

Title:

ID Theft Capital Of The World

Word Count:

416

Summary:

Los Angeles is the counterfeit document capital of America ID theft business is booming in the Californian metropolis

Officials warn that the fake ID business is booming in Los Angeles. Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America says the Federal Trade Commission. It is a practice that victimizes innocent people by using their Social Security Numbers. It has become an epidemic, leaving everyone at risk. And, to make matters worse, most people do not know if thei...

Keywords:

id theft

Article Body:

Los Angeles is the counterfeit document capital of America ID theft business is booming in the Californian metropolis

Officials warn that the fake ID business is booming in Los Angeles. Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America says the Federal Trade Commission. It is a practice that victimizes innocent people by using their Social Security Numbers. It has become an epidemic, leaving everyone at risk. And, to make matters worse, most people do not know if their identity has been stolen.

"Thieves do that with the greatest of ease, computers make it very easy for them", says John Davis, a special agent with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Service. The computerization of records has made it far easier than ever to gather not just hundreds but hundreds of thousands of identification numbers and other identifying information. "The document vendors themselves, they just make up random numbers," John says. "To do this would take maybe about two minutes, tops."

Ann Jordan is a recent victim of identity theft. She's got some serious credit problems, but she can't understand that. Because she's 2 year old. "She's basically got two loans out on her Social Security number and, I believe, a credit card out," says Ann's mother, Kim Jordan. "She's got \$15,000 in debt."

How on earth was that possible?

It was possible because someone else was using a Social Security number identical to Ann's. It's part of a mushrooming problem in America involving criminals who make and sell phony documents.

John Davis says Los Angeles, with its huge population of illegal immigrants, is the counterfeit document capital of America.

NBC News asked Telemundo, its Spanish language sister network, to send an employee for a walk through Los Angeles' MacArthur Park. There he was approached four times in just 30 minutes by document vendors.

"They told me I can get everything from IDs to permanent resident cards, or green cards, Social Security numbers," he says. "They have absolutely everything."

Back to Ann's case, the authorities have arrested a suspect. That was soon after the local TV station broadcasted a report on the theft of Ann Jordan's identity. Jose Ramirez has been charged with identity fraud and forgery.

Undercover video, shot by agents of the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement Service, was used to help convict another man of forging Social Security cards and other government IDs.

In spite of all the efforts to crack ID theft business down, this won't be an easy job, especially in Los Angeles.