

Title:

Identity Document Scams

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Summary:

These are sold on the Internet. Legitimate ones are issued by the recognized auto club in your country and are ONLY valid with the normal government issued drivers license.

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Article Body:

International Drivers Licenses - These are sold on the Internet. Legitimate ones are issued by the recognized auto club in your country and are ONLY valid with the normal government issued drivers license. The legitimate International Drivers License is little more than a translation document in numerous languages enabling authorities to see that you do hold a valid drivers license from your country. It is never a permission to drive by itself. It is never an identity document by itself since it was not issued by any government agency and if it is a real international drivers license you would have had to show a real drivers license to get one, so where is your real drivers license. Occasionally someone asks us if we would accept this as a form of identification and the answer is of course not.

Drivers Licenses - There are replica or false drivers licenses sold on the Internet. The banks are quite capable of knowing what is real and what is not real. People that buy these licenses are fooling themselves more than anyone else.

Passports - A few times a year our law firm gets presented with a hand written passport. Most large countries have not used hand written passports for over 35 years. Some of the less developed countries used them until the post 9/11 era, say around 2002. While it is possible to have a valid handwritten passport that is still current, the offshore banks will never accept one as an ID document. It must be a machine-readable passport. I would also say that traveling on a handwritten passport into the modern world would be difficult if not impossible. Most countries have machine readable passports with digitized photos, some even have RFID chip passports now and along you come with a handwritten passport and

a picture glued into the passport with a stamp and signature across the bottom of the picture. I would think big problems. Get your country to issue you a new machine-readable passport with a digitized photo.

Camouflage Passports - A camouflage passport is a non-official document printed in a passport type booklet. Such passport booklets could be ordered from printers in Asia, not sure if this is still allowed to go on, doubt it. The camouflage passport was issued from a recently defunct country like Rhodesia. So the name of the issuer sounded quite real because at one time it was. When these first came out some offshore banks opened accounts based on them. After they were on the market for a while that soon stopped and the people who used them to open the accounts had their funds locked down. Perhaps they were allowed to show new identity documents; perhaps they were treated as criminals defrauding the bank and lost their money. Not sure since these countries at the time had bank secrecy. We are going back a number of years here. We are sure that numerous memos have been sent to offshore banks warning them of this and it was also a topic at numerous due diligence seminars. Again the person fooled the most by one of these camouflage passports is the buyer. Using one of these in the event of a terrorist detention in an airplane, hotel or elsewhere is unwise. You would be treated as a person of interest and probably questioned vigorously. If they simply decided you were nothing more than a person who likes to play games they would possibly lose interest in you but then again you came to their attention and became singled out and that is never a good thing in such a scenario. Contrary to what you see on TV and in the movies serious terrorists would be likely to do what any self respecting Mexican Road Bandito does and that is strip 100% naked the victims. This does not play out well on family oriented TV shows. This enables the bad guys to find things like identity documents, official credentials, keys, discrete weapons, money, contraband, and anything else that might have been concealed. So they will now find your other real passport and again you are a person of interest to the bad guys.

Traveling with a camouflage passport is of course idiotic. If the authorities of some country find one on you it would be likely that you get detained and experience a long interrogation or worse especially if the name was different. This is a novelty item, not a second passport. These camouflage passports can only come back and hurt you. If you really fear traveling on your own passport go through the trouble of processing through immigration in another country and get a real second passport. Then you should have a government issued residency card, a driver's license from the country and a visa card from a bank in that country, as we suggest and help our clients obtain. This is a full set of real legitimate ID that will pass scrutiny in any country.

Fantasia Passports - These are passports issued from non-real countries. A

famous one is Hutt River. There is a fellow who has a very modest parcel of land in Australia. He read some law and as a result declared war on Australia. They apparently did not mobilize the army and just ignored him, which left him able to declare his independence, or so he thinks, claims, or whatever. He calls himself a country and issues passports. He bought the passport books most likely in Asia. I believe his are printed but not machine readable so he probably is not able to get newer ones or he just wants to use up the ones he has. I even saw a diplomatic version of one of these once.

These passports are not good for much. Maybe if you were in a real depraved third world country and tried a land crossing through an obscure border crossing going from one depraved third world country to another depraved third world country and there was an illiterate guard there it might work. People often take these fantasy passports and submit them for entry visas to third world countries in Africa who are happy to sell anyone a visa stamp. They collect a few entry visas and then try using it since it looks more real in that other countries have accepted it. Of course all the countries they have allegedly visited have only entry visas without an exit visa, which will raise many red flags in a civilized country.

Another instance of these involved an old WWII oil platform a few miles off the coast of the UK called Sea Land. This was an oil platform that declared itself sovereign and issued passports. For a funny touch of humor. Over the years counterfeiters have printed their own versions of the fictitious countries selling passports and sold them thus cheating the original promoter out of sales knowing a prosecution would be almost impossible since the country in question is not real. The Florida Keys tried issuing their own passports some years back issuing Conch Republic passports. Conch is a fish used in seafood in the Florida Keys. These are very real looking fantasy passports. I imagine by now they have been pressured into stopping this practice. In a nutshell you are far safer and better off without one of these fictitious country passports than with one.