

UK makes 'first' conviction over 3-D printed gun

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3D printing technology has made it possible for people to make complex objects—including plastic firearms, such as this one produced in the US

A student was convicted on Wednesday of manufacturing a firearm using a 3D printer, in what London's police said they believed was the first such successful prosecution in Britain.

Tendai Muswere, 26, pleaded guilty to making the 3D printed gun, in a hearing at Southwark Crown Court in the British capital.

Police searched Muswere's central London home on drugs grounds in October 2017. They found evidence of cannabis cultivation—and also components of a 3D printed gun, capable of firing a lethal shot.

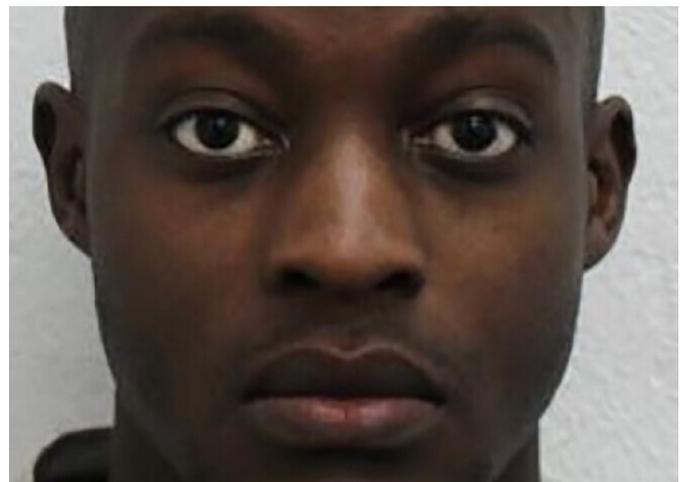
Zimbabwean national Muswere, who does not hold a firearms licence, said he was printing the firearm for a university film project and claimed he did not know that the components were capable of firing.

"He later refused to comment on what his film project was about," London's Metropolitan Police said in a statement.

Officers went through his internet search history and found he had viewed videos demonstrating how to use a 3D printer to manufacture firearms which fired live ammunition.

A second raid in February 2018 resulted in the discovery of further components of a 3D printed gun.

"Muswere claimed that he was printing the firearms for a 'dystopian' university film project but he has not explained why he included the component parts necessary to make a lethal barrelled weapon," said Acting Detective Sergeant Jonathan Roberts, who led the investigation.



Muswere claimed the printed gun was for a "dystopian" university film project, but police say he didn't explain why it contained lethal parts

"Muswere was planning to line the printed firearms with steel tubes in order to make a barrel capable of firing.

"This conviction, which I believe is the first of its kind relating to the use of a 3D printer to produce a

firearm, has prevented a viable gun from getting into the hands of criminals."

Muswere will be sentenced on August 9.

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