



WHERE ARE THEY TAKING MY GUN?

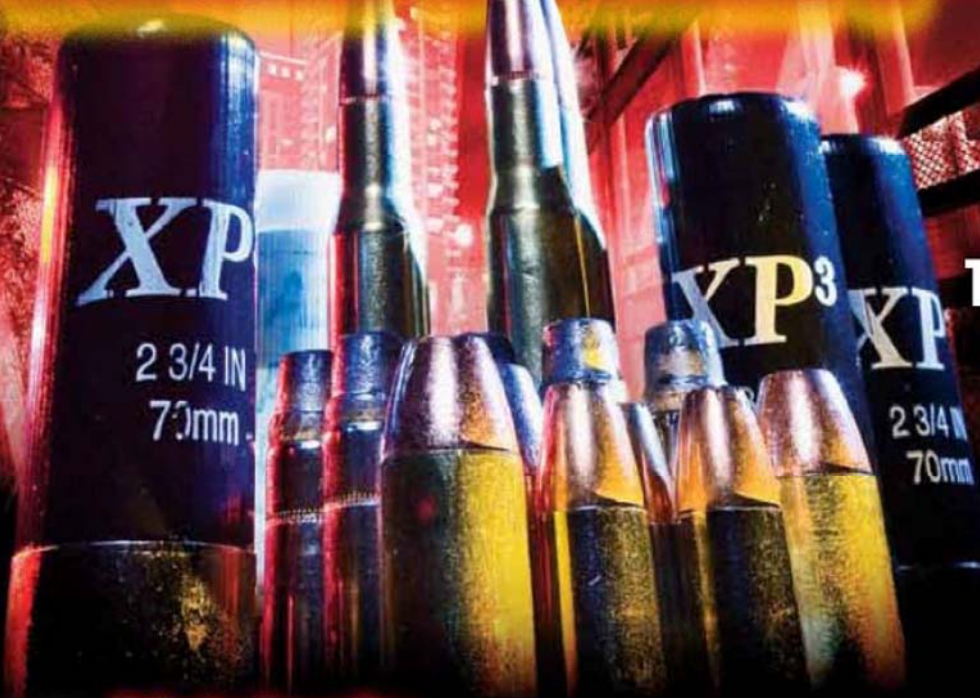
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GATTACA?

ENDING THE NAME GAME

Have you ever found yourself on a stop talking with someone who just happened to have forgotten his ID? “Honest officer, I left it at home” or “I lost it.” You ask all the usual identifier questions — who are you, when were you born, where do you live and what’s your SSN — only to have the guy stumble and stammer through the series of questions as if your mere presence made him so nervous he couldn’t remember who the hell he was. By now the alarm inside your brain is going off, this guy might be lying to me. You can go one of two ways, finish the ticket or field interview and let him go on his merry way (because you’re lazy, or whatever excuse you choose) or you hook him up and take him to the station for fingerprints and a more thorough investigation. The latter choice requires more time and depending on what you wanted to do for the next few hours, can be a pain in the butt. Wouldn’t it be great if you could simply get a fingerprint right there at the scene and have it analyzed while you wait? Wouldn’t something like

that save a boatload of time? Sounding like something right out of the movie *Gat-*



Fast and easy — the Verifier Mw can help you identify a potential suspect. But remember technology never replaces good police skills; it only augments it.

Portable Lie Detector

Once the Verifier has captured the prints, they’re transmitted to the department servers and compared against the local database and if necessary, in AFIS. If you have a state database like California does, they can be checked there

too. The response time varies depending on the databases to be accessed, but the average time seems to be around ten minutes. The information returned can be as basic or complicated as your agency chooses. If your subject has no record, has never been fingerprinted or is clean (for the moment) the response will be something like “No Hit.” “Hit” information can include a mug shot, DMV photo, rap sheet data or whatever your software has been set up to provide. The handheld device has a pretty small screen so I’d suggest coding hit information. Depending on the level of the hit, you won’t be distracted trying to read the information on the tiny screen, you’ll know to get cover rolling and then when everything is safe, look at the response on your car’s computer. The Name Game ends. Chalk up a win for the good guys.

A pal of mine from a suburban Detroit community told me he used the scanner with a guy who *seemed* okay on the surface, but ended up arresting him for a warrant; NCIC returned a list of 28 aliases he used. Amazingly, the model citizen had memorized the names, DOBs, addresses, etc. of his ten closest relatives. He was good — but not good enough for the Verifier.

taca, Crossmatch Technologies has introduced The Verifier Mw — the “Mw” stands for mobile wireless — a handheld, mobile, wireless fingerprint scanner. It talks to the patrol car computer using any number of methods, Bluetooth, 802.11 or for those of you who aren’t wireless, a USB cable. When the Name Game begins you can grab the Verifier and get an impression of both index fingers of Mr. Dirt Bag. You don’t need to roll the finger like on an old-fashioned print card, just a simple straight-up impression. Tuck him into the back seat of your patrol car and work on a report or whistle a tune while *he* sweats it out — awaiting his true self to be discovered.

The Verifier Mw, at about \$2,000, brings the national fingerprint database into the palm of your hand.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

A subject I detain can also benefit from the Verifier because I don’t have to transport him anywhere to check his story — he can be released there instead of from the station, and in less time. Identifying a murder victim can be faster where no ID is on the decedent giving investigators a head start on their case. This device can change our jobs for the better. And I’m not a guy who has to acquire every new gadget just because it’s new. A few years ago, I’d only *heard* about email; now, I cannot imagine life without it. I refused to use Word or Excel until I could see they’d actually make my work easier and I may be the last person on the planet to buy an iPod. I own neither a beanie nor a propeller; I’m just tired of gizmos that are supposed to solve all of my problems only to have them end up on a shelf or in the trash.

We all (should) know the legal ramifications of our jobs; things like probable cause for the contact, reasonable suspicion and reasonable detention. This tool is just a means of bringing the fingerprinting process to you in the street. You still have to have all the legal criteria in place as you would to take a person in for printing. Don’t think you can violate rights, laws or policies and run amok. Only you and your agency can know what laws and policies apply, so make sure you do your homework on the legal issues before you go out and start fingerprinting the world.

The Verifier costs around \$2,000 each. The driving factors are the amount of existing infrastructure like mobile computers, wireless connections and any options your agency chooses to add to the basic model.



For more info: www.crossmatch.com