

Daily Insider

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MUSICIAN INVENTS SECURITY SYSTEM FOR GUITARS

(DI) CREED AND PETER FRAMPTON ARE AMONG THE ARTISTS WHO ARE ALREADY USING THE "SNAGG" SECURITY SYSTEM FOR THEIR GUITARS. SNAGG CO-FOUNDER DON BASKIN SAYS RFID TECHNOLOGY—RADIO FREQUENCY IDENTIFICATION—IS GAINING MOMENTUM. MORE THAN A MILLION INSTRUMENTS ARE STOLEN ANNUALLY, ACCORDING TO MUSIC TRADE MAGAZINE, AND RECOVERY IS MINIMAL. SNAGG EMBEDS A MICROCHIP IN GUITARS WHICH CANNOT BE REMOVED WITHOUT DAMAGING THE INSTRUMENT. THE CHIPS ARE ENCODED WITH I.D. NUMBERS. POLICE DEPARTMENTS AND PAWN SHOPS HAVE HAND-HELD SCANNERS THAT CAN READ THE NUMBERS. FENDER IS MANUFACTURING ABOUT 400 CUSTOM GUITARS A WEEK WITH THE MICROCHIPS IN THEM AND THERE ARE ALREADY ABOUT 30,000 GUITARS WITH THEM IN USE. PURCHASERS HAVE BEEN PAYING \$19.95 FOR SNAGG AS AN OPTION, BUT AT THE SUMMER NAMM SHOW, FENDER WILL INTRODUCE GUITARS WITH THE CHIPS AS A STANDARD FEATURE. SNAGG IS ALSO NOW IN NEGOTIATIONS TO "RFID" AN ENTIRE MAJOR TOUR, PUTTING CHIPS IN HUNDREDS OF PIECES OF EQUIPMENT. THE TOUR TRUCKS, TOO, MAY HAVE GPS LOCATORS, SO IF A TRUCK WITH EVERYTHING IN IT IS STOLEN, IT CAN BE TRACKED BY GLOBAL SATELLITE. NO GUITARS WITH CHIPS HAVE BEEN STOLEN AND RECOVERED YET. BASKIN ESTIMATES THAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN MARKET PENETRATION TOPS 100,000 AS THE CHANCE OF THEFT RISES. BASKIN, WHO STARTED SNAGG IN 1998, WAS A MEMBER OF THE '60s GROUP SYNDICATE OF SOUND. ACCORDING TO BASKIN, IN THE "ONE HIT WONDER" SECTION OF THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME, THEIR "LITTLE GIRL" IS PLAYED ONCE EVERY 20 MINUTES. HE GOT THE IDEA FOR SNAGG WHEN HE APPROACHED BILLBOARD MAGAZINE ABOUT CREATING A SYSTEM OF SECURE AWARDS THAT WOULD ONLY BE IN THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO HAD ACTUALLY EITHER WRITTEN OR RECORDED A TOP 10 HIT. TOO OFTEN GOLD RECORDS AND OTHER AWARDS ARE GIVEN TO PEOPLE WHO HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SONG, BASKIN SAYS. OR IN HIS CASE, HIS GOLD RECORD WAS SWIPED BY HIS EX MANAGER...

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