

# Fake IDs and National Security

## May 2018



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**The 9/11 Commission wrote that, “for terrorists, travel documents are as important as weapons.”**

## Introduction

Fake IDs are used for so much more than underage drinking. Driver’s licenses and state-issued ID cards have become the preferred form of identification in the United States. In addition to being used as proof of eligibility to operate a motor vehicle, we use them for a whole host of purposes ranging from opening a bank account to applying for a U.S. passport to boarding an airplane. Because of their prevalence in our society, a counterfeit or fraudulently obtained driver’s license is a key tool for a thief, criminal, or terrorist to steal, hide, and travel undetected. That’s why the 9/11 Commission recommended that “secure identification should begin in the United States.”



Today, high quality counterfeit IDs have become far too easy to obtain. The internet, social media, the global economy, and leaps in technology have made purchasing a near-perfect emulation of almost any state driver’s license or ID card just a few clicks away.

With nothing but an internet connection and an address, anyone from anywhere can order a fake ID shipped to their doorstep straight from China. That ID will have any picture and biographic data the customer chooses and will arrive hidden deep in a package of cheap trinkets and toys to evade customs detection.

Once it’s in an impostor’s hands, a fake ID can be used to open bank accounts, obtain credit cards, travel, evade law enforcement, and board aircraft - just as the 9/11 hijackers did. Others have since used fake IDs to buy guns, buy explosives, and rent heavy vehicles. ISIS terrorists have used fake IDs to rent safe-houses and cross borders.

The fake ID business is an ever-expanding industry. New vendors from all over the world pop up almost every week to satisfy the exploding demand largely from college campuses across the country. And there’s no indication of it ever slowing down. Sadly, most of our gatekeepers are under-trained to deal with this threat. For these reasons, terrorists will continue seeking out our driver’s licenses and ID cards, which the 9/11 Commission rightly reported were “as important as weapons,” to the hijackers.



## A Brief History of Fake IDs and Terrorism

The state issued driver's license and ID card have long been sought after by terrorists worldwide in order to rent houses, rent cars, send money, and travel undetected by law enforcement.

### The al-Qaeda Handbook:

Counterfeit driver's licenses have been a national security threat since at least 1995, when Timothy McVeigh hand-made a South Dakota license with a heated iron and typewriter and used it to rent the Ryder truck he detonated in Oklahoma City.<sup>1</sup> Foreign terrorist organizations have been using them since at least 2000, when the al-Qaeda training manual was first uncovered. Known as "The Manchester Document" after its recovery from an al-Qaeda terrorist in Manchester, England, the 18 chapter, 180 page book was a veritable terrorism for dummies, focusing on how to wage war, techniques for resisting interrogation, and calling for "bullets, the ideals of assassination, bombing and destruction, and the diplomacy of the cannon and machine gun."

Under the chapter, "Counterfeit Currency and Forged Documents", the manual proscribes that "all documents of the undercover brother, such as identity cards and passport, should be falsified." That book continues to be uncovered from arrested terrorists all over the world.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the operational maxim to use fake IDs to avoid detection has been a staple for terrorists ever since.

### The 9/11 Attacks:

The directions outlined in the al-Qaeda training manual were followed closely by the 9/11 hijackers, who used over 30 different fraudulent IDs between 18 terrorists to open bank accounts, obtain credit cards, hide from law enforcement, enrol in flight schools, and board the aircraft that took 3,000 lives. This was uncovered in the investigations by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks in the United States, otherwise known as the 9/11 Commission, whose 585 page report delved into the complex operations employed by the terrorists. According to that report, the pilot of American Airlines flight 77 which struck the Pentagon, Hani Hanjour, held four state-issued IDs alone. All four

pilots involved in the plot were able to obtain Florida driver's licenses. Two other hijackers were on the terrorist watch-list but were still able to obtain California driver's licenses. The ensuing investigation led the 9/11 Commission to write that, "for terrorists, travel documents are as important as weapons."<sup>3</sup>

### Recent Attacks:

Almost 20 years later, little has been done to close the vulnerability that the 9/11 hijackers exploited with fake IDs. A slew of recent al-Qaeda, lone wolf, and Hezbollah terror attacks and plots have also relied on fake IDs, both here and abroad.

Hosam Smadi was operating with a fraudulently obtained ID when he was arrested for his plot to detonate a bomb under a tower in Dallas, Texas in 2009.<sup>4</sup> In 2011, Khalid Ali-M Aldawsari, who had already collected 42 liters of chemicals and was nearly operational in his plot to detonate WMDs across the country and raise his own al-Qaeda terror cells, wrote that obtaining fake IDs were the next "important steps" in his plot.<sup>5</sup> The 2012 Burgas bus bombers used counterfeit Michigan driver's licenses made in a Hezbollah factory for at least five years while renting cars and hotels in Bulgaria to prepare for their attack.<sup>6</sup> The 2013 Boston Marathon bombing ring leader, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, amalgamated a long reading list of ID counterfeiting guides before his attack, including "Secrets Of A Back Alley ID Man: Fake Id Construction Techniques Of The Underground" and "How to Make Driver's Licenses and Other ID on Your Home Computer".<sup>7</sup>

### Islamic State:

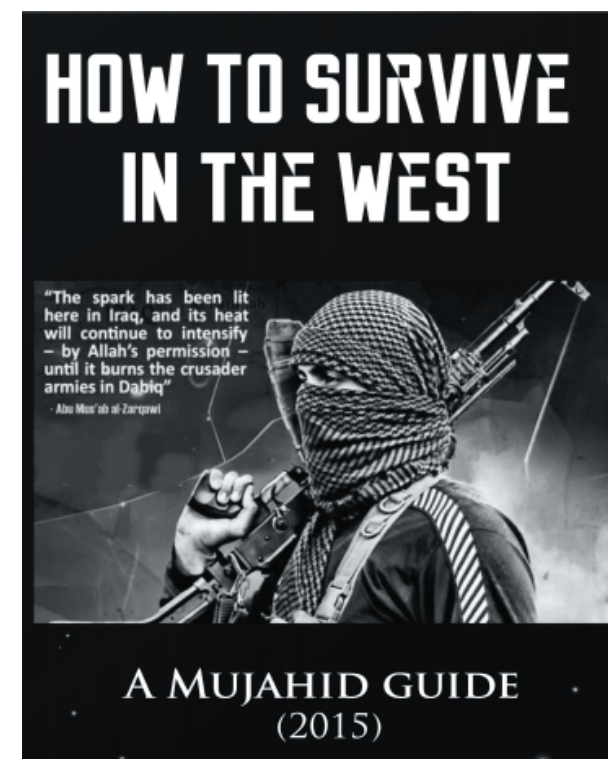
Today's terror threat has somewhat shifted toward Islamic State, or ISIS, which has orchestrated bombings and violent attacks all over the world in just the few short years it has been active. Their successful attacks in Europe that claimed hundreds of lives have not satisfied their desire to attack the

U.S. and "raise black flag over White House". After attacking Texas in 2015, the terror group specifically pointed to California, Virginia, Maryland, Illinois, and Michigan as next targets.<sup>8</sup> Omar Mateen, the terrorist responsible for the mass murder of 49 nightclub goers in Orlando in 2016, pledged his allegiance to ISIS shortly before his attack.<sup>9</sup>

Following in al-Qaeda's footsteps, ISIS created a guidebook advising operatives to obtain fake IDs in order to avoid detection. Sometime in 2015, Islamic State released, "How to Survive in the West", a "mujahid guide" that teaches recruits how to sneak into countries, hide, build bombs, plan attacks, maximize civilian casualties, and escape to Islamic State in Syria or Iraq afterwards. Key to doing so, the book teaches, is obtaining fake IDs.

Its first chapter, "Hiding the Extremist Identity", includes directions for the terrorist to change "everything about you" to make it "extremely difficult for intelligence agencies to know who you really are". To do so, it says to "find people who can fake ID cards" in the "dark underworld". It also advises undercover operatives to rent cars and "install bombs in them" and detonate those bombs near "those who are harming the Muslims".<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup>



"Changing your identity is important because you will come across different people in this struggle; you want to hide your true identity from people who don't know you so no-one in your Secret Agent life can ever describe you accurately if they ever got caught. Identity change is so important that everything about you – your: (Alias name, Physical look, Voice, Meeting places, and even phone number.) Are different to your real ones.

This makes it extremely difficult for intelligence agencies to know who you really are if you always take security precautions before every meeting.

If you can find people who can fake ID cards, that would be even better (and this may be possible if you can have contact with people in the dark underworld)... Rent cars under fake identity papers and install bombs in them and set off the car bombs near Synagogues, near governmental or police buildings, near gas pipelines or near those who are harming the Muslims."

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2. "Al-Qaeda Manual Part 5." Defense.gov. U.S. Department of Defense, 29 June 2005. Web. 24 Dec. 2015.

3. "The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, at 384 (2004).

4. "Jordanian Immigrant Charged in Terror Plot MediaNews." Monterey County Herald, 27 Sept. 2009.

5. Smith: "Terror Plot Is Failure of Immigration System." Congressman Lamar Smith. N.p., 24 Feb. 2011.

6. Kelley, Michael B. "Bulgaria Releases A Second Fake Driver's License They Say Came From The Suicide Bomber." Business Insider. Business Insider, Inc, 16 Aug. 2012.

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8. Curl, Joseph. "ISIS Announces 6-Month Terror Campaign, NAMES 5 Targets — CA, VA, MD, IL, MI." Washington Times. The Washington Times, n.d.

9. "Islamic State Claims Responsibility for Orlando Nightclub Shooting." Thomson Reuters, 12 June 2016.

10. "How to Survive in the West: A Mujahid Guide." (n.d.): 10. Investigative Project. Web. <http://www.investigativeproject.org/documents/misc/863.pdf>. Featured on page 9.

11. Wyke, Tom. "Belgian Police Issue Photos of Two New Paris Attack Suspects Who Both Used Fake ID Cards." Mail Online. Associated Newspapers, 04 Dec. 2015.



### The Truck Attack Threat:

ISIS has written that, "vehicles are like knives, as they are extremely easy to acquire. But unlike knives, which if found in one's possession can be a cause for suspicion, vehicles arouse absolutely no doubts."<sup>12</sup> Avoiding that suspicion is doubly effective when a terrorist can use a fake ID. The 2016 Berlin truck attacker used 14 different identities in Germany alone to escape an extensive criminal record before he killed twelve holiday market shoppers.<sup>13</sup>

In the aforementioned 2015 ISIS manual, "How to Survive in the West," terrorists are told to rent vehicles with "fake identity papers." According to ISIS, the bigger the vehicle, the better. In an issue of its propaganda magazine, Rumiya, ISIS instructs that, "smaller vehicles lack the weight and wheel span required for crushing many victims" and that operatives should stick to larger cars and trucks.<sup>14</sup> That's why Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel walked into a rental company in France and said, "I want the biggest, most powerful vehicle you have." He walked out with the keys to a 20-ton refrigerator truck which he plowed through a national celebration in Nice in 2016 killing 84.<sup>15</sup>

The terrorists responsible for the 2017 Barcelona attack, in which a rented van barreled down a main avenue, slaughtering over a dozen people, also followed this advice perfectly. The van used in the attack was rented using a stolen ID card. Further, the credit card used to rent that vehicle was also used to rent two other vans destined for other attacks. Spanish authorities say the perpetrator was part of a twelve person plot that had collected 120 gas canisters they planned to use in vehicular attacks.<sup>16</sup> The people responsible for this attack followed the ISIS manual step by step.

The Barcelona, Berlin, and Nice attacks were just three of the five European mass murder terrorist attacks using heavy vehicles in a single year, joining attacks in Stockholm and London. This deadly trend taking shape may show that sophisticated terror attacks, the kind that involve skilled airplane pilots, miniaturized explosives, Middle East training camps, and/or complex funding networks, may be less prevalent in the future. Such plots involve extensive coordination with many steps, each step with its own chance of failure, exposure, or law enforcement interdiction. Recent attacks prove that today's terrorists may not need to rely on any of that

complex planning. To commit mass murder, all a terrorist needs is the keys to a vehicle.

The tragic October 2017 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. The United States remains the number one target for ISIS and Islamic extremists and these groups have been threatening New York City for years. Just months before, ISIS released a 44-minute propaganda video beckoning terrorists to attack New York and Washington, D.C. with vehicles and knives<sup>17</sup>. After the 2015 Paris massacre, ISIS released a video of suicide bombers juxtaposed in city scenes of Times Square and Herald Square in New York.<sup>18</sup> And this organization has 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.

The Oklahoma City truck bombing might be even easier today. McVeigh wouldn't need to hand make a fake ID when one can be ordered from dozens of different websites and delivered to a doorstep in days. A terrorist can pick any picture he or she chooses along with any name and address (probably one matching a fraudulent credit card) and receive a high quality counterfeit ID ready to go. Next, that fake ID can be used to rent not only large vehicles, like vans, but actual box trucks. Right now, a known terrorist can walk into a truck rental store anywhere in the country and easily rent this destructive weapon for as long as he or she needs. If they are on a watchlist or are trying to avoid one, the terrorist can simply show that fake ID. If the Barcelona terrorist driver wanted to perpetrate the same attack through Times Square but was on a terrorist watch list, he could simply order an ID online, show it at the closest truck rental company, and walk out with the keys to anything from a cargo van to a 26-foot behemoth with a 7,400 pound capacity. In fact, the Barcelona terrorist could use the same stolen ID that he showed in Spain to get his van because most truck rental companies even accept foreign driver's licenses. It's a dangerous to assume that the person at the cash register is familiar enough with the over 100 different formats of U.S. driver's licenses to determine authenticity before providing a heavy vehicle, but it's simply impossible to rely on that person to authenticate foreign licenses as well.

12. "Sweden Truck Attack Follows String of Similar Vehicle Assaults," Fox News, FOX News Network, 7 Apr. 2017.

13. Berlin Truck Killer Amri 'Had 14 Identities' in Germany, BBC, 5 Jan. 2017.

14. Lockett, Jon. Outrage as Guides Teaching Lone-Wolf Terrorists How to Use Vehicles to 'Crush Victims' Are STILL Online. The Sun, 24 Mar. 2017.

15. Shammass, John. "Nice Terrorist Told Hire Company 'I Want Biggest Most Powerful Truck You Have.'" Mirror, Mirror.co.uk, 17 July 2016.

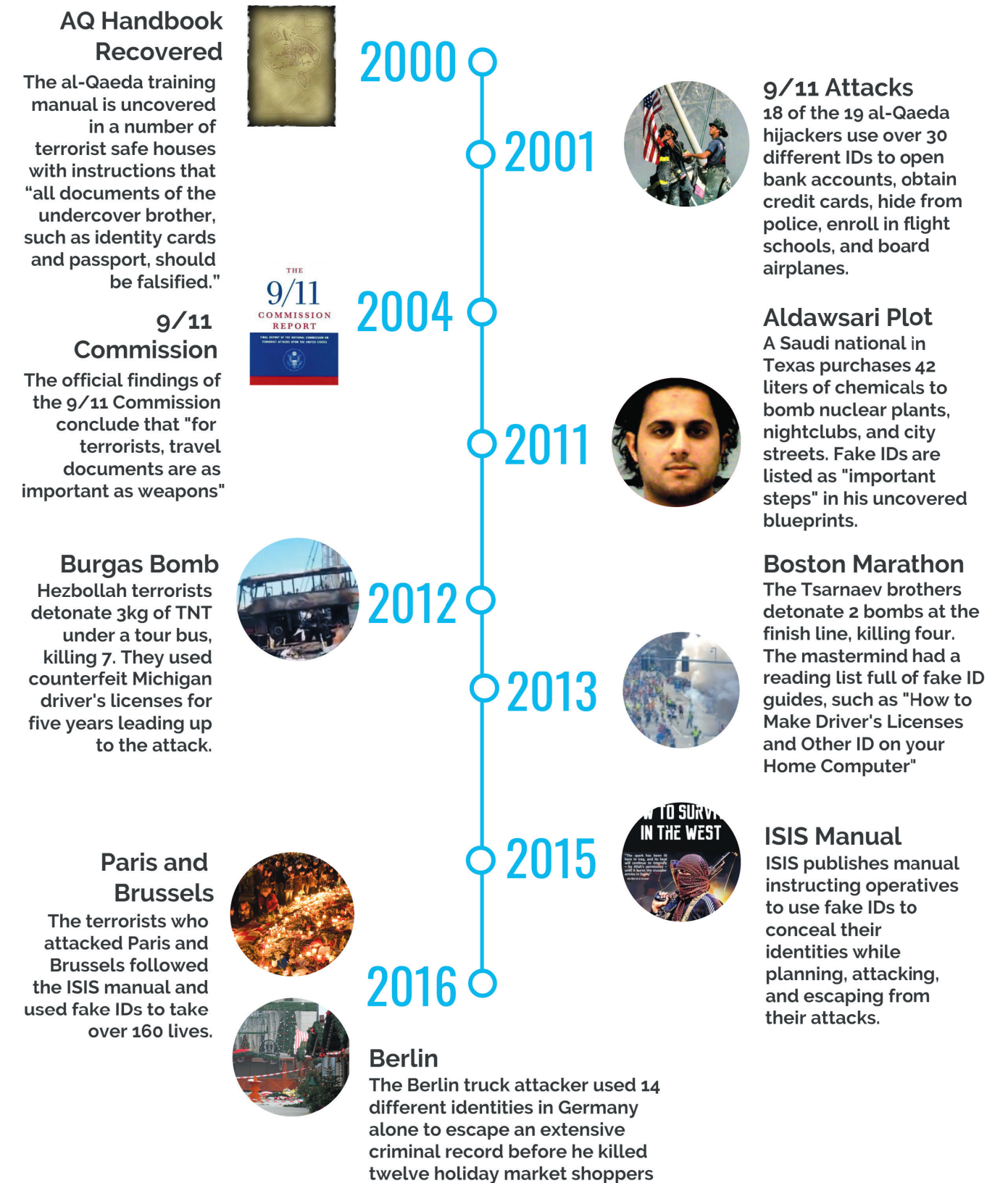
16. Barcelona Attack: Spain Terror Cell Had 120 Gas Canisters. BBC News, 20 Aug. 2017.

17. Silverstein, Jason. ISIS Appears to Threaten Attack on Washington in New Propaganda Video. New York Daily News, 16 Nov. 2015.

18. Dupuy, Beatrice. "Terrorists Have Threatened to Attack New York since 9/11." Newsweek, 1 Nov. 2017.

## TIMELINE OF TERROR

Terrorists have a long history of using fake and fraudulently obtained driver's licenses to facilitate their attacks.



# How Fake IDs are Bought

In the past, fake IDs were of extremely low quality, made in small batches in dorm rooms or Kinko's copy shops and sold on college campuses and street corners. IDChief changed all of that.

## IDChief:

Operating in China, far out of reach from U.S. law enforcement jurisdictions and under a very forgiving legal system, IDChief set a new model for high quality fake IDs produced in mass quantities. It operated a website, displaying all of its prices and 22 different state ID options publicly. It had Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube pages pushing out its products. It had "customer service reps" on college campuses furthering that outreach. Online ordering was made incredibly easy and efficient as customers only needed the internet and an address to place an order. They would fill in any biographic information they chose, attach a picture, wire money, and within two weeks, the customer had a fake ID at his or her doorstep, hidden inside a package of cheap trinkets or toys to evade customs detection. The prices ranged from \$75 to \$150 dollars, including a duplicate. They were even cheaper if the customer was a "middle-man", ordering in bulk and distributing to others. Perhaps most alarmingly, IDChief counterfeits were of higher quality than many ID checkers across the country had ever seen, containing near-perfect emulations of security features and had the ability to provide corresponding information if scanned. This gave IDChief a meteoric rise and by 2012, according to one law enforcement source, its products made up 75% of fake IDs in California.

That year also became its final year. IDChief's sudden rise garnered so much media attention that Capitol Hill took notice. In August 2012, four U.S. Senators sent a letter to the Chinese ambassador citing the website as a threat to our national security and demanded it be shut down. Days later, it was no longer operating. But the absence of IDChief and the market it created left a huge vacuum for fake ID vendors. Dozens of new sellers have since taken its place over the last few years, many also operating in China.

## IDGod:

Most notably is IDgod, a China-based document mill that likely has some of the same operators from IDChief. Its model, its pricing, its images, and some of its products are almost exact copies. IDChief specialized in the Pennsylvania license, which IDGod also offers, but IDGod's most popular product is a Connecticut counterfeit with a near-perfect copy of the Charter Oak watermark. These Connecticut counterfeits became so popular that Giant grocery stores in Maryland stopped accepting any IDs from Connecticut.

## New-IDs

New-IDs claims to have been in operation since 2007. Its website, email servers, and production are all hosted "offshore," and "away from the jurisdiction of our Law Enforcement agencies here in the US." It offers 21 different state IDs at prices ranging from \$125 for one ID and \$90 per ID for bulk orders. It also offers Social Security cards. The New-IDs operators also sell material supply to other counterfeiters under the separate business name, New-holos.

## FakeYourDrank

Fakeyourdrank is the second highest reviewed vendor on FakeIDVendors.com. It offers documents from 12 different U.S. states, each starting at \$80 with discounts for bulk orders and occasional sales and promotional prices. Processing, production, and shipping typically takes two to three weeks. Among the products FakeYourDrank offers is the Washington Enhanced Driver's License (EDL). A genuine EDL is a license that is issued under higher identity authentication standards and contains advanced physical security features from the standard Washington driver's license. EDLs denote both identity and citizenship and can be used as identification to pass land borders.

## IDViking

IDViking offers 25 different driver's licenses and ID cards from U.S. states and Canadian provinces and is currently the highest rated vendor on fakeidvendors.com. The IDs are reportedly received by customers in 12 to 14 days. Its Ohio licenses are one of the most well-reviewed counterfeits on forums. It also offers dozens of student IDs for \$30.

## TedDanzig:

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 tow, 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."*<sup>19</sup>

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.

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 as a result of diligent law enforcement officers and 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.

## Reddit:

Over the last four years, a simple Google search of "buy fake ID" would yield three top results consistently: IDgod, a site on Reddit, and a Business Insider article about buying fake IDs. Two of those dropped after the Reddit site was shut down earlier this year. We've already covered the first result, IDGod. The second, Reddit, is an immensely popular anonymous online forum that allows users to ask and answer questions, post links, and share information about pretty much any topic under the sun. These range from fan-fiction writing circles, to neighborhood message boards, and sometimes to illicit activities: like drug trade, illegal pornography, hate speech, and forgery. The latter applies to the fake ID subreddit, which is a narrowed in community under the Reddit umbrella that specifically focuses on the counterfeit ID market. That brings us to the third result, the Business Insider article from 2014, "Reddit And Instagram Have A Thriving Marketplace For Fake IDs." The writer provides context, scale, and screenshots of the vast and growing fake ID subreddit community.

Operating openly on the clearnet, that subreddit community was more than just a simple marketplace for buying and selling fake IDs. It was a complex and regulated forum involving not only the customers and vendors, but middlemen, expert ID checkers, anonymous law enforcement officers, TSA officers, hotel clerks, rental car company employees, and sometimes extremely nefarious actors, all monitored by a crew of highly involved "moderators" who could delete, move, or discredit posts.

The subreddit forum has also hosted "ask me anything" threads, including one from a bouncer

<sup>19</sup> Eustachewich, Lia. Teen Allegedly Bought Gun with Fake ID, Threatened to Murder Cops. New York Post, 9 June 2016.



at one of the "toughest" bars in the country and one from someone claiming to be a Transportation Security Officer at an airport. The moderators of the subreddit also constantly updated the "verified vendor list," or VVL. The VVL may have been the most popular and useful item to anyone landing on the Fake ID page from Google. Highlighted at the top of the forum and again on the sidebar, the VVL provided an extensive list of fake ID vendors, including which states they offer and which documents they specialize in. These lists were guided by user input and extensive customer reviews. The VVL also identified "scammers," letting potential customers know which vendors would take their payment and never produce a document.

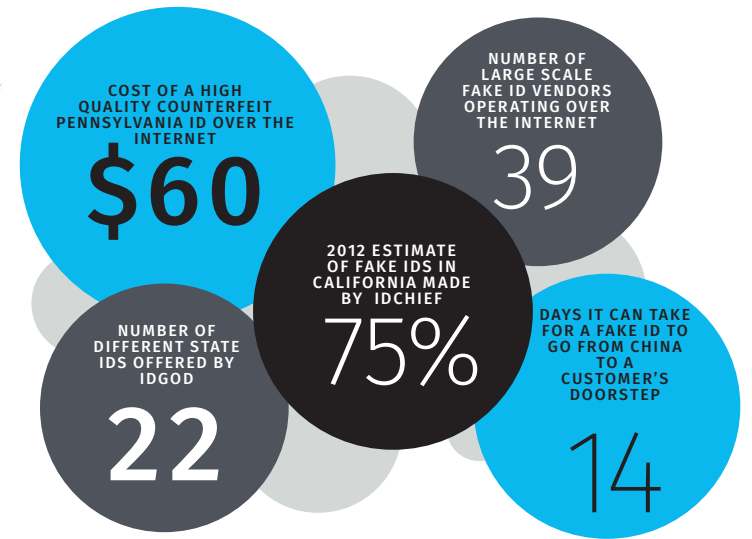
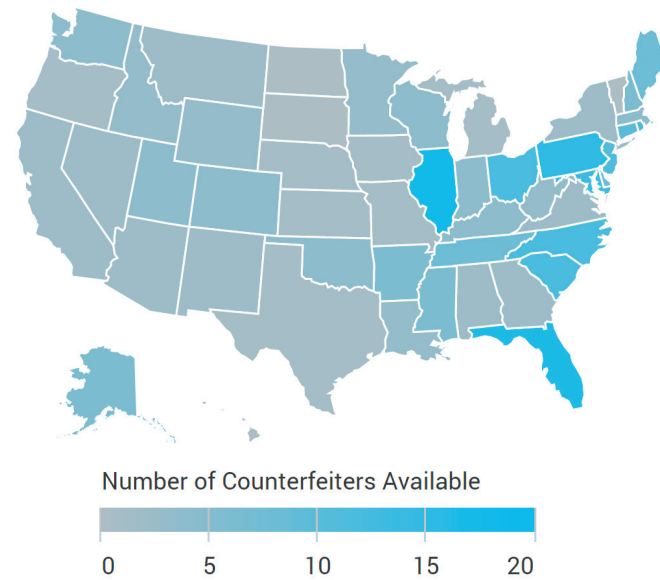
It doesn't take a wild imagination to see how criminals, thieves, and terrorists could exploit all the information available on this forum to purchase and use fake IDs in order to evade law enforcement detection. And this ecosystem operated for at least seven years.

Finally, in February of this year, the subreddit was shutdown for "violating the Reddit rules," which includes posting content that, "is illegal, is

involuntary pornography, is sexual or suggestive content involving minors, encourages or incites violence, threatens, harasses, or bullies or encourages others to do so, is personal and confidential information, impersonates someone in a misleading or deceptive manner, or is spam." Assuming this subreddit falls under the "illegal" category in Reddit's classification, selling counterfeit documents was just as illegal when the subreddit started six years ago as it is today. One has to wonder why it took so long - perhaps it was related to the takedown of the largest domestic counterfeit ID vendor earlier this month, TedDanzig, who operated, marketed, and sold extensively through the website.

Since the shutdown, a number of other fake ID forums have already popped up across the web. The VVL has been re-published in different forms on multiple other sites. Notably, FakeIDvendors.com has almost entirely copied the former subreddit's format and interface. It's really only a matter of time before any of these sites becomes just as popular as the former fake ID subreddit - perhaps with added improvements - just as the fall of IDChief led to IDGod.

### The Most Counterfeited States of Major Vendors



## Who are the Customers?

The vast majority of the fake ID market is made up of underage kids trying to buy alcohol until they turn 21. However, my research has shown many other customers are seeking IDs for more nefarious purposes. Below are just a few select excerpts of anonymous internet testimonials on fake ID use:

#### To Purchase Marijuana

Underage kids regularly post about buying drugs from marijuana dispensaries using their fake IDs.

*"Idgods Mississippi worked at all 7 weed dispensaries in Colorado! The age to buy recreational marijuana in Colorado is 21. Idgods Mississippi worked flawlessly at every dispensary we visited, even passed 3 different scanners that they used. Props to idgod!"*

*"i have the worst arkansas fake ever and it worked fine. but some dispensaries are very strict so just be careful"*

*"I have used my Delaware in a Washington dispensary and went to one of the atms they just came out with and no problems at all"*

*"Just bought around \$100 of goods from a Washington state dispensary with a Barfun New MO."*

*"I drove through CO last week and used my fake at a dispensary. "*

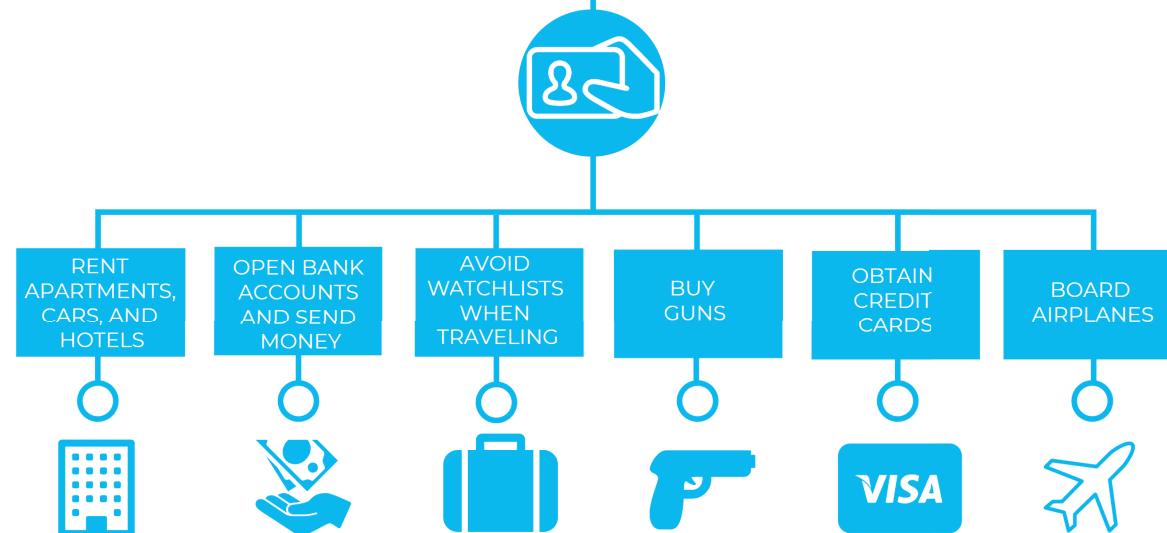
#### To Rent Guns

This is a particularly alarming use of a fake ID, as it could allow for convicted felons and others barred from purchasing firearms a way to escape the prohibition. Last year, a teenager in New York used a counterfeit Ohio license to purchase a gun he planned to use to murder NYPD officers.

*"I live in Ohio, which doesn't require background checks when buying from a private seller. There's a gun show coming to my city next weekend. Will I be able to purchase an AK47 with my fake? On a separate note, how rigorous is Walmart on ammunition? Would I be able to get through with an idgod ct? I'm buying 5.56"*

*"Using a fake at a shooting range?...you have to*

## HOW DO CRIMINALS & TERRORISTS USE FAKE IDs?



*be at least 21 to rent a gun and since I don't have one, I'd have to rent. Does anyone know anything about how strict these places are or have any recommendations?*

### To Ride Amtrak

Trains, both here in the U.S. and abroad, continue to be a top target for terrorists. The 2015 Thalys train shooting by an Islamist terrorist proved that. Terrorists also often travel by train. ID checks at Amtrak are too sporadic and ineffective to mitigate the risk of terrorist travel and the threat to a train itself.

*"Hypothetically, if I want to go on an anonymous train ride could I use a fake, or do they use box scanners?... I'm not a terrorist, I just need to go somewhere without anyone knowing... Let's just say I want to disappear for a while. I'm not trying to hide it from the authorities but from family. I'm leaving my phone at home..."*

*"The two times I went (on Amtrak) with a fake, they just glanced it over to confirm info. You should be fine as long as it didn't look obviously fake."*

*"For reasons I'd rather not get into, I've used one for an Amtrak train trip for both ways. The tellers seem to just glance it over to confirm names."*

### To Book Hotels and Rent Houses

Almost every major terrorist attack has incorporated a safe house for logistics planning, coordination, meetings, weapons exchange, training, briefing, bomb-making, and/or escape. Too few booking representatives are trained in fraudulent document recognition or know how important accurate ID verification and authentication can be to our national security.

*"I'm in my 30s and need an ID with a name other than my own to be used in virtually any circumstance. I would use it for hotels, clubs, casinos, shows, when using a credit card, etc. Would be nice to use for rental car too"*

*"I work for a hotel and can confidently say as long as the name on the id matches the name on the credit card - you're in."*

*"Going to attempt to rent a house in WI in a couple months and was wondering if anybody has had any luck with renting anything, houses, cabins, hotels, etc... I am going to be using a Mr. Rep IL btw."*

*"I've realized how good [fake IDs] can be for other purposes. Just this weekend alone, I've used my [expletive] ID for 3 non-drinking purposes." The post goes on to list using a credit card, buying fireworks, and renting a hotel.*

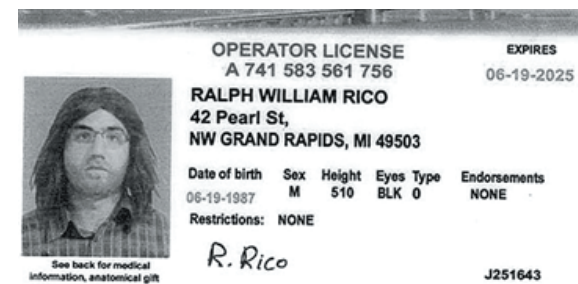
*"Could a fake ID be used for hotels or rental cars?"*

*"when exiting the airport, just find the most foreign person, and be a genuine funny person."*

### To Rent Cars

Terrorists commonly rent cars with fake IDs, as the Burgas Bus Bombers did. This helps them travel across borders (states in the U.S. and countries in Europe) without being detected or tracked by law enforcement agencies.

*"Rented a car with a fake ID, drove it like 1000 miles, dumped it in a parking lot."*



Low quality counterfeit Michigan IDs produced by Hezbollah and used by the Burgas Bus Bombers in their attack that killed 6. Note that the bottom Michigan ID lists an address in Louisiana, but was still effectively used in the plot to rent cars and safe-houses and to travel undetected over five years. Much higher quality documents are currently available and in circulation.

### For Other Unknown Purposes

Many counterfeit vendors report receiving orders from other countries, from people far over the age of 21, and for multiple identities. The largest vendors, such as IDGod, claim that they never fill such orders, but others will gladly take the cash and make whatever ID a customer wants.

*"Unfamiliar with USA drivers licenses and have some questions... I was looking at a Connecticut ID. Thanks and sorry for my extreme lack of knowledge, I know nothing about real US IDs"*

*"Hello Friends..! I need USA National ID card or Lisence card or Utility bill for the verification of my account. Anyone help me.."*

*"Atlantis Fakes: How much are you offering?"*

*Idgod: "have been getting some orders from Iraq and Kuwait we will NOT ship there your order will be deleted and money if paid with bitcoins refunded if paid with western union untouched!"*

### To Rent Trucks

The use of fake IDs to rent trucks is particularly troubling, given the rise of trucks as a predominant terrorist weapon. 2010 al-Qaeda guidance advised operatives to use a "truck as a mowing machine, not to mow grass but mow down the enemies of Allah".<sup>20</sup> ISIS guidance followed up, noting that "Vehicles are like knives, as they are extremely easy to acquire. But unlike knives, which if found in one's possession can be a cause for suspicion, vehicles arouse absolutely no doubts."<sup>21</sup> The 2016 Nice, France attack involved a terrorist plowing a rented truck through a Bastille Day celebration, taking 86 lives. There was another truck attack in Berlin later that year and one in Stockholm already in 2017, as well as an SUV attack in London. Here in the U.S., we face an extreme vulnerability to truck attacks, as anyone can rent a 26 foot truck with a 7,500 pound capacity using a fake ID. Truck rental stores have no identity verification procedures in place and some even accept unfamiliar foreign driver's licenses.

*"i work at Uhaul in Georgia, when someone hands me the ID, all we do is put in the license number, make sure its not expired."*

### At Airports

Given the lessons learned after 9/11, where 18 terrorists used over 30 different driver's licenses as "weapons", this is a vulnerability we should have closed 15 years ago. Below are examples of seemingly harmless kids using fake IDs to board aircraft but demonstrates how easily and often it is done.

*"I'm flying home from school after finals, and my genius self forgets both my real ID as well as my passport in my room... However, I still have my God CT... Weighing my options of missing my flight or possible prison time/felony record, I wisely chose the latter. Turns out, it worked, and I am currently standing on the other side of airport security."*

*"So, I'm on the no fly list because I got into an argument with a TSA agent a few years ago (also got arrested and charged with assault, eventually got the charges dropped on that), so I obviously need to use a fake name to fly. So I'm just wondering what do they look at with that black light and how to tell if my ID will pass inspection or not."*

*"So my dumb\$%^ friend has a death wish and were flying back home for the holidays from college. And he knowingly gave his [fake Colorado ID] to the TSA agent checking boarding passes before going through security. I mean it had his real name and everything but what the \$%^. Anyways he hands it to the agent who checks the name, throws it under the blacklight for maybe .5 seconds and then hands it back."*

*"LOL @ TSA: Just saw the worst IL i've ever seen pass at the checkpoint. Didn't even scan or UV my drivers license. God bless America."*

*"There's a story on here once every couple months that someone [used a fake ID at TSA] and it worked fine. As long as you have UV."*

*"Captain Krunk ID Review: My Colorado [fake] id got me thru Colorado Springs TSA airport security, and I don't mean in my wallet, as my main form of id."*

*"I accidentally gave TSA my fake WA instead of my real one.... It was ok"*



## Conclusion

It's been over 15 years since 9/11 and we still have not implemented the 9/11 Commission's key recommendation to secure our driver's licenses from terrorists. It's time for a national strategy that involves:

### Creating a Better System:

It's not exactly the TSA agent's fault when a fake ID passes through - their jobs are nearly impossible. Every day, they are presented with thousands of individual driver's licenses and ID cards from 56 different jurisdictions across the country, each with up to six different formats. The agent is charged with making determinations on the veracity of those documents in seconds. Add to that a long list of other documents that TSA accepts, such as military IDs, tribal IDs, Trusted Traveller cards, Canadian driver's licenses, transportation worker IDs, and foreign passports. Furthermore, most document checkers at airports are under-trained in fraudulent document recognition techniques and are often equipped with nothing but a UV light. As this paper has noted, relying on a UV feature to determine who can board an aircraft is highly inadvisable, as UV features are among the most commonly counterfeited. Relying on documents alone for proof of identity to board aircraft is too flawed.

### Deploying Document Readers:

Document readers must also be deployed at sensitive areas, such as airports. These can allow for rapid and accurate authentication of identity documents. This would enable TSA agents to verify documentation of passengers more effectively, simultaneously providing more convenience to passengers. TSA has signed a contract with a document scanning company and its scanners should be deployed without delay.

### Enforcing the REAL ID Act:

The Department of Homeland Security should enforce the REAL ID Act on its current schedule and not delay. The set of common sense security standards developed by the states and the motor vehicle community has brought significant increases in the driver's licenses issuance processes and counterfeit resistant features of most states' documents - but not all.

There are still a number of laggard states that believe DHS will delay enforcement. Those states have had since 2008 to adapt best practices but have made little progress. Laggard states should not have their identity documents be looked upon with equal trust as proof of identity as those that have achieved compliance with the Act. Enforcement of the Act would mean that the laggard states' identity documents would not be able to be used to board airplanes. This enforcement will boost security either by prompting the laggard states into upgrades or, failing that, requiring their residents to obtain passports, a more secure document. Total compliance with the REAL ID Act is essential to prevent terrorists from using fake IDs and to better protect Americans from identity related crimes and impostors.

### Keeping Up with the Counterfeiters:

States should upgrade the security features of their documents beyond the REAL ID standards. Adding existing, cost-effective security technology to driver's licenses and ID cards will make recognizing counterfeits easier for law enforcement, gatekeepers, and security personnel and make them to expensive for counterfeiters to produce. States can achieve this by switching to polycarbonate cards, a substance far more difficult to replicate. States can implement newer overt, covert, and forensic features unique to the state of issuance, such as microtext and optically variable devices. States can use laser perforation, which is often poorly emulated by counterfeiters and immediately detectable.

However, no matter how cutting edge security features employed on an ID are, it is always a matter of time until the criminals catch up. It is imperative that states continue to upgrade their features as necessary.

### Attacking the Demand:

Being caught using or possessing a counterfeit ID can lead to jail time, serious fines, suspension from school, loss of license, and may result in a permanent criminal record. In some states, it constitutes a felony. Even if a fake ID user isn't caught, his or her identity may have been stolen or sold by the group that manufactured the counterfeit document. Most college kids, who make up the majority of the market, don't know of these consequences and penalties. They also don't know the links between terrorism and fake IDs. By providing more education on the risks of buying and using fake IDs to college-aged youth, we can impact the largest segment of fake ID customers, thereby decreasing the demand, and let the economics work.

### Enforcing Fake ID Penalties:

In some states, counterfeit ID users are simply denied entry, not questioned or detained, and too often IDs aren't even confiscated. In other states, such as New York, penalties for counterfeit IDs range from felonies to traffic law infractions. States with weak or little enforcement should pass laws increasing the penalties on offenders. Many states are attempting to do so, such as Wisconsin, which passed a law that allows retailers to file claims against counterfeit ID users for up to \$1,000. Some states can revoke licenses for a year for possession of a fake ID, with no option for getting a conditional license. These state laws should be enforced.

If law enforcement agencies have insufficient state laws for prosecution, they should use existing federal laws pertaining to counterfeit IDs and driver's licenses, such as:

1. 18 U.S.C. Section 1028(a)(5) B Possession of Document-Making Implements;
2. 18 U.S.C. Section 1028(a)(8) B Trafficking in False Authentication Features;
3. 18 U.S.C. Section 1342 B Using a Fictitious Name or Address; and
4. 18 U.S.C. Section 1546 B Fraud & Misuse of Visas, Permits, & Other Documents.

### Engaging Congress:

IDChief was shut down in 2012 following a strategic public affairs campaign led by a coalition of organizations that ultimately influenced Congress. After generating stories in the press across the

country, the coalition brought the Chinese document mill to the attention of four United States Senators who addressed a letter to the Chinese Ambassador requesting that the website be shut down due to national security concerns. The bipartisan effort included Senators Durbin, Kirk, Grassley, and Harkin, and prompted the shutdown of the website just days after. This marked a victory in the battle against fake IDs, as IDChief was the largest and most popular distributor. It also demonstrated that there is recourse to the problem of overseas counterfeiters operating beyond U.S. law enforcement jurisdiction. However, IDChief's shutdown created a vacuum and other China-based counterfeiters of U.S. driver's licenses have taken its place. Another action from Capitol Hill could have a similar effect in applying diplomatic pressure on China to address this national security and public safety threat.

### Better International Cooperation:

U.S. law enforcement agencies need better cooperation from its international partners. Overseas document mills too often hide behind protections of foreign laws and diplomatic barriers. By forging better international cooperation, global partners against crime and terrorism can halt international counterfeiters from operating with impunity, as happened when U.S. Senators worked with the Chinese ambassador to shutdown IDChief. Congress should look at ways in which law enforcement agencies can engage in treaties to facilitate prosecution of transnational criminal enterprises, like document mills.

### Better Training of Document Checkers and Gatekeepers:

Front-line personnel in airports, vulnerable areas of commerce, federal building security personnel, and local police should become trained in basic methods of identity document authentication and have tools available to assist in distinguishing counterfeit IDs from valid IDs. This should include ID verification tools, such as magnifying glasses or reference guides to all states at the very least, as counterfeit driver's licenses are rarely used "in-state".



# Keeping IDentities Safe<sup>®</sup>

“WORKING TO SECURE THE IDENTITY OF EVERY AMERICAN”

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