



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on May 23, 2022

New AI Can Detect Concealed Weapons in Public Places

If you carry a concealed weapon, there's a new artificial intelligence (AI) company that says its technology is designed to help security guards keep you out of public places.

Peter George, the CEO of Boston-based AI firm Evolv Technology, hopes the device his company developed will help prevent armed atrocities like that recently committed in Buffalo, New York.

"Could our system have stopped it?" he said, as quoted in *The Washington Post*. "I don't know. But I think we could democratize security so that someone planning on hurting people can't easily go into an unsuspecting place."

It's this notion of identifying "someone planning on hurting people" where George's technology proves problematic, at best.

To see what I mean, here's *The Washington Post's* description of how the Evolv Technology scanner works:

Evolv machines use "active sensing" — a light-emission technique that also underpins radar and lidar — to create images. Then it applies AI to examine them. Data scientists at the Waltham, Mass., company have created "signatures" (basically, visual blueprints) and trained the AI to compare them to the scanner images.

Executives say the result is a smart system that can "spot" a weapon without anyone needing to stop and empty their pockets in a beeping machine. When the system identifies a suspicious item from a group of people flowing through, it draws an orange box around it on a live video feed of the person entering. It's only then that a security guard, watching on a nearby tablet, will approach for more screening.

See the problem? The scanner might (and I use that word on purpose and I'll explain why a little later) be able to detect a weapon being carried by someone, but as any of the millions of gun owners in America could testify, carrying a gun and "planning on hurting people" are not at all the same thing.

In fact, according to a [study](#) published by *The Washington Post*, only 18 percent of crimes involving firearms were perpetrated by the registered owner of the weapon used in the crime.

Now, admittedly, that number is likely high, given the anti-gun bias in academia and the mainstream media, but even using that figure for the sake of argument, one could safely say that 80 percent of people who own a firearm never "plan on hurting people." But the Evolv Technology scanners can't control for that statistic, so 80 percent of the people identified by the scanners and subsequently



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detained by private security or police will be free from any probable cause that could otherwise justify such a search.

None of that bothers Peter George, though. In *The Washington Post* article he boasts that “at least 15,000 guns were flagged by Evolv in the first quarter of 2022.”

Bill Gates and Jeb Bush are two of the notable investors in Evolv.

Of course, George could be inflating those numbers to make his product more appealing, but the fact that Evolv scanners are showing up around the United States should be troubling to the millions of gun owners whose right to keep and bear arms — not to mention the more important natural right to protect oneself — will be denied everywhere these devices are deployed.

And just where are these scanners being used? The *Post* reports:

Consumers can expect to see Evolv a lot more. Sports franchises like the Tennessee Titans and Carolina Panthers now use it; so do the New York Mets and Columbus Crew. The Super Bowl at SoFi Stadium in February deployed for an outside perimeter. In New York City, public arts institutions such as the Lincoln Center are trying it. So is a municipal hospital. (NYC Mayor Eric Adams has touted it as a potential subway security measure, but tight spaces and underground signal interference make that less plausible.)

North Carolina’s Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system, with 150,000 students, has also licensed Evolv. Theme parks are excited, too — all 27 Six Flags parks across the country now use it. Evolv has now conducted 250 million scans to date, it says, up from 100 million in September.

Now, one might be tempted to argue that the use by such AI tech by private companies is not prohibited by the Second Amendment, and they would be correct. However, should the police become involved in the search of people identified by the scanner as carrying a weapon, then the Constitution most certainly would come into play.

Furthermore, as I mentioned above, the U.S. Constitution is not the source of our right to keep and bear arms — it merely protects that right. The right to protect oneself is a natural right, an endowment of our Creator, not our Constitution.

As the immeasurably influential English jurist William Blackstone wrote, “the natural right of resistance and self-preservation” is among the “absolute rights of man ... a right inherent in us by birth, and one of the gifts of God to man at his creation.”

Could it be any plainer?

Unfortunately, understanding the right to keep and bear arms as Blackstone did and as the American Founding Fathers who were so profoundly influenced by him did is rare, and even many gun owners accept and even promote “reasonable restrictions” on the people’s God-given right to own, carry, and use firearms.

Finally, I’ll give the last word to the esteemed Judge Blackstone: “Free men have arms, slaves do not.”



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