

DNA spray helps catch criminals

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"He glowed like a Christmas tree" is how police described a criminal who was finally caught after breaking into a pharmacy at Nobbys Beach in Newcastle, NSW, on more than one occasion.

According to DNA Security Solutions managing director Tania Jolley, the thief initially denied the break-in, but once the police shone an ultraviolet light on his clothes, the telltale signs of her firm's product were plainly evident.

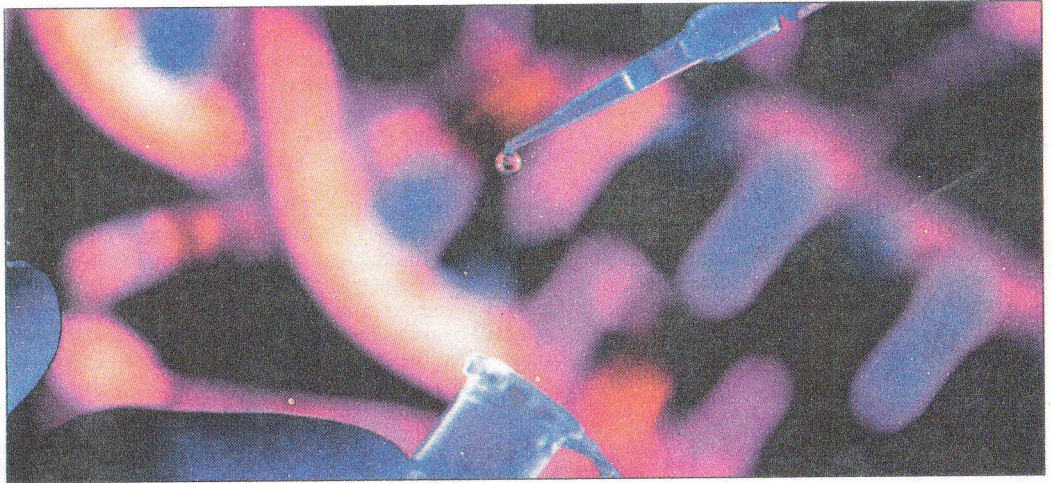
Developed for retail outlets that are attractive targets for thieves, such as late night petrol stations, jewellers and pharmacies, DNA Guardian was the first product released onto the market since DNA Security Solutions (DSS) began commercialising its range last year.

Ms Jolley and Andrew Taft, who both have security backgrounds, established DSS in Adelaide three years ago to commercialise products they had been developing since 2005.

"No one has done anything like this here," Ms Jolley said.

"We are the first Australian company to market anything like this. It's as big a market as CCTV."

The company's products are based around a laboratory-made



DNA as a security device is the latest tool aimed at identifying thieves and graffiti artists. Photo: PHIL CARRICK

biosynthetic DNA that is harmless to humans. Originally the technology was developed by perfume manufacturers to identify their product from the counterfeit article.

DSS has incorporated this technology into various delivery systems that spray a colourless mist containing an ultraviolet marker with the DNA tracer.

The spray is contained in a unit that might, for instance, be installed over the shop's door, and is released remotely by the shopkeeper or automatically. It can deliver multiple sprays.

The DNA tracer can remain

on the skin for up to six weeks. Unlike other dyes that spray paint and which are more like asset markers, the DSS developers claim that with billions of DNA codes available, each unit has its own DNA marker.

Under an ultraviolet light, police can see that not only has a crime probably taken place, but they can link the criminal to the outlet through the DNA marker. "It provides a forensic link to the crime scene placing the thief and your belongings at a place and a point in time, giving authorities the greatest chance of capturing the criminals," said DSS.

Also planned are products for taxis, while today DSS will release its new DNA TagTagger, which addresses graffiti, at the Graffiti Forum in Brisbane.

In Britain, the market is known as perpetrator marking and has grown in the past decade. While she could not provide figures on the size of the British market, Ms Jolley referred to one security firm there that is valued at £45 million (\$78 million).

Clearly hoping to emulate that success, Ms Jolley said that she is looking for angel investors to put in \$250,000 to support the company with its expansion plans.