

UK Police Claim To Have Seized Their First 3-D Printed Gun Parts

By Lucas Laursen

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Police in Manchester, United Kingdom, yesterday seized a 3-D printer (<http://spectrum.ieee.org/tag/3-D%20printing>) and what they said

(<http://www.gmp.police.uk/content/WebsitePages>



Photos: Greater Manchester Police

([/F32F886757B6529180257CoFo0229898?OpenDocument](http://www.gmp.police.uk/content/WebsitePages/F32F886757B6529180257CoFo0229898?OpenDocument)) were 3-D printed gun components, which would be a first in the UK. They arrested a man involved on suspicion of making gun powder, who [told the BBC](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-24666591) (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-24666591>): "It's nothing to do with a gun whatsoever."

Soon after the announcement, coder and writer Dj Walker-Morgan [tweeted](https://twitter.com/Codepope/status/393661206000840704) (<https://twitter.com/Codepope/status/393661206000840704>) that the components in the police photographs were just parts of the printer. For a comparison of the parts, see this New Statesman [post](http://www.newstatesman.com/future-proof/2013/10/3d-printed-gun-seized-manchester-actually-spare-printer-parts) (<http://www.newstatesman.com/future-proof/2013/10/3d-printed-gun-seized-manchester-actually-spare-printer-parts>). Of course, the police might have just posted photos of the wrong parts.

But hours later, the police department released another [statement](http://www.gmp.police.uk/Content/WebsitePages/32936B600DBD980980257CoFo03DEEFC?OpenDocument) (<http://www.gmp.police.uk/Content/WebsitePages/32936B600DBD980980257CoFo03DEEFC?OpenDocument>): "We need to be absolutely clear that at that this stage, we cannot categorically say we have recovered the component parts for a 3D gun." It did not say whether the department had left parts out of its public photos. Instead, it called for "further forensic testing by national ballistics experts."

Perhaps the man was planning to re-enact the pivotal murder scene in [the latest episode of "Elementary"](http://3dprintingindustry.com/2013/10/24/3d-printing-gun-hardly-elementary/) (<http://3dprintingindustry.com/2013/10/24/3d-printing-gun-hardly-elementary/>)? TV script writers, as usual, are ahead of the game. "CSI: New York" [featured](http://worldcadaccess.typepad.com/blog/2013/01/3d-printing-on-csinew-york.html) (<http://worldcadaccess.typepad.com/blog/2013/01/3d-printing-on-csinew-york.html>) a 3-D printed gun earlier this year, too. As Jeremy Hsu [pointed out earlier this year in IEEE Spectrum's Tech Talk](http://spectrum.ieee.org/tech-talk/consumer-electronics/gadgets/3dprinted-guns-firing-shot-has-big-implications) (<http://spectrum.ieee.org/tech-talk/consumer-electronics/gadgets/3dprinted-guns-firing-shot-has-big-implications>), these guns are still only good for one shot at a time and are far less reliable than conventional guns. A potential murderer would need to be pretty sure of his or her abilities to rely on a printed gun.

For readers hungry for more, Vice sent someone to spend a week with the maker of a printed gun in Texas. A 24-minute video and report are [here](http://motherboard.vice.com/read/click-print-gun-the-inside-story-of-the-3d-printed-gun-movement-video) (<http://motherboard.vice.com/read/click-print-gun-the-inside-story-of-the-3d-printed-gun-movement-video>).