

## D.C. may use gun technology in landscaper's murder trial

Scott McCabe, **The Examiner**  
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WASHINGTON - The [District of Columbia](#) could soon hold [America](#)'s first murder trial in which a relatively new technology that can identify the location and caliber of gunshots plays a prominent role, officials said.

The ShotSpotter system, which uses global positioning technology to fix where shots were fired, and the characteristics of the weapon, helped D.C. police capture a man accused of killing a landscaper working in Anacostia in October 2006, according to police officials. If the first-degree murder case against [Lankward Harrington](#) makes it to trial in October, it will become the first time the company will provide expert testimony in a murder trial, ShotSpotter officials said.

The employees have never testified at a homicide trial because most murder cases end in plea deals, said ShotSpotter spokesman [Gregg Rowland](#).

"I don't want to make it sound like it's a panacea," Rowland said, "but when police get the witnesses, detectives get forensic evidence, and ShotSpotter gets the time and caliber, and it all matches up, it's pretty compelling."

In September 2006, the District installed the technology in the roughest neighborhoods in Southeast Washington. In the 17 months since, the system has been used to recover 10 weapons and make eight arrests, police said.

The [D.C. Council](#) will vote on whether to spend \$1.8 million to expand the ShotSpotter system from east of the [Anacostia River](#) to Shaw and [Columbia Heights](#) in Northwest Washington. Police hope to add the expansion before the summer spike in crime.

On Oct. 16, 2006, the newly installed sonar system alerted police that multiple gunshots had been fired at 2649 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE.

When the call went over the air, a patrol officer was recorded as saying that she thought that she had heard gunshots but could not confirm, said [Capt. Michael Eldridge](#), of the intelligence fusion center. The officer immediately found landscaper [Jose Villatoro](#), suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. Police obtained a description of the suspect and stopped Harrington, 22, as he was leaving the area two blocks away.

Police searched Harrington and found a loaded handgun, Eldridge said. The ballistics matched the weapon used to kill Villatoro, he said.

smccabe@dcexaminer.com