

CRIME TECH

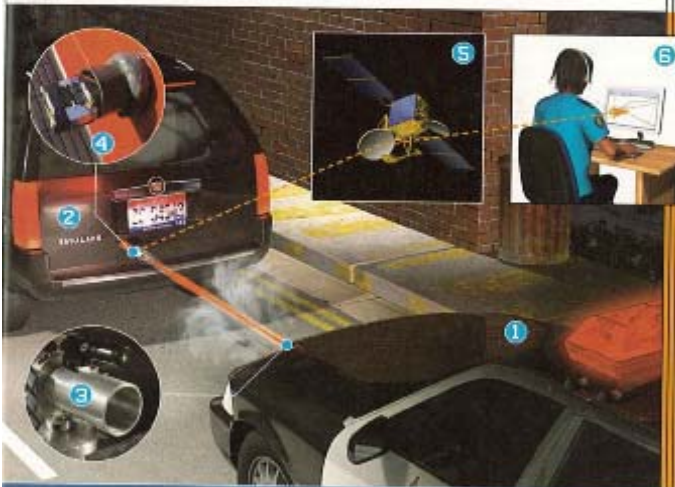
# STICK IT TO 'EM

L.A. police turn to an adhesive GPS dart to lasso the getaway car

**LOS ANGELES**, car capital of the country, is notorious for its epic police chases. O.J.-style pursuits may make for exciting TV, but the fatality statistics are sobering: Police chases kill, on average, one Californian every week. Now the Virginia-based company **StarChase** has proposed a safer way to catch fast-moving crooks—shoot GPS homing devices like darts and stick them to the back of fleeing vehicles. Instead of a frantic pursuit, an officer eases off the chase and lets police headquarters track the suspect by computer. Police can then move in for a calmer arrest.

The StarChase system, which the Los Angeles Police Department will test this fall, consists of a laser-guided launcher and a miniaturized GPS tag complete with a radio transmitter and a blob of gummy adhesive. Once stuck to its target, the tag begins transmitting coordinates to a server through an encrypted cellular network. Computers superimpose the GPS data over a map that allows dispatchers to track the vehicle's every move.

The LAPD trials will last five months. If all goes well, the department could purchase as many as 20 units by this time next year. —MATTHEW PHENIX



## HOW THE GPS DART WORKS

1. Flashing lights: A routine traffic stop begins.  
2. The suspect pulls over.  
3. The officer aims the StarChase launcher as he relays vehicle information to dispatchers. As the officer steps out of his cruiser,

the suspect starts to flee.  
4. The officer remotely triggers the StarChase launcher, which delivers an electronic tracking tag to the rear of the fleeing car.  
5. Once affixed to the suspect's vehicle, the tag

"pings" precise GPS data to the StarChase server every few seconds.  
6. A dispatcher tracks the vehicle's location and movement in real time, relaying the suspect's movement to officers.