

The Camera on Your Street Isn't Just Watching Your Car.

It started as a license plate reader. The patent says it can become something else entirely



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There's a small black oval on a pole near your neighborhood entrance. Solar panel c top. No markings. Most people drive past it every day and have no idea what it is.

It's a Flock Safety camera. And there are **at least 80,000 of them** across the United States right now, scanning vehicles **billions of times every month.**

You almost certainly live near one. You may be paying for one without knowing it.



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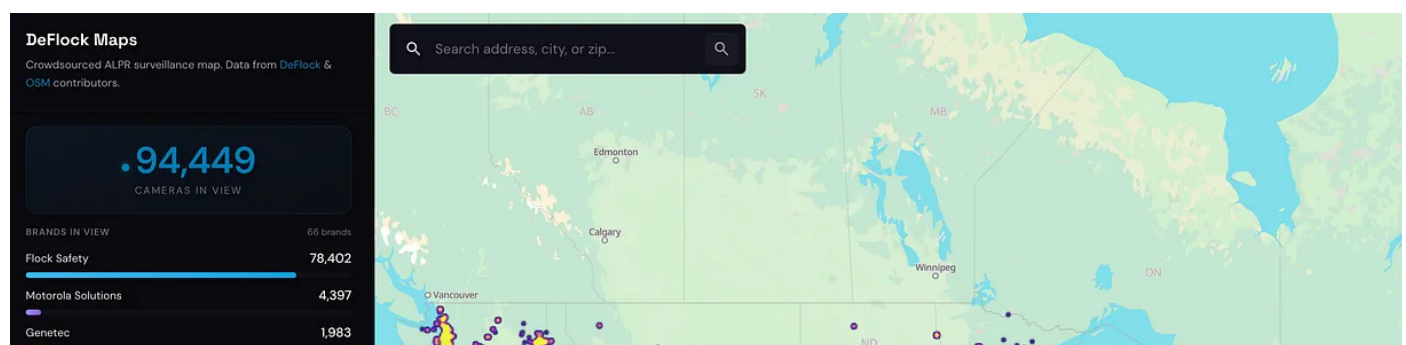
[Image composite by Kay Rubacek. Okay, Flock cameras don't have yellow and blue e; I know, but pay attention to what they do have, according to their patents...]

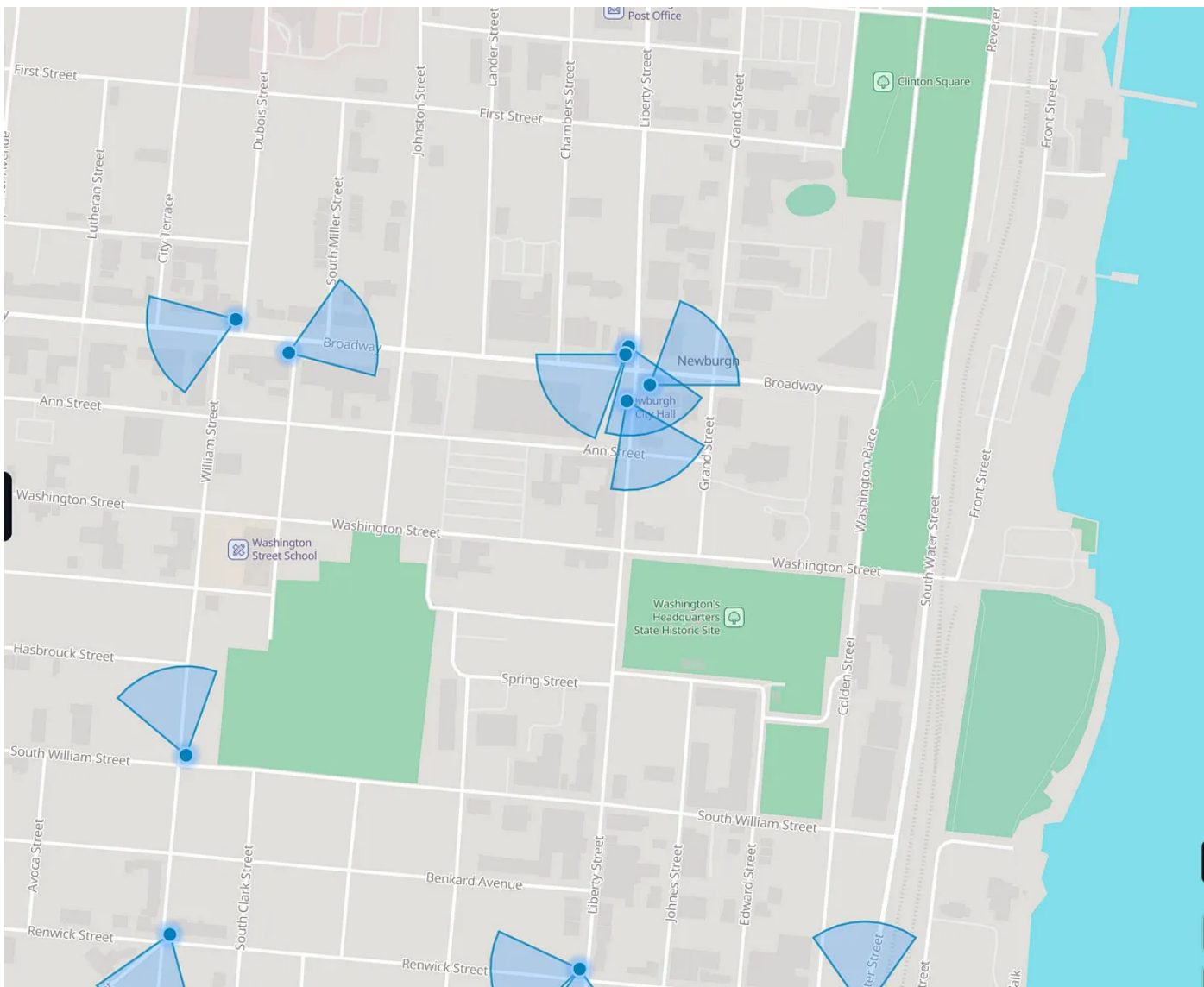
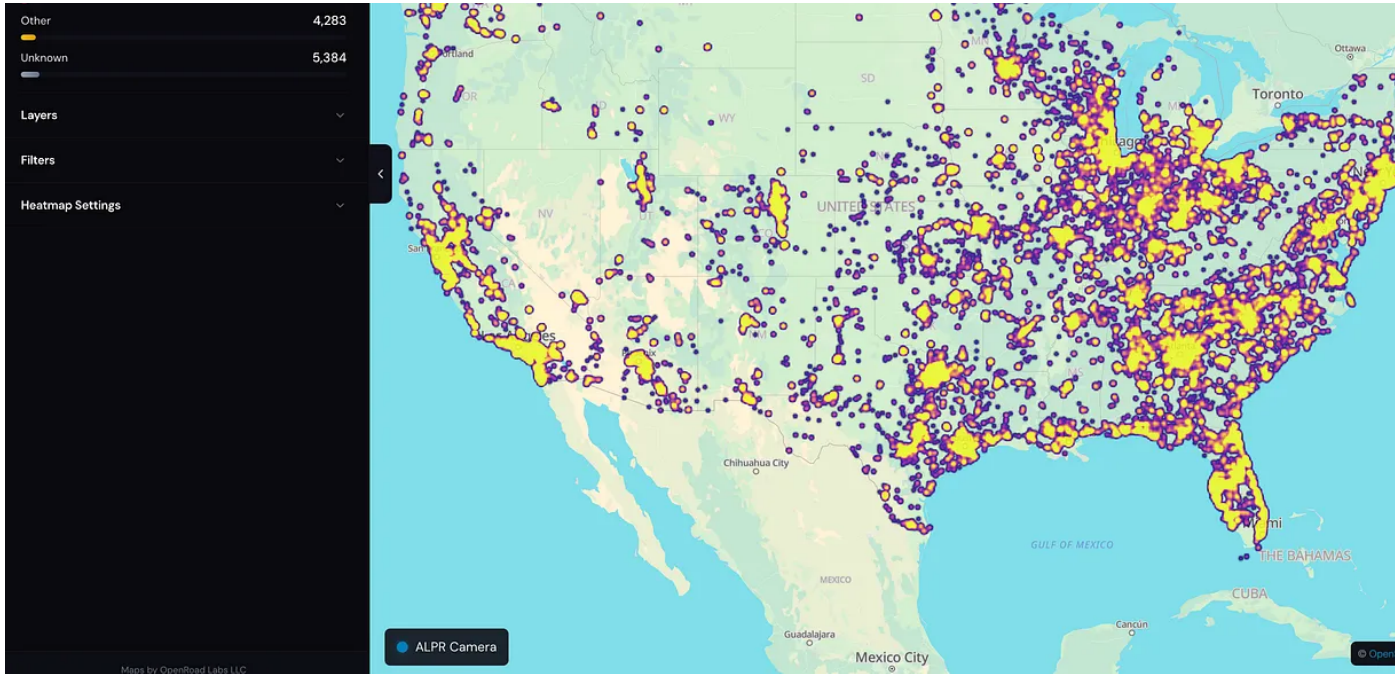
What People Think They Are

Flock Safety markets its cameras as license plate readers. Crime-fighting tools. Objective evidence machines. They pitch and sell to local police, Home Owners Associations (HOAs), schools, hospitals, retailers, and churches. Basically anyone with a security budget and a crime problem.

The pitch is hard to argue with: 70% of crime is committed with a vehicle. License plates are traceable. The cameras are solar-powered, wireless, install in minutes, and Flock handles everything. They've helped recover stolen cars, find missing persons, solve murders.

More than 5,000 communities across 49 states have said yes. This tracker map shows 94,449 as of today.







What the Patent Says They Are

Here's where it gets complicated.

While Flock tells the public their cameras don't collect personal information, don't use facial recognition, and aren't tied to individuals their own patent tells a different story.

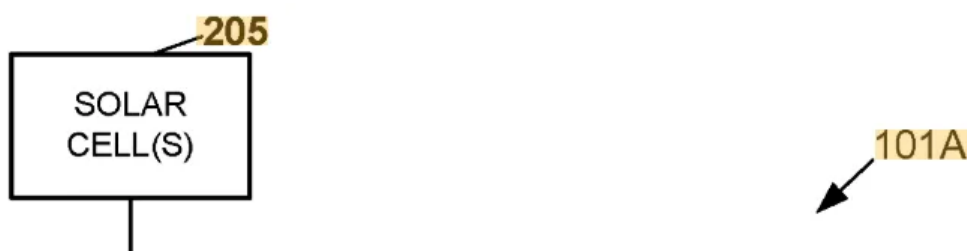
Patent US11416545 "System and method for object based query of video content captured by a dynamic surveillance network" describes a system capable of:

- Tracking humans by race, gender, height, weight, and clothing
- Querying footage by facial recognition data points
- Integrating with drones
- Sharing data across jurisdictions with no geographic limit

The patent text states that investigators can query the system for any footage having a person with matching face recognition data points.

That's not a license plate reader. That's a nationwide facial recognition network waiting to be switched on.

And here's the part that should be making headlines: **none of that requires new hardware.** It's a software update.



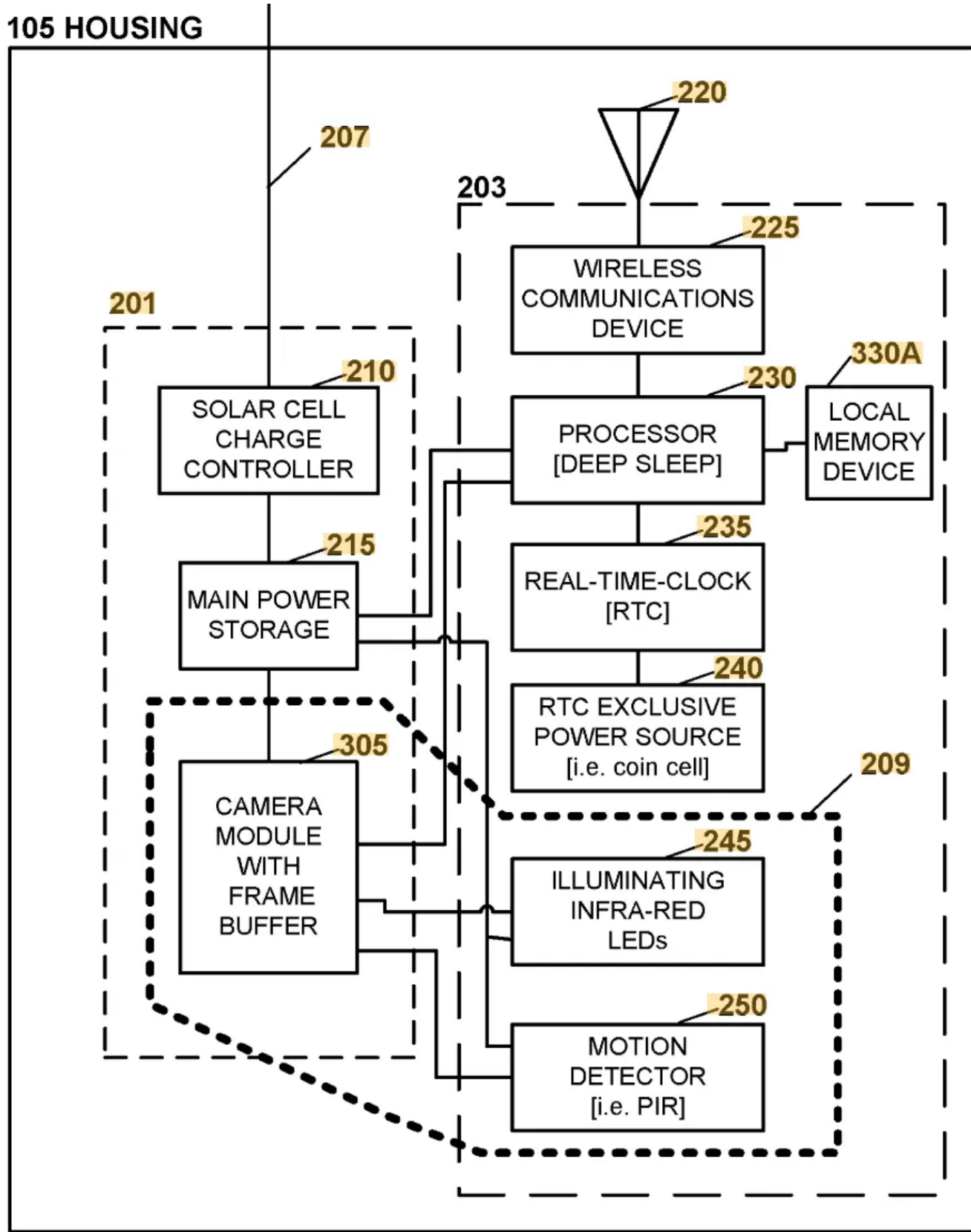
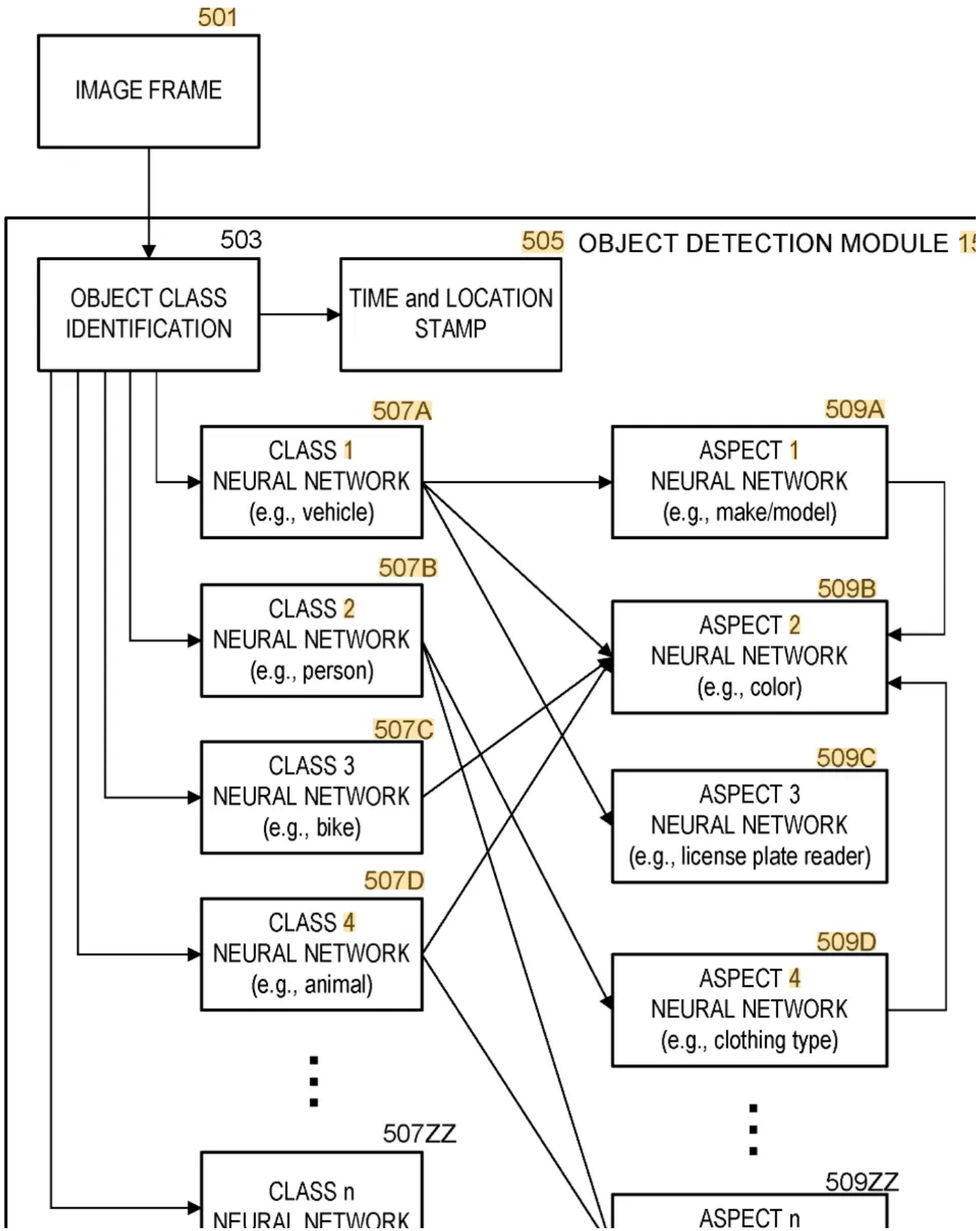


FIG. 2

FIG. 3



**FIG. 5A**

Moving Beyond Cameras

The ears. In October 2025, Flock announced their gunshot-detection microphones would now also listen for “sounds of human distress.” No new hardware was required. It is just a software update to devices already on your street.

The drones. Flock acquired drone company Aerodome and launched “Drone as First Responder” — autonomous drones that dispatch automatically when a camera flags an event. Described as “flying LPR cameras” Flock is targeting 100 drone cities by end of 2026.

✦ Flock Safety



Flock Alpha

The most powerful Drone as First Responder system ever built. Designed in the USA.

Flock Alpha sets a new standard for rapid response in public safety. NDAA-compliant, Alpha is purpose-built for Drone as First Responder (DFR), enhancing speed, coverage area, and camera power in a fully integrated solution.

The Fastest DFR Drone Ever Built

- + Reach speeds of 60 mph
- + Superior connectivity and safety
- + Cut response times in half
- + 15 antennas, 4 cellular modems, 1 parachute, 0 compromises



Advanced Imaging & Detection

- + Read license plates from up to 2,000 feet away
- + Highest definition thermal on an NDAA drone
- + Unmatched low-light performance
- + Clear detection and tracking day or night



Always-Ready Infrastructure

- + Redundant power and charging systems
- + Battery swaps in under one minute
- + Industrial-grade HVAC keeps Alpha ready 24/7
- + Launches within seconds when needed



[Flocksafety.com/products/flock-df](https://flocksafety.com/products/flock-df)

The doorbells. Amazon's Ring **partnered with Flock** in October 2025, giving law enforcement using Flock's platform the ability to request footage from Ring's estimated 10 million residential cameras. In December 2025, Ring added facial recognition.

Your neighbor bought a doorbell to see who's at the door. They got a node in a surveillance network instead.

The national database. 75% of Flock's law enforcement customers are enrolled in the National Lookup Tool, one click shares your local data with every agency on the network. Audit logs show 3,100+ agencies ran 733,000+ searches on school cameras alone in a single month. Immigration-related searches outnumbered criminal ones 2-to-1. Parents dropping their kids at school are being tracked.

Was this ever only just a license plate reader? What do you think?

Cameras, microphones, drones, doorbells are all feeding the same searchable database accessible to thousands of agencies, no warrant required.

Who Is Installing These?

Everyone. And that's a problem.

Local police departments are the primary customers — public contracts, city council votes, theoretically subject to democratic oversight.

HOAs are the hidden layer. Over 200 homeowner associations have bought and installed Flock cameras nationwide. HOAs are private entities. They are not subject to public records requests. There is no transparency portal, no FOIA, no public meeting required. And their cameras feed the same network law enforcement queries.

Private businesses, retailers, hospitals, banks, logistics companies, all operate on the same platform.

State governments have funded local deployments through grant programs. California alone ran a \$242 million Organized Retail Theft Grant Program, with at least 16 grantees purchasing Flock cameras.

The federal government ran pilots with the FBI, ATF, CBP, NCIS, and Homeland Security Investigations. Flock says those ended in August 2025. But **Mountain View, California** only discovered federal agents had accessed their cameras when they ran internal audit in February 2026, years after it happened.

The result is one interconnected network.

People Are Noticing

A man named Will Freeman moved from Washington state to Huntsville, Alabama in 2023. On the drive down, he kept seeing the same thing: small black ovals on poles, solar panels on top.

He looked one up. Found Flock's website. Didn't like what he found.

So he built **DeFlock.me**, a crowdsourced, publicly available map of ALPR cameras across the United States. Today it has mapped **nearly 90,000 cameras**, and people are adding more every day.


What they're discovering is interesting. In Huntsville, every camera downtown is pointed *outward* — tracking who enters, not who leaves. DeFlock lets users report not just camera locations but the direction they face, offering a window into deployer strategies that police and companies would rather keep quiet. Some cameras aren't facing roads at all.

Flock CEO Garrett Langley called DeFlock **"terroristic."** He sent a cease-and-desist letter. The map is still up.

And the irony? **Public records requests have confirmed** that police have repeatedly used Flock's own camera network to investigate vandalism against Flock cameras — the system catching the people trying to take it down.















Communities Are Fighting Back


More than **60 cities have now canceled or suspended** their Flock contracts, and the pushback is coming from ordinary people, not just civil liberties lawyers.



Recent Victories

Communities across the country are rejecting ALPRs

 City/State	 Date	 Outcome	More info 
Shoreline, WA	May 2026	✓ Contract Rejected	More info 
El Cerrito, CA	May 2026	✓ Contract Rejected	More info 
Appleton, WI	May 2026	✓ Contract Canceled	More info 
Bloomington, IN	April 2026	✓ Contract Canceled	More info 
Salem, IL	April 2026	✓ Contract Rejected	More info 
Dane County, WI	April 2026	✓ Contract Canceled	More info 
Tompkins County, NY	April 2026	✓ Contract Canceled	More info 
Oshkosh, WI	April 2026	✓ Contract Canceled	More info 
Ithaca, NY	March 2026	✓ Contract Canceled	More info 
Saranac Lake, NY	March 2026	✓ Contract Canceled	More info 

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The resistance isn't fringe. It's cities, states, senators, lawyers, coders, and people with spray cans. But is the resistance growing faster than Flock's sales team?

The Fourth Amendment Question

The Fourth Amendment protects Americans from unreasonable searches and seizure

Established in 1791, it has spent the last 230 years trying to keep up with technolog

In June 2024, [a judge in Norfolk, Virginia ruled](#) that collecting Flock location data constitutes a *search* under the Fourth Amendment and cannot be used as evidence when collected without a warrant.

The argument is simple: a police officer watching your car on a public road is legal. A network of 80,000 cameras building a permanent, searchable record of everywhere every car has ever been — that starts to look different.

The courts are still working this out. The cameras keep going up in the meantime.

What You Can Do

- 1. Look up your neighborhood on [DeFlock.me](#).** The map is public and searchable. You might be surprised how many cameras are near you — and which direction they're pointed.
- 2. Check whether your city has a Flock contract.** File a public records request. Ask who has access to the data, whether federal sharing is enabled, and whether your H2O cameras feed into law enforcement systems.
- 3. Show up before the vote.** Most Flock contracts get approved without public attention. City council agendas are public. The time to speak is before the contract is signed, not after the cameras go up.
- 4. Share this.** The [car kill switch law passed in 2021](#) because it was buried in a trillion-dollar bill and nobody talked about it. The same expansion is trying to keep happening quietly here too.
- 5. Learn from History.** I wrote a book about this. It's a short read and half of it is printable pages for group discussions at home, school, club, church — just get people

together and start talking. [NOWHERE LEFT TO RUN: 10 Steps to Survive Tyranny To](#)

Now I want to hear from you:

Did you know there was a Flock camera near your home?

Does the patent including facial recognition, pedestrian tracking, software-unlockable change how you feel about the cameras?

Is the community pushback working? Or is it too little, too late?

Drop it in the comments. And send this to one person who drives past these poles every day without knowing what they are. 🖱

Until next week, stay strong, stay calm, and stay human.

~ Kay

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Discussion about this post

Comments

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Write a comment...



Lesa Spravka 1d

♥ Liked by Kay Rubacek

Wow. Thank you for this article rich with resources for getting involved. What's fascinating to me the town I'm in, San Antonio, there is only 2 or three downtown and on the south side, but there many more on the north side of town, where the more affluent people live and work. And where because of the abundance of stores. Also there's a couple of military bases on the south side too like you say it's creeping in rapidly. I'm gonna see what I can do at the city level.

♥ LIKE (1) 💬 REPLY



3 replies by Kay Rubacek and others



Dominique  11h

That's scary! I don't live in the US but I assume this isn't just a problem there!

♥ LIKE 💬 REPLY



3 more comments...