

## C o v e r t T o p s o p s

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**Abstract:** [...]Adam Harvey revved up his assembly line to foil - or at least critique - the National Security Agency's collection of Americans' phone records in the name of counterterrorism. When the Transportation Security Administration adopted body scanners at airports, activists wrote the Fourth Amendment on their underwear in metallic paint readable by the new devices. The U.S. government's ever-expanding use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), some armed with Hellfire missiles, has provoked a mini-industry of cultural countermeasures, local government regulations and splashy, nonlethal uses.

**Full text:** At the Pentagon and CIA, they are known as "countermeasures," the jargony adaptation of Newton's Third Law: For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

The U.S. Army in Iraq jammed cellphones to counter deadly roadside bombs triggered by calls.

Osama bin Laden switched to carrier pigeons when spy agencies got good at eavesdropping on al-Qaeda communications.

And Adam Harvey revved up his assembly line to foil - or at least critique - the National Security Agency's collection of Americans' phone records in the name of counterterrorism.

Harvey is an artist and privacy advocate in New York. His "privacy protection" creations, which include "anti-drone garments" that he says thwart thermal imaging cameras, have attracted the attention of guerrilla fashionistas and at least one intelligence agency. (He won't say which one or share the e-mail the agency sent him because he's so concerned about it.)

His latest gadget, to be sent to customers Sept. 20, is a metallized fabric case that he says shields a cellphone from electronic poaching by the government, by phone companies, by whomever.

"The thing I'm worried about is creating a large database of all my movements and not knowing what it's used for," said Harvey, 32, who has been in the habit of turning his phone off and taking out the battery to counter companies he believes already know too much about him.

"When you give up your privacy, it can make anyone vulnerable to manipulation," he said.

A tradition of resistance

Harvey's creations are the latest in a typically American cultural reaction to perceived or real government intrusiveness that is as old as government surveillance of citizens.

"It reflects a growing cultural influence and critique about the scope of government activity," Marc Rotenberg, executive director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a Washington-based research and advocacy group, said of Harvey's work. "Everybody carries some degree of paranoia. And maybe he's not the only one who should be worried. Maybe it's anyone who has an e-mail, cellphone or Zip code."

In 2006, Rotenberg's organization and its supporters protested a new U.S. electronic passport whose embedded microchip can be read from a distance. They handed out "personal passport protectors" - plastic bags and aluminum foil to wrap the passport and make the chip unreadable. Afterward, the government tweaked the technology to make the passport harder to read by unauthorized persons.

When the Transportation Security Administration adopted body scanners at airports, activists wrote the Fourth Amendment on their underwear in metallic paint readable by the new devices.

The U.S. government's ever-expanding use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), some armed with Hellfire missiles, has provoked a mini-industry of cultural countermeasures, local government regulations and splashy, nonlethal uses.

In San Francisco, a drone delivered an engagement ring to a wedding proposal. In Philadelphia, a dry cleaner

used the aircraft to carry clean shirts to customers. In Stockholm, an artist designed a clown-faced "peace drone" that dispenses the painkiller oxycodone.

A growing concern about drones in U.S. airspace has prompted legal countermeasures. In the small Colorado town of Deer Trail, the town board recently split 3 to 3 on an ordinance that would have approved drone-hunting licenses and bounties for shooting them. Residents will vote on the measure in November.

It began with one man's campaign. "We don't want drones in town," Phillip Steel told Denver TV station ABC7. "They fly in town, they get shot down."

The Federal Aviation Administration reacted with a warning about the injury risks of shooting objects out of the sky.

An Oklahoma state representative wants to limit police access to surveillance drones to certain situations, such as finding a missing child.

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), a opponent of drone surveillance and critic of domestic surveillance in general, managed to get the FBI to tell him it had used surveillance drones in eight criminal cases and two national security cases.

"None of the UAVs used by the FBI are armed with either lethal or non-lethal weapons, and the FBI has no plans to use weapons with UAVs," an FBI letter to Paul stated last month. "The FBI does not use UAVs to conduct 'bulk' surveillance or to conduct general surveillance not related to an investigation or assessment." Every drone operation is done by the book, with the proper approvals, the letter said.

To protect and provoke

Harvey's inspiration for his first privacy project, a kind of facial camouflage, did not originate with something as serious as the possibility of drone warfare. It was inspired by club parties. It bothered him that someone could easily take pictures of people in their most unguarded moments and post the photos online, without permission, perhaps never to be erased.

Developed as his master's thesis at New York University, CV Dazzle, named after a type of ship camo used during World War II, is face paint designed to make features undetectable by computer vision algorithms, which are used in computerized facial recognition.

From there he moved into a line of "anti-drone" garments made of a metallized fabric that traps body heat. It is meant to cloak heat signatures from the prying eyes of thermal imaging devices sometimes mounted on drones and police surveillance aircraft.

To be provocative, the clothes come in only three styles: a burqa, a hijab and a hoodie.

His customer base for the few he has sold so far has been "niche and fashion," Harvey said. He said he does not intend to sell his stealthwear to anyone with nefarious motives: "I'm mostly interested in the conversations it generates."

The NSA declined to comment on Harvey's work, as did the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Dickie Richards, who retired from the NSA after 41 years of service, said that the garments and phone case could be "somewhat effective" but that bending the material could easily create gaps through which electronic signals or heat could escape. "It's much better than wearing an aluminum cap, though," he laughed.

If the government targets someone, he added, such countermeasures would be useless against the many tools officials could bring to bear. "It could be effective if they're a target of convenience," he acknowledged.

Harvey's latest invention, the phone case, was almost ready for mass production when Edward Snowden released his trove of classified NSA documents and the world learned just how much phone and e-mail traffic the spy agency was vacuuming up every day. Taking advantage of the news, Harvey rushed to begin an online Kickstarter fundraising campaign ahead of schedule.

The Kickstarter campaign went active Aug. 2 with a goal of \$35,000, which would allow Harvey and his colleague, Johanna Bloomfield, to produce and market the product in larger quantities. Halfway through the campaign, they have raised more than \$44,000.

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