



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 16, 2012

## DHS to Deploy New Scanners That Secretly Search From 50 Yards Away

Very soon the Department of Homeland Security won't have to touch you to know everything it wants to know about you. Using a new laser-based scanner that fires a beam from about 164 feet, the government will be able to see everything it wants to see about your body, your clothes, and what's in your suitcase. Reports indicate that the soon-to-be-deployed scanner is so powerful that it can detect everything from "what you had for breakfast to the adrenaline level in your body."



And what's the most frightening part about this long distance über-powerful pat-down? You'll never know it's happening.

In November 2011 Genia Photonics, the creators of the scanner, was subcontracted by In-Q-Tel to perfect the device for use by the Department of Homeland Security.

In-Q-Tel provides the following history of its creation on its website:

In 1998, CIA identified technology as a top strategic priority, and set out a radical plan to create a new venture that would help increase the Agency's access to private sector innovation. In-Q-Tel was chartered in February 1999 by a group of private citizens at the request of the Director of Central Intelligence and with the support of the U.S. Congress. IQT was tasked with building a bridge between the Agency and a new set of technology innovators.

Mission accomplished. The bridge builders at In-Q-Tel have managed to find a company so innovative that it can secretly bypass the Fourth Amendment from more than 50 yards away.

Naturally, the government wants to get this device installed in airports and border crossings as soon as possible. Genia Photonics' website claims that their product will allow agents to detect "drug mixtures, chemical and biological warfare (CBW), explosives and toxic spills..." before they become a threat to the homeland or to the agents themselves.

The beam used in this scanner is ten million times faster and one million times more sensitive than those currently in use. Imagine the possibilities of a tool so fast and so sensitive: no longer will the TSA be resigned to plucking one or two or even a dozen people out of a security line in the airport. Now, with the Genia Photonics laser, they can scan every single passenger and know so much more than just what he's carrying. And again, the best part about it is that passengers will never be the wiser. They will never know that their very body chemistry is being monitored and recorded by agents working on behalf of the U.S. government.

Of course, DHS and TSA will not be satisfied with merely being able to quickly detect explosives, chemical, and biological weapons and now they won't have to be. Reading straight from the promotional material produced by Genia Photonics, the new scanning method (called terahertz spectroscopy) can "



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penetrate through many dielectric materials, such as clothing, paper, plastics, leather, wood and ceramics.”

Does one often carry wood and ceramics on board an airplane? No, but one certainly finds such objects in a home. Fortunately, for Homeland Security, their new little scanner is very portable and won't be confined to use in airports or border patrol stations.

Take this [bit of boasting from In-Q-Tel](#) as evidence of the ultimate unconstitutional use of the device:

An important benefit of Genia Photonics' implementation as compared to existing solutions is that the entire synchronized laser system is comprised in a single, robust and alignment-free unit that may be easily transported for use in many environments... This compact and robust laser has the ability to rapidly sweep wavelengths in any pattern and sequence.

Everyone everywhere will now be a potential target for this portable, powerful laser beam. From 164 feet the government can fire a laser beam that can penetrate wood (houses?) and detect important biological data about whatever (whoever) is inside.

Here's [a little bit of the history](#) of the company that will soon deliver this device into the hands of the federal government:

Founded in 2009 by the merger of Optav Solutions and FG2 Tech, Genia Photonics Inc. is an innovative company specializing in high-speed picosecond fiber-based lasers and spectroscopic measurement systems. Centered around our patented fiber laser technology, Genia's compact, easy to use and controlled via software systems will change the methodology for various applications in biomedical, industrial as well as defense and security.

In order to understand how the scanner works, read this [brief description provided by Gizmodo](#):

The machine is a mobile, rack-mountable system. It fires a laser to provide molecular-level feedback at distances of up to 50 meters in just picoseconds. For all intents and purposes, that means instantly.

The small, inconspicuous machine is attached to a computer running a program that will show the information in real time, from trace amounts of cocaine on your dollar bills to gunpowder residue on your shoes. Forget trying to sneak a bottle of water past security — they will be able to tell what you had for breakfast in an instant while you're walking down the hallway.

Basically, if Genia Photonics can deliver on their promises, there will be few places that the government cannot go and few things it cannot know. Imagine, for example, the private information that would become available to the government if were to attach one of these devices onto a drone? The unmanned aerial vehicle could carry the scanner to within 50 yards of a window or wall and instantly detect crucial biological information from anyone on the other side.

In another scenario, perhaps police cars will be fitted with the scanners and allow local law enforcement to patrol neighborhoods surreptitiously searching for otherwise undetectable traces of drugs or explosive material without the need for a pesky search warrant or probable cause.

One crucial question that is not addressed by Genia Photonics or its promoters at In-Q-Tel is what exactly is the “label-free genetic analysis, and chemical/biological sensing” that will be performed by their machine.

Furthermore, what of the constitutional issues? Who decides whom to target with the laser? Is probable



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cause no longer a requisite for such intrusive searches and seizures? Will the eye of a magistrate no longer need to look over the shoulder of law enforcement? Are search warrants a thing of the past? Will there be no need for an affidavit “[particularly describing the place to be searched and the persons or things to be seized](#)”?

And, why does the government need to know the genetic or chemical makeup of citizens of this Republic?

According to [testimony given in November of last year](#) by Tara O’Toole, M.D., MPH Under Secretary for Science and Technology, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, before the Committee on Homeland Security Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, Infrastructure Protection, and Security Technologies, “All of these projects are expected to produce transition-ready technologies in the next 12 to 24 months.”

So, as soon as November of this year, the government could be in possession of this scanner. A scanner that detects and stores information about you on the molecular level via high-frequency lasers aimed at your body from over 160 feet away. This data will be instantly delivered to the controller of the device who will then possess a range of information about you that includes a precise “genetic analysis” of your body — and you’ll never know you’ve been searched.



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