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# A Shot in the Dark - GPS Gunshot Detection

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So we've spent much of last month talking about the not-so-obvious ways stalkers can use GPS devices to invade your life. If you're new to ProTech Yourself get the low-down on how stalkers use over-the-counter [GPS and mobile device](#) technology to hang-on to ex-lovers and spouses. We've also talked about how you can negate the effects of these nasty tracking devices by employing some GPS technology of your own in the article ["How to Protech Yourself Against GPS Stalkers,"](#) and other news pieces.

February's focus for Holcroft Station – again, for you newbies, that's the name of our hometown - is on prosecutorial misconduct. So I figure why not take a look at some new fangled technology tools our men and women in blue might use to track and identify criminals – in particular gun-firing criminals. After all, if the evidence collected against a defendant is more accurate, isn't it less likely those prosecutors will bend the rules to get a conviction?



If you've ever watched an episode of Law & Order, you're well aware of the hurdles detectives jump through to place a perpetrator at the scene of the crime. Well, if the series writers are paying attention they may re-work a script to include GPS-based audio forensic detection systems in a new episode. These are the latest high-tech tools being used on the front lines of crime prevention and criminal prosecution.

[ShotSpotter](#) is one example of such a device. This gunshot-detection system represents a new generation of audio forensics. By deploying a series of sensitive noise detectors on rooftops throughout a geographic area and combining soundwave analysis with GPS tracking data, police departments can get a picture of where and when gun fire took place within a very short period of time from the event – usually seconds. The technology was recently installed in Minneapolis Minnesota by Police Chief Tim Dolan, who credited ShotSpotter with disproving an alibi of a suspect involved in gang-related cross-fire.



Similar forensic devices are also used in military applications and home land security efforts. The power of audio analysis can not only pinpoint gun fire but it can compare audio samples in videos and recorded phone calls to verify the identity of a caller or videotaped messenger. In fact, this technology is used by the FBI through a system called [FASR](#) (forensic speech and audio analysis) as the voice equivalent of a fingerprint to verify if it's really Osama bin Laden in a new video clip, for example.

These devices aren't fool proof and "false-positive" can occur if loud pops (say, from the backfiring of a car's exhaust) or other noises occur. Even so, they are getting positive reviews

from the police forces that employ them and often false-positives can be controlled by wiring in camera systems like those used for reporting road weather conditions.

If only Detective Briscoe and District Attorney McCoy were so lucky. They'd be closing cases and getting convictions like nobody's business. Oh well – I'm not complaining. As predictable as the plot is, I always enjoy the whole 60 minutes right up to the phrase "And how do you find the defendant?"

On another note: We're still getting inquiries about GPS devices and child safety and I'm leaning towards having my next installment cover some small, cute and fashionable products that can help parents protect and keep track of their infants, toddlers, and tweens. But, the jury is still out. So send me an email at [protechyoursself@320sycamore.com](mailto:protechyoursself@320sycamore.com) and let me know if you agree or if you want to file a motion to move on to something else. And remember, if you like what you're reading – tell a friend. Because that's how we learn, share, and build better communities – together.

Now if only they could make a GPS gadget to find the remote. 'Til next time.

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