A Knightscope K5, knocked over outside its maker’s door

In April 2017 a 41-year-old man knocked over a Knightscope K5 security robot on patrol outside its maker’s offices in Mountain View, California; he told the company he was an engineer who wanted to “test” the robots, and its staff held him for the police.



By the Clerk · 19 April 2017 · 2 min read

CASE:	BAS-0015
SUBJECT:	A 41-year-old man, whom police described as smelling strongly of alcohol
OBJECT:	A Knightscope K5, a 300-pound security robot patrolling its maker’s offices
DATE:	19 April 2017
PLACE:	Knightscope’s offices, 1000 block of Terra Bella Avenue, Mountain View, California
FILED:	20 October 2026
GRADE:	HARM · INDIVIDUAL

Facts

At around a quarter past eight in the evening of 19 April 2017, Mountain View police answered a report of a prowler at Knightscope, on the 1000 block of Terra Bella Avenue, a police spokeswoman told CNET. Knightscope makes the K5, a security robot about five feet tall and 300 pounds, and one of them was on patrol at the company’s own offices. Police say a 41-year-old man knocked it over. The three sources print his name; this record does not.

More on why a robot with no AI in it is still filed.

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Security Sales & Integration describes what a K5 does when attacked: it is autonomous and built to avoid confrontation, and it emits a loud chirp and alerts its control centre, the chirp growing louder while the threat goes on. Knightscope's account is that the robot detected the "assault" and reported it, its alarms sounded, and the man tried to leave. Stacy Dean Stephens, the company's vice president of marketing and sales, and a colleague held him until the police arrived.

The spokeswoman told CNET that the man "appeared confused, had red, glassy eyes and a strong odor of alcohol emitted from him." An employee of the business asked for a private person's arrest for prowling, and he was also charged with being drunk in public. CNET could not reach him and police could not say whether he had a lawyer.

The robot suffered scratches, CNET and Security Sales & Integration report, and all three sources have it back on patrol by the time they went to press, a week later.

Statements

Stacy Dean Stephens, of Knightscope, to CNET: "The robot did exactly as it was suppose to do — the 'assault' was detected and immediately reported." And: "The robot has recuperated from his injuries and is back on patrol keeping our office and employees safe again."

The same, on the man's account of himself: "He claimed to be an engineer that wanted to 'test' the security robots. I guess he now has his answer."

Knightscope, as CSO Online quotes its statement to ABC7: "It's a testament to the technology that police caught the aggressor and booked in him jail."

For the record

The robot was guarding the people who built it, on their own lot, and when it was knocked down it was they who came out and held the man. Knightscope's website, CNET notes, read "Robots Winning Against Crime." The robot did what Stephens says it was built to do, detect and report; holding the man fell to Stephens and a colleague.

The man said he had come to test security robots. He was charged with prowling and with being drunk in public. The sources list no charge for the robot.

Mitigating circumstances

The police describe a man who was confused and smelled strongly of alcohol, and the only motive on record is the one he gave, a test. The robot was scratched and went back to work. No source reports anything further done to the machine once it was down, or how the charges ended.

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SOURCES

1. Chris Matyszczyk, Man assaults Silicon Valley security robot, police say (archived), CNET, 26 April 2017
2. Ms. Smith, Drunken man arrested for assaulting 300-lb. K5 security robot, CSO Online, 26 April 2017
3. Steve Karantzoulidis, Drunk Man Assaults Security Robot in Silicon Valley, Security Sales & Integration, 26 April 2017

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