

A map of Eastern Europe and the Balkans region, showing countries like Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Ukraine. The map is overlaid with a semi-transparent grey box containing the text 'History of Romanian Skimming Crimes'. The text is in a large, white, sans-serif font. The map shows major cities, borders, and geographical features like the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea. The word 'Romania' is highlighted in red on the map.

History of Romanian Skimming Crimes

Why is this important?

- Suspects we have arrested in California for EBT theft and skimming are Romanian by descent (Exceptions)
- Direct connection between Romanian thieves and EBT theft crimes
- Skimming has been around for 25 years. Why did EBT theft explode in 2020?
- **History tells us how we got here**



Check Device Two

Protect Your EBT

Closely inspect ATMs or payment devices for unusual, loose, or added equipment, skimmer or pin

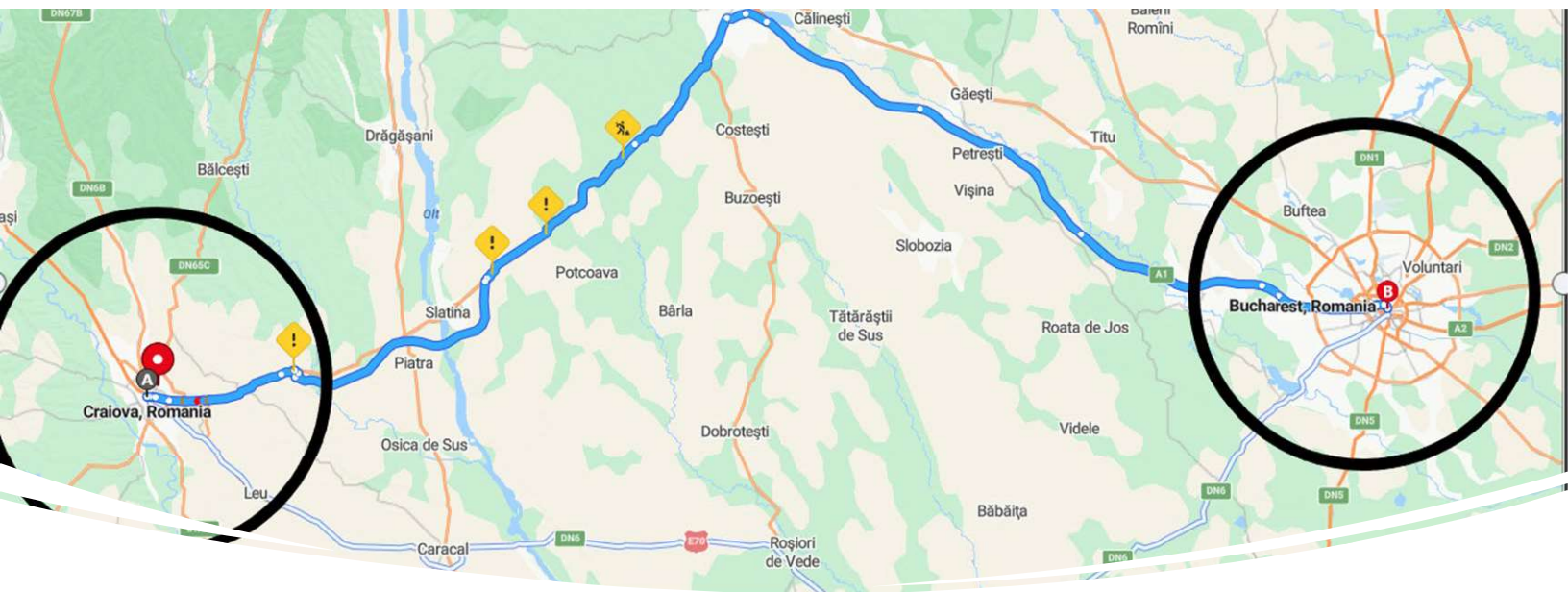


Report suspicious activity to an attendant at the location

Romania

- Borders
- Main Cities
 - Bucharest “Little Paris”
 - Craiova
- People
 - Ethnic Elements of Roman/Greek
 - ROMA (Ethnic Term) vs. ROMANI (Geographic Term)
 - Based on family connections and gypsy lifestyle
- Soviet Occupied Post WWII
 - Cold War “Eastern Bloc” Country
 - Government overthrow in 1989
 - Moved to a free market economy
 - Early and quick movement into technology





Craiova

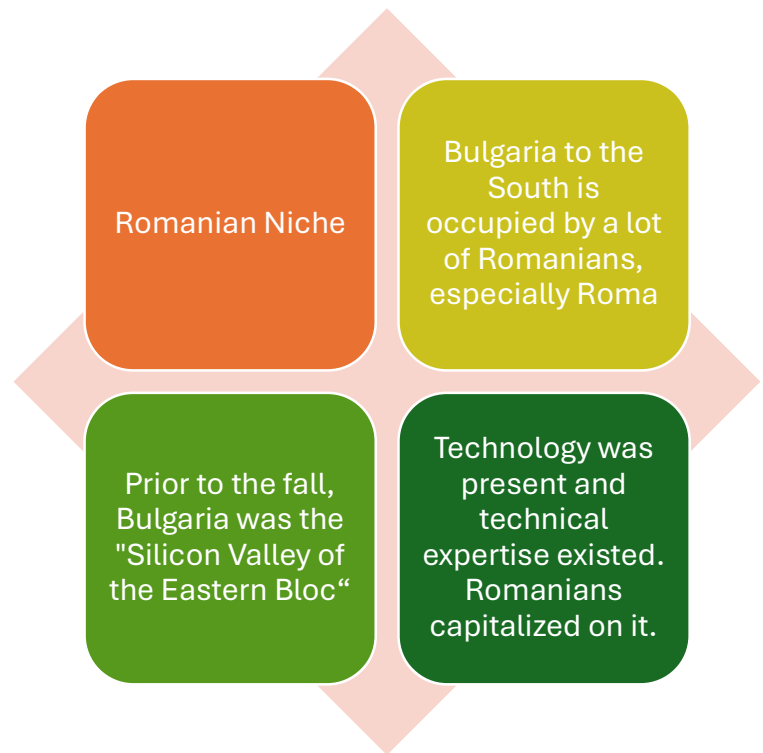
- Craiova is the southern most city in Romania to Bulgaria.
- Bucharest to Craiova is about 3 hours travel by vehicle
- Almost all of our ATM Skimming Crews originate from either Bucharest or Craiova
- Starting to see a connection with Constanta (Beach Tourist Town on Black Sea)

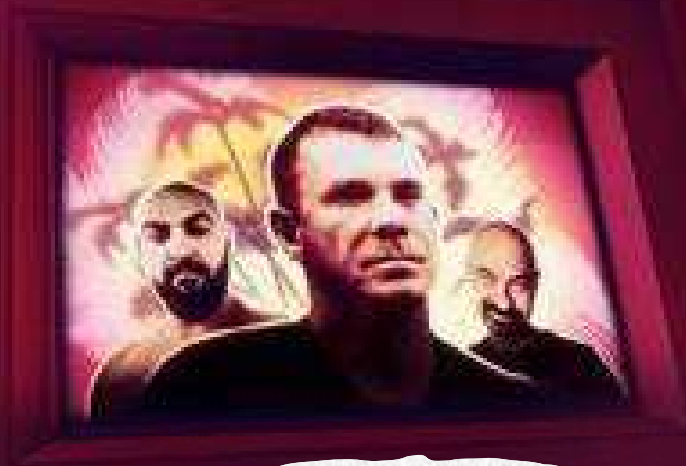
Romanian Mafia

- Known worldwide for ATM Skimming
- Intel suggests a strong connection between the American Romanian Mafia and the Sinaloa Cartel
- Romanian Mafia made a Mexico Connection in 2015
- Romanian Mafia Clans:
 - Bucharest
 - Setup into 6 different clans. Chira Clan is most known for skimming
 - Craiova
 - Specialize in Human Smuggling (through the use of “Tour Operators”) and ATM Skimming
 - Smuggle through the south from Mexico
 - “Canadian Pipe”
 - Hold family members in Romania as collateral



Connection with ATM Skimming





Craiova Connection

Florian Tudor

- Who is Florian Tudor
 - Godfather of ATM Skimming Operations
 - Aka: “El Tiburon” THE SHARK
 - Alleged to be part of the “Tandarei Mafia”
 - Tandarei is a luxury town in Craiova known to house affluent gangsters



Florian Tudor



- Originally immigrated to Brazil, where he honed his craft in ATM Skimming Operations
- Married to a Brazilian National, Jucilene Belmonte do Amaral
- Tudor owned Brazil Money Exchange Centro Cambiario
- Brazil Money Exchange started operations in 2012. It was set up by Juliano Belmonte do Amaral (Jucilene's Brother)
- 2016 Olympics perfected the Shimmer and stole chipped cards in Brazil



Top Life Servicios

- Company whose mission is to service and operate ATM machines in Mexico
- Founders of the company were Florian Tudor (Shark) and Paul Daniel Ionete



Ion Damian Nedescu

- Recruited by Florian Tudor
- Well respected Romanian Businessman
- Nedescu fell on hard times and Tudor took advantage of it
- Nedescu ran business setting up back contracts, etc. (Multiva)



Riviera Maya Gang

- Florian Tudor (the Shark)
- Paul Daniel Ionete (Mufa or the Jack)
- Ion Damian Nedescu (The Brains)
- Constantin Sorinel Marcu (the Muscle)

Recruits

- Top Life Servicios
 - Recruited highly skilled radio technicians from Romania and Eastern Europe
 - Sent them to training in ATM Technology
 - Technicians were used to build chips to install inside the ATM machines
- Capture 12% of the global skimming market in 2 years (\$240 million)
- Use over 1000 pullers, mostly Romanian immigrants to pull cash from ATM's



MU
LA



Investcun

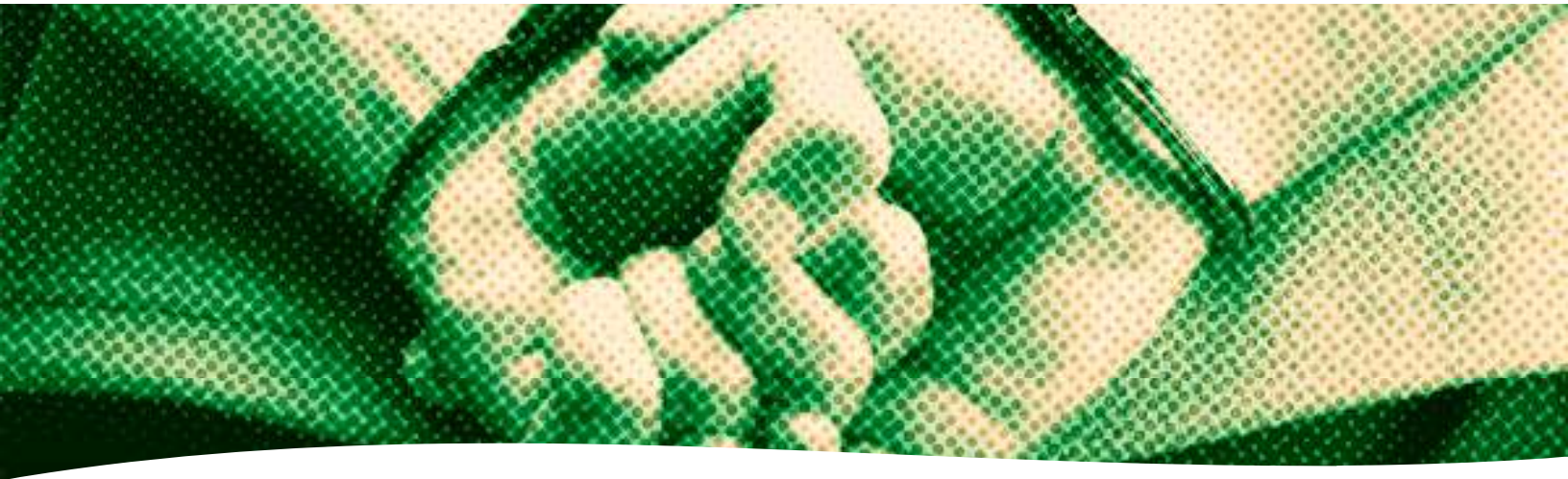
- Owned by Florian Tudor's Stepbrother, Adrian Enachesu
- Reinvested skimming profits into real estate
- Connected to politician, Governor Roberto Borge Angulo
 - Uses the government to seize and resell property
 - Investcun would buy up Governor's seized properties
- Purchase property in Craiova and Paraguay



Riviera Maya Gang Hit

- Police Raids and Arrest in 2019
- Riviera Maya Gang Exposed
- 1000 pullers out of work

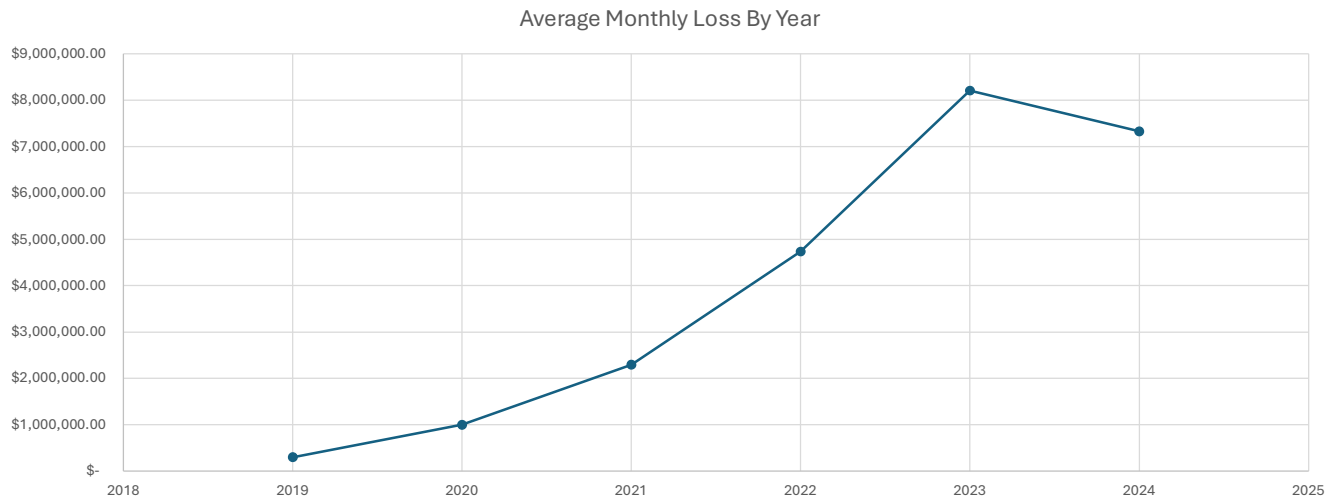




Fallout

- Romanian Organized Crime thirst for \$\$\$
- Trained and Skilled Criminal Workforce
- Organized Crime System to install skimmers and export \$\$\$
- Looking for a new and easy target? (EBT to the Rescue)

EBT Fraud and Theft in California and the US



- Direct correlation between the Riviera Maya Gang take down and increases in EBT Skimming and Theft



ROMANIAN ORGANIZED CRIME
AND ATM SKIMMING OPERATIONS
IN THE UNITED STATES

Romanian Organized Crime US Territories

8/20/20

LEGEND:

1: AK, WA, OR, NV, CA, ID, UT, HI

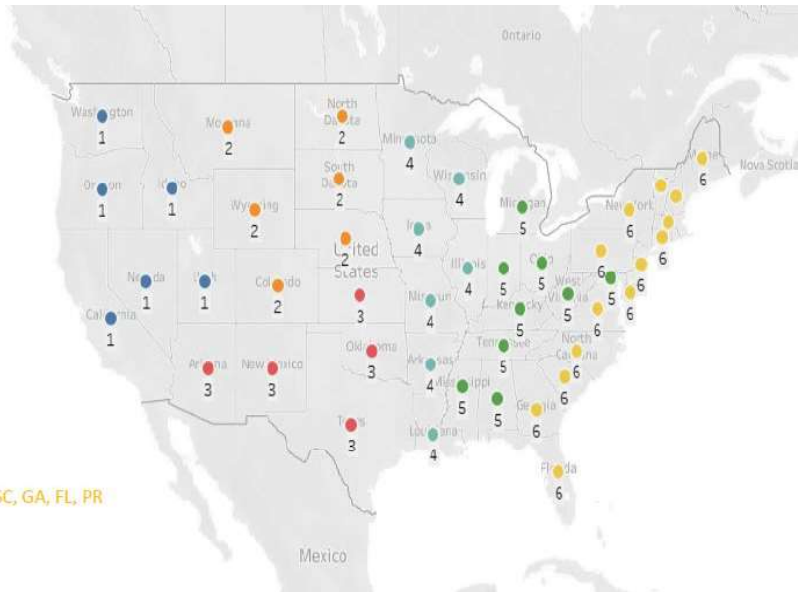
2: MT, WY, CO, ND, SD, NE

3: AZ, NM, TX, KS, OK

4: MN, IA, MO, AR, LA, WI, IL

5: MI, IN, KY, TN, MS, AL, OH, WV, MD

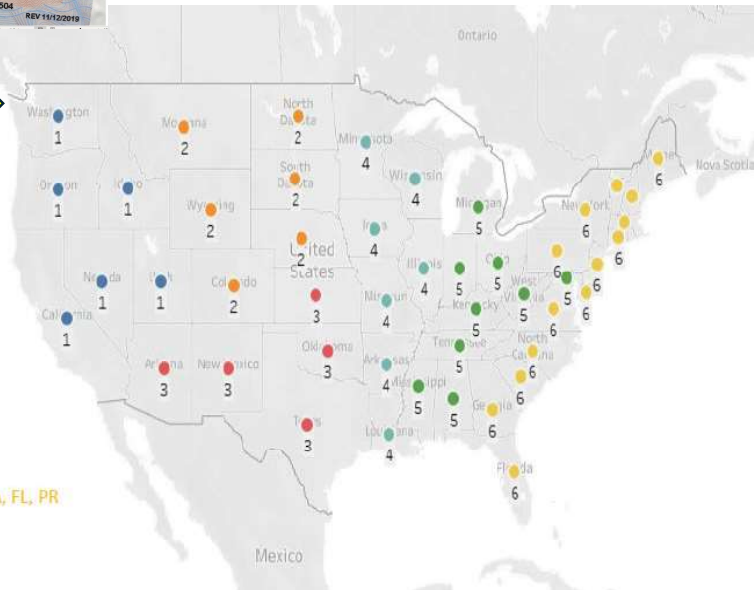
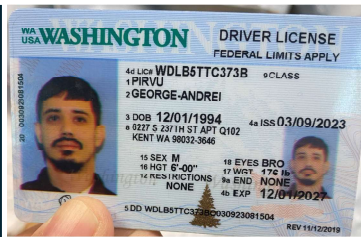
6: ME, VT, NH, MA, NY, CT, PA, NJ, DE, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, PR



Section for California:

Covers Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, and Nevada.

Look for Washington ID's
Washington has very liberal laws for obtain DL's and use of false addresses



LEGEND:

1: AK, WA, OR, NV, CA, ID, UT, HI

2: MT, WY, CO, ND, SD, NE

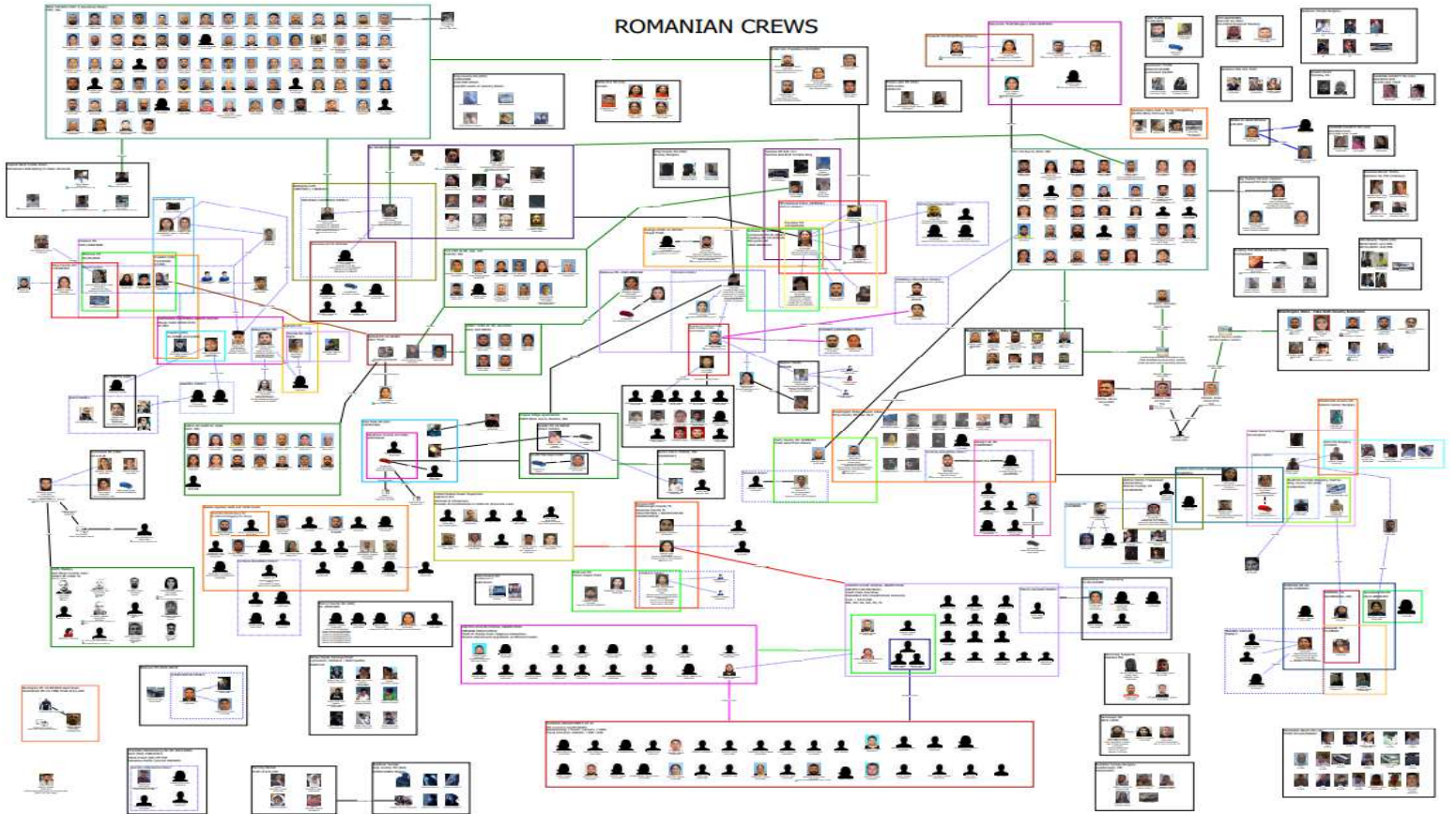
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5: MI, IN, KY, VA, OH, WV, MD

6: ME, VT, NH, MA, NY, CT, PA, NJ, DE, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, PR

ROMANIAN CREWS



Romanian Organized Crime in the US

- Romanian OC in the US sets up similar to Mexico Cartels. They each have their designated areas of control.
- Each section has a “MAIN BOSS” that oversees the section wide activity – Setup is similar to Mexico Cartels Plaza Bosses
- Section 1 that encompasses California most common families are the MICLESCU, SERDARU, CHICIU, TOMESCU, NISTOR, IANCU, DUMITRU and GHIOCEL. (Can move around but this is their base)
- Sections can shift to maximize profit sharing
- Investigations and arrests result in moving families to new sections or to train others
- Or arrests or investigations result in return to Mexico and/or Romania

| Section 1 | Section 2 | Section 3 | Section 4 | Section 5 | Section 6 |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|---|
| MICLESCU TOMESCU IANCU CHICIU NISTOR SERDARU DUMITRU GHIOCEL | CALDARARU DRAGOMIR CONSTANTIN | DUMITRU HORNEA TOMEI TUDOR FULGUTA IORDACHE | POPA POPESCU HORBAS MUNTEAN STOICA | BARBU BADANAC MUNTEANU | DEMIR ANGHEL BOGDAN CIURAR COVACIU TUDORACHE KVEC ROSTAS |

Miclescu and Ghiocel (Yokul) Families

- There are families like the MICLESCU and GHIOCEL's that span all over and are active in each area as main families.
- That has to do with what they specialize in which provides the "local" families with the training and specialization as well.
- MICLESCU's are known for their skimming activity
- GHIOCEL's are knowns for the conversion of cash or profits into non-identifiable means. Meaning they are great at turning cash and profits into something that is easier to launder and not hit the banks or the eye of law enforcement.

ROMANIAN ORGANIZED SKIMMING ACROSS THE UNITED STATES

CT sees \$2.6M in food benefit money stolen. 'These benefits are critical to their lives.'

Criminals commonly obtain EBT card information — the card number and the owner's PIN code — through skimming devices ...
DSS since her initial report filing, where they told her the ...

Roughly 350 EBT cards involved in skimming incidents in Monroe County

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (WROC) — The Monroe County Department of Social Services is reporting roughly 350 skimming incidents ...
obtain a replacement EBT card and PIN, and file an application for ...

Scam targeting SNAP in Pennsylvania, New Jersey could be part of transnational crime ring, Secret Service says

For the last 18-24 months, the U.S. Secret Service said it has seen a rise in point of sale and ATM skimming. The agency believes
EBT cards used ... Special Agent in Charge Mike Centrella, of ...

Massachusetts EBT money reported stolen in Springfield area last month

(WWLP) — More than \$17,000 in EBT funds were stolen ... within one to two weeks. Skimming devices and phishing are ways
thieves may obtain access to card information. This type of fraudulent ...

6 charged with stealing \$300,000 using card skimmers in Rhode Island, Massachusetts

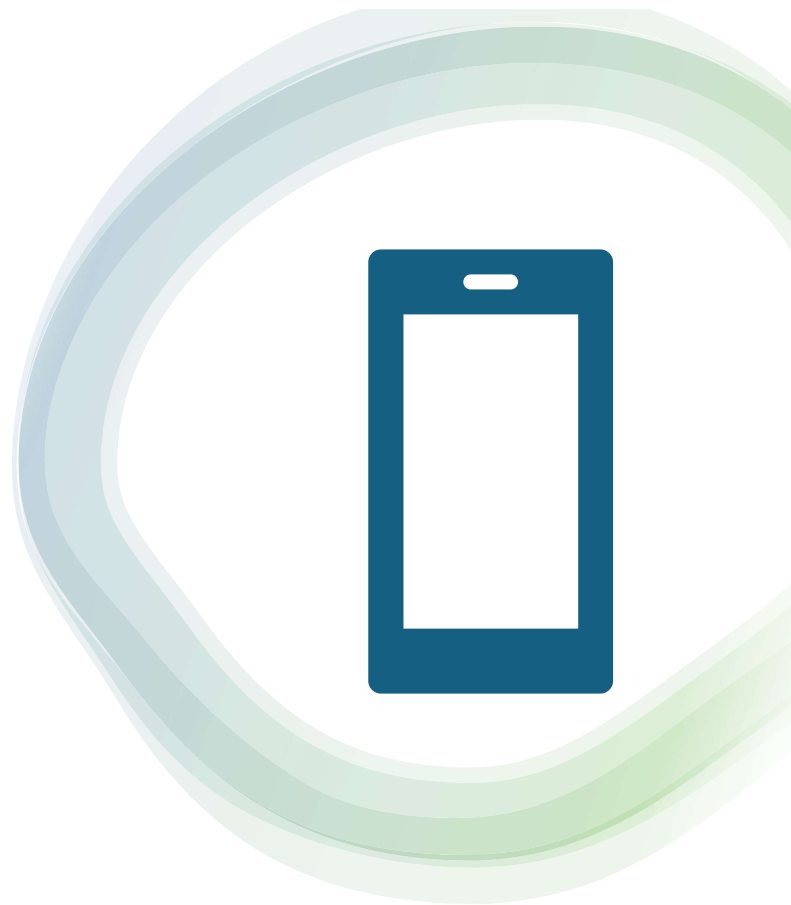
Story by Molly Farrar • 5d • 2 min read



The suspects allegedly placing skimmers at a self-checkout at a Walmart in Pennsylvania.
© U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Rhode Island

Cell Phones and Romanian OG

- They always have multiple phones they use for different purposes.
 - One is normally to talk with family, friends, your normal conversation
 - Second Phone for the criminal activity they are involved in.
 - Third Phone if they are involved in Organized Retail Theft and Skimming



From: 61553333488815 Carlitos Rich (owner)

Din 376 am luat 87 de mii

Status: Read

Platform: Mobile



1/17/2024 7:10:57 AM(UTC+0)

CELL PHONE COMMUNICATIONS

- Most Romanian criminal operations are communicated through Apps
 - WhatsApp
 - Signal
 - Snapchat
 - Telegram.
 - It is extremely rare that they will carry on conversations about criminal activity through normal messaging apps on the phone.

- You can normally find the “plaza bosses” cell phone or contact name/number when you look at the calls or texts that have the least number of communications and combine that with the evidence you have gathered in the case.



SENDSPACE

SendSpace Wizard is a free desktop tool that lets you upload multiple files into your sendspace account!

Download the Wizard - Select your Operating System:



Windows



Mac OS X 10.5+



Linux

No advertising, no spyware - **Guaranteed**

Using **SendSpace Wizard**, you can:

- Upload Multiple files
- Resume Broken Uploads
- Drag/Drop files to upload to SendSpace
- Send file links to others by email
- Add file descriptions and more before uploading
- Manage your online files, create folders and more!
- Get Automatic Updates

Pro Benefits

- Download Multiple files
- Resume Broken Downloads
- Download **faster** using our built-in download accelerator

[Download the Wizard Step-By-Step User Guide](#)

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Linux is a registered trademark of Linus Torvalds.



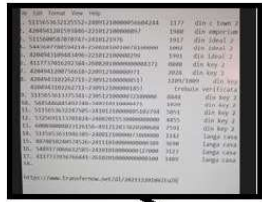
zelle | THIS IS HOW MONEY MOVES™



MONEY APPS

- Money Apps Commonly Used:
 - Zelle
 - Remitly
 - Venmo

EBT SKIMMING PROCESS



Skimmer placed

Card number swiped. PIN viewed on camera or capture by PIN Pad

Skimmer retrieved or data downloaded via bluetooth

Data reviewed and compiled in one notepad document

Data shared using online database sharing websites

Suspects use burner phones/spoof numbers to call hotline to check card balance

Cards with balances are cloned

Cashouts occur with cloned cards on first three days of the month





EBT Skimming CalWorks

- Crews in each section, work in sync installing skimming devices
- Pullers within the section, work to withdraw funds from devices and split the proceeds:
 - % Stays with the Crew
 - % Crew Leader
 - % Section Leader
 - % Back to OG Group
 - (ADD MICLESCU SLIDES INTO HOW THE OG SECTION CONNECTS TO HUMAN SMUGGLING)
- Cash gets moved through the crew, section, and OG group. Proceeds eventually get converted to legitimate purchases (i.e. real estate, cars, jewelry, BITCOIN)
- Use pawn shops to broker trading in and purchasing high end jewelry

EBT Skimming and CalFresh

- Focus is on POS devices at food businesses. Small grocery stores, self service POS devices, even big box stores like Walmart, Sams Club, and Costco.
- Stolen CalFresh data is transferred to another section and used to purchase large quantity goods.
 - Example: Funds stolen in California, then used in Florida within 1-2 days
- Stolen CalFresh data is stolen by one crew, and another crew within the section uses the funds to make large purchases that can be sold on the black market. (i.e. Baby formula, diapers, soda, energy drinks, etc.)
- Stolen CalFresh data is stolen by one crew, and another crew within the section or another section uses the funds to make purchases to support a restaurant or food business (i.e. food trucks)



Flow of Stolen Benefits

8/20/20

LEGEND:

1: AK, WA, OR, NV, CA, ID, UT, HI

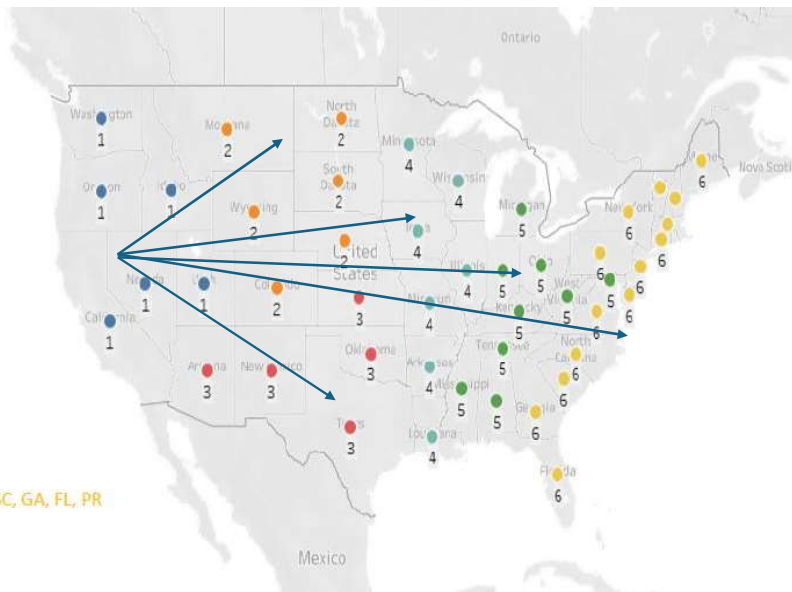
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3: AZ, NM, TX, KS, OK

4: MN, IA, MO, AR, LA, WI, IL

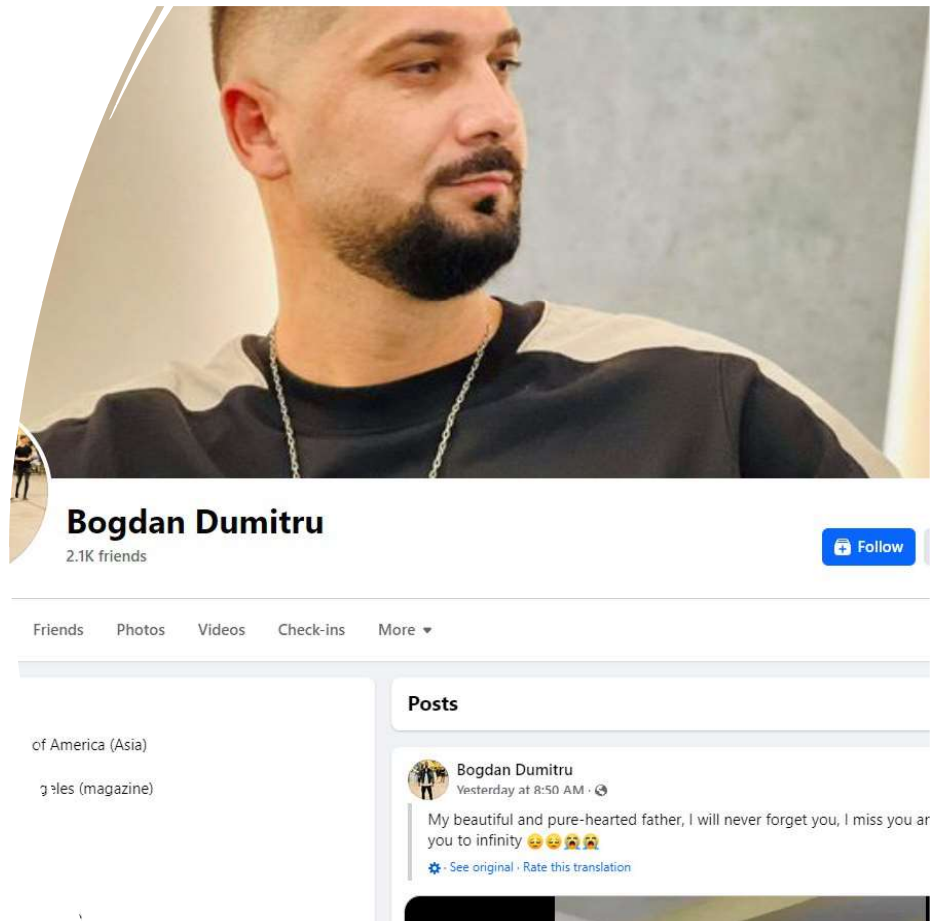
5: MI, IN, KY, TN, MS, AL, OH, WV, MD

6: ME, VT, NH, MA, NY, CT, PA, NJ, MD, DE, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL, PR



DUMITRU

- DUMITRU CLAN IS PRESENT IN BOTH SECTION 1 AND 3
- WORK AS BOTH INSTALLERS, PULLERS, AND TRAINERS



BOGDAN DUMITRU

- Lived in Craiova
- 2016 entered the United States
- May 2023 OCDA & GGPD executed a search warrant @ his residence in Garden Grove.
- Bogdan seen by several agencies placing skimmers and conducting cash outs.



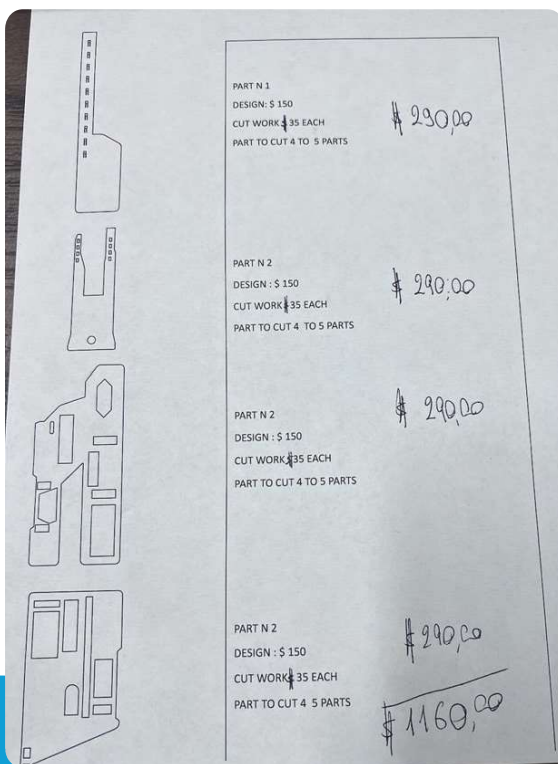


- **2023 Bogdan moved back to Craiova and purchased a home**

- **NO KNOWN INCOME OTHER THAN ATM SKIMMING**

Skimmers Design and Production

- Skimmers are manufactured two different ways:
 - Shipped in from outside the country
 - Built with a 3d Design through a metal fabrication shop



OTHER CRIMES

- Residential Burglary
 - Distraction Theft
 - Retail Theft
- Commercial Burglary
 - Pan Handling
 - Assault



TEODORA VELCU

| Date | Total Loss | Police Report # | Department who took Report and what state |
|-----------|------------|-----------------|---|
| 5/26/2023 | \$6,891.50 | 23-03616 | Tustin Police, CA |
| 6/13/2023 | \$4,840.00 | 23-05199 | Chino PD, CA |
| 6/13/2023 | \$7,954.00 | | Orange PD, CA |
| 6/20/2023 | \$8,532.00 | 23-8047 | Fontana PD, CA |
| 6/24/2023 | \$9,025.00 | | Lacey PD, WA |
| 7/9/2023 | \$3,200.00 | 23-38136 | Marysville PD, WA |
| 7/10/2023 | \$4,940.00 | 2319401453 | Puyallup PD, WA |
| 7/10/2023 | \$5,973.00 | | Pierce County SO, WA |
| 7/11/2023 | \$868.00 | T23000923 | Tukwila PD, WA |
| 7/18/2023 | \$2,311.00 | | Seattle PD, WA |
| 7/18/2023 | \$0.00 | 23-267721 | Lynnwood PD, WA |



- Residential Burglary
- Retail Theft
- Over 50,000.00 stolen from Ulta

Romanian nationals posed as ICE agents to rob Hispanic victims: OC DA

Story by Karla Rendon and Hetty Chang • 2w •  2 min read



Left: Alexandru Vasile. Right: Laurentiu Baceanu. Both men are Romanian nationals who were arrested in Fullerton on suspicion of robbing Hispanic victims throughout Orange County.
© Provided by NBC Los Angeles

OPERATION **ROBIN HOOD**



Who is affected by this “Victimless Crime”?

- The Public Assistance Program Recipients and their Families – Some of the most vulnerable members of our community who depend on public assistance program benefits to help them pay for housing, food, utilities, clothing, transportation and other necessities.
- The taxpayers who support our public assistance programs and who ultimately bear the cost of replacing the stolen benefits.
- The Public Social Service Agencies that administer our public assistance programs and whose employees and administrators are forced to expend additional funds, time and energy to track, document, report and replace the stolen benefits.
- Our local economies which suffer from decreased spending by public assistance program recipients who, in many cases, are never fully reimbursed for their losses.
- The victims of other crimes perpetrated by the criminals who steal these public assistance benefits and use the stolen funds to facilitate their other criminal enterprises.
- Local, County, State and Federal Law Enforcement Agencies whose personnel must spend countless hours combating these crimes.

Arrested on May 1, 2023



| | |
|---|---|
|  | BKN: 3277289 NAME: MICLESCU CRISTINA DOB: 110497 Race: O Sex: F Height: 506 Weight: 180 Eye Color: BRO Hair Color: BLK |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|--|
|  | BKN: 3277308 NAME: ALECU NICOLASO DOB: 102495 Race: W Sex: M Height: 601 Weight: 230 Eye Color: BRO Hair Color: BLK |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
|  | BKN: 3277309 NAME: DARUS MICLESCU DOB: 042697 Race: O Sex: M Height: 509 Weight: 180 Eye Color: BRO Hair Color: BLK |
|--|--|

Arrested on June 1, 2023



Arrested on July 2, 2023



BKN: 3284441
NAME: IGNAT MARIAN
DOB: 051679
Race: W
Sex: M
Height: 602
Weight: 200
Eye Color: BRO
Hair Color: BLK

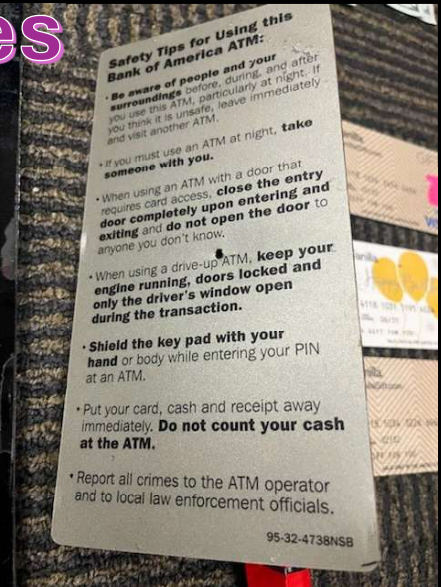


BKN: 3284440
NAME: IGNAT IONEL
DOB: 042104
Race: W
Sex: M
Height: 600
Weight: 160
Eye Color: BRO
Hair Color: BRO

| 28 Cloned EBT cards | |
|---------------------|--|
| 4427434131136259 | |
| 4427434264482298 | |
| 4427434278433113 | |
| 4403933572561485 | |
| 4427434284725072 | |
| 5432401739242417 | |
| 4427434132775055 | |
| 4427777014737241 | |
| 5077190939053480 | |
| 5077190390403695 | |
| 5077190413354800 | |
| 5077190433520703 | |
| 5077190901675047 | |
| 4427434162440141 | |
| 4427434253377483 | |
| 4427434271130732 | |
| 4427434281554624 | |
| 4427434281561520 | |
| 5077190906715731 | |
| 5077190410582999 | |
| 5077190415036645 | |
| 5077190905775017 | |
| 5077190906128653 | |
| 5077190439123924 | |
| 5077190433493927 | |
| 4427434245357742 | |
| 5077190939193278 | |
| 4457850045734595 | |

09-01-2023

71 Cloned Cards
12 Skimming Devices
Over 30k cash



11-01-2023 through 11-03-2023

- 5 Stater Bros in OC
- Over 30k stolen benefits





II: 41467815 FBI: 21FU71CP2



II: 41467830 FBI: FXJAJFJWW



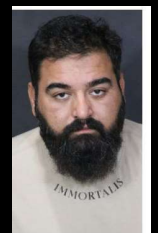
II: 41467826 FBI: WE4E9W



II: 41164370 FBI: TJD5DJ



HO085XMI :IMX EECINSI



REV: ED-0210MM NAME: OLAND
CII: NA FBI:
DOB 06/01/1987



II: 41467635 FBI: 08R17



II: 41467697 FBI: C7N2M5



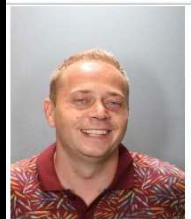
No booking number NAME: MARUTA,
CII/A41471836 FBI/AM045MCP7
DOB 09/23/1983



II: 41468814 FBI: E23L8LL



II: 41468826 FBI: 1VLNLEP



IOACA

II: 41319657 FBI: TV5MM9

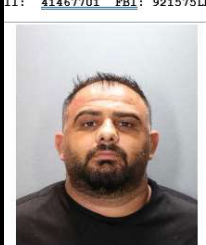


931266 FBI: E3J2HLNT



II: 41467810 FBI: 6540NFP

II: 41467701 FBI: 921575L



Evidence to be seized and/or information to be documented:



**Cell phones
(utilize Faraday
bags if possible)**



All cash



All access cards



**Passports and
foreign
identification
cards or drivers
licenses (IDs are
frequently
false).**



**Rosters with
account
information or
store addresses**



**Forged
documents
Attempt to
determine
where the
suspect(s) are
staying (Hotel
keys, air B&B
information).**



**Search and
photograph car.
Store or
impound as
necessary
based on
circumstances.**

Cars are often rented through private services. Photograph the rental agreement.

Forging equipment, skimming devices, and shims are often located in their cars.

Obtain a search warrant if necessary.

CHECK FOR HIDDEN COMPARTMENTS!!

Possible Felony Charges

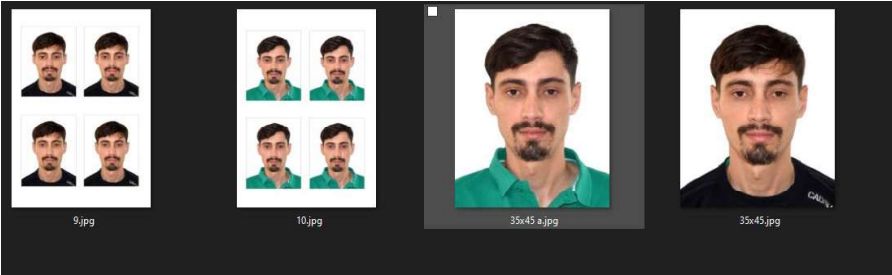
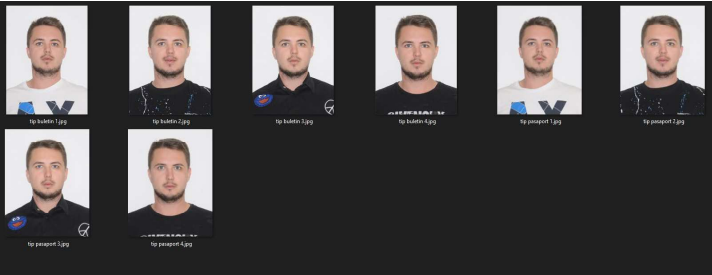
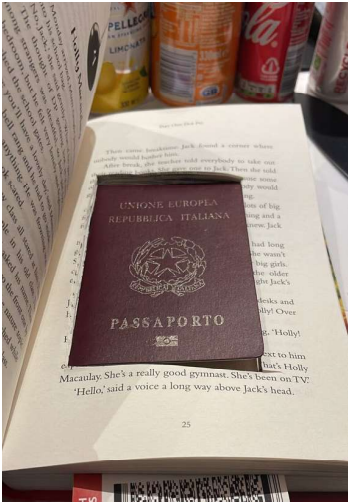
-
- Identity Theft-530.5 (c)(3) PC
 - 484e (a) or (b)PC-possession of an access card without consent. “b” section is for possession of four or more cards.
 - Forgery with intent to use counterfeit access card-484F(a)
 - Fraudulent possession of a scanning device-502.6(a) PC (only if located during the search)
 - Grand Theft over \$950-487(a)PC
 - Commercial Burglary (grocery store ATMs or ATMs inside banks)-459 PC
 - Conspiracy-182 (a)(1) PC

Additional Considerations

- Cars loitering in or circling the area. Suspect vehicles are in constant contact with the other suspects via What's App.
- Suspects may arrive together but one or more suspect(s) may lay off or return to the car.
- Have a plan for both outcomes.
- Attempt to interview suspects and gain admissions of guilt and/or intelligence. In most cases, the suspect(s) will not talk to the police.
- Make sure we can ID them (Book and live-scan). Assume that their identification documents may be forged.

Fake Passport Supplier

- texasarizonastatue@protonmail.com



Open Discussion and Questions

What is happening in terms of handling EBT theft in your area?

Is there any additional intelligence you can offer to the class?

Is there a unique EBT theft case you want to share?

Contact Information

**Shawn Ferris, Chief of
Investigations, Riverside
County DPSS**

Email: Sferris@rivco.org

Phone: (951) 850-1259

**Amanda Veach, DA
Investigator, Orange County
DA's Office**

Email:
Amanda.Veach@ocdapa.org

Phone: (714) 655-3400