpy upon probe recognition of isosequential dsDNA target **D1**:**D4** ( $\Delta H_{rec}$ ).<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>  $\Delta \Delta H$  is measured relative to  $\Delta H$  for **D1**:**D4** = -306 kJ/mol.  $\Delta H_{rec} = \Delta H$  (upper strand vs cDNA) +  $\Delta H$  (lower strand vs cDNA) -  $\Delta H$  (probe duplex) -  $\Delta H$  (dsDNA target). "±" denotes standard deviation. N/A = lack of a clear lower base line prevented determination of this value. <sup>b</sup>Data, previously reported in reference S5, are included to facilitate comparison.

			- <i>T</i> <sup>293</sup> ΔS			
Probe	Zipper	Sequence	upper strand vs cDNA	lower strand vs cDNA	probe duplex	- <i>T</i> <sup>293</sup> Δ <i>Srec</i> (kJ/mol)
U1 U5	+4	5'-G <u>U</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>U</u> ACG	235±3 [-30]	247±6 [-18]	224±1 [-41]	-7
U1 U4	+2	5'-G <u>U</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC <u>U</u> AT ACG	235±3 [-30]	254±6 [-11]	203±8 [-62]	+21
U2 U5	+1	5'-GTG A <u>U</u> A TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>U</u> ACG	251±1 [-14]	247±6 [-18]	204±3 [-61]	+29
U2 U4	-1	5'-GTG A <u>U</u> A TGC 3'-CAC <u>U</u> AT ACG	251±1 [-14]	254±6 [-11]	245±5 [-20]	-5
U3 U5	-1	5'-GTG ATA <u>U</u> GC 3'-CAC TA <u>U</u> ACG	220±7 [-45]	247±6 [-18]	225±5 [-40]	-23
U3 U4	-3	5'-GTG ATA <u>U</u> GC 3'-CAC <u>U</u> AT ACG	220±7 [-45]	254±6 [-11]	256±3 [-9]	-47
V1 V5	+4	5'-G <u>V</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>V</u> ACG	233±6 [-32]	224±3 [-41]	178±5 [-87]	+14
V1 V4	+2	5'-G <u>V</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC <u>V</u> AT ACG	233±6 [-32]	247±28 [-18]	205±2 [-60]	+10
V2 V5	+1	5'-GTG A <u>V</u> A TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>V</u> ACG	285±6 [+20]	224±3 [-41]	233±4 [-32]	+11
V2 V4	-1	5'-GTG A <u>V</u> A TGC 3'-CAC <u>V</u> AT ACG	285±6 [+20]	247±28 [-18]	241±4 [-24]	+26
V3 V5	-1	5'-GTG ATA <u>V</u> GC 3'-CAC TA <u>V</u> ACG	243±4 [-22]	224±3 [-41]	181±3 [-84]	+21
V3 V4	-3	5'-GTG ATA <u>V</u> GC 3'-CAC <u>V</u> AT ACG	243±4 [-22]	247±28 [-18]	203±3 [-62]	+22
Y1 Y5	+4	5'-G <u>Y</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>Y</u> ACG	261±2 [-4]	270±4 [+5]	227±3 [-38]	+39
Y1 Y4	+2	5'-G <u>Y</u> G ATA TGC 3'-CAC <u>Y</u> AT ACG	261±2 [-4]	279±3 [+14]	224±4 [-41]	+51
Y2 Y5	+1	5'-GTG A <u>Y</u> A TGC 3'-CAC TA <u>Y</u> ACG	276±1 [+11]	270±4 [+5]	N/A	N/A
Y2 Y4	-1	5'-GTG A <u>Y</u> A TGC 3'-CAC <u>Y</u> AT ACG	276±1 [+11]	279±3 [+14]	237±2 [-28]	+53
Y3 Y5	-1	5'-GTG ATA <u>Y</u> GC 3'-CAC TA <u>Y</u> ACG	231±1 [-34]	270±4 [+5]	226±2 [-39]	+10
Y3 Y4	-3	5'-GTG ATA <u>Y</u> GC 3'-CAC <u>Y</u> AT ACG	231±1 [-34]	279±3 [+14]	174±9 [-91]	+71

**Table S7**. Change in entropy at 293 K upon duplex formation  $(-T^{293}\Delta S)$  and change in entropy upon probe recognition of isosequential dsDNA target **D1**:**D4**  $(-T^{293}\Delta S_{rec})$ .<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>  $\Delta(T^{293}\Delta S)$  is measured relative to  $-T^{293}\Delta S$  for **D1:D2** = 265 kJ/mol.  $-T^{293}\Delta S_{rec} = T^{293}\Delta S$  (upper strand vs cDNA) +  $T^{293}\Delta S$  (lower strand vs cDNA) -  $T^{293}\Delta S$  (probe duplex) -  $T^{293}\Delta S$  (dsDNA target). "±" denotes standard deviation. N/A = the lack of a clear lower base line prevented determination of this value. <sup>b</sup>Data, previously reported in reference S5, are included to facilitate comparison.

Additional background discussion regarding the  $\Delta G_{rec}^{293}$  term. The  $\Delta G_{rec}^{293}$  term, which we define as  $\Delta G_{rec}^{293} = \Delta G^{293}$  (ONX:cDNA) +  $\Delta G^{293}$  (cDNA:ONY) -  $\Delta G^{293}$  (ONX:ONY) -  $\Delta G^{293}$  (dsDNA), describes the thermodynamic driving force for Invader-mediated recognition of a linear dsDNA target with the same core sequence as the Invader probe (e.g., 5'-GTGATATGC : 3'-CACTATACG for the probes shown in Table 4). While  $\Delta G_{rec}^{293}$  is not a direct measure of the thermodynamic driving force for recognition of model target DH1 (Figure 4) or more complex targets, it is a useful term to assess different Invader designs relative to each other. The  $\Delta G^{293}$ (dsDNA) component – i.e., the change in free energy associated with formation of the dsDNA target region - will likely be considerably more negative (i.e., more stable) for model target **DH1**, whereas the  $\Delta G^{293}$  (**ONX**:cDNA) and  $\Delta G^{293}$  (cDNA:**ONY**) terms are not expected to deviate substantially in the formed recognition complexes save for potential stacking interactions with nucleotides in the T<sub>10</sub>-loop. We did not experimentally determine the  $\Delta G^{293}$  (ONX:cDNA) and  $\Delta G^{293}$  (cDNA:**ONY**) terms as they need to be determined simultaneously, which is experimentally challenging. Consequently, we expect  $\Delta G_{rec}^{293}$  for Invader-mediated recognition of **DH1** to be less favorable than for recognition of the corresponding isosequential dsDNA targets, which is supported by our experimental observations (e.g., no recognition of **DH1** is observed with V2:V5 despite a  $\Delta G_{rec}^{293}$  value of -23 kJ/mol, Figure 4 and Table 4). However, we have found that  $\Delta G_{\rm rec}$  values for Invader-mediated recognition of linear isosequential dsDNA targets scale to more complex targets such as DNA hairpins (i.e., dsDNA recognition more likely to ensue with probes with highly negative  $\Delta G_{rec}^{293}$  values), aiding probe optimization – e.g., see references S5, S7 and S8.



**Figure S8**. Electrophoretogram from experiments in which **Y2:Y5** or **V2:V5** probes were preannealed with **DH1** (heating to 90 °C for 2 min, followed by slow cooling to room temperature) followed by incubation in the HEPES buffer (50 mM HEPES, 100 mM NaCl, 5 mM MgCl<sub>2</sub>, pH 7.2, 10% sucrose, 1.44 mM spermine tetrahyrdochloride) for 15 h at room temperature.

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S29































































































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