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COUNTERFEIT IDS:
A NATIONAL SECURITY, PUBLIC SAFETY THREAT



One of the largest counterfeit ID vendors in the country was finally taken down

In 2016, we reported on a terrifying murder plot against NYPD officers by a disturbed New York City teenager, Ranbir Shergill. 18 years old at the time, Shergill began carrying out meticulously planned steps towards his ultimate goal, a rampage of carnage through New York City streets that summer. First on his list was getting a fake ID.

Shergill ordered a fake ID online using the darknet, a level of the internet that lets users operate anonymously and is commonly used for the sale and trade of illicit goods or services due to its untraceable nature. Using a .tor browser, which connects the users to the darknet by scrambling their ip addresses, Shergill was able to find a high-quality fake ID vendor who sold and delivered him a counterfeit Ohio driver's license. Shergill paid in bitcoins, a form of anonymous and untraceable electronic currency.

For Shergill's next step, he traveled to Ohio and purchased a handgun using that Ohio fake ID. He traveled back to New York with a Glock 17 in hand, the weapon he planned to use to murder the police officers. A note on his phone read, "Do it during a snow storm... go from Dunkin Donuts on van wyck after shooting and killing officers they will be wearing coats. And one will be male other female. Then try to kill other NYPD officers."

Fortunately, Shergill was reported and arrested before he could carry out his plot. Authorities found seven magazines, 118 rounds of ammunition, and the Glock pistol at his house before he could use it.

Shergill almost certainly got the ID he purchased a gun with from TedDanzig, the darknet's oldest and most successful fake ID vendor. TedDanzig only makes Ohio IDs, only operates on the darknet through a site only accessible through a .tor browser, only accepts bitcoins for payment, and charges the same amount that Shergill paid for his ID.

When someone on a Reddit forum where TedDanzig is active linked the article and wrote, "Ted, is that you?" TedDanzig responded, "The price + OH + tor use does imply he bought from us. I almost don't want to check my order history."

Shergill was caught but TedDanzig has sold thousands of other high quality Ohio IDs across the world and has since upgraded to an even higher quality Michigan ID, of which he's also sold thousands. The Michigan IDs were cheap and almost undetectable, according to anonymous online reviews like this one:

"Ok so this id is amazing. I am from california close to San Diego. I have used it at numerous liquor stores, The tilted Kilt, and at a pretty strict bar in my town. Here is where the #%^ gets real. I went to LAS VEGAS. Used it at many bars no questions asked. Used it at a big pool party at the palms, passed the bend test and the \$%^ bouncer. I ALSO went to a huge club that night too!! And the bouncer was so strict and had pulled three fakes already when i was in line and there were cops around. I was #%^ myself when i was next in line. OK he looks at it for like five seconds gives it right back to me and i was on my way."

TedDanzig's fake ID sales could have continued indefinitely. He was even about to roll out a new Utah fake ID that was even more undetectable than his Michigan. That ID could have been used by customers like Shergill throughout the world, in cities big and small, to buy guns, rent trucks, or board airplanes. However, last month, TedDanzig was finally taken down.

It was a result of an investigation dating back to 2015, when Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) officials first learned of TedDanzig after a Suspicious Activity Report indicating an influx of counterfeit Ohio driver's licenses. DPS agents discovered the online marketplace and placed their own order, receiving a counterfeit Ohio ID in eight days, taped between baseball cards to avoid detection. The agents consulted with postal inspectors who determined that the complex shipping techniques had left the package "impossible to trace".

But shrewd investigators learned of a 2008 case involving a Toledo-based counterfeiter named Mark A. Simon. Further examination of that case and Simon's recent activity, including post-doctoral work in physics at the University of Toledo, indicated that Simon might be TedDanzig. By careful surveillance, trash pulls, and accessing private messages that TedDanzig sent on Reddit, the investigators were able to determine that Simon was indeed TedDanzig and that he was operating the massive document mill out of his house in Toledo using runners, tumbling deliveries, high tech machinery, and latex gloves to cover any trace of evidence.

On February 6, 2018, US Secret Service agents and Ohio DPS executed search warrants at four addresses around Toledo, OH. One of them was Simon's, where they recovered 30 digital wallets containing \$4.7 million in bitcoin, 21 gold and silver bars, 233 gold and silver coins, \$7,000 cash, six fake IDs, numerous computers, heat shields, six cell phones, six modems, and 20 printer plates. Mark Alex Simon charged with corrupt activity, money laundering, identity fraud, manufacture, transfer, sale, or distribution of false identification cards, telecommunications fraud, forgery, and possession of criminal tools. Three other accomplices were also arraigned in the case. Thanks to diligent law enforcement officers, one of the world's biggest and most dangerous document mill operators is now in custody. The TedDanzig site is still up, but we somehow suspect it's no longer being operated by Mark A. Simon. Here's hoping the Ohio DPS and US Secret Service receive a whole lot of orders.



Ray Martinez set to lead Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

On February 13, New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commissioner Raymond Martinez was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as the new Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). Martinez is a long-time friend of Keeping IDentities Safe and when he was serving as the New York State Commissioner of Motor Vehicles from 2000 to 2005, he was an honored speaker at several of our meetings and events, praising the importance of driver's license security to our members. He was also a speaker in a 2011 New York City event hosted by Board Member Henry Buhl. In meetings at the U.S. House of Representatives in 2003 and 2004, he spoke in favor a federal law to set minimum security levels for the issuance of driver's licenses. He was one of the few state officials in 2005 who publicly advocated for the security improvements brought by the REAL ID Act when it was being considered by the Senate.

When Martinez was the Chief Administrator of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission from 2010 until January 2018, he was recognized with an award from our organization for "National Security Excellence", for his work in driving that agency's needed upgrades to secure its credentials from criminals, impostors, and terrorists. He has a long and distinguished career, including serving as the Deputy U.S. Chief of Protocol and Diplomatic Affairs for the U.S. Department of State and as the White House's Deputy Director for Scheduling and Advance for First Lady Nancy Reagan. Martinez also served as Assistant General Counsel for the Long Island Power Authority. We can anticipate that Ray Martinez will bring his fraud fighting, law enforcement approach to his new job at FMCSA, which is responsible for ensuring that commercial truck drivers and the trucking industry adhere to federal safety standards. We are proud that this organization has a fifteen year friendship with this dedicated public servant and has supported his continuous efforts to keep this country and its citizens safe. Martinez was sworn in March 1.

[Click here for the story](#)

ohio's NEW DL-ID



Ohio begins central issuance and pursues full REAL ID compliance

Beginning July 2018, the 11.6 million residents of Ohio will be able to obtain REAL ID compliant driver's licenses and ID cards. The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) will also be centralizing production of driver's licenses, a critical step in deterring identity theft. Keeping Identities Safe congratulates the Ohio BMV for their important work protecting the Buckeye State's residents, noting that Ohio is joining 41 other states which now provide driver's licenses and identification cards through the mail from a centralized printing station, rather than receiving them over the counter.

Centralizing the production of driver's licenses and ID cards will reduce driver's license fraud and identify theft by:

- Preventing thievery and the loss of Registrar Agency materials;
- Creating a safe and secure printing environment to prevent loss of card stock;
- Utilize manufacturing techniques beyond the capability of localized issue printers; and
- Ensuring that only driver's license applicants whose identities have been confirmed receive a credential.

[Click here for the story](#)



The New York City truck attack and current threat level

An average of seven people on the terrorist watch list are encountered by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) trying to enter our country every single day. That's according to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Kirstjen Nielsen, speaking at the Aspen Institute last week in a discussion on her agency's strategy to confront the rapidly evolving

terror landscape. The room full of national security experts undoubtedly picked up on the operative word in that remark, "encountered". How many terrorists on the watch list seeking to enter the country are never "encountered"? Just how many terrorists on the watch list are able to sneak past the various DHS security layers? Moreover, how many terrorists seeking to enter our country were never on a watchlist? The tragic October terrorist attack in New York City in which Sayfullo Saipov rented a truck and plowed it through pedestrians in Manhattan should have come as no surprise. Saipov manipulated his resident addresses for over two years to avoid detection while plotting an attack. In doing so, he obtained driver's licenses from at least three states that we know of, including a commercial truck driver's license from Pennsylvania, one of the least secure states in the country when it comes to driver's licenses. We've been warning about this for years - and so has ISIS. The United States remains the number one target for ISIS and Islamic extremists and these groups have been threatening New York City for years.

Last May, ISIS released a 44-minute propaganda video beckoning terrorists to attack New York and Washington, D.C. with vehicles and knives. After the 2015 Paris massacre, ISIS released a video of suicide bombers juxtaposed in the city scenes of Times Square and Herald Square in New York. And we have been warning of a major European style truck attack for years, publishing op eds, speaking at conferences, and making presentations for law enforcement agencies across the globe. And we still aren't doing enough to face that threat. Some of the vulnerabilities are tougher to close than others. Turn on any network news station after a terror attack and you'll be right in the middle of any given talking head opining on the complicated issues of how to best win hearts and minds, how to end the war in Afghanistan, or what to do with Guantanamo Bay. Meanwhile, a crucial - and simple - terrorist prevention practice is being routinely ignored: combating fake IDs. Fake IDs have been integral to terrorist operations from Timothy McVeigh to 9/11 to the 2015 Paris attacks. They are used to travel, move money, hide from law enforcement, and much more. Today, a high quality fake ID convincing enough to fool even experts can be obtained for under \$100 by anyone, anywhere in the world. ISIS knows this. In ISIS's 2015 manual for undercover terrorists, *How to Survive in the West*, operatives are instructed that, "Identity change is so important...This makes it extremely difficult for intelligence agencies to know who you really are...find people who can fake ID cards".

The 2015 Paris and 2016 Brussels attackers that murdered over 160 people followed the ISIS guidance exactly. Salah Abdeslam, the logistics chief for the Paris attacks, provided himself and others involved with fake Belgium ID cards as he transported them through checkpoints across countries, including the plot's bomb-maker and architect. The ensuing investigation found those fake IDs sourced from a "factory" based in Belgium. The Belgium IDs were used to rent houses, cross borders, and wire money under false identities to evade detection by authorities. The Brussels metro station bomber also had an ID from the same factory, his in the name of a famous soccer player. When Belgian police raided the "factory", they found computers, scanners, printers, heat presses, and over 1,300 unfinished documents. The investigations into the attacks are still ongoing as others involved may still be at large. It remains uncertain how many undercover ISIS terrorists may have escaped using those high-quality fake IDs.

In her address to the Aspen Institute, Secretary Nielsen also said, "every country in the world must meet minimum requirements to... prove identity document security and more, or face consequences." The problem is that many of our own states don't meet these minimum security requirements, outlined in the REAL ID Act. Meanwhile, this past December, a Bangladeshi national who entered the United States in 2011 through chain migration, detonated a pipe bomb in the nation's busiest subway system beneath Times Square. Blending in with the rushing masses with explosives strapped to his chest, Akayed Ullah triggered his

device during peak travel hour. Fortunately, he was the only one seriously injured. However, it could have been much worse. Instead of a suicide mission with a small bomb, the once-licensed taxi cab driver might have instead rented a truck and run down pedestrians on the streets, channeling the successful New York City Halloween attack of Sayfullo Saipov. Ullah was licensed to drive a livery cab between 2012 and 2015, but the license was allowed to lapse. Ullah pled not guilty to terror charges last month. The terrorist threat is very real and very constant.

As Nielsen said, "Make no mistake: America is at war. We are at war with an enemy that knows no boundaries and respects no borders." We just hope the Secretary is serious about disarming the enemy of fake IDs, or what the 9/11 Commission more aptly termed as "weapons". It's time for a national strategy to combat fake IDs.

[Click here for the story](#)



REAL ID measures help catch a crook with three identities

"Jose Casas" is a man of many names, due to his long history of identity theft, fraud, and hiding from law enforcement. While he operated under the "Casas" alias for years, this career criminal's real name surfaced when he was fingerprinted upon his arrest, proving that this was just one of many identities he utilized to game the system. He maintained several fraudulently obtained identities, which he stole from innocent people and leveraged both their life savings and credit history to live comfortably on the lam.

However, his crime spree began to unravel on December 6, 2017 when he visited an Arizona Motor Vehicles Division office to renew his commercial driver's license. When Casas's application was being processed, the newly updated facial recognition system discovered that his photo closely resembled two other individuals in the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) database. Soon after, ADOT detectives with FBI training in facial recognition were able to determine that all three photos were of Casas. The impostor's long story then came to light. In 2007, Casas applied for an Arizona commercial driver's license using a counterfeit Illinois commercial driver's license - under the name of a victim in Texas. He then used the stolen identity to open a trucking business, purchase vehicles for the business, purchase personal vehicles, and buy a house in Goodyear, AZ. Back then, no facial recognition technology was actively used at ADOT offices, but thanks to the REAL ID Act, facial image comparison is now automatic and commonplace.

Detectives served a search warrant on February 7 at Casas's Goodyear residence and arrested

him. Casas's two other Arizona commercial driver's licenses under stolen identities were proof enough for the warrant, both of which were under medical suspension. Since commercial drivers are required to undergo a yearly physical, Casas was most likely refusing to do so and was rotating licenses to avoid having his credential cancelled for using drugs. After being fingerprinted, detectives discovered that Casas had an outstanding warrant from 1996 in Illinois for failure to appear on drug charges, including delivery of narcotics and possession of cocaine. He was booked as a fugitive after the State of Illinois verified the warrant. Casas was booked in a Maricopa jail on several counts of forgery and fraud schemes as well as mortgage fraud. The good news in this case is that a professional criminal is finally facing justice for his actions, the bad news however, is that there are still many others like him in the United States who will continue to roam free until all states upgrade to REAL ID standards and automatically compare renewals with existing databases.

[Click here for the article](#)

It's now been over 16 years since 9/11 - and the driver's license loophole STILL hasn't been fixed!

Did you know that fake IDs are used for so much more than underage drinking? The 9/11 Commission said that identity documents were as important as weapons for the hijackers. Check out our video to learn how criminals, thieves, and even terrorists use fake IDs to commit their crimes.



Support Keeping IDentities Safe



How are we fighting driver's license fraud?

- By raising awareness
 - By working with law enforcement
 - By helping states comply with REAL ID
 - By working with state legislators all over the country
 - By providing research
 - By working every day to protect your identity documents!
- We can only continue to do this with your support*

[Click here for more!](#)



Keeping IDentities Safe
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