

## Fox Apologized For Misreporting On TSA -- Will *The Daily*?

March 04, 2011 5:35 pm ET - by Sean Easter

On Tuesday, *Fox & Friends* ran a segment about a new portable DNA analyzer soon to begin testing by the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The facts are these: The analyzer is **entering** preliminary testing, and it will be used in situations where DNA analyses are legal and authorized, such as establishing familial relationships in refugee cases. A document that details USCIS policies clearly **explains** that all such tests are completely voluntary. The TSA will not be involved in the testing the device, and has no intention to explore DNA testing.

None of that stopped *Fox & Friends* from **pushing** the completely concocted falsehood that the TSA will test passengers' DNA at airport security checkpoints. Co-host Steve Doocy teased the segment by saying, "And if you thought you thought pat-downs were bad, just wait. Now the TSA wants your DNA." In the segment, co-host Gretchen Carlson said the government claimed it would "build a database of terrorists and ... profile." On-screen graphics during the segment were particularly egregious, containing phrases such as, "New TSA Device Will Check Genes," "TSA Will Check Passengers' DNA Results," and "DNA Swap At Airports; 'Genetic Patdown' Device To Be Introduced."

Another misleading story about the same device appeared in the February 26 edition of the News Corp. iPad newspaper *The Daily*. Where the *Fox & Friends* segment was brazenly false, *The Daily* **article** simply fearmongered that the DNA analyzers could be abused. The text of the article did not mention the TSA -- although the URL does -- but the article led by discussing airport scanners: "Airport scanners already get under your clothes, but federal officials aren't stopping there: They want to get inside your genes, too." The implication of the headline presentation is, let's just say, explicitly clear:



So, while the text of the article doesn't outright say that the TSA will check passengers' DNA at security checkpoints, the suggestion is subtle as a jackhammer.

The article also makes much of the opinion of Jim Harper, director of information policy studies for the Cato Institute and a [member](#) of the DHS Data Privacy and Integrity Advisory Committee. In fact, the article's only pull quote is this ominous snippet:

member of the DHS privacy committee, called the technology a game-changer, and one that officials are rolling out too hastily.

"There's going to be a rapid migration

"We're plunging into the unknown here."

— Jim Harper,  
DHS privacy committee

Unexpected paternity results, for example, would do more than thwart an immigrant family or an adoption.

*The Daily* also reports Harper's concern that his committee was not consulted. But the testing of this device is not a shift in policy with respect to when the DHS is authorized to offer DNA testing. Again, the device is only in preliminary testing in cases where DNA analysis is already used. In light of these facts, Harper's statement that there's "going to be a rapid migration into collecting more DNA from more people" is pure speculation.

*Fox & Friends* [apologized](#) for its reporting on the TSA today. *The Daily*, another News Corp. outlet, should also clarify its misleading report.

Copyright © 2010 Media Matters for America. All rights reserved.