

Undercover on a Segway

摄位车上进行的“秘密活动”

Tourists beware

游客们当心

A report from the seamy underworld of unlicensed tour guides

关于无证导游这个阴暗地下世界的报道

A TERRIBLE threat stalks the streets of Washington, DC: unlicensed tour guides. These brazen lawbreakers imperil the public by showing them around the nation's capital without a permit. Your correspondent went undercover to observe at first hand the dangers tourists face in their clutches. It was harrowing. First, your correspondent had to balance on a Segway, a two-wheeled vehicle from which she could have fallen several inches to the cold, hard pavement. "Just try to relax," purred Bill Main, the outlaw guide, "It's easy." With white knuckles and a pink helmet, the tour began.

华盛顿特区大街上正蔓延着一个可怕的威胁：无证导游。这些无耻的违法者扰乱公共秩序，在没有许可的情况下带领游客们参观这个国家的首都。记者亲历地下世界去观察第一手游客们关键时刻面临的危险。这让人很恐惧。首先，记者必须在摄位车上保持平衡，这种两轮电动车有让她从任何一边摔向冰冷坚硬的人行道上的可能性。“别担心，”违法导游 Bill Main 发出喉音说道，“很简单的。”在兴奋、紧张中带着一个粉色的头盔，这趟行程开始了。

Mr Main never took the exam to become a tour guide, so your correspondent braced herself to hear a torrent of errors. Would he claim that the White House was once destroyed by aliens, as in the film "Independence Day"? No. Actually, he was pretty good. Yet he could be jailed for 90 days if caught. Washington requires all guides to pay \$200 and take an exam. That adds up: Segs in the City, the firm Mr Main runs with his wife, Tonia Edwards, employs a dozen guides.

Main 从未参加过成为导游的考试，因此记者准备好了听到一大串错误信息。他会说白宫曾被外星人摧毁过一次么，就像电影“独立日”中的场景那样？不会，事实上，他很好。然而如果他被抓到了会被判监禁 90 天。华盛顿要求所有导游付费 200 刀然后参加考试。还要加上：Main 和太太 Tonia Edwards 运营的公司城市摄位车公司雇佣的大批导游。

The permit system protects incumbents, raises prices and kills jobs. Mr Main also believes that it violates his right to free speech. Robert McNamara of the Institute for Justice, a libertarian law firm, agrees. "The government cannot restrict speech unless there is evidence the speech is causing harm," he explains. Tour guide patter hardly qualifies. Mr McNamara helped Segs in the City file a lawsuit against the city government in 2010. The city won; Mr Main's appeal reached a DC federal court on May 5th. The city defends the licence as an essential safeguard for consumers.

许可系统保护了在职者们，提高了价格，削减了岗位 Main 也相信系统侵犯了他的言语自由权。自由论法律公司——司法研究所的 Robert McNamara 同意他的话。“政府不能限制 Main 的言语除非有证据说他造成了伤害，”他说道。导游的话很难界定资格。McNamara 在 2010 年帮助城市摄位车旅游公司起诉了市政府。但是政府胜诉了；Main 在 5 月 5 号上诉到特区联邦法庭。市政府辩护到证书是为消费者设置的必要护卫。

In the 1950s only one American worker in 20 needed a permit from the government; today that figure is around one in three. Some jobs, such as doctors, clearly need strict controls. But some states require licences for florists and interior designers. Such permits tend to cost hundreds of dollars and months of extra training, yet offer little benefit to consumers,

says Morris Kleiner, an economist at theUniversityofMinnesota. Sometimes customers, like undercover tourists, can look after themselves.

20 世纪 50 年代政府平均 20 人中之批准了一位美国工人成为导游；今天数据到了大约三个过一个。一些工作，比如说医生，明确需要严格控制。但是一些州要求花匠和室内设计者考取证书。这种许可证需要花费数百美元和长达数月的额外培训，然而这对消费者来说受益甚微，明尼苏达大学的经济学家 Morris Kleiner 说。一些客户，比如“从事间谍活动的”旅游者们，能照看好他们自己。