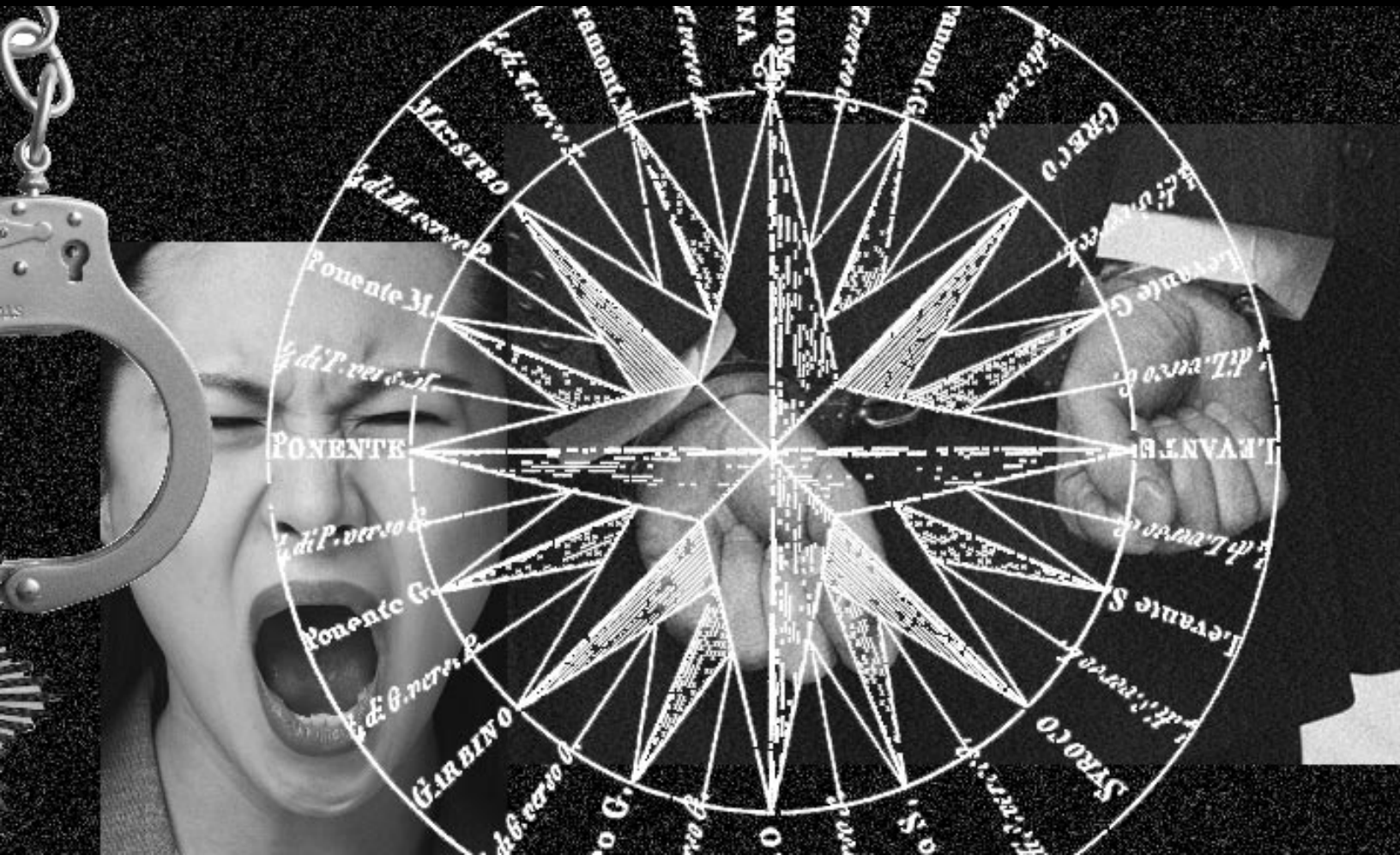


United States Department of State
Bureau of Diplomatic Security

ISSUES IN
**GLOBAL
CRIME**



1998

ISSUES IN

GLOBAL CRIME



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Internet Addresses:
<http://www.state.gov>
<http://www.travel.state.gov>
<http://www.heroes.net>

letter from the editor

With the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, we saw the emergence of a new global security threat—transnational crime. Transnational crime results in the loss of billions of dollars annually, can affect bilateral relations between nations, and can destroy the fabric of society.

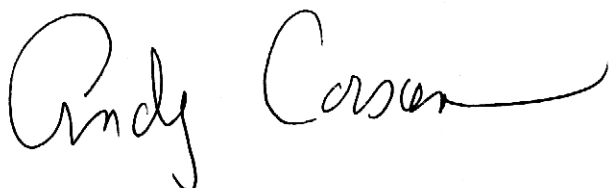
In an effort to sensitize and educate the reader on the ramifications of transnational crime, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security's Office of Intelligence and Threat Analysis (DS/DSS/ITA) is inaugurating a new publication, *Issues in Global Crime*. We discuss the role diplomacy plays in combatting transnational crime. Next we look at how the Department of State allocates resources to protect the diplomatic community overseas.

We take an in-depth look at some emerging trends in transnational crime. Such as Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud, a confidence scheme that, according to U.S. Secret Service Financial Crimes Division, "represents a serious financial threat to the United States." Other disturbing new transnational crime trends that will be addressed in this publication are rising crime in China, organized crime in South Africa, motorcycle gang warfare in the Nordic countries, and the truck hijackings in Mexico, where losses to businesses because of cargo theft are estimated in the \$100s millions.

Whereas transnational crime primarily affects business enterprises and international organizations, the most prevalent threat overseas is crime against your person. The information provided in our articles on personal security is general and has application globally. We examine the problem of carjackings in Africa, and the crimes of pickpocketing, rape, and the theft of laptop computers. The State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs provides important information for Americans who are contemplating safe travel or residence abroad.

Hopefully, throughout this premiere issue, we offer countermeasures and suggestions to protect potential victims.

Issues in Global Crime, complements DS/DSS/ITA's annual chronology *Significant Incidents of Political Violence Against Americans*, and its analytical publication *Terrorist Tactics and Security Practices*.



Andy Corsun, Editor

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Combatting Transnational Crime

by Susan Snyder

International crime has become a serious national and international security threat. Where in the past, countries most feared armed attacks from hostile neighbors, governments now face the more insidious threat of internal corruption manipulated by powerful drug syndicates. Sheer firepower and size of armies are no longer the primary measures of power. Money has taken their place.

Access to wealth on a grand scale makes international criminals a unique international security threat. Since their main objective is to create a secure operating environment, they can buy themselves protection at almost any level of government—thereby manipulating the machinery of democratic government to serve their own purposes.

Around the globe, examples of drug and other corruption are abundant. In the Western Hemisphere, we have only to look at Colombia—and, of course, at Mexico—to see just how effective drug criminals can be. On the other side of the world, we see authorities in Burma and increasingly in Afghanistan, using the drug trade as vital sources of state income. In Africa, the most egregious example is Nigeria where all forms of crime and graft are practiced with virtual impunity.

In the State Department, the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) is responsible for all activities related to curbing the threat of international crime, including drug trafficking.

In the late 1980s, when the Cold War began to thaw, and transnational crime began its ascendancy, INL was forced to rethink its diplomatic strategy and tactics. We were used to dealing government-to-government, assuming that elected governments are in a position to speak for their nations' actions. But, what do you do in a case when the leadership is corrupt and working against the interests of its own citizens as well as against the interests of the United States? Or how do you cope with a government whose intentions may be good at the highest levels, but is institutionally incapable of achieving common goals?

These are not abstract questions. The diplomatic carrots and sticks of financial aid or military pressure are not always credible in countries where international criminals have immediate access to larger sums of money and better firepower than even our own government can muster on short notice. But we have learned that we have a unique weapon in our diplomatic arsenal: experience building and maintaining democratic institutions under the rule of law.

Here are some examples of how INL is making diplomatic use of our experience. Most of what we are doing falls under the rubric of institution building. We need to instill a much wider and more profound respect for the rule of law in countries where law was often based on the whims of authoritarian rulers. Criminal organizations took advantage of these conditions to “legalize” their outlaw status. This would not be possible in a just system where the rule of law prevails.

To that end, we are training police, lawyers, judges, court reporters, and investigators throughout the world. We provide them with equipment necessary to do their jobs. We are also aiding nations in developing strong, fair laws outlawing the production and transit of illegal drugs, providing assistance in reforming criminal codes, and helping to draft strong antimoney laundering and asset seizure statutes.

Key to this effort is regional cooperation among law enforcement agencies. The goal is to destroy the criminal organizations' infrastructure by sharing critical information between governments. We are helping to facilitate this information exchange at the working level through joint operations and joint training seminars.

Last year, law enforcement officials in countries where INL has programs seized 140 metric tons of cocaine products. These 140 tons represent a significant portion of the 700–800 metric ton theoretical worldwide production of cocaine.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the world's drug and crime syndicates, whose acts of violence and corruption terrorize societies and paralyze governments, are under pressure as never before. Strengthened through U.S.-provided training, information, and assistance, police organizations in Colombia, Mexico, Thailand, and elsewhere have investigated, tracked, and apprehended some of the world's most powerful and historically invulnerable criminals. And with the successful incapacitation of each top layer of criminal leadership, the capabilities of the security forces expands and the strength of the crime syndicates erodes, tipping the balance of this struggle increasingly in favor of antidrug and anticrime forces.

We are also encouraging the global community to rethink—in the most positive and constructive sense—some of its traditional views on national sovereignty. Transnational criminal organizations routinely violate borders, and then evade justice by using those same borders to their advantage. But our enforcement capacity is constrained by national political concerns and geopolitical limits. Through diplomatic efforts, we are trying to promote the political will necessary to permit effective interdiction, extradition, information sharing, and prosecution.

We are negotiating such agreements around the globe, and encouraging regional cooperation in areas such as Latin America. For example, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina have signed bi- and trilateral cooperation agreements aimed at targeting crossborder drug and crime problems. And, throughout Latin America and the Caribbean, we have signed extensive maritime agree-

ments that enhance U.S. and host country law enforcement efforts against maritime drug smuggling by permitting our Coast Guard to board suspicious vessels on the high seas and to pursue them, if necessary, into the territorial waters of these countries.

We continue to strike at the very heart of the world's largest drug and crime syndicates by limiting their access to legitimate banking systems. In the 10 years since INL began seeking global solidarity in fighting money laundering, we have made considerable progress. For many years, some bankers chose to ignore the source of deposits on the theory that once in the system, there is no such thing as dirty money. Working through our G-7 allies and the Financial Action Task Force, we have convinced most governments, if not most bankers, that the source of funds is not only important but can ultimately become a national security concern. Aside from the inflationary consequences of large infusions of drug money into an economy, the corruptive power of this money jeopardizes the viability of democratic governments.

We are also using our own laws more creatively. President Clinton has invoked his executive powers under the International Economic Emergency Powers Act to keep drug-tainted Colombian enterprises and individuals out of the U.S. market place. These are powers normally invoked only during national emergencies. In the past, they have been used against Libya, Iran, Iraq, and Haiti under the Cedras regime.

We are using our strengthened visa laws to prohibit suspected drug traffickers and money launderers, their families and associates from entering the United States, as we have long done in the case of terrorists. In some instances we have revoked the visas of high-ranking government officials, like Colombian President Samper, who have been implicated in corruption scandals. This action is extremely effective, putting on notice all who are tempted by criminals' bribes and payoffs.

Finally, we promote the eradication of illegal drug crops. The coca crop offers the most immediate opportunity for radical reductions. Extensive coca cultivation occurs in the three largest coca-producing countries—Peru, Bolivia, and Colombia. On average, every 200 hectares of coca eradicated in

Peru and Bolivia deprives the drug trade of a metric ton of refined cocaine. A coca field is a large, stationary target; a load of finished cocaine distributed among trucks, boats, and aircraft is not. Even manual eradication, therefore, can play an important role.

In 1996, there was a net reduction in Peru of 21,000 hectares of coca. These hectares could have produced approximately 100–105 metric tons of cocaine—or roughly a year's supply of cocaine for 2 million addicts. Additionally, our eradication programs in Colombia and Bolivia destroyed another 17,500 hectares. This easily translates into a reduction of finished product of about 45–50 metric tons. In total, our source country eradication programs removed about 150 metric tons of potential cocaine from the system.

We are also taking steps to reduce illicit opium cultivation. Eradicating opium poppies is time consuming because the crops can be quickly replaced, whereas coca takes 18 months to mature. However, we have successfully reduced opium poppy cultivation in many countries around the world such as Thailand, Guatemala, and Mexico.

By law, the Secretary of State is responsible for coordinating international counternarcotics and crime assistance and policy. The Secretary carries out his or her responsibilities through the President's representative in country—the ambassador—who coordinates the actions of all agencies involved in crime control through the ambassador's country team. Our mission is to stem the flow of drugs to the United States and curb the effects of transnational crime on U.S. citizens—and contrary to some common misperceptions—the State Department's international antidrug and anticrime programs are making a difference. We play a critical role as catalyst in promoting a coordinated, and effective, international crime control effort. While our material assistance enables countries to accomplish a host of tasks that might otherwise not be possible, our national commitment to end international crime, including drug trafficking, is a powerful, if intangible, motivation to other governments.

The most revealing example of our success is demonstrated through our counternarcotics programs. Without INL's international drug control programs, there would be a significant increase of cocaine available for sale on the streets of the United States. There would also be much more heroin. Drug prices would fall as supplies increased. And as there is a direct relationship between drug availability and use, we could expect to see a marked rise in new use among vulnerable youth.

We know that our antidrug programs work. Cocaine use in the United States has dropped significantly over the past decade and a half. And INL's programs continue to take a major bite out of the worldwide supply of cocaine. In 1996, working with our allies in the Western Hemisphere, we collectively removed nearly 300 metric tons of cocaine from the system—and this in spite of the drug trade's ability to outspend us, manipulate corrupt officials, and otherwise sabotage antidrug operations. The bottom line is that for an annual investment of \$150–\$250 million dollars—less than 2 percent of the entire Federal drug control budget—our programs have eliminated \$30 billion worth of cocaine.

There is no silver bullet solution to transnational crime and drug trafficking problems. However, the global community has the ability to deny criminals what they desire most: a secure operating environment, access to the legitimate economy and banking sector, the ability to travel freely, and in the case of drug traffickers, the source of their illicit wealth. We are making progress in these areas and are gradually weakening the stronghold of international criminals. ■



Tracking the Global CrimeThreat

by Russell R. Ross.

U.S. companies are operating overseas, frequently in localities where law and order is lacking. The State Department system of measuring the crime threat at U.S. diplomatic locations abroad, and applying resources to counter the measurable threat may offer an example worthy of imitation by U.S. enterprises doing business abroad.



To meet its foreign policy objectives, the United States maintains diplomatic relations with 184 nations at about 280 localities worldwide. The U.S. presence in these areas is usually high-profile. Over the years, this visibility has had the undesired result of attracting the unwanted attention of persons or causes who wish us ill. The roster of movements and individuals who have sought to strike at the U.S. diplomatic presence overseas has ranged from international terrorists and violent demonstrators to dangerous cranks and hardened criminals. In the last decade, these specific threats have been amplified by a general ambience of lawlessness that has seized many a capital city of the world. Many of these capitals, especially, but not exclusively, in the Third World, have become breeding places for rampant crime, even as the capability of host governments to cope with it has been stretched to the breaking point.

The responsibility of protecting U.S. diplomatic personnel and facilities in these foreign areas falls to the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) of the U.S. Department of State. As reports of growing crime around the world began to reach the Department from its embassies, DS acted methodically to meet its protective responsibilities. If crime is increasing around the world, then a system had to be developed to measure its seriousness. The system had to be sufficiently generic in its measurement tools so that they could be applied worldwide. In other words, to keep the playing field level for all State Department posts abroad, the criteria by which the crime threat would be measured had to apply equally to all overseas locations, irrespective of their orderliness or anomie. At the same time, the system had to be sufficiently flexible to produce a differentiated picture of crime, for example, in cities such as Luxembourg or Rejkavik, where it was acknowledged to be low, as compared to Lagos or Karachi, where it was acknowledged to be much higher. In this way, if a uniform system could be applied worldwide to quantify the crime threat in a foreign city, DS could then allocate its protective resources commensurate with the threat level, according to a uniform standard. Decisions to apply security measures made by seat-of-the-pants, *ad hoc* evaluations would be avoided, and in a time of shrinking government resources, a dollar's worth of security measures would be made to do the work of two, as the crime threat and its countermeasures were made to coincide.

With the help of a project officer skilled in both criminology and statistics, DS' first definitive crime rating system was unveiled in 1991. It was based on the reporting of crime incidents against the official U.S.

community at a diplomatic post overseas. To this objective criterion, the number of incidents, the Regional Security Officer (RSO) at an overseas post added his numerical evaluation of local police effectiveness and the response time to an emergency call from U.S. Embassy officials. These factors: the incidents, the police effectiveness and response time, were given a statistical weight, which was then translated into a textual crime threat rating of low, medium, high, or critical at an overseas locality. The lowest scores produced a rating of low; the highest scores produced a rating of critical.

The same crime rating system was applied to all posts. When it was in place, it obviated *ad hoc*, seat-of-the-pants evaluations of the local crime threat, and it served as a benchmark for the allocation of security resources at overseas installations. DS could ascertain the crime threat rating in a given area, then bring to bear a package of security countermeasures appropriate to the threat and to safeguard U.S. employees.

The system worked well enough, and produced differentiated threat levels that generally reflected the incidence of crime and police effectiveness (or ineffectuality) at posts around the world. There was, however, a steady drumbeat of criticism from ambassadors and RSOs. This criticism focused on two arguments. First, in counting only incidents against the embassy community, the statistical sample was too narrow. An area might be abidingly dangerous for expatriates in general, but because embassy staffers went unscathed, a post might still receive a threat rating of low. Second, a post untouched by incidents against its members, and consequently receiving a crime threat rating of low, might find itself penalized for having in

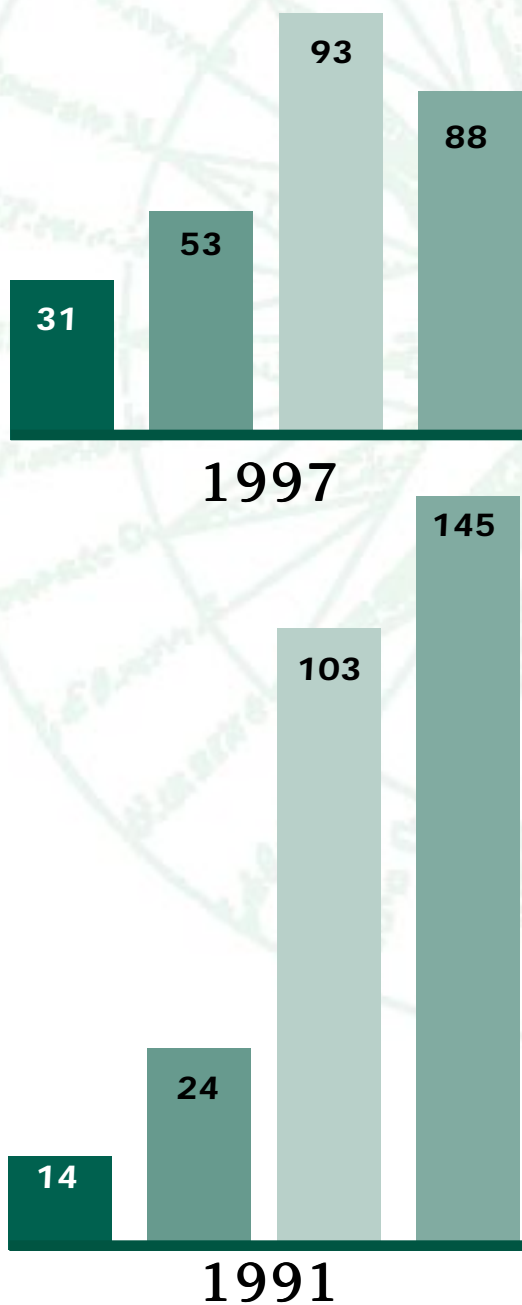
Crime Threat Levels At Overseas Posts

place good security procedures and programs that held criminal acts against its personnel to a minimum. Theoretically, this could produce a bureaucratic absurdity whereby a post with a recorded low crime threat could have its security resources abridged, until its members were sufficiently victimized to raise its crime threat level, at which point security resources would be restored. While human intervention prevented this cycle from taking hold, the criticism from the field made sense, and in 1993, it was decided to revisit the methodology by which the crime threat at overseas diplomatic posts had been determined.

As research to accomplish this revision got underway, DS was given a new mandate. Since a major security expenditure of the bureau was to hire local guards to protect residences and official buildings at a diplomatic post, the new methodology needed to yield a crime rating that reflected the crime threat in these areas. After experimenting with various criteria, it was decided that the crime threat in a locality could be measured by three variables: crime environment, perpetrator profile, and police effectiveness.

The crime environment was further defined by two factors: ambient crime, which was the occurrence of all incidents in a given location, irrespective of whether the victims were members of the embassy community, and the mobility of crime, which was the extent to which criminal elements from other quarters of the city intruded into areas of the city where diplomatic installations and residences were located.

The perpetrator profile was defined by three factors characterizing the criminals



■ Critical ■ Medium
 ■ High ■ Low

Comparison of figures from first year's survey to the last available survey.

in an area: their aggressiveness, their arming, and their aggregation into gangs. It was felt that these traits had a great deal to say about the seriousness of the crime threat in an area. If the perpetrators were prone to confrontation and gratuitous violence toward their victims, rather than relying on stealth thievery, for example, surely this should have a bearing on the crime threat level. By the same token, if the criminals were armed with firearms, rather than a club or knife, this should have a similar bearing, as would the aggregation of criminals into gangs, as opposed to single perpetrators.

Police effectiveness was defined by two factors: police deterrence/response and training/professionalism. Police deterrence meant the ability of local law enforcement agencies to forestall crime by their presence in a locality. Police response meant their disposition to answer requests for help from the U.S. Embassy promptly, and to investigate cases, arrests suspects, and bring them to a closure. Police training or professionalism in a more general sense referred to the overall behavior and probity of local law enforcement officials: their disinclination to take or solicit bribes, their disposition to act responsibly with both citizens and suspects, and their aversion to the abuse of their official position by engaging in illegal activities.

The above factors grouped under the three variables indicated were judged to be the determinants of the crime threat level in a given locality. They were combined into a questionnaire consisting of no more than seven questions (one for each factor). For each question, the respondent was given a set of multiple-choice answers, indicating in varying degrees the prevalence or seriousness of that factor in a given foreign

Global Crime Survey Stats

Africa



Latin America



East Asia and the Pacific



Western Europe



Eastern Europe



Middle East



South Asia



1991

Global Crime Survey Stats

Africa



Latin America



East Asia and the Pacific



Western Europe



Eastern Europe



Middle East



South Asia



Critical High Medium Low

1996

area. The respondent had only to check the answer corresponding most closely to conditions at post. The questionnaire was then transmitted to all U.S. diplomatic posts overseas, and RSOs were instructed to respond to it annually.

RSO responses from the field were weighed statistically, with the maximum possible score fixed at 100. Post inputs were recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, which aggregated the total scores for each foreign locality. The scoring range from 0 to 100 was then divided into quartiles, with 0–25 rendering a crime threat level of low; 26–50 a level of medium; 51–75 high; and 76–100 critical. The crime threat levels for all posts were compiled into a master list, which was circulated for commentary among all Washington agencies having representation at overseas State Department posts. After this coordination was accomplished, the list became the authoritative compilation of crime threat levels for the Department.

After publication, this list became a risk management tool for DS, permitting the allocation of security resources, as envisioned, according to the crime threat level. As list followed list at regular intervals, the accumulation also found another purpose—as a tool for analytical research. DS analysts tracking global security developments could follow the evolving crime threat at individual diplomatic posts around the world, and discern trends which could then be drawn to the attention of bureau policymakers.

Experience with preparation of the list, in the meantime, gradually established the validity of the criteria and their statistical evaluation, as crime threat levels so derived closely matched anecdotal reporting from varied sources around the world. In

the 5 years that have elapsed since a crime rating system has been in place, analysts have seen the worldwide crime threat escalate. As the attached table indicates, the trend is clearly discernible: In 1991, we had 14 overseas posts where we judged the crime threat to be critical; in 1996 that number had more than doubled to 31 posts. In 1991, we had 24 posts where we judged the crime threat to be high; in 1996 that number had more than doubled to 58. During the same time frame, the number of medium-threat posts dropped from 101 to 89, and the number of low-threat posts dropped from 118 to 83. Most of the upsurge occurred in Africa, Latin America (especially Central America), Eastern Europe, and the republics of the former Soviet Union. By contrast, the safest regions of the world, comparatively speaking, were western Europe, where it seemed people were more orderly, and in the Middle East and Far East, where repressive or authoritarian regimes were more skilled in keeping order.

A focused, definitive system for keeping track of the evolving crime threat around the world thus has enabled the DS to fulfill its responsibilities to keep abreast of the state of anomie in the world, and to bring its protective resources to bear in an efficient and responsive manner.

Global Crime Survey Stats

Africa



Latin America



East Asia and the Pacific



Western Europe



Eastern Europe



Middle East



South Asia



1997

South Africa

“The time has come for our nation to choose whether we want to become a law-governed and peaceful society or hapless hostages of lawlessness.”

—*South African President Nelson Mandela, 1996.*

Organized Crime in South Africa

By
Steve
Capelli

Special thanks to Dr. Chris de Kock, Head of Crime Research, South African Police Service and Lala Camerer of the Institute for Defense Policy, South Africa.

(Notes appear at the end of this article)

America and its allies will face many national security threats in the twenty-first century, but none will be as intractable or insidious as the growth of transnational organized crime gangs. As the world’s richest consumer market, America is an attractive locus for international drug traffickers. Once only a local problem, organized crime has now become global in scope.

With the advent of international transportation, communication, trade, and finance, these nefarious groups now have an unprecedented ability to transport illicit materials and to undermine banks and other financial institutions around the world. Drug profits flow, once cycled, through the same modern infrastructure, into legitimate investments, comingling with and competing against legitimate commercial revenues, threatening to strangle our legitimate economy. While America will be greatly affected by growing crime syndicates, newly democratized countries will be at an even greater risk. Using their huge drug profits or corrupting government officials and driving out legitimate businesses, these global criminals threaten to set back progress in developing nations before it even begins.¹

A case in point is South Africa. Since the end of apartheid, crime in all its various forms has expanded exponentially. No one is immune. Affluent South Africans, tourists, expatriates, business people, and the poor have all been affected by this growing crime wave. South Africa is commonly referred to in the media as “the world’s most dangerous country outside a war zone.” To back this astonishing claim, press reports point out that one out of every four South Africans either knows or has been a victim of violent crime. Violent crime is not restricted to locals. After a German executive was killed in an attempted carjacking in August 1996, the German Chamber of Commerce conducted an oft cited survey in which 16 out of 30 Chief Executives of German subsidiaries in the country reported that they had been victims of violent crime.

Many South Africans are upset and they are demanding harsher punishments for all offenders. This concern for personal safety has driven many South Africans and foreign residents alike to flee the country. Those who remain can be heard on radio talk shows, which seem to be flooded with callers demanding a reinstatement of the death penalty. While others, living in wealthy suburbs, ensconce themselves in homes hidden behind high walls topped with razor wire and protected by guard dogs. “Crime threatens our lives,” cries Tokyo Sexwale, the provincial Premier in Johannesburg. We are becoming “a gangster state where hijackers, drug lords, muggers, and other criminals trample (our) hard-won democratic rights into the dust,” declares George Fivaz, Commissioner of the South African Police Service (SAPS).²

Crime Grows

A cursory review of crime statistics reveals the pervasiveness of South Africa’s crime problem. In 1995 alone, crime drained \$7.1 billion out of the South African economy. That amount represents 6 percent of the nation’s GDP—equivalent to estimated profits of the proposed Cape Town Olympic games.³ This is an unacceptable loss which no economy, let alone a developing one, can sustain. Moreover, the SAPS recorded nearly 2 million violent crimes, including 18,983 murders, 36,888 rapes, and 66,838 armed robberies. This works out to a serious crime every 17 seconds.⁴ (Violent crime committed by roving street gangs is particularly prevalent in the provinces of—the worse being Gauteng—KwaZulu-Natal, and Eastern and Western Cape.)

Although crime statistics are notoriously unreliable, recently compiled SAPS data show a clear upward trend. Since 1990, South Africa has experienced a dramatic increase in almost every category the SAPS tracks. Comparative data from 1990 to 1995 shows a:

- 93.8 percent increase in attempted murders
- 72.3 percent increase in incidents of robbery with aggravated assault
- 234 percent increase in arson cases
- 35 percent increase in residential break-ins
- 20 per cent increase in burglaries at businesses
- 44 percent increase in vehicle theft
- 27 percent increase in theft from vehicles
- 238 percent increase in truck hijackings
- 394 percent increase in seizure of counterfeit banknotes

In addition to violent street crime, South Africa is faced with spreading organized crime and accompanying political corruption. While most foreign businesses can control street crime through countermeasures and increased insurance premiums, which they figure into their bottom-line, organized crime, on the other hand, is less controllable and more insidious. It also eats away at a nation's sovereignty and ability to govern, eroding law and order. This leaves a hostile climate for legitimate investment. Therefore it is the growth of organized crime, not street crime *per se*, which most worries corporate CEOs and political leaders. For it will be the government's ability to contain organized crime, along with growing street crime, which will determine if South Africa's transition to multiparty democracy and minority rule is ultimately successful.

Understanding South Africa's Gangs

According to SAPS statistics, there are approximately 500 well-organized and well-armed crime syndicates active in South Africa, half of which are located in and around Johannesburg.⁵ These gangsters engage in a myriad of crimes. Police sources say 178 of the 500 are involved in the global drug trade. While the rest, dabble in everything from vehicle theft and counterfeiting to smuggling gold, diamonds, arms, household goods, and people.

Gangs in South Africa have a long history and a tight internal order. Criminologist Vernie Peterson says gangs existed in working-class coloured areas for decades. In the traditional coloured areas razed by apartheid, gangs were celebrated in song and legend. Looked upon as local heroes, they controlled petty crime and in return dispensed limited patronage. The scope of local gangs is immense. Media reports claim that some 80,000 gangsters control much of the crime in the Cape Flats, a working-class district in Cape Town.

South African gangs or syndicates, as described by Joan Wardrop in her study of Soweto street gangs, are organized like a typical Mafia organization. These gangs are headed by a boss or *makulu baas*, who, with the help of his second-in-command, usually a brother or cousin, macro-manages a large hierarchical organization. Immediately under the *makulu baas* are his confidants who form a tight "inner circle." This inner circle is mainly respon-

sible for protecting the boss and devising new money-making schemes. They are also in charge of the workforce, which encompasses a legion of prostitutes, spotters, enforcers, truck drivers, and other lackeys. Lastly, there are the foot soldiers. High-profile members entrusted with carrying out the gangs most dangerous and risky work. Many of these street-level hoods, called *tsotsi*, were once shock troops for the African National Congress (ANC) in its struggle against the government.⁶ They have now transferred their guerrilla training, learned to combat an oppressive political system, to illegal ends. Now the gangs recruit in prisons, offering to lost youth an identity and a sense of belonging, as well as an income.⁷

Although syndicates operate along strict internal controls, increasingly they are working with other syndicates to increase their power. By reaching agreements with smaller gangs or contracting work out to individuals, they are better able to ship their products. Just like multinationals, they must “buy” into local operations and expand them or contract subsidiary organizations to conduct their work for them in areas where they do not have expertise.⁸ For example, a gang may hire a subcontractor with a particular skill in vehicle theft or smuggling drugs, guns, or aliens.

These formal and informal linkages between gangs are usually based on more than just mutual business interests. Many gangs are derived from family, clan, religious, and civic ties that go back again to the apartheid era.⁹ This explains the growth of transnational criminal alliances,

in which cartels in one region will link with gangs in other areas in order to ship their goods and open new markets.

Sociologist Alan Block aptly describes this new criminal trend in his definition of crime syndicates. He sees transnational organized crime as “a loosely constructed social system and social world.” This is a world in which a loose set of “relationships” bind professional criminals, politicians, law enforcement, and various entrepreneurs together. These links are clearly seen in South Africa’s drug trade.

A New Transshipment Point

As law enforcement agencies across the globe crack down on transnational narcotics traffickers, drug lords are forced to find new places from which to ship their wares and launder their ill-gotten gains. Because of South Africa’s developed infrastructure, as well as its overworked customs inspectors, and its convenient location between East Asia and South America, it is becoming an attractive new drug transshipment point for gangs from as far away as Russia and Asia.

Working through Nigerians, these transnational criminal organizations link up with local South Africa gangs to create new drug transit routes to the United States and Europe. Both feed off one another in a symbiotic relationship. Transnational crime groups need the locals to do the ground work, while local gangs need the money that the global drug trade provides to maintain their turf.

Most of the drugs that come into South Africa are smuggled in by Nigerians criminals, who pose either as tourists or refugees. Since customs officials worldwide are on the look-out for Nigerian criminals' smuggling contraband, many Lagos-based drug syndicates have relocated to other countries in order to take heat off themselves. Nigerian criminals see South Africa as the perfect transit hub. It provides them unequalled access to other countries in Africa and a convenient base not too far away from home. Due to massive refugee flows, no one actually knows how many Nigerians have migrated to South Africa. It is commonly believed, however, that there are large pockets of them in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town.

For example, cartels in Colombia often get semiprocessed cocaine from Bolivia and Peru and move it through go-betweens in Brazil. Nigerian drug mules take semiprocessed cocaine from South America to Africa. Contacts in South Africa then ship it to Europe, where the Italian Mafia distributes some of the drug in Western Europe, while Russian gangs distribute the rest in Eastern Europe.

Hashish comes from Afghanistan and Pakistan through Kenya to Nigerian criminals in South Africa. Meanwhile, LSD and ecstasy (XTC) avoid other countries entirely by coming to South Africa directly from the Netherlands and England respectively.

From southeast Asia, Nigerian gangs, in cooperation with Chinese Triads, move heroin from the "Golden Triangle" through South Africa and then into the West, as well as Mandrax from India, which flows in from a number of African countries including Zambia, Zaire, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Mozambique, Swaziland, and Kenya.

As cited above, South Africa's neighbors have very porous borders and are often used as transit states. In addition, other nations such as Zambia are known transit points for drugs from southern Asia to South Africa and Europe. On February 2, 1994, three Zambians were arrested in the Groot Marica area and police seized 5,000 Mandrax sedative tablets.¹⁰ In West Africa, Ghana is another major drug transit state. On December 23, 1994, South African police arrested three Ghanaian men and seized over 2,910 grams of cocaine wrapped in condoms and swallowed by the drug traffickers.¹¹



Growing Domestic Drug Use

It is important to note that while close to 90 percent of all the drugs shipped to South Africa end up in other countries, some stay. Many SAPS officials see South Africa as gradually becoming a major drug market. Recent police statistics show some disturbing trends. For instance, there has been a marked increase in the consumption of so-called designer drugs, like cocaine and heroin, as well as newer drugs like ecstasy and its derivative nexus.¹² In 1992 police seized 1,341 grams of heroin, 1,846 grams in 1993 and an astonishing 24,745 grams in 1994.¹³ South Africa has also earned the dubious distinction of being one of the largest producers of marijuana (dagga) in the world, edging out traditional front-runners, Mexico and Morocco.

To illustrate the growing spread of cocaine use in South Africa. Police point to the doubling of arrests for cocaine-related offenses during the period from 1992 to 1994. In addition, the amount of cocaine seized rose sixfold from 24 lb. to 152 lb.¹⁴ In 1995, police confiscated 400 lb. of cocaine, two and a half times more than the year before.¹⁵ Even more indicative of increasing availability of cocaine is the dramatic decrease in its street price. Today a rock of cocaine goes for about \$14. Police fear that cocaine—which is half the price it was a year ago—will become as cheap as mandrax, which sells for between \$8 and \$10 a tablet.¹⁶ Moreover, the people who run drug rehabilitation centers, have also noticed a sudden rise in cocaine use. Four years ago it was common to have one cocaine case a year. Now they are getting six to 12 cases a day.¹⁷

In addition, 80 percent of all of the mandrax produced globally is destined for South Africa. Mandrax was a legally available sleeping pill until the 1970s. Since then, many South Africans have taken to crushing it, mixing it with marijuana and smoking it. Officials estimate that 4.5 million tablets of mandrax were sold in South Africa in 1995.¹⁸ And finally, the highly addictive crack form of cocaine is swiftly replacing dagga as the drug of choice.

Smuggling

Police are quick to point out the fact that once a drug smuggling route is established it can easily be used to transport other illicit goods like arms, cars, ivory, gems, and counterfeit notes. For example, mandrax is increasingly being bartered for stolen vehicles and spare parts from South Africa. South Africa's national road, N-4, from Mozambique and Swaziland is fast

becoming one of the main smuggling routes. On May 12, 1995, police confiscated approximately 4,000 mandrax tablets valued at 60,000 Rand, and found 12 bags of marijuana the next day.¹⁹

Asian criminal organizations are very active in smuggling in ivory, rhino-horn, abalone, minerals, vehicles, and aliens.²⁰ Some of Asia's most powerful criminal groups, such as the 14 K-Hau Tsz Triad Society, the Table Mountain Gang (a Taiwan-based criminal organization), the Wo Shen Wo Triad Society and others from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are active in South Africa.

Cheap guns, a legacy of Africa's many armed conflicts, abound in the region. Asian gangs are also involved in the illegal arms trade. Trade in these weapons is highly profitable, even as prices fall. SAPS reports that during the period from January 1 to August 31, 1995, a total of 7,247 firearms was confiscated by them, 3,983 in the volatile KwaZulu-Natal Province alone. South African police uncovered a "crack Japanese gunrunning syndicate" in Cape Town last August. Gang members were reportedly buying .38 caliber handguns from local gun dealers and then shipping them via Mauritius to Japan where they were given to local Mafia members.²¹ While Asian gangs had a late start, they have swiftly secured their place in South Africa's underworld. They can be found throughout South Africa, but their primary headquarters are in Cape Town. Triads also run quasilegitimate businesses such as night clubs, restaurants, travel agencies and movie companies. These are, as a rule, supported with ill-gotten gains.

Police believe that seven large organized syndicates control most of the gold and diamond smuggling trade. Using money

from illicit activities, such as narcotics trafficking, smugglers are able to buy consignments of minerals and then ship to Europe for sale on the black market. Stolen gold and diamonds are flown by small planes to neighboring countries or it is sent by ship straight to Europe. All this requires a highly organized syndicate. In 1995, 20 tons of gold worth \$34 million were stolen from the nation's mines. Diamond theft also runs into the millions with 3,594 uncut gems stolen from mines in the Johannesburg area alone. While costly, many in the mining industry dismiss it as petty theft carried out by miners. In reality, it is middle and upper level managers, who have connections to mobsters, not miners, pilfering the company. Most of the money received from stolen bullion and gems goes into Swiss bank accounts.²¹

Smuggling illicit goods is made simple by inefficient and corrupt customs officials. Hundreds of Zimbabweans sneak into South Africa daily. Low paid and overworked customs officials on both sides of the border are susceptible to bribes, this allows smugglers to brazenly enter South Africa without any documentation. Many smugglers use taxicabs, whose drivers will allow anyone to enter the country without detection for the right price.²³ Corruption can also be found at airport terminals. In October 1995, police uncovered a smuggling ring that had almost circumvented airline security, airport security, customs, and the police. It is believed that the contraband almost passed inspection because customs officials are either bribed to look the other way or they are busy looking for weapons. Police believe that this is just the tip of the iceberg.²⁴

All this lucrative contraband provides the criminals with ready cash with which they are able to purchase legitimate businesses. Since these legitimate businesses are subsidized by crime, they can run-off the competition by undercutting their competitor's prices. Ultimately, they are left with a monopoly. This is just another of the negative consequences of rampant crime.

Carjacking and Motor Vehicle Theft

Police reports state that a car is stolen every 9 minutes in South Africa. Carjackings are taking place at a very rapid rate—one every 53 seconds.²⁵ This amounts to over 8,000 carjackings in 1995 alone. Over 75 percent of these armed thefts took place in Gauteng Province, which includes crime-ridden Johannesburg. The total financial lost from car theft and hijacking in 1995 equaled 4.5 billion Rand (\$53 million, which is two-thirds of what South Africa's legitimate car makers made that year.²⁶ In addition, during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy (1990-95) truck hijackings rose by 238 percent.²⁷ SAPS says there are over 112 organized criminal syndicates involved in vehicle theft. These syndicates have wide ranging networks spanning the globe.

Experts believe that close to 80 percent of all vehicle thefts can be traced to organized criminal syndicates, who smuggle these vehicles to other countries or chop them up to sell their parts on the black market. For instance, some of these stolen cars are being found in places as far away as Europe and Australia. In order to make a profit, poor street kids are enticed by criminal gangs to steal vehicles at gun

point. Since new legislation make it illegal for the police to arrest anyone under the age of 18, most carjackers are teenagers, who commit these crimes with impunity. The gangs get the vehicles and then transship them to other southern African nations, such as Zimbabwe and Botswana. Recently South Africa police, with help from Zambia and Zimbabwe, broke up a large-scale organized car theft ring, netting 7.25m Rand (\$2million) worth of stolen vehicles.



Money Laundering

Crime syndicates are truly international businesses, and like any business, these organizations are fueled and motivated by the huge profits that are their lifeblood. Without this money, they cannot finance the manufacturing, the transportation, the smuggling, the distribution, the murder, and the intimidation that are essential to their illegal trade. According to U.N. estimates, organized crime is a \$750 billion-dollar-a-year enterprise. All this money must go somewhere. Thus, drug smugglers are constantly looking for places where they can launder their profits. With the advent of high speed computers and an increase in international money transfers, money laundering is easier now than ever before. South Africa, with its lax banking regulations, is the perfect place to launder money.

According to Special Agent Harold Wankel, Chief of Operations for the United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, in his testimony before the House Banking and Finance Committee in February 1996, “Globalization of the drug trade has necessitated an expansion and sophistication of the laundering of illegal drug profits.” Methods of laundering drug money vary by country and region, driven by a number of factors, including the sophistication of banking and financial centers, the existence of underground banking systems that operate largely along ethnic lines and strength of enforcement pressure.²⁸

FBI Director Louis J. Freeh in testimony given before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Foreign Operation’s hearing on International Crime, said that criminal organizations are attracted to new democracies because of the “relaxed borders and improved telecommunications systems that have emerged in recent years to facilitate their illegitimate operations. These countries are targets of opportunity for the major drug trafficking organizations, like the Colombian cartels, which seek to establish new and lucrative markets.”²⁹

Commercial Crime

SAPS reports that 85 organized gangs are involved in sophisticated commercial crimes, including embezzlement. This equates to a \$6.8 billion (31 billion Rand) drain on the economy.³⁰ In 1996, 54,846 cases valued at \$852 million (R3.8 billion) were reported to police, a 7.3 percent increase in reported cases and a 37 percent increase in the value involved when compared to figures for 1995. Some 42 percent of all commercial crimes committed in South Africa in 1996 took place in Guateng Province, the nation's commercial nerve center.

Police reason that social, political, and technological developments have led to rising commercial crime, especially with South Africa's access to technology. The fear is that because of lax laws and negligible enforcement, white-collar crime will expand. As lucrative U.S. firms enter South Africa they will make tempting targets.

SAPS officials are concerned about the scope and depth of commercial crime. In the past, the police have had a difficult time controlling fraud and embezzlement cases. Problems arose because the police lacked the resources to deal with these "victimless crimes" and because most companies are reluctant to report these crimes. However, a KPMG Aiken and Peat Forensic Auditors Survey shows that more companies are now willing to report commercial crimes. Moreover, heavily publicized commercial crime cases have shown law enforcement's resolve in hunting down commercial criminals.



02	LUXEMBURG	93
19	TURIN	93
22	NEAPEL	93
06	MADRID	93
22	STUTTGART HBF.	93
01	LYON	94
22	HELSINKI	94
71	SFRANCISCO-DALLAS	94
43	PARIS	94

Crimes Effect on Foreign Investors

America is the third largest foreign investor with some 250 firms, behind both Britain and Germany, but that number is growing faster than for any other nation.³¹ American businesses are obviously interested in South Africa, but they are with good reason wary about the growth of organized crime.

Organized crime can hurt foreign businesses through a variety of methods. It mainly tries to drive out legitimate competition, by using its ability to call on massive amounts of cash to influence local governments. Organized crime does not try to compete on an equitable basis and therein lies the threat. Illicit profits pumped into a legitimate business by its criminal overlords will help to sustain that business as it lowers its prices in an effort to drive out other competitors. Once competition has been eliminated, a monopoly is formed in that sector by criminal gangs.

In addition to the ability to undermine legitimate businesses through illegal competition, organized criminal groups' influence over labor unions can also be an effective tool for eliminating competitors.

Why Now and Why South Africa?

For instance, control over teamsters or garbage collectors can quickly run up costs for private sector businessmen. Labor strikes are another effective tool wielded against legitimate business.

The danger of being financially undermined by the Mafia is not the only peril faced by business. There are unsubtle methods as well: extortion and intimidation are also practiced. This has not yet been the case in South Africa, but it is something that will need to be closely monitored.

In South Africa, crime affects business mainly through quality of life issues. If workers are constantly under threat from violent crime they will be less productive. It will also increase fixed costs associated with security measures for workers and for plant and equipment. Crime affects the cost of doing business in an area if the ports and transportation routes are haunted by systematic theft and hijacking.

All these factors work to undermine long term capital investment by both foreign and domestic firms. This internal strife undermines the government's tax base. Without this source of revenue the government has little money to support police protection. Consequently, with little or no policing taking place, a vicious crime cycle begins. Thus a self-perpetuating downward economic and social spiral starts.

Mark Shaw in his recent work on crime, notes that there are two dovetailing trends that facilitated the growth of organized crime and crime in general in South Africa. First is the nation's transition from apartheid to democracy. Shaw says that, "Comparative evidence suggests that crime increases markedly in periods of political transition coupled with instability and violence." He cites Eastern Europe during its transition to democracy, and in the final days of the Soviet Union and the first days of the Soviet Republics, as examples where economic and political collapse created a vacuum into which organized crime grew. The obvious answer then could be that political instability breeds crime.

The legacy of apartheid makes South Africa's history much different than that of nations in Eastern Europe. The erosion and then collapse of apartheid boundaries allowed crime to move out of the townships and into the suburbs, where it was more likely to be recorded. Greater affluence in these areas—and in parts of black townships as barriers to black economic empowerment dropped—increased the rewards available to criminals and the incentive to engage in more organized, sophisticated crime.

It is the effects of apartheid on the SAPS which make today's crime fighting that much more difficult. In the past, the police were agents of a state helping to enforce the nation's idea of a morale society. According to Shaw, even the South African Police's official historian concedes that during the apartheid era, only one in ten members of the force were engaged in

crime detection and investigation. Combating crime was secondary to the policing of apartheid and the maintenance of internal security.³² Hence, older police have little experience in actual crime fighting in the Western sense. This inexperience is now showing as organized crime is getting a foothold in the nation. The police are unprepared for this type of work and are just now reorganizing their forces to better combat organized crime, but there are still some large gaps. For instance, there are only 400 officers assigned to a nationwide drug task force. The number of international flights into South Africa has more than tripled since 1994.³³

Moreover, South Africa has many of the attending social ills seen throughout sub-Saharan Africa. Rapid urbanization, cheap weapons, high unemployment, high population growth rate, illegal immigration, high illiteracy rates, and one of the world's most unequal income distributions. Socioeconomic factors are a long-term problem that the government hopes to address through economic development and reform, but short-term crime issues are being addressed by some new SAPS initiatives.

Police Response

Over the past 2 years, the SAPS have begun several projects with other nations and with local businesses to promote cooperation. These initiatives include:

A Tourism Safety Task Force Joint was established in November of 1995. This is a joint project between the police and the community. Where stakeholders, like tour groups and hotels, provide funds so that the police can provide extra security and information for tourists. In addition, a

nongovernmental agency, National Business Against Crime and Corruption, was formed to provide a liaison between the police and the business community. Over the past year this organization produced a media awareness campaign and provided the Gauteng Police with 4,000 cellular phones and 100 BMW police vehicles.

SAPS has created a unit specialized in organized crime, the National Crime Investigation Service, which solely monitors and tracks organized criminal gangs. They have also enhanced their intelligence and information management networks, and are developing both a national- and provincial-level computerized data base. Plus South Africa participated in its first joint crime combatting exercise in June–July 1995. The government has also signed anticrime cooperation agreements with Mozambique and Swaziland in March and August of 1995 respectively.

On June 13, 1996, Police commissioner George Fivaz announced the start of “a no nonsense, back-to-basics policing plan aimed at crushing crime wherever it is encountered.” He pledged to arrest 10,000 of South Africa’s “most wanted” criminals within 1 month, as part of phase one of a long-range anticrime campaign. These are all steps in the right direction, but even more must be done.

How the Private Sector Can Help Fight Organized Crime-

So what can be done to stop this growing trend?

First, there needs to be more cooperation between the private sector and government. Information sharing is a key ingredient in the fight against organized crime. These groups actively seek to hide their activities. Thus a bright light is needed to bring their actions out into the open for everyone to see. Opponents need to know what they are up against before any countermeasures can be devised. By sharing information both the private and public sectors can work together to defeat the enemy.

Second, police need the latest technology in order to have a level playing field. Currently, the SAPS do not have simple tools like a computerized fingerprint identification system. Thus, many criminals go free because they can not be linked with other crimes quickly enough and are let out on bail. The SAPS also need more advanced equipment to conduct drug interdiction operations. More X-ray machines at airports, would do wonders for interdiction, as well as more people and dogs to check bags.

Only through cooperation between the public and private sectors can organized crime be defeated. To facilitate better crime prevention measures and to implement effective law enforcement techniques, there must be more communication, a better exchange of information, and a more efficient dissemination of ideas

among governmental agencies. With increasing awareness by both sectors of society, it is possible that the scourge of organized crime can be curtailed in South Africa. This effort to dismantle the organized crime syndicate must be accomplished in the immediate future before the tentacles of the crime organization become so embedded in South Africa's social and political scenes that they may never be removed.



Crime Ratios per 100,000 People 1994-96*

	1994	1995	1996
Violent Crimes			
Murder	43	42	37
Attempted Murder	46	44	43
Robbery w/Aggravating Circumstances	139	136	107
Social Fabric Crimes			
Rape	64	70	74
Serious Assault (GBH)	321	334	334
Common Assault	299	314	309
Property-Related Crimes			
Housebreaking (Residential)	365	388	385
Housebreaking (Business)	150	146	142
Other Robbery	56	58	79
Stock Theft	64	66	65
Shoplifting	110	101	96
Theft of Motor Vehicles	170	170	152
Theft out of Motor Vehicles	295	307	295
Other Thefts	582	590	595
Commercial Crimes			
Fraud, Forgery, Misappropriations, Embezzlements and Other	103	100	99
Violence Aimed at Property			
Arson	19	18	15
Malicious Damage to Property	194	201	198
Selected Other Crimes			
Illegal Possession of Firearms	17	18	15
Drug-related Crimes	84	69	62
Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs	43	37	35

* American Chamber of Commerce, South Africa

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A teal-colored map of Nigeria is positioned on the left side of the page. A dark green horizontal bar extends from the right edge of the map across the top of the page.

Nigeria

emerging trends in transnational crime

Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud

By
**Andy
Corsun**

Special thanks to David Manley, former-Regional Security Officer in Lagos, Nigeria;- Mike Zupan, Assistant Regional Security-Officer, Lagos, Nigeria, and the U.S. Secret-Service Financial Crimes Division.-

(Notes appear at the end of this article)-

While checking the office mail you come across a poorly handwritten envelope addressed to you (or your company) postmarked from Lagos, Nigeria. Inside, on official-looking stationery, is an unsolicited “confidential business proposal,” from someone purporting to be a Nigerian civil servant. The offer states:

“Having consulted with my colleagues, and based on information gathered from the Nigerian Chamber of Commerce, I am pleased to propose a confidential business transaction to our mutual benefit. I and my colleagues have in our possession instruments to transfer the sum of \$35,500,000.00 into a foreign company’s account in our favor. This amount emanated as a result from an over-invoiced contract, executed, commissioned, and paid for about two years ago by a foreign contractor. We are therefore seeking your assistance in transferring this money to your account as it can only be remitted to a foreign account, and as civil servants, we are forbidden to operate for foreign accounts. The total sum will be shared as follows:

- 30% for the account owner (you)
- 60% for us
- 10% to settle any incidental expenses

“We shall commence the transfer of funds immediately, as soon as you send the following documents/information through the above fax number.

1. Four copies of your company’s letter head and invoice papers signed and stamped
2. Your banker’s name, address and fax numbers
3. The account number and name of would be beneficiary.

“Bear in mind that this is absolutely a private and personal deal, nonofficial; and should be treated with all measure of secrecy and confidentiality.”

You have just received an Advance Fee Fraud (AFF) letter, also known as “419” after the section of the Nigerian penal law that deals with this type of fraud.¹

AFF letters and faxes are confidence schemes and appear as various proposals from “officials” of Nigerian Government ministries, existing companies, or Nigerian Government contracts. The letters and faxes contain official-looking stationery with appropriate government seals, stamps, and signatures. The aforementioned AFF letter is an example of a transfer of funds from an over-invoiced contract.

The quality of AFF letters has evolved over the years, from poorly handwritten letters to more professional products prepared on word processors. Word processors also allow AFF criminals to generate more letters.

AFF criminals include university-educated professionals who are the best in the world for nonviolent spectacular crimes.

AFF letters first surfaced in the mid-1980s around the time of the collapse of world oil prices, which is Nigeria’s main foreign exchange earner. Some Nigerians turned to crime in order to survive. Fraudulent schemes such as AFF succeeded in Nigeria, because Nigerian criminals took advantage of the fact that Nigerians speak English, the international language of business, and the country’s vast oil wealth and natural gas reserves—ranked 13th in the world—offer lucrative business opportunities that attract many foreign companies and individuals.

AFF confidence schemes are limited only by imagination, however, they usually fall into the following categories:

- Transfer of Funds From Over-Invoiced Contracts
- Contract Fraud (C.O.D. of Goods and Services)
- Conversion of Hard Currency (Black-Money)
- Sale of Crude Oil at Below Market Prices
- Purchase of Real Estate
- Disbursement of Money from Wills (Benefactor of a Will)
- Threat Scams or Extortion
- Clearinghouse

Each of these business schemes will be discussed in detail in the section entitled **AFF Schemes: Themes and Variations.**

According to the Metropolitan Police Company Fraud Department in London, some 3,000 AFF letters a week are mailed or faxed worldwide; primarily from Nigeria. The United States and Great Britain are the recipients of over 50 percent of this material.

To circumvent the cost of mailing the letters, these criminals will use counterfeit stamps and forged franked stamps or possibly attempt to bribe corrupt Nigerian Postal Service workers. It is believed that AFF letters with counterfeit stamps are surreptitiously placed in overseas mail or delivered by hand.

Names and addresses of potential victims are obtained through various trade journals, business directories, magazine and newspaper advertisements, chambers of commerce, and the internet.

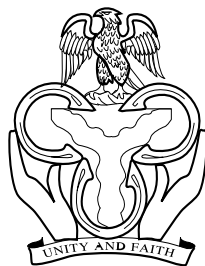
Actual monetary losses to AFF scams are hard to obtain. Many victims are reluctant to come forward and report their losses in AFF scams because of fear or embarrassment. It is estimated that AFF scams result in the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars annually worldwide.

The U.S. Secret Service Financial Crimes Division, which receives 100 calls a day from Americans approached or defrauded from AFF criminals, indicates that “Nigerian organized crime rings running fraud schemes through the mail and phone lines are now so large, they represent a serious financial threat to the country [United States].”

Profits obtained in AFF are often used to support other more violent crimes such as narcotics trafficking. In the early 1990s, Nigerian drug traffickers expanded their operations to include AFF, which is less risky, does not require much travel, nor the movement of contraband. According to the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency, drugs and financial fraud are inextricably intertwined in Nigeria. Conservative estimates indicate that about 30–40 percent of heroin that moves throughout the world is either moved by or its movement is controlled by Nigerian criminals.

AFF has created such a negative impact on legitimate Nigerian businesses, the Nigerian Government periodically places notices in newspapers worldwide warning people of the fraud.

Though basically a nonviolent crime, AFF has resulted in the kidnaping or death of foreign victims. Part of the criminal’s ruse is to have the victim travel to Nigeria (either directly or via a bordering country) to



CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA.

PRESS STATEMENT **ON** **ADVANCE FEE FRAUD SCAM**

THE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA IS VERY MUCH CONCERNED THAT IN SPITE OF THE VARIOUS EFFORTS MADE IN THE PAST THROUGH PRESS STATEMENTS TO COMBAT THE ADVANCE FEE FRAUD/ TELEFAX SCAM, IT HAS CONTINUED UNABATED, WITH INCREASING SOPHISTICATION. THE BANK IS ALSO WORRIED BY THE RECKLESS ABANDON WITH WHICH NAMES OF SOME TOP CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA OFFICIALS ARE OFTEN FRAUDULENTLY USED BY THE FRAUDSTERS TO LEND CREDIBILITY AND RESPECTABILITY TO THE SPURIOUS TRANSACTIONS.

2. GIVEN THE FREQUENCY WITH WHICH SOME GULLIBLE PEOPLE STILL FALL VICTIM TO THE BUSINESS SCAMS, THE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA DEEMS IT NECESSARY ONCE AGAIN, TO RE-ISSUE THE PRESS STATEMENT (FIRST ISSUED IN 1991) TO ALERT THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY, OF THE INCREASING SPAT OF THE ATTEMPTS BY INTERNATIONAL SYNDICATE OF FRAUDSTERS TO DE-FRAUD THEM.

3. THE FRAUDULENT ATTEMPTS TAKE THE FORM OF CIRCULAR LETTERS, UNAUTHORIZED FAX AND TELEX MESSAGES RELATING TO PURPORTED APPROVED TRANSFERS OF FUNDS RUNNING INTO THE MILLIONS OF U.S. DOLLARS ARISING FROM ALLEGED FOREIGN CONTRACTS. THE "BUSINESS PROPOSALS" SHOULD ORDINARILY HAVE PUT ANY RESPECTABLE INDIVIDUAL ON INQUIRY. HOWEVER DRIVEN BY GREED AND THE URGE FOR QUICK MONEY, MANY HAVE IGNORED THE WARNING BY THE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA. THE AUTHORS OF THE CIRCULAR LETTERS WHO BEAR NIGERIAN NAMES ARE PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL SYNDICATE WHO ARE OUT TO DUPE GULLIBLE OVERSEAS RECIPIENTS WHO ARE THEMSELVES BOTH VILLAINS AND VICTIMS IN THE BOGUS "BUSINESS" DEALS.

4. THE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA, THEREFORE, WISHES ONCE AGAIN, TO WARN ALL RECIPIENTS OF SUCH FRAUDULENT LETTERS, ETC. THAT THEY DO NOT EMANATE FROM THE BANK AND THAT THE BANK HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OR RECORDS, WHATSOEVER, OF THE PURPORTED CLAIMS OR TRANSFERS OR EVEN THE RELATED ALLEGED CONTRACTS. RECIPIENTS SHOULD, AS SUCH, EXERCISE CAUTION AND IMMEDIATELY CONTACT THEIR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES OR THE INTERNATIONAL POLICE ORGANIZATION (INTERPOL) NEAREST TO THEM IN ORDER TO HELP TRACK DOWN THE INTERNATIONAL CROOKS AND SWINDLERS.

5. THE BANK WILL NOT BEAR ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY LOSS SUSTAINED BY ANY PERSON OR CORPORATION THAT FAILS TO HEED THIS WARNING.

CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA
TINUBU SQUARE, P.M.B. 12194, LAGOS, NIGERIA

meet a (with) Nigerian Government “official(s)” to complete the transaction. Often, the victim is told that it is not necessary to get a visa, or the criminals will get one for him or her.²

Once in Nigeria, these criminals will attempt to solicit more money from the victim, either by continuing the elaborate ruse, or if that fails—physical intimidation.

Over the past 3 years, 15 foreign businessmen (one American) have been murdered in Nigeria in AFF scams.³

Since September 1995, at least eight Americans have been held against their will by these criminals in Lagos that have come to the attention of the U.S. Embassy. In 1996 the U.S. Embassy helped repatriate ten Americans who came to Lagos looking for their “pot of gold.”

On July 2, 1996, a Swedish businessman was kidnaped from his hotel in Lome, Togo. Kidnapers, reportedly Nigerian criminals, demanded \$500,000 ransom. It is believed that the businessman was a victim of an AFF scam that deteriorated into a kidnaping. After lengthy negotiations between the kidnapers and Swedish police, the victim was released unharmed on July 12, 1996.

There has been little success in prosecuting these perpetrators. One explanation is that only 5–10 percent of AFF victims will come forward and report an incident. Other reasons are:

- AFF victims may not want to admit they were defrauded, and involved in what they were led to believe was an illegal proposition.

- Victims may believe they can recoup their losses by continuing to play out the fraud. Criminals rely on this logic, referred to as “gambler’s mentality,” resulting in more losses for the victim.

- Victims may believe if they report the fraud they will be prosecuted under U.S. law as a co-conspirator. At least one U.S. court has upheld civil forfeiture of the proceeds attributed to AFF.

- Sections 5 and 6 of the Nigerian Presidential Decree of April 1995, make receipt and/or possession of a fraudulent letter by a victim an offense. This may deter victims from returning to Nigeria to aid in the prosecution of these criminals.

Once a targeted victim forwards money and/or products to Nigeria in one of these scams, it is difficult, if not impossible, to recoup losses. Perhaps the best defense against AFF is to adhere to the old adage “if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.”

The purpose of this report is to provide the reader with a basic understanding of how AFF works. Included are steps and guidelines on how to recognize AFF, and ways to determine legitimate business proposals and partners in Nigeria.

How Advance Fee Fraud Works

After a victim responds positively to an AFF letter by sending the required documentation (for example, signed company letterheads, bank account number, etc.) the hook is in. The primary reason for the documentation is not to rob the victim's bank account, but to perpetuate the illusion that the deal is legitimate and moving forward. The blank signed letterheads are altered and used by the criminals as props in other frauds, letters of reference to obtain visas, or sold to other AFF criminals.

For the next week to 10 days, the perpetrators establish a level of trust with the victim. This is accomplished by sending the victim more "official" documentation verifying the bona fides of the deal and the people involved. The criminals will correspond with the victim via fax machines and courier mail because it is difficult to trace. In the past, these criminals made extensive use of business centers in Lagos to place phone calls and send faxes, but the Nigerian Government reports—and evidence seems to confirm—that business centers were closed in an effort to thwart AFF scams.

The criminals also conduct the scams from their homes or other locations (front companies). To ensure the integrity of the phone lines at those locations, they will gain access to active telephone lines. The telephone lines were either abandoned by the owner who could no longer afford it, or are used without the knowledge or consent of the owner. Therefore, a criminal will use a phone line that is registered to someone living in another part of the city, making it almost impossible to trace.

What happens next is the most crucial point in the fraud and can take a number of directions. A victim will be advised that the deal is near completion, however, an emergency has arisen and money is needed to pay an unforeseen government fee or tax before the money can be released. If the fee is paid, the criminals will come up with another "problem" that requires immediate payment by the victim. Each "problem" is supported by "official" documentation.

The criminals can run this ruse for months or even years, depending on the gullibility of the victim or his or her desperation to recoup losses. One Western diplomat described it as ". . . kind of like gambling. You get in so deep you keep putting money in to get something out of it."

At some point during the fraud, the criminals will attempt to have the victim travel to Nigeria or a bordering country to finalize the contract, money transfer, or other transaction. If the victim appears reluctant to go to Nigeria, the criminals will suggest a neutral country where an AFF team, unbeknownst to the victim, is already established. The AFF team will not target a victim in the victim's own country where they have established roots and can easily check on the validity of the scam.

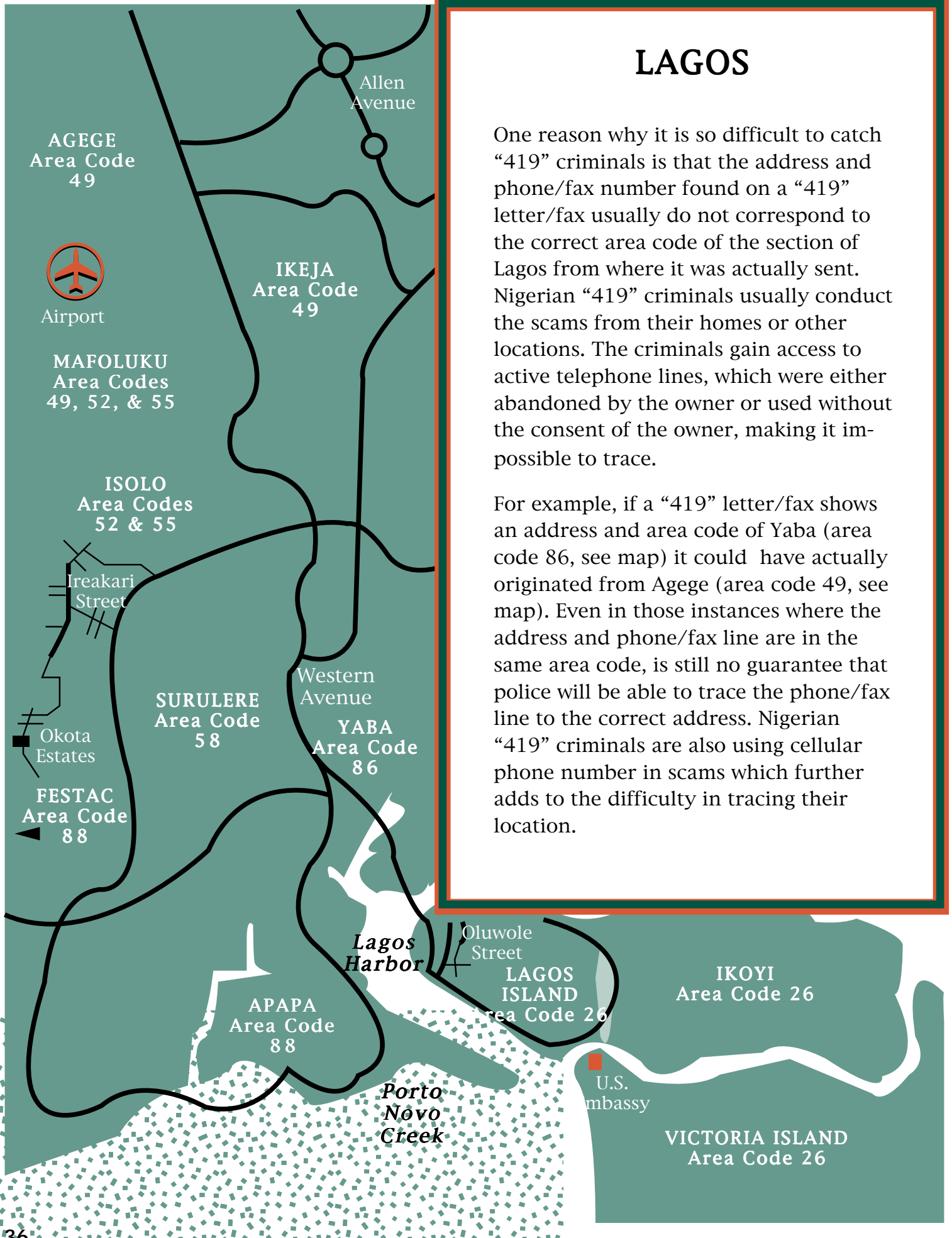


Pictured are some typical telephone lines in Lagos. It is very difficult for law enforcement officials to trace these telephone /fax lines to the perpetrators.

LAGOS

One reason why it is so difficult to catch “419” criminals is that the address and phone/fax number found on a “419” letter/fax usually do not correspond to the correct area code of the section of Lagos from where it was actually sent. Nigerian “419” criminals usually conduct the scams from their homes or other locations. The criminals gain access to active telephone lines, which were either abandoned by the owner or used without the consent of the owner, making it impossible to trace.

For example, if a “419” letter/fax shows an address and area code of Yaba (area code 86, see map) it could have actually originated from Agege (area code 49, see map). Even in those instances where the address and phone/fax line are in the same area code, is still no guarantee that police will be able to trace the phone/fax line to the correct address. Nigerian “419” criminals are also using cellular phone number in scams which further adds to the difficulty in tracing their location.



Travel to Nigeria

In some instances, prior to coming to Nigeria, the criminals will tell a victim to bring expensive watches, pens, and men's suits as "gifts." Proceeds from these items are kept by the criminals.

The criminals may tell the victim that a visa is not required to enter Nigeria, or a visa has been arranged to be issued upon arrival. Without exception, a valid Nigerian visa is required for entry and departure, and airport visas are not available. Travel to Nigeria should not be undertaken without first verifying the bona fides of a company or business partners. If a victim meets the criminals in a bordering country, the victim may find that he or she still must travel to Lagos. Entry without a visa, gives the criminals leverage over the victim and leads to other forms of extortion.

Once in Lagos, the victim will be housed in one of the many small hotels (euphemistically known as "419" hotels), located primarily around Murtala Muhammad Airport. At this point, the victim is totally immersed in the scam, and the criminals have total control over the victim's every move. The victim is taken to meetings with criminals posing as Nigerian Government officials, or possibly corrupt government officials, to finalize the deal. The meetings can take place in government offices or annexes that are "rented" by the criminals or in a office that is setup to resemble a government office. These offices are often located near government buildings to add authenticity to the fraud.

If the victim is sufficiently duped by this elaborate ruse, he or she returns home unharmed and the scam continues. However, if the victim decides not to pay additional payments and/or sign a contract, the victim will be subjected to threats and physical abuse until he or she arranges for more payments.

Neutral Country

If the victim is reluctant to go to Nigeria, the criminals will suggest a neutral country where a team is already established. The victim will be requested to provide them with his or her flight itinerary and the name of the hotel he or she will be staying. This is the first step in controlling the victim's movements during the scam.

Operating under the guise that the business contacts are in Nigeria, the criminals will have the victim send roundtrip airline tickets from Lagos to the neutral country for face-to-face meetings with business contacts. The victim is also requested to reserve hotel rooms in his or her name for the contacts. The hotel rooms are never in the same hotel as the victim's.⁴ The criminals will cash the airline tickets, and use the hotel rooms, which are reserved under the name of a legitimate business person, or his or her company, in other scams or sell to another AFF criminals.

Meetings will be setup in areas of the city unfamiliar to the victim. To keep the victim off balance and allow the criminals time to conduct countersurveillance, the criminals will schedule and cancel a number of meetings with the victim.

Whether the victim decides not to pursue the "deal" or at some point during a scam, the victim stops paying, the criminals will not walk away from the victim. They will attempt to reconsumate the fraud using various ruses. The AFF criminals might pose as Nigerian Government officials attempting to get the victim's money back or try to convince the victim that they are the legitimate government officials and the other men he or she dealt with were frauds. Revictimization will be perpetrated either by the original criminals, or sold to another AFF team to operate.



Advance Fee Fraud: Themes and Variations

All AFF proposals share a common thread. The proposals are unsolicited, emphasize the urgency and confidentiality of the deal, and require the victim to pay various government and legal fees and taxes before receiving what turns out to be nonexistent money.

Below are examples of some of the more common forms of Advance Fee Fraud.

Transfer of Money From Over-Invoiced Contracts

About 90 percent of AFF are over-invoiced contract scams. The scam involves an offer to transfer large sums of money into an overseas bank account owned by a foreign company. The money comes from over-invoiced contracts from a Nigerian company or one of the Nigerian Government ministries (that is, Central Bank of Nigeria, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation). The author of the letter claims to be a government or bank official who is willing to pay the victim a generous commission of up to 30 percent for assisting in the transfer of the funds. Initially, the victim is asked to provide company letterhead and bank information to initiate the transfer of funds. The victim soon finds out that he or she is required to pay various “transaction fees” before the money can be released. The victim can be strung along for months or years paying various fees and taxes before realizing that the money does not exist.

PROJECTS COSTS CONSULTANTS

QUANTITY SURVEYORS, CONSTRUCTION COST CONSULTANTS & PROJECT MANAGERS

OFFICE: NO.160 KOLAWOLE STREET, SHOMOLU, LAGOS-NIGERIA

TEL: 2341-824153, FAX:234-1-4978114

OUR REF: PCC/BE/O1 _____ YOUR REF: _____ DATE: 28/12/95 _____
ATTN: THE PRESIDENT/CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Dear Sir,

REQUEST FOR URGENT BUSINESS EXECUTION

We are writing based on the information about you and your firm we gathered from the foreign office of Nigerian Chamber of Commerce. We write with absolute confidence in the legality of our firm and that of you and your firm. Basically, the business we are about to introduce is based on trust and real confidence which we believe can exist between us.

For your introduction, we are a small but very influential firm of quality surveyors, construction costs consultants and project managers who have been involved in the planning and execution of a number of projects for the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) which were executed by foreign contractors. Most of these contracts were deliberately over-measured and over-invoiced at their planning stages. These projects have been commissioned and the contractors paid their rightful dues leaving the over-invoiced sums owed them by the Corporation.

The military Government of Nigeria is part of an effort to win international support has directed that we examine these contracts and recommend all outstanding debts due all foreign contractors for payment. As consulting quantity surveyors on these projects, we and our colleagues at the corporation were able to discover these over-invoicing and over-management. At the end of this exercise, we are left with huge sums of money at the moment in a suspense account of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) resulting from the initial over invoice costs. We are therefore introducing to you one of these contracts where the sum of US\$35M (Thirty Five Million U.S. Dollars) was over-measured and over-invoiced. We now seek the assistance of a trusted foreign company in order to process, claim and remit these funds into a nominated account as debt owed your company. In order to accomplish this therefore we shall require from you the following:

- i) A letter of trust and confidence to attest that we can trust and rely on you.
- ii) Three (3) copies of your company or any other company letter head and proforma invoice duly stamped and signed below with which you want us to process the claim.
- iii) Particulars of the bank account where you wish the funds to be transferred into.

You are expected to send these to me via my fax number **234-1-4978114**.

During our deliberations, we resolve that my firm and my colleagues shall take 60% of the funds while 30% shall be given to you for your assistance and the remaining 10% shall be used to off-set all expenses that may be incurred by both parties during the course of executing the business. You are therefore advised to keep records of all your expenses in the course of executing the business.

If this business interest you, please reply only by fax message so that we provide more details. While trying to reach us either by fax or phone, please dial direct. Do not go through the international operator in view of the confidential **NATURE OF THE BUSINESS**.

Please trust with utmost confidence and urgency as we hope to hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully,
for: PROJECTS COSTS CONSULTANTS
MR. FELIX OBI (PRINCIPAL PARTNER)

Contract Fraud (C.O.D. of Goods and Services)

This fraud is sometimes referred to as “trade default” and targets primarily small companies with little export experience. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, “Twenty-five percent of reported fraudulent business solicitations from Nigeria involve large orders for products of U.S. companies.”

The targeted company receives an order from a Nigerian company and a bank draft for items to be shipped via air freight. The Nigerian company will attempt to solicit a sample of the product and/or introductory price under the guise of planning to introduce the product into Nigeria. The Nigerian company will try to convince the targeted company that registration, import, and other fees are required to bring the product into Nigeria.⁵ They will do this by sending the targeted company documentation from real or fictitious law firms.

The Nigerian company will usually place a number of small orders (less than \$10,000) with the targeted company, paying with legitimate bank drafts. This is to develop a business relationship with the targeted company and convince them that they have established an export opportunity and a new distribution system in Nigeria. The U.S. Commerce Department cautions American businesses whenever overseas bank drafts are used as payment by Nigerian companies or individuals. “While there is a possibility that such a draft could be legitimate, it is far safer to request payment in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit. The letter of credit should be confirmed by a reputable and known financial institution.”

The targeted company will then receive an urgent letter indicating that the Nigerian company was just awarded a lucrative contract with the Nigerian Government. The targeted company is requested to immediately send a large shipment of their product. A bank draft is included with the letter. The shipment is sent, and the targeted company learns too late that the bank draft is fraudulent, the goods are not recoverable, and the Nigerian company does not exist.





roundworld promotion & coy.

74 Iga-Iduganran Street (Registered in Nigeria)
Isale-Eko, Lagos
Nigeria

SPECIALITIES:

- IMPORTER,
- EXPORTER,
- MARKET PROMOTION & PUBLICITY.
- PRESS/SCREEN PRINTING SERVICES.
- DESIGNER,
- STATIONERY SUPPLIER &
- GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

Our Ref: RPA/092/96 Your Ref: _____ Date: 9th JULY, 1996

Our FAX NO:234-1-5450026-ATTN:FDS 044

MESSRS: [REDACTED] " TAKE PRIORITY ACTION "

DEAR SIRs,

RE: SUPPLIES OF COMPUTER SPARE PARTS – IBM COMPARTIBLE PARTS

WE HAVE BEEN CUTTING STEPS CONTINEOUSLY TRYING TO GET THE NAME OF THE ADDRESS OF A RELIABLE EXPORTERS OF THE ABOVE FROM YOUR COUNTRY WHICH WE ARE FORTUNATE TO OBTAIN THROUGH A GOOD SAMARITAN AS A RELIABLE AND HONEST PARTY TO CONTACT FOR REGULAR SUPPLIES OF SAME AND SHALL APPRECIATE YOUR EVERY POSSIBLE CO-OPERATION ON THIS FIELD.

FIRSTLY, WE ARE COMPELLED AS TO DRAW YOUR KIND ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT WE ARE ALSO REGISTERED AS A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY, WHOSE ACTIVITIES INVOLVE IMPORTS/ EXPORTS FOR MANY YEARS, ESPECIALLY ON ELECTRONICS ITEMS AND SHALL APPRECIATE YOUR EARLY RESPONSE TO THIS FRUITFUL NEGOTIATIONS.

AT THIS RATE, WE FEEL FREE AS TO ENCLOSE HEREWITH, THE FOREIGN BANK DRAFT ISSUED TO US BY OUR FOREIGN FINANCING HOUSE IN AN EQUIVALENT TO THE LOCAL CURRENCY DEPOSIT WE HAVE HAD WITH THEM, TO ENABLE YOU ARRANGE SHIPMENT OF THIS ORDER ON C&F LAGOS BY AIR PARCEL POST OR THROUGH ANY COURIER TO US JUST FOR PROMOTIONAL PURPOSE AT THE FORTHCOMING TRADE FAIR. THIS DRAFT IS TO BE ENTERTAINED INTO YOUR A/ C., BY WAY OF T/T ON ACCOMPANY THIS DRAFT WITH COPIES OF THE DISPATCH DOCUMENTS AS THE COUNTER BANK WILL TAKE DOWN THE RECORD OF PURPOSE OF RELEASING FUNDS INTO YOUR ACCOUNT. PLEASE COOPERATE, AND WE ARE PLANNING TO SEND OUR IMPORTS MANAGER OVERTHERE IN THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 1996.

YOU WILL KINDLY SEND US A FAX DETAILING US ITEMS TO BE INVOLVE ON THE SHIPMENTS TO US AND POSSIBLY FULL DETAILS OF SHIPMENT OF THIS SAMPLE COLLECTIONS ETC., TO ENABLE US FOLLOW UP ACCORDINGLY.

IT IS THE DESIRE OF THIS HOUSE AS TO BE YOUR SOLE AGENT, SINCE WE ARE PRESENTLY OPERATING THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE STATES WE HAVE IN NIGERIA AND WE HAVE NEGOTIATIONS FOR SUPPLIES OF THE UNDER MENTIONED ITEMS:

OUR BOOKINGS:— COMPUTER SPARE PARTS — IBM COMPATIBLE PARTS

SHIPMT: BY AIR PARCEL POST ON C&F LAGOS OR THROUGH ANY COURIER AND FAX US URGENTLY THE DISPATCH SLIP, ETC., AS TO ENABLE US FOLLOW UP.

REMARKS:— PLS LET US KNOW IF YOU ARE ABLE TO ACCEPT THE V.A.T CHECKS FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE CLEARANCE AT YOUR END, AWAITING YOUR ACCEPTANCE CONMFIRMATIONS AND BEST RGARDS TOWARDS YOUR EARLY RESPONSE.

YOURS FAITHFULLY,
DIRECTOR

(A.A.ABBEY) Esq.
ENCL:INTERN.BANK DRAFT:

USD 35,000,000.

Conversion of Hard Currency

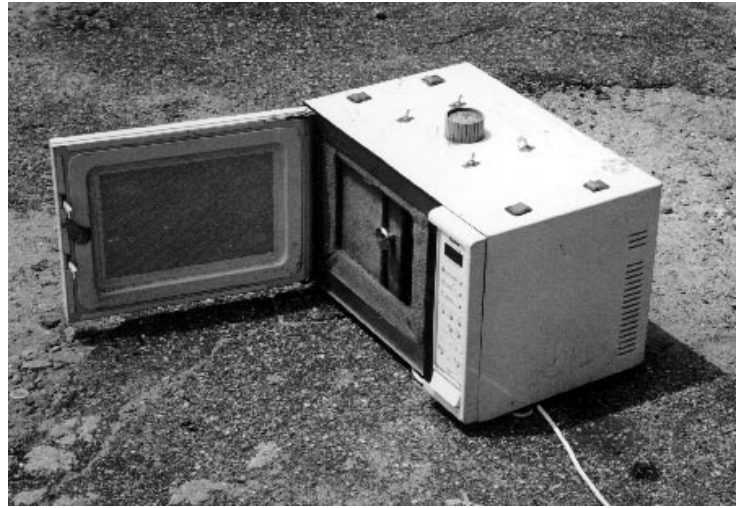
(Black Money)

This fraud is reminiscent of the 1930s flimflam whereby a con artist would put a piece of paper into a box and pull out a dollar bill from the other end. Today's version is called Conversion of Hard Money or "Wash-Wash." It is more sophisticated, but the results are the same.

The letter or fax entices the victim with a "chance of a lifetime" offer. Once the victim agrees to allow the criminals to obtain a visa for him or her and meet them in Nigeria, (or a neutral country) the following scenario occurs:

The victim will be shown a suitcase allegedly full of U.S. currency in \$100 bill denominations that was temporarily defaced with a black waxy material (vaseline and iodine) to mask their origin. The criminals tell the victim that there is \$40 million dollars in the suitcase. However, in order to remove this material, and restore the notes, the victim must purchase a special solution (commercial cleaning fluid) which is very expensive. The cost of the special solution ranges from \$50,000 to \$200,000. The victim will receive 40 percent of the \$40 million as his or her "commission."

In front of the victim, the criminals will wash one of the bills with the special solution restoring the U.S. currency to its original form. In an effort to assuage any doubts the victim may have, the victim will be asked to pick out another \$100 bill at random to be cleaned. Before the criminal



A microwave is sometimes used in the "wash-wash" scam. Instead of "solution" to remove the black material, criminals will use a microwave to melt the waxy material.

cleans the bill, the victim is momentarily distracted by one of the criminal's accomplices. During that split second, the criminal using slight of hand, will pull out a real \$100 bill from his sleeve, and clean it in front of the victim. The "treated" notes are given to the victim to take to a bank for verification.

In some instances, as a sign of good faith, the victim will be able to keep the suitcase for a short time, until the victim gets the money to buy the solution. To prevent the victim from opening the suitcase, the victim is told that exposure to the air will cause the black substance to ruin the money. Ammonia is placed inside the suitcase in the event the victim opens the suitcase giving the impression that the money is disintegrating.

The criminals walk away with the victim's money, and the victim ends up with a suitcase full of blank paper.

ENGR.KEBBI ZANNA
LAGOS, NIGERIA.
Telfax:234-1-885553, 5890814

Dear Sir,

BUSINESS PROPOSAL STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Your contacts came to me through a friend who does business between your country and Lagos. But I was careful not to reveal to him why I needed a competent foreign link in the person of your respected self.

In short,I am a trained Chemist specializing in currency chemistry and top official in the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Limited, in Lagos. During the last political dispensation in Nigeria (1992 to 1993), I was hired and involved in the chemical reconversion of otherwise genuine US Dollar Bills brought into Nigeria under hidden circumstances by powerful arab National who were out to give Financial Support to a moslem former presidential aspirant. And of course, this was with the tacit connivance of the then military government.

Now in the heat that followed the political crises and the subsequent cancellation of the elections, the former moslem presidential aspirant was clamped in jail and has since remained in detention, with the result that some package containing a little less than **(Forty-Million United States Dollars) \$40, Million U.S. Dollars**, awaiting reconversion, were abandoned in my care and custody.

As a result of the discreet nature of the reconversion exercise, which in fact is known only to me, I now have in my exclusive control about **(Forty-Million United States Dollars) \$40 Million U.S. Dollars** bills in cash, presently in the form of bonded retractable negative 267,03 mint stage, deliberately defaced to elude detection and facilitate their importation into Nigeria. The bills now require only chemical reconversion to grade A1 135 neon proof mint stage and subsequent movement outside of Nigeria for choice investments preferably in your country.

After successfully reconverting the Dollar bills by chemical process, and in the event that you accept to work with me, you shall entitled to 40% of this funds and another 5% shall be set aside for expenses, while the remainder of 55% shall be fore me and (2) subordinates.

What in essence, the whole exercise entail, is that you shall be required to make a brief visit to Nigeria to see things for yourself and be convinced beyond doubts, that the reconverted bills would really meet any scientific or commercial tests in terms of its genuiness, either in Nigeria, Europe or in the U.S.A.

Your visit will also avail us the opportunity of knowing each other and collectively plan workable strategies for smooth conclusion of this exercise. A letter of invitation to enable you obtain a visa to Nigeria will be faxed to you in due course.

Finally, it is important to keep the facts of this exercise to yourself, the way I have done all these months. You must agree with me, that we cannot blow up a chance of a lifetime because we cannot be discreet over a matter that would defintely work to our mutual satisfaction.

I await your urgent response, while I remain with best regards for your kind attention.

Sincerely yours,

ENGR. KEBBI ZANNA

Sale of Crude Oil at Below Market Prices

The victim is offered special crude oil allocations at lower than market rate. As in other AFF business proposals, the victim is required to pay special registration and licensing fees to acquire crude oil at below market price, only to find that the "sellers" have disappeared once the fees have been paid.⁶

On July 2, 1996, officers of the Nigerian Federal Investigative and Intelligence Bureau (FIIB), accompanied by U.S. Secret Service agents and the Regional Security Officer in observer roles, executed search warrants on 16 locations in Lagos, resulting in the arrest of 43 Nigerians. One of the addresses, No. 84 Okota Ire Akarai Estate, Isolo, was not Dyke Bourder Oil Services but the office of NJIMA Industries (below), a manufacturer of high quality paints. Two facsimile machines, and five telephone sets were seized along with fake letterhead from the Central Bank of Nigeria, and the Nigerian Petroleum Corporation. Also correspondence from victims worldwide and N390,000 (approximately US\$4,800.) believed to be proceeds from AFF scams.



DYKE BOURDER OIL SERVICES

(PETROLEUM CONSULTANTS)

NO 84, OKOTA ROAD, OKOTA-ISOLO, LAGOS, NIGERIA.

FAX: 234-1-525346, TEL: 234 - 1- 525972

OUR REF:..... YOUR REF:..... DATE 12th December, 1994

ATTN: THE PRESIDENT/C.E.O.

Dear Sir,

OFFER FOR SALE OF NIGERIA CRUDE OIL (SPOT LIFT).

QUALITY: Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) standard export.

TYPES: Nigerian Bonny Light, QUA IBOE Light, Penning Ton Light, Forcados Blend, Escravos Light, Bonny Medium, Brass Blend.

QUANTITY: Three Million Barrels only. From quarterly allocation of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

SPECIFICATION: FOR BONNY LIGHT	SPECIAL GRAVITY	084.98%
	API	37.00
	RSW	0.6% VOL
	WATER CONTENT	0.2%
	POUR POINT BELOW	4OF
	SULPHUR WT	0/14

PRICE:

The price per barrel shall be the arithmetic means of "Brent" dated quotation as reported on the plant meter wire as per average low/light of four (4) quotation (TWO) days before and Two days after discharge. The offer is less a gross discount of US\$5.00 (United States Five Dollars) per barrel. This amount minus the current export price of US\$17.50 per barrel.

Letter of intent to be submitted to the Honourable Minister of Petroleum and mineral Resources, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nol 7 Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria (i.e. contact through DYKE BOURDER OIL SERVICES).

These conditions are as follows:

1. Spot Life
2. Quantity: 1 million barrels per month for 12 months
3. OFFER ON F.O.B.
4. OFFER OFF "OPEC" records
5. Freight at buyer's account at US\$1.24 per barrel
6. Port charges, customs fees at buyers account at US\$250,000.00 per vessel of the Million barrel.
7. Buyer shall be the importer of records and shall be responsible for the paymnet of all customs duties or fees. Lay-time, demurrage, if any, at port of discharge shall bear all responsibilities in accordance with the terms and conditions of the charter party agreement.
8. Payment of letter of credit shall be made by the buyer after ten (10) days to discharge of the crude oil into shore and upon presentation of the shipping documents to the buyer's bank.
9. VAT (Value Added Tax).

I do hope this will mark the

Thanks for your cooperati

I.C. Okwe
Chairman,





JETAG PROJECTS W.A. LTD

BRIG. GEN. BRIGHTH ONYE (RTD)
PLOT 3 FASHADE CLOSE
OREGUN
IKEJA - LAGOS

ATTENTION: [REDACTED]

18th October 1994

SIR,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EARLY REPLY, AS I MENTIONED TO YOU OVER THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION, I USED MY COMPANY JETAG PROJECTS W.A. LETD AS A RETIRED SENIOR ARMY OFFICER TO FRONT FOR MY FORMER COLLEAGUES IN VARIOUS BUSINESSES.

I WISH TO INFORM YOU AT THIS STAGE THAT I HAVE SUCCEEDED IN THIS RESPECT DUE TO THE CONFIDENCE PROPOSED ON ME BY THE MENTIONED. THE ARMY IS NOT VERY POPULAR HERE IN NIGERIA AND MY CLIENTS ARE EITHER BUYING PROPERTIES ABROAD OR DEPOSITING MONEY INTO ACCOUNTS OVERSEAS.

IT IS THEREFORE GOING TO BE VERY INTERESTING AND PROFITABLE IF YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO MAINTAIN ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY OVER ANY TRANSACTION CARRIED OUT BY MY CLIENTS. MY CLIENTS NAME WILL NOT BE GIVEN TO YOU FOR NOW AND YOU CAN ONLY SEE THEM WHEN WE HAVE CONCLUDED AND FINALIZED THE TRANSACTION (PAYMENT STAGE).

AS I AM WRITING THIS REPLY, YOUR SECRETARY FAXED ME MORE LITERATURES WHICH I DON'T THINK WILL EITHER INTEREST MY CLIENT OR HAVE ANY MEANING TO THE BUSINESS AT HAND.

WHAT RATHER I THINK MY CLIENT WANT TO SEE IS (1) COLOUR PICTURE OF VARIOUS ELEVATIONS OF A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING IN FLORIDA THAT CAN HOUSE MY CLIENT HIS 3 WIVES AND 14 CHILDREN.

PICTURES OF A PROPOSED HOUSE THAT WILL BE CONVERTED TO A 20 ROOMS MOTEL TO SERVE MOST NIGERIAN DIGNITORIES WHEN EVER THEY ARE IN USA.

THIS IS TO HAVE SWIMMING POOL HEALTH CLUB LAWN TENNIS ETC. THE ABOVE SHOULD SECRETLY BE ARRANGED AND POSTED TO ME BY THE COURIER SERVICE IMMEDIATELY FOR DISCUSSION WITH MY CLIENT. THE FINANCIAL PRICE SHOULD BE STATED WHICH WILL MAKE PROVISION FOR 10% COMMISSION FOR MY COMPANY AND YOUR COMMISSION INCLUSIVE.

I LOOK FORWARD TO IMMEDIATE ACTION.

Purchase of Real Estate

This fraud involves an offer to purchase real estate using the services of a real estate broker or a "well established" business executive.

Once a home is located, the broker or person acting on behalf of the home buyer is required to pay certain fees to complete the transaction in return for receiving a normal commission.



A homeowner in Lagos, Nigeria, has placed a warning to prevent real estate fraud.

Disbursement of Money From Wills

In this variant of the money transfer fraud, charities, religious groups, universities, and nonprofit organizations receive a letter or fax from a mysterious benefactor interested in the group's cause and wishing to make a sizable contribution. Before the contribution can be released, the recipient must first pay an inheritance tax or various government fees and taxes. The victim also may be requested to travel to Nigeria and/or a bordering country to collect the "gift."



UBA, ADE, USMAN & CO.
(EZU-OGALI CHAMBERS)

BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS AND NOTARY PUBLIC

**No. 9 Apo Palace Way
Ago-Okota-Isolo
Lagos-Nigeria**

Tel/Fax: 234-1-4528037

Date: 6th June 1996

Our Ref: UAU/EG/AD/96/06/06

Your Ref:.....

ATTN:

Dear Sir,

RE: TESTAMENTARY BEQUEST OF LADY KOKI KAWASHIMA ADETOLA TO

[REDACTED]

We hereby acknowledge the receipt of your fax dated 06-06-96. We are satisfied with your proof of identity.

Based on the Will of Late Lady Kiko Kawashima Adetola, she bequeathed to [REDACTED] the sum of \$250,000.00 U.S. Dollars.

We are making rapid progress with respect to the grant of probate and we shall inform you how far we have gone in our next correspondence.

Equally, we shall send to you in our next correspondence, an extract of the Will of the Late Lady Kawashima Adetola for your records.

In all, our sacrosanct duty remains the execution of the testamentary wishes of the deceased testator by ensuring that all gifts made in the Will is passed to the intended beneficiaries eventually.

Please acknowledge receipt of this letter immediately.

Kind regards,

DR. AHMED USMAN
(Managing Partner)

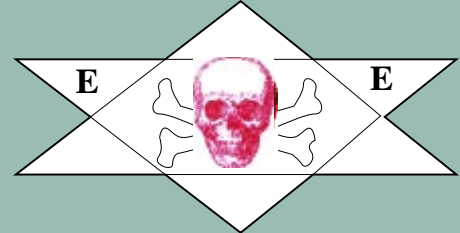
Threat Scam (Extortion)

This type of AFF is not common, and is seen primarily in Europe. It threatens the life of the recipient of the letter or fax unless funds are deposited in a certain bank on a specific day. There is no evidence that this fraud has been carried out.

EXECUTION! EXECUTION!! EXECUTION!!! **NATIONAL CORPORATION HEADQUARTERS LAGOS**

Bankers

Midland Bank, central London
Riyald National Bank, Saudi Arabia
Nordic Banking Group, Holand
Change Banking Inc. Group, Hong Kong
Chemical Bank Inc. Texas
Chase Manhattan Bank, New York
United bank for Africa, Lagos
APN Amro Bank Geneva



Your Ref: _____ Our Ref: JANSO/0587/52AB _____ Date 15-11-94 _____

PRIVACY

ATTN: [REDACTED]

We wish to introduce our company/ourselves as a subsidiary of INTERNATIONAL ASSASINATORS AND WORLD SECURITY ORGANZATIONS, with branches in one hundred and two (102) countries.

We have received a fax message our World Headquarters, New York, this morning to inform you to produce a mandatory sum of US\$35,000.00 (THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND UNITED STATES DOLLARS) only, into our account given below in Switzerland within Ninety Six hours (96), alternatively, you will kidnapped and forced to commit suicide during the period of our on-coming anniversary of fifty years.

APM AMRO BANK
12 QUAI GENERA GUISAN
1212 Geneva 3
A/C NO. 8270LB (L.N.SIADU)
SWITZERLAND

CAUTION

1. Fax immediately to this office, the payment slip, confirming the payment an to enable us reconcile with our files and deploy our men already monitoring you.
2. We will as well waste no time to carry our operations, if we discover that this contract is disclosed to any second party including the following:-
 - (a) Police
 - (b) Relation and
 - (C)Friends
3. We guarantee your safety locally and internationally, on the completion of this contract and will not hesitate to disclose our men in your country to you and as well render our service if needed or on request.

We seek your urgent co-operation, for it is not our wish to get you eliminated.

PRINCE (DR) BVANO H. JIMOH
SECRETARY

Clearinghouse

The newest twist in AFF has Nigerian and non-Nigerian criminals living outside of Nigeria claiming to be a clearinghouse or venture capital organization for the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).⁷ In essence, clearinghouses are noninterested third parties setup by the criminals to provide payment instructions allegedly from the CBN to the victim. Clearinghouses also lend credibility to the AFF scam by alleviating any doubts the victim may have in dealing with a Nigerian bank. It is for this reason that a number of fraudulent clearinghouses have been setup in the United States.

A clearinghouse will not be setup in the same country as the country where victim resides. This makes it harder for the victim to verify the legitimacy of the clearinghouse.

The clearinghouse will either launder the proceeds from AFF or funnel its proceeds to the criminals who in turn deposit it into bank accounts in those world financial centers (Geneva, New York, London) whose strict banking laws limit police access to its records. From these bank accounts, the money is transferred to a corresponding bank in Lagos. Once the money hits Lagos, it is almost impossible to trace. Nigerian criminals in general do not sit on their money. AFF criminals will convert the money into consumable goods. They will buy expensive cars (via structured payment, lease plan, or steal them), appliances, or household goods (for example, heavy generators) and ship them back to Nigeria to sell. They will invest the profits in other ventures—including narcotics—and ship it back to the United States or Europe.



The U.S. Government Response

The U.S. Government is taking a multipronged approach to the problem of Nigerian criminal activity. It is being actively pursued on the law enforcement and foreign policy fronts.

Senior-level meetings chaired by the Department of State, and attended by members of the U.S. intelligence community and U.S. law enforcement officials, including the U.S. Attorney General have been ongoing concerning Nigerian criminal activity. A U.S. Government working plan has been drafted to combat this issue, and a number of recommendations have been implemented.

Internationally, in 1996, the Political Eight (G-7 plus Russia) met in Lyon, France, to coordinate enforcement efforts against transnational crime. One outcome of the meeting was the formation of a subgroup dedicated to combatting Nigerian criminal activity.

The United States and 38 other governments have raised the issue of Nigerian criminal activity with the Nigerian Government to impress upon them the serious nature of this problem.

The best defense against Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud is public awareness. To receive additional information on Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud, contact the Financial Crimes Division of the U.S. Secret Service (see page 50) for assistance. District Offices of the U.S. Department of Commerce (see pages 51-53) and the Commercial Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Lagos, Nigeria, also stand ready to assist any U.S. firm

seeking information about a particular Nigerian company or the Nigerian business climate in general.

Update

On March 31, 1998, members of the Nigerian police fraud unit, or 419, and the local Interpol, accompanied by U.S. Secret Service agents and Regional Security Officers carried out raids on seven homes and businesses in Lagos. The homes and businesses were being used to carry out Advance Fee Fraud. (The Nigerian police were acting on information provided to them by the U.S. Secret Service.) A total of 55 arrests were made as a result of 25 search warrants. Telephones, fax machines, and documents used in 419 frauds were also seized.

Determining the Legitimacy of Nigerian Business Proposals and Partners

The following was prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

If a proposed transaction looks legitimate, and a U.S. company is interested in pursuing it, the company is strongly urged to check the bona fides of the Nigerian company before proceeding. However, the legitimacy of a firm is not necessarily a sufficient indication that all solicitations using the firm's name are legitimate. The transaction itself must be verified, because many scams use legitimate company names or names of Nigerian Government agencies in fraudulent solicitations. Until the specific proposal is verified, the U.S. company should not send out letterhead, invoices, bank account information, or product samples.

Domestically, this can be done by requesting a *World Traders Data Report* (WTDR) through a U.S. Department of Commerce District Office.

These reports, which are prepared by the commercial staff at the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, provide the following types of information: types of organizations, year established, principal owners, size, product line, and financial and trade references. Due to specificity and detailed nature of the service, the WTDR takes 4–6 weeks and costs \$100. Overseas, the U.S. company representative should contact American Citizen Services Unit of the Consular Section at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

Remember, it is important to verify both the transaction and the company. Through prudent skepticism, American companies can avoid falling victim to individuals involved in fraudulent business activities, yet continue to take advantage of lucrative business opportunities with legitimate companies.

Reporting a Fraudulent Business Proposal

In the United States contact:

U.S. Secret Service
Financial Crimes Division
1800 G Street, NW
Room 942
Washington, DC 20223

Phone: (202) 435-5850
Fax: (202) 435-5031



Or contact the local U.S. Secret Service Field Office.

Overseas, contact the Foreign Commercial Service (FCS) at the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If there is no FCS office, contact the American Citizens Services Unit of the Consular Section or the Regional Security Office.



**The
COMMERCIAL
SERVICE**

**United States of America
Department of Commerce**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION
U.S. AND FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE
EXPORT ASSISTANCE CENTER DIRECTORY
August 15, 1996**

Lauri J. Fitz-Pegado
Assistant Secretary and Director General
U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230
PHONE: (202) 482-5777, FAX: (202) 482-5013

Vacant
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230
PHONE: (202) 482-0725, FAX: (202) 482-5013

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Sacramento - Brooks Ohlson, Director
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PHONE: (916) 498-5155, FAX: (916) 498-5923

Orlando - Lou Nixon, Director
Eola Park Centre, Suite 1270
200 E. Robinson Street, ZIP: 32801
PHONE: (407) 648-6235, FAX: (407) 648-6756

ALASKA

Anchorage - Charles Becker, Director
World Trade Center, 421W. First St.: ZIP: 99501
PHONE: (907) 271-6237, FAX: (907) 271-6242

San Diego - Mary Delmege, Director
6363 Greenwich Drive, Suite 230, ZIP: 92122
PHONE: (619) 557-5395, FAX: (619) 557-6176

Tallahassee - Michael Higgins, Director
107 West Gaines Street, Room G-01, ZIP: 32399
PHONE: (904) 488-6469, FAX: (904) 487-1407

ARIZONA

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PHONE: (602) 640-2513, FAX: (602) 640-2518

San Francisco - Vacant, Director
250 Montgomery St., 14th Floor, ZIP: 94104
PHONE: (415) 705-2300, FAX: (415) 705-2297

GEORGIA

ATLANTA - Tapan Banerjee, Director
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Santa Clara - James S. Kennedy, Director
5201 Great American Pkwy., #456, ZIP: 95054
PHONE: (408) 970-4610, FAX: (408) 970-4618

Savannah - Barbara Prieto, Director
120 Barnard Street, Room A-107, ZIP: 31401
PHONE: (912) 652-4204, FAX: (912) 652-4241

CALIFORNIA

LONG BEACH - Joe Sachs, Director
US&FCS Director - Steve Morrison
One World Trade Center, Ste. 1670, ZIP: 90831
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COLORADO

DENVER - Ann Tull, Director
1625 Broadway, Suite 680, ZIP: 80202
PHONE: (303) 844-6622, FAX: (303) 844-5651

HAWAII

Honolulu - George B. Dolan, Director
P.O. Box 50026
300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 4106, ZIP: 96850
PHONE: (808) 541-1782, FAX: (808) 541-3435

Inland Empire - Fred Latuperissa, Director
2940 Inland Empire Blvd, Suite 121
Ontario ZIP: 91764
PHONE: (909) 466-4134, FAX: (909) 466-4140

CONNECTICUT

Middletown - Carl Jacobsen, Director
213 Court Street, Suite 903 ZIP: 06457-3346
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11000 Wilshire Blvd., Room 9200, ZIP: 90024
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5600 Northwest 36th St., Ste. 617, ZIP: 33166
PHONE: (305) 526-7425, FAX: (305) 526-7434

Orange County - Paul Tambakis, Director
3300 Irvine Avenue, Suite 305
Newport Beach ZIP: 92660
PHONE: (714) 660-1688, FAX: (714) 660-8039

Clearwater - George Martinez, Director
128 North Osceola Avenue, ZIP: 34615
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IDAHO

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700 West State Street, 2nd Floor, ZIP: 83720
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CHICAGO - Brad Dunderman, Director
Stanley Bokota, US&FCS Director
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PHONE: (312) 353-8040, FAX: (312) 353-8098

Rockford - James Mied, Director
P.O. Box 1747
515 North Court Street, ZIP: 61110
PHONE: (815) 987-8123, FAX: (815) 963-7943

Wheaton - Roy Dube, Director
c/o Illinois Institute of Technology
201 East Loop Road, ZIP: 60187
PHONE: (312) 353-4332, FAX: (312) 353-4336

INDIANA

Indianapolis - Dan Swart, Director
11405 N. Pennsylvania Street, Suite 106
Carmel, IN. 46032
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IOWA

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210 Walnut Street, Room 817, ZIP 50309
PHONE: (515) 284-4222, FAX: (515) 284-4021

KANSAS

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151 N. Volutsia, ZIP: 67214
PHONE: (316) 269-6160, FAX: (316) 683-7326

KENTUCKY

Louisville - John Autin, Director
601 W. Broadway, Room 634B, Zip: 40202
PHONE: (502) 582-5066, FAX: (502) 582-6573

Somerset - Sara Melton, Director
2292 S. Highway 27, Suite 320, ZIP 42501
PHONE: (606) 677-6160, FAX (606) 677-6161

MISSISSIPPI

Jackson - Mark E. Spinney, Director
201 W. Capitol Street, Suite 310, ZIP: 39201
PHONE: (601) 965-4388, FAX: (601) 965-5386

MISSOURI

ST. LOUIS - Sandra Gerley, Director
8182 Maryland Avenue, Suite 303, ZIP: 63105
PHONE: (314) 425-3302, FAX: (314) 425-3381

Kansas City - Rick Villalobos, Director
601 East 12th Street, Room 635, ZIP: 64106
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Reno - James K. Hellwig, Director
1755 East Plumb Lane, Suite 152, ZIP: 89502
PHONE: (702) 784-5203, FAX: (702) 784-5343

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Portsmouth - Susan Berry, Director
601 Spaulding Turnpike, Suite 29, ZIP: 03801
PHONE: (603) 334-6074, FAX: (603) 334-6110

NEW JERSEY

Trenton - Rod Stuart, Director
3131 Princeton Pike, Bldg. #6
Suite 100, ZIP 08648
PHONE: (609) 989-2100, FAX: (609) 989-2395

Newark - Tom Rosengren, Director
Gateway One, 9th Floor, ZIP: 07102
PHONE: (201) 645-4682. FAX: (201) 645-4783

NEW MEXICO

Santa Fe - Sandra Necessary, Director
c/o New Mexico Dept. of Economic Develop.
P.O. Box 20003, Zip 87504-5003
PHONE: (505) 827-0350, FAX: (505) 827-0263

NEW YORK

NEW YORK - Joel W. Barkan, Acting Director
6 World Trade Center, Rm. 635, 10048
PHONE: (212) 264-0635, FAX: (212) 264-1356

Buffalo - George Buchanan, Director
111 West Huron Street, Rm 1304, ZIP: 14202
PHONE: (716) 551-4191, FAX: (716) 551-5290

Rochester - James C. Mariano, Director
111 East Avenue, Suite 220, ZIP: 14604
PHONE: (716) 263-6480, FAX: (716) 325-6505

Harlem - K.L. Fredericks, Director
163 West 125th Street, Suite 904, ZIP 10027
New York, New York ZIP: 10027
PHONE: (212) 860-6200, FAX (212) 860-6203

Long Island - George Soteros, Director
1550 Franklin Avenue, Room 207
Mineola, ZIP 11501
PHONE: (516) 739-1765, FAX:(516) 571-4161

Westchester - Bill Spittler, Director
707 West Chester Ave, White Plains ZIP 10604
PHONE: (914)682-6218, FAX:(914)682-6698

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400 West Market Street, Suite 400, ZIP: 27401
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PHONE: (513) 684-2944, FAX: (513) 684-3227

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Moosic ZIP: 18507
PHONE: (717) 969-2530, FAX: (717) 969-2539

Pittsburgh - Ted Arnn, Director
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81 Mary Street, ZIP: 29403
PHONE: (803) 727-4051, FAX: (803) 727-4052

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Park Central Office Park, Bldg. 1, Ste. 109
555 N. Pleasantburg Drive, Greenville. SC:
29607
PHONE: (864) 271-1976, FAX: (864) 271-4171

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Augustana College, 2001 S. Summit Avenue,
Room SS-29A Sioux Falls, ZIP: 57197
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PHONE: (615) 736-5161, FAX: (615) 736-2454

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PHONE: (901) 544-4137, FAX: (901) 544-3646

Knoxville - David McNeill, Director
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PHONE: (423) 545-4637, FAX: (615) 545-4435

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DALLAS - Bill Schrage, Director
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PHONE: (214) 767-0542, FAX: (214) 767-8240

Austin - Karen Parker, Director
1700 Congress, Ste 300R, 2nd floor, ZIP: 78701
P.O. Box 12728 Zip: 78711
PHONE: (512) 916-5939, FAX: (512) 916-5940

San Antonio - Mitchel Auerbach, Director
1222 N. Main, Suite 450, ZIP: 78212
PHONE: (210) 228-9878, FAX (210) 228-9874

Houston - James D. Cook, Director
500 Dallas, Suite 1160, ZIP: 77002
PHONE: (713) 718-3062, FAX: (713) 718-3060

UTAH

Salt Lake City - Stephen P. Smoot, Director
324 S. State Street, Suite 105, ZIP: 84111
PHONE: (801) 524-5116, FAX: (801) 524-5886

VERMONT

Montpelier - James Cox - Director
109 State Street, 4th Floor, ZIP: 05609
PHONE: (802) 828-4508, FAX: (802) 828-3258

VIRGINIA

Richmond - Philip A. Ouzts, Director
704 East Franklin Street, Suite 550, ZIP: 23219
PHONE: (804) 771-2246, FAX: (804) 771-2390

WASHINGTON

SEATTLE - Lisa Kjaer-Schade, Director
2001 6th Ave, Suite 650, ZIP: 98121
PHONE: (206) 553-5615, FAX: (206) 553-7253

Tri-Cities - Mark Weaver, Director
320 North Johnson Street, Suite 350
Kennewick, WA. 99336
PHONE: (509) 735-2751, FAX: (509)783-9385

WEST VIRGINIA

Charleston - W. Davis Coale, Jr., Director
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PHONE: (304) 347-5123, FAX: (304) 347-5408

Wheeling - Martha Butwin, Director
1310 Market Street, 2nd Floor, ZIP 26003
PHONE (304) 233-7472, FAX (304) 233-7492

WISCONSIN

Milwaukee - Paul D. Churchill, Director
517 E. Wisconsin Avenue, Room 596, ZIP: 53202
PHONE: (414) 297-3473, FAX: (414) 297-3470

WYOMING

Served by the Denver Export Assistance Center

REGIONAL OFFICES:

EASTERN REGION

Roger Fortner, Regional Director
World Trade Center, Ste 2450, 401 E. Pratt St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
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MID-EASTERN REGION

Gordon B. Thomas, Regional Director
36 East 7th Street, Suite 2025
Cincinnati, OH 45202
PHONE: (513) 684-2947, FAX: (513) 684-3200

MID-WESTERN REGION

Sandra Gerley, Acting Regional Director
8182 Maryland Avenue, Suite 1011
St. Louis, MO 63105
PHONE: (314) 425-3300, FAX: (314) 425-3375

WESTERN REGION

Keith Bovetti, Regional Director
250 Montgomery St., 14th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104
PHONE: (415) 705-2310, FAX: (415) 705-2299

Determining the Legitimacy of a Business Proposal

For help in determining the legitimacy of a business proposal, contact:

U.S. Department of Commerce
Office of Africa, Room 2037
Nigerian Desk Officer
Washington, DC 20230

Phone: (202) 482-5149

Fax: (202) 482-5198

To obtain marketing information on Nigeria and other countries:

All reports on the National Trade Data Bank can be accessed by CD-ROM disks in libraries or by subscribing for internet access. For more information, call 1-800-STAT-USA.

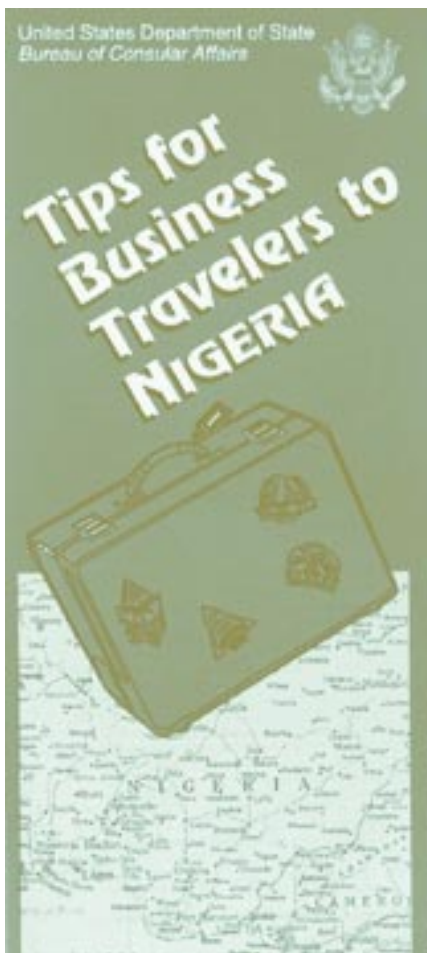
Before You Go

For information on travel conditions in Nigeria and other countries, contact the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs. The Bureau of Consular Affairs produces *Consular Information Sheets* on all countries. *Consular Information Sheets* provide warnings, country descriptions, entry requirements, as well as information on air travel safety, crime and criminal violence, commercial fraud, areas of instability, traffic safety and road conditions, medical facilities, photography restrictions, currency regulations, drug penalties, and the location of the U.S. Embassy. Request the *Consular Information Sheet* for Nigeria. The following information is excerpted from the latest *Information Sheet* for Nigeria dated November 25, 1996:

“Entry Requirements: A visa is required and must be obtained in advance; airport visas are not available. Promises of entry into Nigeria without a visa are credible indicators of a fraudulent commercial scheme in which the perpetrators seek to exploit the foreign traveler’s illegal presence in Nigeria with threats of extortion or bodily harm. U.S. citizens cannot legally depart Nigeria unless they can prove, by presenting their entry visas, they entered Nigeria legally. There is an airport departure tax. Entry information (and information on departure tax) may be obtained at the Embassy of the Republic of Nigeria, 2201 M Street, NW, in Washington, DC 20037, telephone (202) 822-1550, or at the Nigerian Consulate General in New York, telephone (212) 715-7200. Overseas, inquiries may be made at the nearest Nigerian embassy or consulate.

“Commercial Fraud: A major and continuing problem is the commercial scam or sting that targets foreigners, including many U.S. citizens. Such scams could involve U.S. citizens in illegal activity, resulting in extortion or bodily harm. The scams generally involve phony offers of either outright money transfers or lucrative sales or contracts with promises of large commissions or up-front payments. Alleged deals frequently invoke the authority of one or more ministries or offices of the Nigerian government and many even cite by name the support of a Nigerian government official. The apparent use in some scams of actual government stationery, seals, and offices is grounds for concern that some individual Nigerian officials may be involved in these activities. The ability of U.S. Embassy officers to extricate Americans from unlawful business deals is extremely limited. Nigerian police do not always inform the U.S. Embassy of an American in distress. The Department of Commerce has issued advisories to the U.S. Business community on doing business in Nigeria. Both the Department of Commerce and the U.S. Embassy in Lagos can provide business travelers with further details.”

For information on travel conditions in Nigeria and other countries, contact the U.S. Department of State, Overseas Citizens Services:



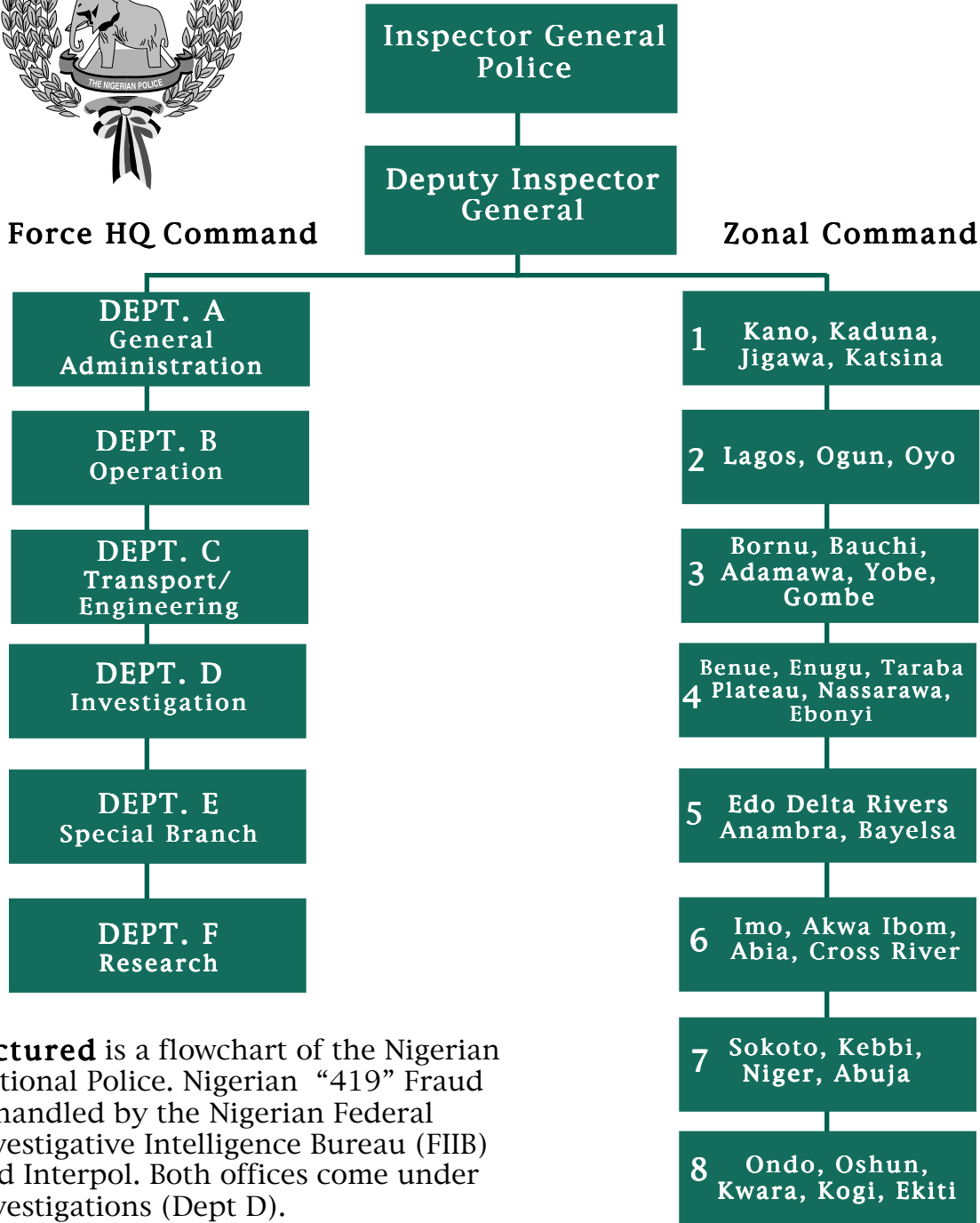
Recorded Information: (202) 647-5225
Automated Fax System: (202) 647-3000
Internet World Wide Web: <http://travel.state.gov>

The U.S. Department of State publishes a pamphlet entitled *Tips for Business Travelers to Nigeria*. To obtain a copy:

Automated Fax System: (202) 647-3000 (Code 1044)
Internet World Wide Web: <http://travel.state.gov>

Single copies are also available at no charge from the Office of American Citizens Services and Crisis Management, Room 4811, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-4818. Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

NEW NIGERIA POLICE ORGANIZATION CHART



Pictured is a flowchart of the Nigerian National Police. Nigerian “419” Fraud is handled by the Nigerian Federal Investigative Intelligence Bureau (FIIB) and Interpol. Both offices come under Investigations (Dept D).

Note: Each state is being commanded by a commissioner of police while departments have commissioners of police in charge of some sections.

Endnotes

¹The “419” penal law was revised and expanded with the issuance in April 1995, of Presidential Decree No.13 entitled Advance Fee Fraud and other Fraud Offenses Decree 1995.

²Nigerian law requires a valid visa for entry and departure. Airport visas are not issued and valid visas should only be obtained at a Nigerian diplomatic mission. U.S. citizens are encouraged to register at the U.S. Embassy in Lagos or U.S. Liaison Office in Abuja to obtain updated information on travel and security in Nigeria.

³On May 20, 1995, the U.S. Embassy in Lagos reported that James Breaux, an American businessman, was shot and killed in Surulere, Lagos. There are strong indications that Mr. Breaux, a resident of Switzerland, was lured to Nigeria by AFF criminals. **His U.S. passport indicated that he was admitted to Nigeria without a visa or entry stamp by immigration officials.**

⁴Surprisingly, nine out of ten victims comply with this request.

⁵The U.S. Commerce Department indicates that “. . . only if an American exporter sells to the Nigerian Government through an agent is there a registration fee requirement. When registration fees are legitimately connected to government contracts, they are clearly published by the ministries to which they are payable, and they do not exceed Naira 5,000 (approximately \$61 at N81=US\$1 as of June 1996).”

⁶The U.S. Embassy advises that all sales of Nigerian crude oil are made through the Crude Oil Marketing Division of the NNPC.

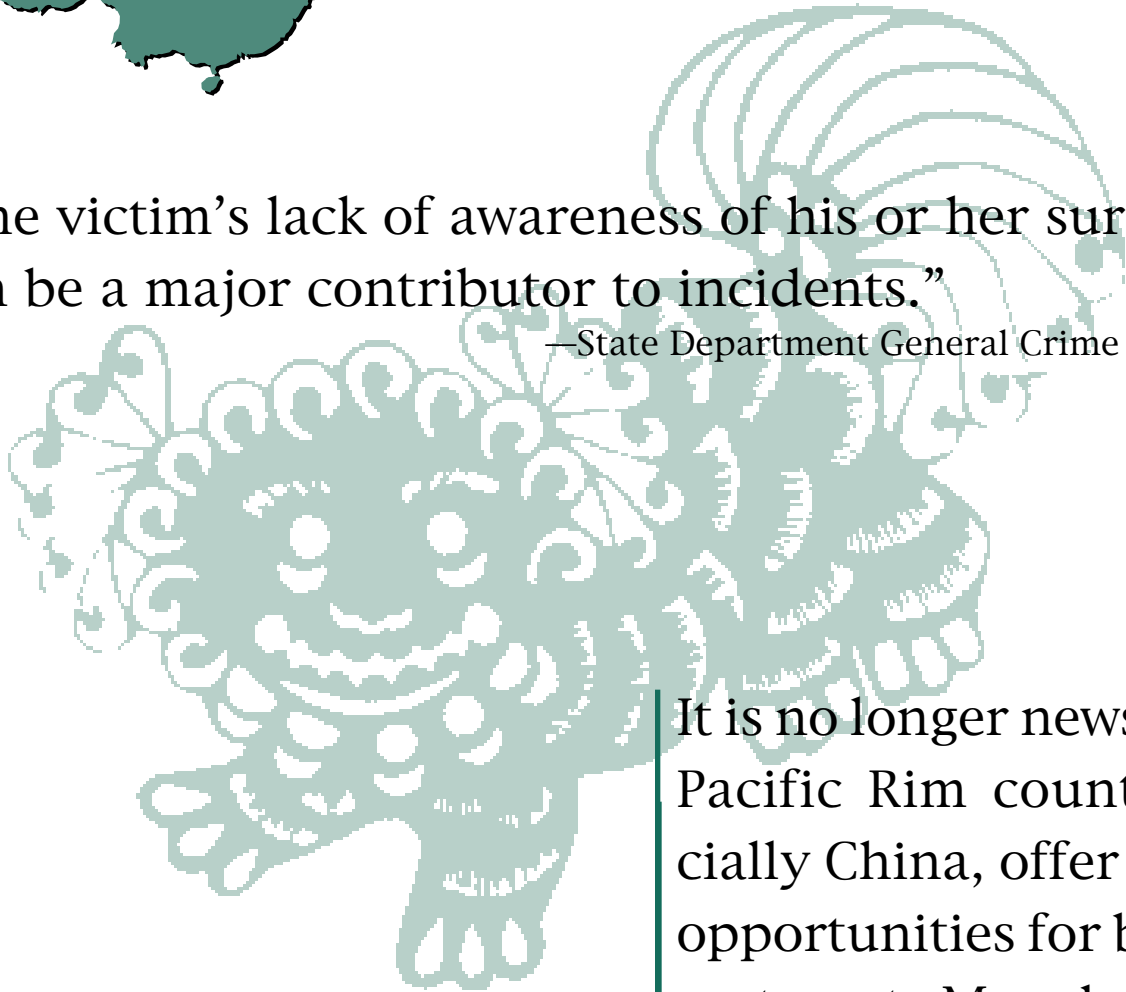
⁷The Central Bank of Nigeria does not have a clearinghouse, and, as with most legitimate banks in Nigeria, it goes through a corresponding bank in the United States or Europe.



emerging trends in transnational crime

“The victim’s lack of awareness of his or her surroundings can be a major contributor to incidents.”

—State Department General Crime Report on China



Crime in China

By
**Jim
Dunne**

Special thanks to Regional Security Officer Don Schurman in Beijing and Brent A. Barker in Shanghai.

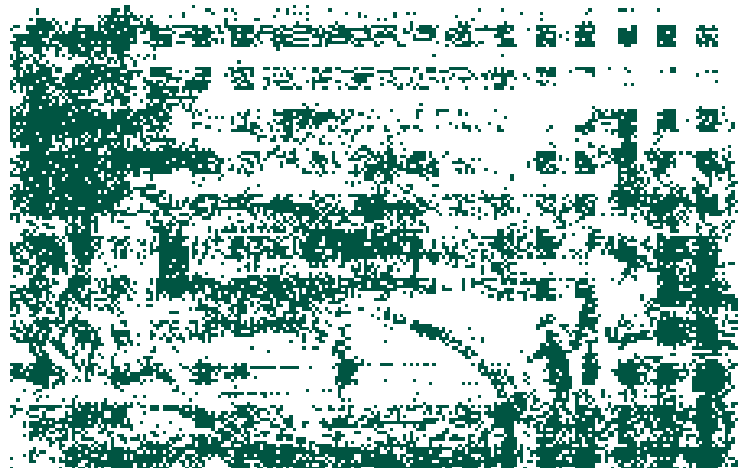
It is no longer news that many Pacific Rim countries, especially China, offer a wealth of opportunities for business investment. More business representatives are venturing into China’s cities and countryside to take advantage of that nation’s vast, untapped markets. China’s openness to economic activity from abroad has also encouraged a greater number of students and tourists to come and

spend time in the country historically known as “the sleeping giant.” What is news to many of the business people, students, and tourists who explore China is the rising rate of crime there. Many in the West do not realize that in tandem with economic reforms undertaken by China in the past two decades, criminal activity has increased substantially. As a result, too many Americans and other Westerners come to China unprepared for the possibility of a criminal encounter and some conclude their visits with a loss of property or even a loss of life.

With more Americans visiting China, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is recording a greater number of criminal encounters in which the victims are Americans or other Westerners. Crimes affecting Americans range from simple purse-snatching and pickpocketing to the more elabo-

rate schemes of organized gangs. While all criminal activity is of interest to the intelligence analysts of DS, crimes involving violence against persons or property receive the bulk of our attention. To a limited extent, we do monitor the growth of Asian organized crime, in so far as it creates a fertile climate for acts of criminal violence.

This brief article is not intended to be a comprehensive report of all criminal activity in China. It also does not endeavor to address every crime that visitors might encounter. Such reports might fill several volumes. Instead, this article aims chiefly to present an overview of the kinds of crimes Americans and others have encountered in China in recent years and to highlight possible trends these incidents might suggest. The incidents and trends themselves, of course, deserve commentary. After reviewing several criminal incidents, we will consider some possible causes for China’s rise in crime. For comparative purposes, we will briefly sketch the crime situations in a handful of other East Asian countries. Finally, we will present proposed steps toward preventing, avoiding or countering crime.



The Problem

China long has been and remains one of the safer places in the world to visit. In fact, Americans are less likely to experience crime in China than they are in many American cities. Crime rates are rising throughout China, but the vast majority of victims are native Chinese. In some respects, crime in China is assuming forms more commonly found in Western societies. In April 1997, for example, Shanghai's first case of serial murder reportedly alarmed many of the city's citizens. The problem is that, as crime rates climb and more expatriates arrive, they and their communities may be expected to experience more criminal activity as well. More crimes against foreigners in China are being reported. An analysis of these crimes reveals that the victims might have been particularly vulnerable because they had relaxed their normal precautions.

Here is a sample of crimes against foreigners that occurred in the past few years. A French tourist was found strangled on Mount Taishan. She had been traveling on her own for about a month. A German tourist was wounded by a knife on Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Police said the attacker was mentally ill. An Italian diplomat was found with his throat slashed in an expensive residential hotel complex in Beijing. As in most such crimes in China, it is likely none of the victims felt particularly threatened and probably took no extraordinary precautions to guard against a criminal attack.

A number of Westerners have been attacked in their hotel rooms. Two such attacks in 1996 received extensive media coverage and raised some alarms about the security of foreigners doing business in China. In one case, a British consultant working for a U.S. company in Shenzhen was found stabbed to death at his hotel.

Police suspected robbery was the motive as the victim's money, passport, and briefcase were missing from the room. In another case, a Chinese woman employed by a Western company's Beijing office was found killed in her room at a five-star hotel in Guangzhou. Further details were not disclosed and personal motives could not be ruled out in either case.

Unpleasant incidents encountered by foreigners in China are not limited to assaults and thefts and may not even be violent. Here are several unusual incidents experienced by Americans in China in 1995. In February, an American business woman said she had been lured to China from Hong Kong by a company director who invited her to a Chinese New Year holiday banquet. After the banquet, her host told her to immediately settle a large amount of outstanding payments for merchandise he had delivered. She proposed a payment schedule, which he rejected. As they discussed the dispute, Chinese security officials suddenly arrived to serve her court papers. She reluctantly surrendered her passport, which was confiscated by the authorities. In an unrelated incident later the same month, an American filed a report with Chinese officials concerning a large embezzlement by several Chinese employees of his firm. Shortly thereafter, he claimed to have been threatened by his business partners. In March, an American and her husband, investors in a Chinese cement factory, said they were prevented by workers from leaving the factory when they refused to authorize a general pay raise. The couple were allegedly beaten. According to their story, the police arrived but failed to secure the couple's freedom and left the scene. A local deputy mayor intervened and effected their release but did so only after the husband authorized the pay raise.

Labor-related encounters complicated by the action or inaction of law enforcement personnel continued in 1996. In March, an American joint venture in China attempted to transfer about 20 workers to a factory that belonged to its Chinese partner. Workers responded to the attempted transfer by rioting and threatening two American citizens working for the company. Police responded to the scene but made no effort to contain or control the rioting workers. In April, an American company chief was held against his will by workers who had been falsely told the chief would not pay them their salaries. The police eventually arrived, but it was not clear whether they were there to secure the American's release or simply to press him to solve the dispute with the workers. Finally, in May, an American company operating in China claimed to have experienced police harassment. Company heads believed the harassment resulted from the termination of a plant employee who had a relative on the local police force. The alleged harassment included unexplained thefts, policemen arriving in large groups to ask for money or food, and the detention of a Chinese employee. The employee reportedly was forced to watch the beating of another prisoner before he was released.

The growth of organized crime, which often involves the transactions of huge sums of money, is the issue which perhaps has most successfully commanded the attention of Western governments and business people. For years the United States has urged China to crack down on the illegal copying of compact disks (CDs) and to arrest CD pirates. Since December, 1996, when Chinese authorities stepped up efforts against CD pirates, they claim to have arrested more than 100 violators and

closed 28 underground factories, where each disk-making machine could copy 10,000 disks a day.

A survey of the available literature on organized crime in China reveals a wide range of activity. Illegal trading in stock and commodities markets has reportedly become a major source of economic crime. Other areas of organized criminal activity, much of it quite lucrative, include the theft of semiconductor chips, the pirating of software, and trademark counterfeiting. The counterfeiting of convertible currencies and credit cards also constitute a thriving enterprise. Such organized criminal activity certainly has its financial victims, but is generally nonviolent and normally is not the primary concern of professionals in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security. Nonetheless, organized crime can lead to violent incidents, sometimes involving confrontations between rival gangs and between gangs and law enforcement personnel. Without doubt, the prevalence of even nonviolent organized crime can create an environment that fosters violent crime.

Americans in China, of course, are also subject to the more common criminal acts faced by many expatriates. A review of State Department reporting on crime involving Americans in China in 1996 reveals a handful of wallet thefts and pickpocketing, a bicycle theft, a few attempted and actual break-ins of vehicles and residences, and some vandalism. While these offenses may seem petty and might make the threat from crime seem slight, remember that diplomatic personnel, along with some business representatives, tend to be the best-protected expatriates in most overseas locations. Some

criminal incidents are more noteworthy than others, however. In one locale, for example, two residential break-ins were followed by tampering with computer equipment found in the residence. In Shanghai, an American citizen was forced into a taxi cab at the railway station by two men. He was able to escape when the cab stopped at a traffic light. In Beijing, a teacher at the international school was robbed and beaten around noon in the vicinity of the school.

Americans and other Westerners, of course, are rarely singled out as targets of crime because of their nationality. In most cases, Americans and other Westerners are subject to crime because of their relative affluence and fall victim to criminal attacks for which relatively affluent Chinese might also be targeted. One attribute that makes Americans and other Westerners in China more vulnerable than their Chinese counterparts, however, is that they are often obviously on unfamiliar territory and often appear uncertain of their surroundings. In addition to being seen as wealthy, they may also be seen as “easy.”

China’s government has provided exhaustive statistical studies of the country’s rates of crime and the scale of the problem is often staggering. For perspective, remember that China is a country of 1.2 billion people. In the first 10 months of 1996, China’s courts handled 560,000 cases involving serious crimes, a rise of 0.9 percent over the same 1995 period. Major crimes reported in China in 1995 totaled more than 700,000 cases. China is said to have more than 380,000 drug addicts. In 1996, Chinese police arrested more than 110,000 people for drug-related crimes and solved more than 87,000 narcotics cases. Yunnan Province alone arrested more than 29,000 drug traffickers over a 4 1/2-year period.

In a recent 5-year period, China’s police addressed 677,000 cases of prostitution involving 1.34 billion people.

Leading the concerns about crime in China is the huge and growing issue of official corruption. Last year, according to an annual report by Chinese authorities, among the criminal suspects investigated were 3,622 personnel of “party and government leading bodies,” 2,134 personnel of administrative organs, and 3,303 personnel of economic management organs. These figures, according to the report, added up to 13,530, an increase of 3.5 percent over the previous year.



Why is Crime on the Rise?

“*To Get Rich Is Glorious*”—Deng Xiao Ping

Most China-watchers agree that the rise in crime of all kinds has coincided with the country's rapid growth as an economic power. China's leaders, who have been remarkably open about the country's problems with crime and corruption, might be the first to agree. For some who engage in criminal activity, the motive may be survival. In any developing society in which a few people manage to amass wealth, many of the “have nots” may be expected to target the “haves.” Also of significance in the growth of crime is the elevated role of opportunity. The economic opportunities afforded many Chinese by the government have opened the door to criminal opportunities, as well. Author Ian Buruma, writing on China for *The New York Times*, said, “The cynicism bred by years of Communist propaganda has created a perfect climate for graft and corruption.” Certainly, active underground markets for narcotics and weapons, which probably have been enhanced by China's economic liberalism, establish a fertile ground for a wide variety of criminal activity. China, of course, is often quick to blame foreign influence. Last summer, Ren Jianxin, President of China's Supreme People's Court, warned that “prostitution, drug addiction, drug trafficking, and other ugly social phenomena are spreading and becoming more intense.” He singled out international drug cartels as leading culprits.

As it does in much of the world, the illicit narcotics trade perpetuates much of the crime in China. According to Chinese officials, police in China arrested more than 110,000 people for drugs-related crime and solved more than 87,000 narcotics cases in 1996. China's proximity to the extensive reach of narcotics cartels in the

so-called “Golden Triangle” of Burma, Laos, and Thailand makes it a convenient transit point for drug shipments bound for other countries. China's southwestern provinces of Yunnan—where narcotics activity is said to be especially intense—Sichuan, and Guangxi, Guangdong, Hunan, and Gansu all launched special wars on drugs last year, according to Chinese press accounts.

Of all the factors contributing to the growth of crime in China, those of a cultural nature may be the most significant. Williard H. Myers, Director of the Center for the Study of Asian Organized Crime, has provided a definition for the quality of *guanxi*. He describes it as “a social strategy by which individuals in a hierarchical society seek to ensure access to resources, which are controlled by powerful elites, who can arbitrarily allocate them.” It may also be described as a complex network of bonds, obligations, debts, and repayments and usually excludes those who do not contribute to the bond. *Guanxi* may be considered as comparable to what we in the West call “networking,” but it is much more complex and encompassing in practice. The Chinese concept of *guanxi* generally governs any actions taken in business relationships. The rules of *guanxi* in business enterprises in China may be considered to assume the role played by law, as it is commonly understood in Western society. As a result, many Chinese engage in business practices that seem appropriate to them, but are widely considered illegal in the West. To the Western merchant attempting to do business in China according to Western norms, the dictates of *guanxi* may appear to be an impenetrable stumbling block, allowing him to act only in ways he considers at least highly unethical.



Prisoners being transported in a truck in Canton with banner exhorting firm punishment on economic criminals.

What Can Be Done?

Criminal encounters in China are a surprise to foreign visitors who think the tightly controlled, authoritarian nature of the society ensures them a crime-free visit. Naturally, the best way to avoid such surprises is to know what criminal activity has occurred and learn what steps may be taken to avoid an encounter with crime. There are many ways to acquire such knowledge, but security professionals often sum up such efforts with the admonition, "Practice security awareness and exercise caution." Remembering this advice can help you avoid being victimized by petty crime, including pickpocketing and purse-snatching, as well as the more sophisticated approaches of organized crime.

James Pringle of the *London Times'* Beijing office has described the common and some of the more unconventional criminal ap-

proaches in China. One common ploy, he points out, involves a Chinese woman striking up a conversation with a foreign man in a hotel bar. When the man returns to his room, accomplices claiming to be police officers knock at his door. The accomplices say that the woman has made an accusation of sexual harassment. At that point, they make demands for money. The demands may become violent.

Pringle offers the following advice to travelers in China. First, never open your hotel room door unless you know who is on the other side. Police uniforms are easily purchased. Agree to see policemen only in the presence of senior hotel staff. Second, keep your money, camera, and valuables out of sight on trains and buses. If possible, sit near the driver. Beware of jostling crowds. Third, as he puts it, chat with the cheerful girls haunting hotel coffee

shops and buy them ice cream, but leave it at that. The AIDS problem is spreading. Also, avoid the growing drug scene. Fourth, beware of safes in anything but four-star or five-star hotels. The fifth piece of advice Pringle offers recalls the security professional's admonition to "Practice security awareness and exercise caution." "Don't become paranoid," he says, "but abandon the notion that nothing bad can happen to you in China. Adapt the prudence you would maintain in other developing countries." Exercising caution, in fact, may lead the smart traveler to avoid altogether those areas where trouble is most commonly found, such as trains, buses, and their stations. Lingering excessively outside your hotel may make you a more visible target for petty theft. Engaging in any activity commonly thought to be a vice is, of course, of high risk.

Far from ignoring or denying the problem, law enforcement authorities in China have grappled with the country's climbing crime rate in the same way China has dealt with other crises in the past half-century—by launching a campaign against it. China's principal tactic in fighting crime appears to involve a combination of public trials and executions. The anticrime campaign, known as "Strike Hard," has reportedly resulted in thousands of executions since it was first launched in April 1996. By some estimates, the anticrime push is considered to be probably the most far-reaching drive since a similar effort took place in 1983 and 1984.

In some of the more crime-ridden parts of China, national and local leaders are traversing various other avenues to battle crime. In Beijing's Dongcheng District,



Prisoners sentenced to death in Pehong Prefecture, Yunna Province, during anti-drugs campaign.



A man standing trial accused of stealing a television set.

authorities claimed to have cut the crime rate by more than half after putting a more visible police presence on the streets. Police in Guangdong Province are said to have turned to “brains and technology.” They attribute some of their success stories to an “urgent meeting” system, which enables them to deploy thousands of police to strategic parts of the province through the use of a telephone hot line system and advanced telecommunications for information exchange. For some business executives and employees, kidnaping remains an ever-present threat. Near Guangzhou, the People’s Liberation Army’s Physical Education College has made bodyguard training available to civilian men and women. Last year, China called for the adoption of modern security technology and methods to replace its reliance on security personnel. A number of security employees were thought to have used their access and talents to perpetrate crime themselves.

The U.S. Embassy’s Regional Security Officer and Consular personnel are available to provide information about criminal threats and render whatever assistance is possible in the event of a criminal incident. It is always advisable to register with the U.S. Embassy when you begin an extended

stay in a foreign country and to check with Embassy personnel regarding the latest criminal ploys and locations to avoid. Once you are victimized in a criminal attack, however, the unfortunate truth is that you may be at the mercy of local law enforcement personnel long before Embassy staff can come to your rescue. It is for this reason that you are also advised to “do your homework” before an incident occurs so that you may avoid unpleasant surprises.

“Toto, I don’t
think we’re in
Kansas anymore.”

—Dorothy, *The Wizard Of Oz*

Like Dorothy in “The Wizard of Oz,” you may wonder how you can cope in a land where the rules of the game are not the ones you know. There are, of course, no easy solutions, but experience has shown that steps can be taken. The recommendations that follow do not necessarily apply only to China, but can often be applied globally.

According to an old adage, “There is no substitute for knowing your territory.” A thorough knowledge of local laws, customs, and business practices can help to prevent misunderstandings and miscalculations. Before anything adverse happens, it may be advantageous to establish a relationship with local authorities, especially the police. As one security professional put it, “That is often done by inviting the head cop and a

few of his cronies to a lunch or dinner followed by several drinks of the local white lightning.” Many foreign companies operating in China are said to have an official Chinese partner. It could, and perhaps should, be the Chinese partner who serves as your source for local rules, your conduit to the authorities, and your intermediary in disputes.

Without a doubt, the information you possess and carry deserves as much protection as you do. Be strongly advised that you should expect little privacy in the conduct of your affairs. Your information is desirable and may be aggressively targeted. Do what you can to make it hard to get. Lapses in information security are common, mostly because efforts to obtain information are not always obvious. It is a good idea to work closely with a security professional to protect your information at home, at the office, in your communications, and on the road. OSAC, the State Department’s Overseas Security Advisory Council, provides useful information to that end.

Often, as OSAC has pointed out, the quickest route to your information is through you. Practitioners of industrial espionage are only too willing to exploit your weaknesses for their gain. Many Americans possess personality traits that increase their vulnerability to the classic attempts at espionage. Americans, it is said, want to be liked, and we tend to be social and gregarious even with casual contacts. We also place a high value on candor and trust, and we tend to be more open towards those who display those traits. In another way, Americans who appear to place a great emphasis on economic status may be vulnerable to an approach that exploits our perceived obsession with wealth and “things.” Similarly, Americans tend to be

ambitious, oriented toward job advancement and professional recognition. These three personality traits—sociability, status, and ambition—are logical targets for those attempting to apply a direct approach to either deceive Americans into carelessly providing competitive information or to seduce the unprincipled to cooperate in turning over information to business rivals. Americans should also be on guard against false appeals to ethnicity. In fact, an intelligence service may attempt a “false flag” recruitment, in which an American with a strong sense of ethnic identity is approached on the basis of his or her ancestral country, when in reality the real recipient of the information is a different country entirely.

Conclusion

The breadth and scope, if not necessarily the intensity, of possible criminal encounters in China is truly staggering. It is clear that the myriad forms crime may take as a result of China’s booming economy, together with the apparent shortcomings of the authorities in adequately halting crime, create a situation in which fear of crime is fear of the unknown. If there is a common thread among the various criminal incidents recounted in this article, it is that, in most cases, the crime that occurred is one that the victim did not expect.

The solution, or, at least, the first step toward a solution, would seem to be an expanded knowledge of crimes that have occurred and that are occurring, so that a greater portion of the unknown becomes known and that more of the unexpected becomes expected. In the security field, it is sometimes half-seriously said that, “A little paranoia never hurt anyone.” Before doing business in China, or, for that matter, any country, an expatriate should re-

search as thoroughly as possible, through the media or any other source, the criminal environment she or he is likely to face. It is my hope that this brief article has begun to serve that purpose.

Crime Elsewhere in Asia

Just as crime levels and trends vary considerably from region to region in China, so do they vary among the countries of East Asia and the Pacific. Not surprisingly, the more developed countries of the region enjoy relatively low, but rising, crime rates. The region's developing countries, mostly located in Southeast Asia, must contend with more serious crime problems. In some cases, the disparity in crime levels between countries is so extreme that it is often not useful to excessively generalize about "crime in Asia." Here are some impressions of criminal activity in several East Asian countries obtained largely from media accounts:

In May of 1996, Cambodian authorities were said to be drawing up measures to counter the rising number of armed robberies against foreigners in Phnom Penh, the capital. The report cited one American journalist who had hired an armed bodyguard.

Kidnaping has been described as "nearly an industry" in the Philippines, where bandits usually target wealthy Filipinos and ethnic Chinese who will quietly pay the ransom and avoid noti-

fying the authorities. The chief criminal threat facing most Westerners in Manila is normal urban crime, including purse-snatching, which may be accomplished by a thief on a motorbike. In January, 1997, President Fidel Ramos described corruption in the government as a "nightmare."

Violence among "triad" crime gangs appears to be increasing in Hong Kong, and especially in Macao. In May, 1997, Portugal sent several anti-organized crime police officials to Macao to help fight an escalation of violence among rival gangs.

In early 1996, authorities in Singapore, where the crime rate is quite low, expressed concern that more criminal acts were being committed by "foreigners." In May of 1997, police figures indicated that more than half of the murders committed in Singapore in 1996 were crimes of passion.

Citizens of Japan who are long accustomed to low crime rates have reportedly grown alarmed by a rise in criminal activity. Concerns were said to have arisen in 1995 when, in the wake of the Sarin subway attack and the shooting of the national police chief, police in November of that year found 17 dead babies in two suburban apartments. The influence of organized crime is said by some to be large and growing. In spite of fears about crime and other social problems, one journalist opined that "The likelihood of being shot and killed in Japan is akin to the chance of being struck by lightning."

By far, the region's worst location for crime, in terms of severity and frequency, is Papua New Guinea. Roaming

gangs of mostly young and violent thieves known as “raskols” rely on numbers and force to threaten even the best-protected residences of diplomats and business people. Many missionaries and other less-protected expatriates pay for their vulnerability with chronic exposure to violent crime. Rape is said to be nearly as common as property theft.

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The location, which seems to produce the most exotic tales about crime, probably because it receives a large number of foreign visitors, is Thailand. A number of tourists have fallen victim to an increasingly common ploy in which they are drugged by strangers who offer them food or drink. The luckier victims merely lose their valuables. The *Bangkok Post* reported in April 1997, that rising crime has fueled a boom in the sale of security systems. A recent official study revealed that economic crimes in the country increased 25 percent in 1996.

A dark teal map of Mexico is positioned in the upper left quadrant of the page. The word "Mexico" is printed in white text across the central part of the map. In the background, there is a large, faint, circular watermark of the University of Texas at El Paso seal, which features a central sun and a figure holding a staff.

Mexico

Truck Hijackings and Cargo

By
Kevin J.
Huska

Theft in Mexico

Special thanks to John P. Rodriguez,
Industrial Security Consultant,
El Paso, Texas.

Have you wondered why the cost of that personal computer or high-end electronic equipment you've had your eye on keeps increasing in price? One of the reasons is the additional cost encountered by manufacturers who must protect or replace raw materials or finished commercial products from highway bandits or organized criminals. In fact, an American business executive states an

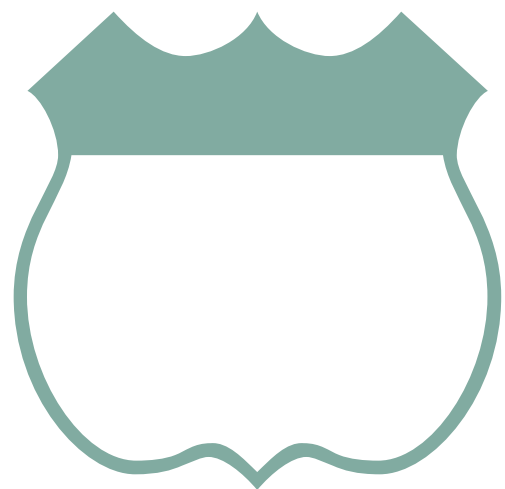
additional \$200 is added to each personal computer due to the cost of theft and protecting these items while in transit through remote foreign lands.

Cargo theft and truck hijackings occur around the world: on the railroad operating between St. Petersburg and Vladivostok in Russia; or the mountain roads winding through Eastern Europe, and on the heavily used route from Sao Paulo, Brazil, to Paraguay and the tri-border region. However, due to the increased trade between Mexico and the United States, cargo theft in Mexico has become an increasingly difficult problem for those responsible for the security of the product. According to corporate security managers, the number one security problem in Mexico is truck hijackings and cargo theft. The Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City advised that there were an estimated 20,000 truckjackings in 1996 nationwide, affecting both multinational and locally owned businesses. These crimes have caused added expenses to business in Mexico due to additional security measures required to ensure the safety of cargo shipments.

The magnitude of the problem should not be understated. Although there are no national-level numbers for the monetary loss to U.S. companies related to cargo theft, industry estimates have put worldwide losses at \$30 billion annually; and

losses in Mexico in the 100s of millions of dollars. In discussions with the Department of Transportation, FBI, National Cargo Security Council, American Truckers Association, corporate security managers, private consultants, and the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, it is evident the problem is huge and that there is no coordinated effort to quantify or correct it between private government officials.

In analyzing the cargo theft problem, two key and consistent factors become evident. First, Mexican organized gangs and local street thugs actively seek opportunities to steal transport vehicles and cargo. Their reward is quick cash with very little risk of apprehension. Secondly, the primary commercial targets are computer equipment, where the average truck load is valued at \$250,000; high-end electronic equipment; and name-brand clothing and sports apparel. Most any stolen product can be resold in a matter of hours on the black markets in Mexico. The frequent ease with which truckjackings in Mexico are carried out is causing business managers to expend increasing amounts of valuable resources to address transportation security matters and protect their investments.



Piñatas on Wheels

How do criminals know what specific cargo container or truck out of hundreds to target? One answer is their understanding of the entire shipping process. In order to clear the Mexican customs process, it is necessary for American companies to forward invoices to the Mexican authorities or private custom brokers. This is usually done by fax. Business managers have indicated that shipping invoices are copied, shared, and sold by criminal elements, giving organized groups specific knowledge of cargo contents, specific routes, shipping dates, and destinations.

Insider knowledge is a major element in the operation and success of these criminal endeavors. It is a known fact that information leaks originating from trusted company employees are routine. Product information and transportation schedules are valuable commodities to criminal organizations and sensitive data about cargo movements is potentially worth “big money.” U.S. and Mexican transportation companies might as well deliver the goods to the bad guys directly, because currently the process of protecting information is inviting criminals to take advantage of lucrative opportunities.

Operationally, the thieves have little difficulty identifying cargo trucks as they depart a factory or distribution center. Typically, armed gangs of three to eight individuals will follow a truck until an opportunity presents itself, then approach the driver (always with a weapon) and simply hijack the truck. Drivers wisely and rarely give any resistance to protect the cargo entrusted to them. In Mexico City, smaller delivery trucks are also targeted. One local

company reported losing 10 percent of its fleet per day—incredible but true—with the vehicles recovered hours later without the retail items. A majority of the trucks hijacked on remote highways are recovered within a matter of hours, which indicates complicity by the drivers and/or the carriers. Those trucks that are not recovered, some of which are owned by U.S. companies, are sold or stripped down for parts by these enterprising criminals.

Internal Controls and Other Concerns

Another problem is the failure to fully check the background, including criminal history, of contract drivers. There have been instances of drivers with a history of criminal activity who are entrusted with thousands of dollars of material and who are later found to be directly involved in the theft of the goods. In addition, U.S. companies that rely on local contractors to transport material throughout Mexico report that many problems can be directly related to improper procedures by the contract drivers. For example, drivers often have been found to use remote areas to take breaks instead of protected rest areas to sleep. This practice leaves drivers and their cargo vulnerable to approaches by criminals on the lookout for an easy score. Regrettably, it is always feasible that the drivers looking for a financial windfall are involved in the theft of trucks and cargo.

Truck hijacking gangs target companies that have products that can be sold with ease on the black market, this includes pharmaceutical supplies and even food.

One of the biggest losers, as mentioned, seems to be clothing companies. One apparel maker has lost a number of tractor-trailer rigs and goods in the past year, with monetary losses in the millions of dollars. Once stolen, these items can be easily moved through the illegal underground markets that can be found throughout the capital city. The Regional Security Officer at the U.S. Embassy estimates that 60 percent of the merchandise disappears within Mexico City, the world's largest metropolis, within 24 hours. It is common knowledge that name brand blue jeans, athletic foot wear, and electronic equipment are sold at local flea markets where intervention by law enforcement or local authorities is minimal. It should come as no surprise that as long as problems with the enforcement of Mexican law continues, these informal markets and the number of cargo thefts will continue to grow.

Interestingly, Mexico is virtually an uninsured country. Under Mexican law a motor carrier's responsibility, which includes contractors, is limited to about \$400 per metric ton of cargo. However, insurance coverage is constantly being canceled due to the high loss ratio in Mexico. Some insurers have doubled their rates while others are balking at writing Mexican policies. Self-insurance policies, sometimes costing \$500,000, has become a new but expensive way local managers are dealing with the problem.

A final area of concern is the placement of road blocks and checkpoints along highways where military and police units search for weapons, drugs, and other contraband. These official checkpoints have been a source of problems for all shippers. Helping oneself to goods from a truck is quite common in Mexico, and unfortu-



Where are the trucks most vulnerable? Aside from the delivery trucks that make routine, scheduled deliveries within the larger cities, trucks are vulnerable while on the highways in transit. Trucks carrying commercial goods are usually hijacked within 60 miles of major cities and along the heavily used transportation routes such as the Laredo-Monterrey Highway, the port of Veracruz to Mexico City, and the Guadalajara-Mexico City highway corridor.

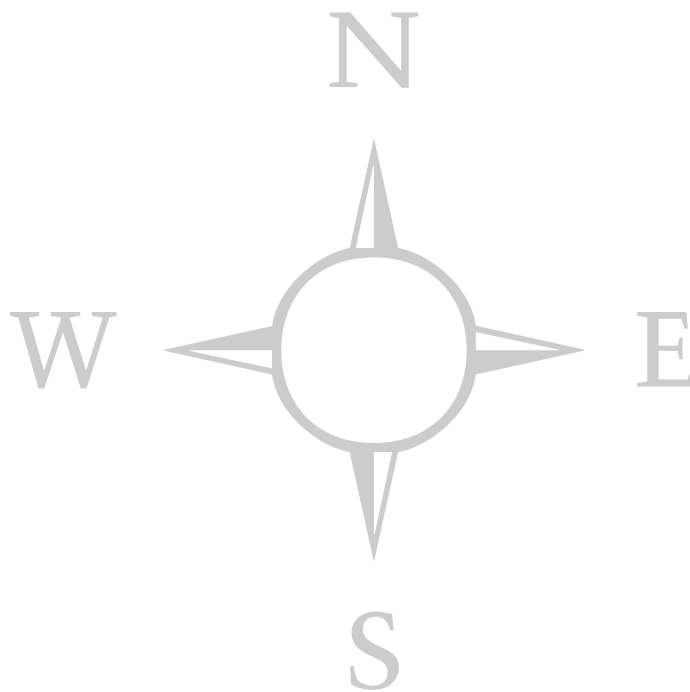
nately, some checkpoint police feel “it is their right” to appropriate goods in transit, according to Mexico -based security managers. With police officers earning approximately US\$70 per week, protecting shipments is a low priority. Persistent problems with corruption are a problem in Mexico and dramatic improvements in this area are not anticipated for the foreseeable future.

What Can Be Done?

Many proactive managers have improved the process of transporting goods by scrutinizing their contract drivers, removing corporate logos from their vehicles, and hiring armed security escorts for the vehicles—including off-duty Mexican police officers. These procedural changes have had only limited success in attacking the problem and reducing monetary losses incurred by U.S. companies operating in Mexico. In some cases, the entire process of better managing resources to protect life and property needs to be revamped.

The issue of truck hijackings and thefts of cargo containers shipped to and from large distribution centers is a problem towards which managers must take a proactive and aggressive approach. One method is for business managers to consider establishing a countrywide transportation security policy. Most importantly, managers should document and report incidents to Mexican and U.S. officials. Though reaction and recovery of stolen product is very minimal, documenting the Mexican authorities’ response to corporate problems is important. The scope and complexity of the issue can never be fully appreciated or understood unless losses are quantified and passed to decisions makers in the respective governments.

Strong growth in the trade between Mexico and the United States is expected to continue and the problem of cargo thefts will also continue to escalate. The emergence of stronger, better organized drug trafficking cartels also poses a threat to the security of cargo. Furthermore, corruption of Mexican officials will only intensify and prolong the problem as criminal organizations expand and increase their influence. The actions to date by Mexican law enforcement, which operates with dwindling resources, leads to the conclusion that there is no solution for this type of crime. One of the keys to correcting the problem is for business and security managers to work together and quantify monetary losses, product loss, location, and modus operandi of thefts. With this information, government entities will be better able to understand and address the damage cargo theft is having on business development in Mexico and focus the limited resources on combatting the crime.



TRANSPORTATION SECURITY POLICY

Some security managers have found success in combatting thefts by instituting the following transportation policies:

- Conduct an analysis of the entire shipping process and identify vulnerabilities.
- Handle shipping and customs documents as sensitive information.
- Subject employees with access to shipping information to personnel screening.
- Coordinate convoys of 3-5 trucks.
- Utilize armed-protection services during overland transportation.
- Use toll roads, which are generally safer than alternate, less traveled routes.
- Travel only during daylight hours.
- Stop only at approved rest areas and gas stations.
- Use new technology—including Global Positioning System coverage—to counter thieves and track cargo.
- Check-in and update local offices while cargo is in transit.
- Immediately report any incidents to Mexican law enforcement authorities.
- Establish a preventative, proactive program and test it periodically.
- Share information with other security managers and the U.S. Embassy.





“People are frightened of the motorcycle gangs, which are putting the lives of ordinary people at risk with their internecine rivalry. This is Denmark, not Chicago.”

—Danish Prime Minister Rasmussen

Nordic Motorcycle Gangs

By
**Peggy
Brown**

Special thanks to ATF Special Agent Theodore Baltas, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; DS Special Agent Ken Luzzi, Houston Field Office; Houston Police Department, Criminal Intelligence Division; John Schilling, RSO Copenhagen and RSO staff; Karen Schaefer, RSO Stockholm; and Foreign Service Investigator Trevor Klink.

Since 1994, the traditionally peaceful Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Norway have become a battleground for violent attacks between two American-based motorcycle gangs. The two gangs, or motorcycle clubs, are the California-based Hell’s Angels and the Texas-based Bandidos. During this period, the violence has resulted in the death of 11 people and injured numerous

bystanders. A favored weapon in this ongoing feud has been the Swedish-manufactured Carl Gustav, a shoulder-fired antitank missile, 12 of which were stolen from a Swedish army store near Malmo in February 1994 by the Bandidos.

This violence against each others' clubhouses and members has caused an outcry among the citizens in Scandinavia, particularly in Denmark, which has faced the brunt of the violence since four killings occurred in that country. In 1996, Denmark's Prime Minister pledged new powers for the police to fight the gangs' activities and indicated that Denmark would not stand this escalating violence. In 1997, Denmark banned Hell's Angels clubs and motorcycle gangs and Danish police started to routinely stop and search known gang members on sight. The Danish Government had already banned gang members from setting up clubhouses in residential areas following an October 1996 antitank missile attack in downtown Copenhagen that killed 2 persons and wounded 19.

In June 1997, Norway's Prime Minister vowed to copy Denmark's law and drive biker clubhouses out of urban areas, after a female bystander's death in Drammen, Norway. In Sweden this incident prompted the Justice Minister to suggest banning biker clubs from all populated areas.

Denmark's Hell's Angels are apparently now looking to countries in the east, such

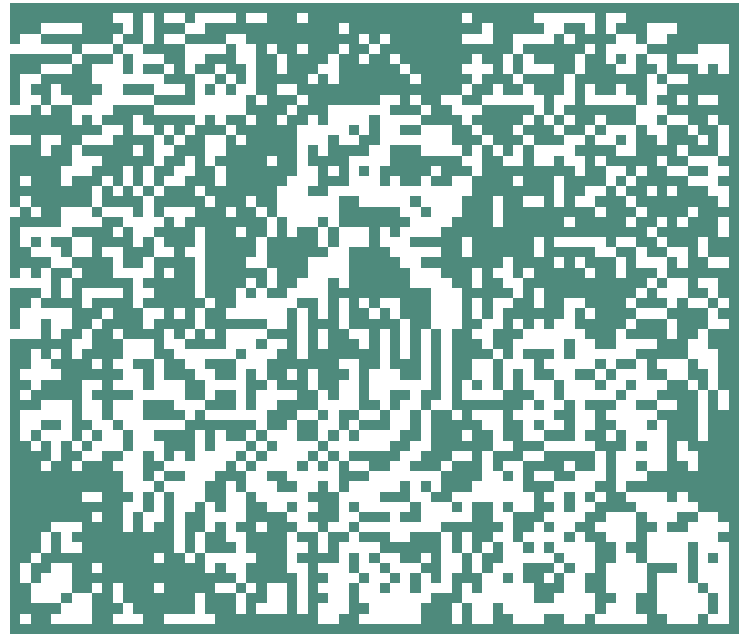
as Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltic States, for further expansion. Papers found during a 1996 search of a Hell's Angels building in Roskilde, Denmark, detailed an elaborate plan for reorganization and expansion. The reorganization of the European section apparently is being driven by Danish Hell's Angels members who want to divide Europe into three regions. The Copenhagen chapter would be in charge of all the Scandinavia countries, the Baltics, Russia, and Ukraine under a "Northwest Region Two." The United Kingdom would fall under "Region One" and Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Switzerland would be "The Central European Region." Hell's Angels in Europe currently has 34 or 35 chapters in more than nine countries and wants to double the number of countries with Hell's Angels representation. Interpol has now established a special task force to investigate the criminal activities that international motorcycle gangs are involved in.



Roots of the Conflict

The dispute between Hell's Angels and the Bandidos started in 1994 after the Bandidos set up chapters in several Scandinavian countries a few years earlier. The Hell's Angels had been established in Copenhagen for over 10 years by that time. The Bandidos-affiliated clubs in these countries initially formed in an attempt to avoid being taken over by the Hell's Angels or basically for their self preservation. The conflict between the two biker gangs was initially a turf battle in which the Hell's Angels did not intend to share their turf with the newly established Bandidos gang. By March 1996, the dispute started making news following a Hell's Angels attack at Copenhagen's airport against Bandido members which killed one and wounded two. Then in October 1996, a car bomb exploded outside the Hell's Angels Oslo headquarters.

There are a number of theories on how the feud originally started between the two clubs. One view is that the duel was initially sparked by a barroom brawl in Denmark when a group of Bandidos harassed a lone Hell's Angels member. The lone member apparently hid out in a ladies' restroom to escape the gang. This then led to retaliation by Hell's Angels and escalated to the present feud. One Danish sociologist said gaining honor is of prime importance to these club members and this is often achieved by stealing it from another man, most likely in a violent manner. Another problem faced in the Nordic countries is lack of space. An observer noted that the United States was large enough to handle various American gangs in different regions. The fact that rival clubs in the Nordic countries establish club houses near each other creates even more tension.



Motorcycle Clubs' Criminal Activities

There are several factors contributing to the current duel between the two motorcycle gangs. The conflict involves a gang's power, territory, and share of the criminal market in the Scandinavian countries. The clubs are involved in trafficking hashish, amphetamines, and "Ecstasy" and have now ventured into marijuana, cocaine, and heroin markets. However, club rules strictly forbid members from using drugs intravenously. Individual bikers have also been known to run sophisticated rings that are also involved in prostitution, arms smuggling, and other illegal activities. These illegal activities are hidden behind legitimate businesses the clubs run, including bike shops and tattoo parlors. Traditionally, most of the gangs' members were criminals before joining clubs. Some police in Scandinavia suspect that the current struggle with the Bandidos has been exacerbated in the competition for access to Eastern Europe and a share in its criminal market.

One reason the American-based motorcycle clubs have expanded in the Nordic countries is the easy access to surrounding open seas due to the number of ports which facilitate the import and export of illegal goods. These countries were seen as ideal locations for various drug activities. There has been a major increase in the supply of amphetamines, cocaine, and other hard drugs since the motorcycle clubs' arrival to the region. Some youths are attracted to the motorcycle clubs' mystique due to rising unemployment, crime, or family problems. Membership requirements to these clubs are the same as those in the United States. Membership is restricted to white males who are at least 21 years old. An unofficial requirement is the possession of a criminal record and time served in jail.

The growing popularity of motorcycles and the biker movement in Europe is also affecting the price and availability of Harley Davidson motorcycles to the extent that World War II vintage and non-running Harleys are extremely expensive. Despite the large number of stolen and counterfeit Harley parts from the United States, there remains a great demand for these items. Motorcycles stolen in the United States are quickly disassembled and a new Vehicle Identification Number is etched to replace the original number. The motorcycle parts are then shipped overseas as machinery or other miscellaneous items. In the Houston area, where the Bandidos are based, stolen Harley Davidsons only have a 5 percent recovery rate. It is believed that the Bandidos are stealing these motorcycles and shipping them overseas for resale to finance their narcotics operations and help fund their expansion into new countries.



Hell's Angels in the Nordic Countries

Hell's Angels was established in Denmark in 1977 when four local Danish gangs united and applied for membership through Hell's Angels in California. They were threatened by a local rival gang and 11 died in the skirmishes before the Angels claimed victory. There were no problems until 1993, when another American-based group, the Bandidos, were formed in Denmark. Hell's Angels Copenhagen was established on December 31, 1980. The second Angels chapter was set up in Denmark in 1978 and was known as Black Sheep South Coast. In 1985, they became "hangarounds" for Hell's Angels and later prospects as Denmark South. On December 31, 1987, Hell's Angels Denmark South was approved as a full chapter. This chapter was subsequently closed in August 1996 and split into three separate chapters. Hell's Angels Denmark Aarhus gained full membership in December 1992 after being a prospect chapter since April 1991. Hell's Angels Aalborg became a chapter in November 1996. As other local groups were destroyed, Hell's Angels Copenhagen became the leading motorcycle gang in Denmark and most powerful. Hell's Angels currently has the following chapters in Denmark: Copenhagen, Nomads, West End, Roskilde, Odense, Aarhus, and Aalborg.

Hell's Angels is an extremely organized club in Denmark and has "friends" in 25 clubs which can be called upon for assistance. Hell's Angels are split up with 85 members in Sweden, 110 in Denmark, 70 in Norway, and 25 in Finland. There are 15 official chapters in all. When the third Hell's Angels chapter opened in March 1997 in Sweden, between 250 to 300 international members attended to celebrate the opening of the new "Angels' Place."

In Sweden the outlaw motorcycle gangs are involved in organized crime and have participated in murder, attempted murder, armed robbery, and illegal possession of firearms and explosives. The violent conflict between the Hell's Angels and Bandidos has dominated the local crime scene in this country. In 1997, a Super Rally was held at High Chaparral amusement park in Jonopings Ian in southern Sweden and was well attended by the Hell's Angels and most of their supporter clubs. The Hell's Angels currently have two clubs in Sweden, the Malmo and Helsingborg Sweden clubs. The latter was admitted to full membership in February 1996. The Hell's Angels have one prospect chapter, Stockholm Southside and approximately 15 motorcycle supporter clubs. So far the supporter clubs have not taken an active role in the ongoing conflict with the Bandidos in Sweden. Gamlestans Goteborg Motorcycle Club is probably the next group to become a Hell's Angels hangaround club. The Bandidos so far have one chapter known as Bandidos Sweden and a supporter club called Aphuset. Swedish police, however, believe that one or two outlaw motorcycle gangs will become affiliated with the group in the near future.

The Bandidos in the Nordic Countries

In late 1988, the Morticians, a supporter group to the Hell's Angels, broke with the Angels following disputes and established Undertakers Northland and Undertakers East Coast. Then in 1992, they contacted the Bandidos in France and the United States seeking membership. After serving as prospects to this group for a short time, they became full Bandido members in 1993. The Bandidos Denmark Northland in Stenlose, Sjaelland, has the distinct status as Bandidos National Chapter for Europe which handles Bandidos' matters for all of Europe.

In late 1996, three hangaround chapters and one prospect chapter were established. The Bandidos Motorcycle Club has the following chapters in Denmark: Northland, East Coast, Southside, South Island, and National Chapter Europe. Frederiksvaerk is the only prospect group and the three hangaround chapters are Bandidos Aalborg, Bandidos Horsens, and Bandidos Copenhagen. The Bandidos have 130 members across the Scandinavian countries in at least seven chapters. More than 100 gang members have been imprisoned in the Nordic countries since 1991.

Adding to the feud are instances when club members have shifted their alliance between the two groups. A Danish former president of Hell's Angels Copenhagen, Michael Garcia Lerche Olsen, served first in the Titangade-based chapter but was expelled from the club, deprived of his motorcycle, vest, and colors. He now is the president for the Swedish branch of the Bandidos in Kattarp outside Helsingborg. Other Danish former Hell's Angels have

joined Olsen and are considered traitors by the Hell's Angels. The June 1997 attack against the Bandidos clubhouse in Drammen, Norway, was an attempt to kill the visiting Bandido leader Michael Olsen.

The Bandidos based in the United States apparently believe the Nordic Bandidos are beyond their control and distanced themselves from these overseas branches. There is also a concern that the gang warfare and activities of the Nordic chapters could be tied into those involving the American chapters. On the other hand, the Bandidos in the Nordic countries seem to be disappointed that they are not getting full support from their mother chapter.

Peace Agreement

In September 1997, the Nordic Hell's Angels and Bandidos established a truce and recently agreed to set up mutual motorcycle workshops. Apparently, the Danish Hell's Angels have ordered their Scandinavian "brothers" to avoid confrontations with Bandidos. Further, the Danish press has reported that gangs are willing to expel their own members if they carry weapons or wear bullet-proof vests.

Police in the Nordic countries report that the two motorcycle clubs appear to be concentrating on their illegal businesses since the truce. There has been extensive contact between the clubs and the criminal communities in the Nordic Countries. Also, recent arrests indicate that the clubs are building up their financial base with illegal activities involving drugs and weapons. American law enforcement officials believe that the recent truce by presidents of the chapters was for propaganda purposes to keep local legislation from outlawing the motorcycle gangs entirely.

Chronology of Incidents in Nordic Countries 1994-97

Denmark

**December 26, 1995
Copenhagen, Denmark**

Five to ten Bandidos attack two Hell's Angels members at a Copenhagen restaurant and severely beat them.

Death at the Airport

**March 10, 1996
Copenhagen, Denmark**

Members of Hell's Angels ambushed a group of rival Bandidos at Copenhagen's airport. A Bandido Southside member was killed and one member, one prospect, and one hangaround were injured.



April 17, 1996

Denmark

Hell's Angels Denmark South's clubhouse in Snoldelev was hit by a rocket. Fourteen members were inside but none were badly injured.

April 26, 1996

Denmark

A Bandidos Southside leader was nearly killed when several persons broke into Hoirserod State Prison and tossed a hand grenade through his jailcell window that exploded under his bed.

May 7, 1996

Copenhagen, Denmark

A Hell's Angel Copenhagen member and two companions were injured by two grenades thrown in front of his home in Copenhagen.

July 10, 1996

Nykoebing, Denmark

Danish EOD defuse a small bomb planted under the van of a Bandidos gang member outside the Bandidos clubhouse in Nykoebing.

July 21, 1996

Copenhagen, Denmark

A bag of explosives was found outside of a Hell's Angels' Copenhagen chapter in downtown Copenhagen. The bomb was detonated by police.

July 25, 1996

Copenhagen, Denmark

An imprisoned leader of Hell's Angels Copenhagen was attacked by several unknown men while sleeping in his Jyderup State Prison cell. The attackers failed to break through the cell door, but the prisoner was badly injured from three shots from their automatic weapons.

August 5, 1996

Greve, Denmark

A civilian was hit by bullets in a drive-by shooting in Greve, south of Copenhagen. Police believe the victim was mistaken for a Hell's Angels member living in the same building.



Explosion!

September 12, 1996

Roskilde, Denmark

A car bomb exploded outside a Hell's Angels clubhouse in Roskilde causing extensive damage but no injuries. The clubhouse is located in a densely populated residential neighborhood.

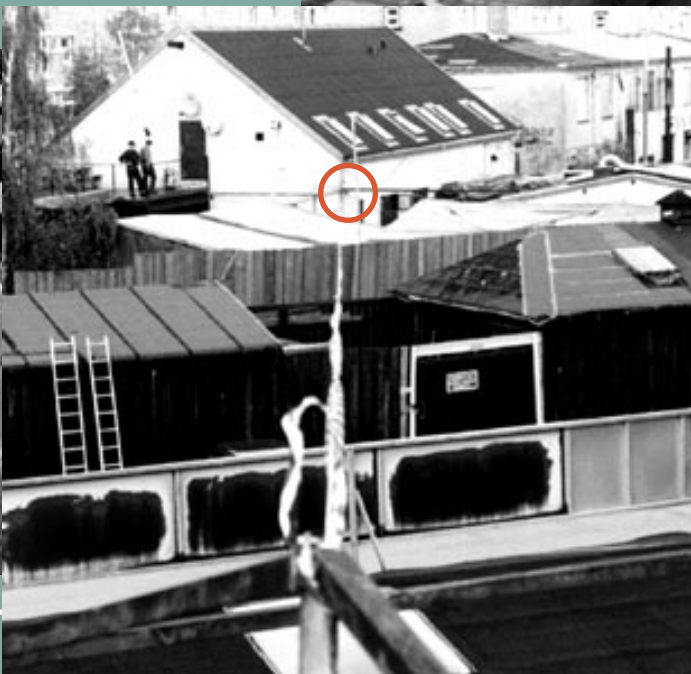


Aerial view of the attack site. Remains of the car bomb are under the white tarpaline.

Rocket Attack!

October 6, 1996
Copenhagen, Denmark

The Hells Angels Copenhagen chapter was attacked by a rocket during the yearly Viking Party. One prospect and one guest were killed and 17 were injured. An unused rocket was found nearby.



Circle indicates site of impact.

August 14, 1996
Denmark

A Bandidos Southside supporter was shot in his car while leaving the Bandidos chapter.

September 2, 1996
Aalborg, Denmark

A Hell's Angels Aalborg member was shot and wounded, by two men, in a drive-by shooting as he closed a store in Aalborg owned by the Hell's Angels defense fund.

September 4, 1996
Aalborg, Denmark

A car bomb exploded in a parking lot in Aalborg but failed to injury a Hell's Angels member as he drove by.

September 22, 1996
Roskilde, Denmark

In the early morning, the Hell's Angels Roskilde chapter was attacked by 250 machinegun rounds. Only one member was injured by the attack.

December 1, 1996
Copenhagen, Denmark

A gunfight took place outside a Copenhagen restaurant between members of Hell's Angels and the Bandidos. No one was injured.

December 5, 1996
Copenhagen, Denmark

Two members of the Bandidos were attacked by gunfire while they were trapped in a private yard in Valby, Copenhagen. One was injured.

December 9, 1996
Aalborg, Denmark

A member of the Bandidos Aalborg chapter was attacked by gunfire as he waited in his car at night. Although he was hit by ten bullets, he survived the attack.

Finland

February 12, 1996
Helsingfors, Finland

There were two hand grenade attacks in Helsingfors. One was against a restaurant belonging to a member of Hell's Angels Finland which badly injured two people. The second attack was against a motorcycle garage belonging to Hell's Angels Finland chapter.

March 1, 1996
Helsinki, Finland

A Finnish Bandido leader was shot and killed at their clubhouse in Helsinki. A Hell's Angels car fled the scene following the attack.

May 12, 1996
Finland

An unexploded hand grenade was found outside the Hell's Angels' Finland chapter.

May 18, 1996
Finland

Two Bandidos threw two hand grenades at the Hell's Angels' Finland chapter which injured two members.

August 1996
Helsinki, Finland

A Hell's Angels member was beaten up by an unknown intruder in a prison near Helsinki.

Norway

January 15, 1996
Hamar, Norway

A bomb went off against the Hamar chapter of the Screwdriver motorcycle club, a Hell's Angels hangaround club. No one was injured.

January 18, 1996
Norway

There was a firebomb at the Hell's Angels Norway chapter in Oslo.

March 10, 1996
Oslo

A Bandidos Sweden member was shot and wounded in Fornebu Airport in Norway by members of Hell's Angels.

May 9, 1996
Oslo, Norway

Two tourists were wounded in Oslo when the car they were driving was shot at, as they passed by the Hell's Angels' Norway chapter.

July 15, 1996
Oslo, Norway

A Bandidos Sweden member was shot and killed in Norway.

July 16, 1996
Drammen, Norway

A Danish Bandidos gang member was shot dead near Drammen.

July 19, 1996
Oslo, Norway

There were shots fired from another car in a drive-by shooting in Oslo, however nobody was injured. A Hell's Angels member and companion were in the targeted car.

June 5, 1997
Drammen, Norway

A bomb went off in a car parked next to the Bandidos clubhouse killing a woman driving past the building in Drammen.

Sweden

1994
Helsingborg, Sweden

A Hell's Angels member was murdered in Helsingborg.

1995
Sweden

Since 1995, there have been two antitank missile attacks against the Hell's Angels compound in Hasslarp, Sweden. The missiles were stolen from a Swedish military depot near Malmo by the Bandidos.

July 31, 1995
Helsingborg, Sweden

An antitank missile was fired into the Sweden Helsingborg Motorcycle clubhouse but no one was injured. The group was a Hell's Angel prospect chapter at the time.

December 6, 1995
Helsingborg, Sweden

There was a shoot-out between two vehicles on a highway outside of Helsingborg. A Hell's Angel Sweden member was wounded in the leg.

February 29, 1996
Helsingborg, Sweden

A hand grenade left by the car of a Hell's Angels' Helsingborg hangaround did not explode as he moved his car.

March 5, 1996

Helsingborg, Sweden

There was gunfire between two cars in Helsingborg. One Bandidos Sweden prospect was seriously injured.

April 11, 1996

Hasslarps:

Early in the morning, the Hell's Angels Helsingborg chapter was hit by two rockets. No one was killed in the attack, but the clubhouse was severely damaged.

July 23, 1996

Helsingborg

The president of Bandidos Sweden was shot in the leg while driving a car close to the Hell's Angels Helsingborg clubhouse. He went to a local hospital and police later found several bullet holes in his car.

August 4, 1996

Helsingborg, Sweden

A member of Hell's Angels Helsingborg was attacked by gunfire while driving his car in Helsingborg. He was badly injured in the attack.

August 27, 1996

Stockholm, Sweden

A member of Bandidos Sweden was attacked while driving his car. Sixteen rounds were fired at him but he was not hit.

August 28, 1996

Helsingborg, Sweden

A member of Hell's Angels Helsingborg was attacked by three men as he went to his garage. He was shot three times but survived.

September 10, 1996

Hasslarp, Djurslov, and Malmo, Sweden

Swedish police seized 12 members of Hell's Angels in raids on three clubhouses in southern Sweden. They were being questioned on suspicion of conspiracy to murder. They were seized after police raided clubhouses in Hasslarp, Djurslov and Malmo.

September 15, 1996

Helsingborg, Sweden

A parked car was hit by bullets and 15 shells were found later on the street. The suspicion is that the Hell's Angels and Bandidos opened fire on each other but there is no proof.

September 24, 1996

Helsingborg, Sweden

The Hell's Angels Helsingborg chapter was attacked by a rocket. No one was injured in the attack.

September 28, 1996

Helsingborg, Sweden

The Hell's Angels Helsingborg chapter was attacked by a rocket, two hand grenades and a bomb. No one was injured in this attack.

October 3, 1996

Malmo, Sweden: A large blast outside a Hell's Angels clubhouse in Malmo injured four people and caused widespread damage to buildings within several hundred yards of the clubhouse. Twenty families had to be evacuated. Four members of the biker gang were in the clubhouse but not injured. The following day approximately 100 people participated in a demonstration against the Hell's Angels.

January 13, 1997

Helsingborg, Sweden

A member of the Bandidos Helsingborg chapter was in a shoot-out outside his home in Helsingborg. Two persons fled by car and later a member of Hell's Angels Stockholm visited a hospital to have a bullet wound treated.

March 22, 1997

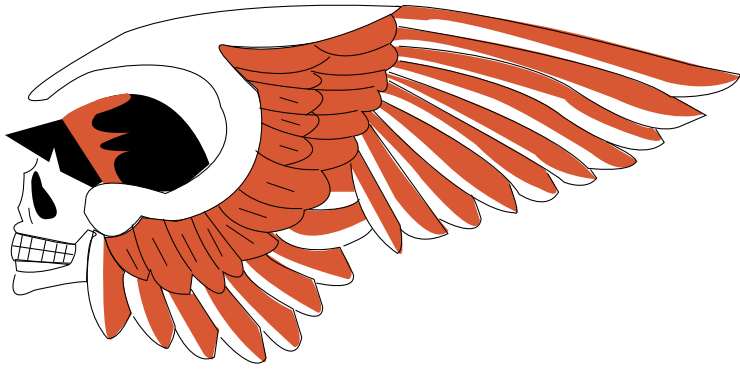
Helsingborg, Sweden

An antitank missile was fired into the Hell's Angels Helsingborg clubhouse but the grenade did not explode and there were no injuries.

April 28, 1997

Helsingborg, Sweden

A bomb exploded outside of the Aphuset clubhouse causing only material damage. Aphuset is a Bandidos supporter club. Another bomb exploded simultaneously outside of a garage used by Bandido supporters.



Hell's Angels

"The Fighting Will Only End When The Angles Win."—A Canadian Scholar

The Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club is an international outlaw motorcycle gang with about 1,500 members worldwide. It is the largest motorcycle gang, with the most chapters overseas and the largest membership. The group started after World War II, formed by disgruntled veterans that formed a club in San Bernardino, California, in 1948. The Marlon Brando movie *The Wild One* brought national attention to the activities of bikers in 1953. Four years later, the Oakland chapter was formed by Sonny Barger and became the "Mother" chapter which issues all charters for new chapters. In the 1950s, the American Motorcyclist Association maintained that only 1 percent of all motorcycle riders were troublemakers and not the majority of riders. The Hell's Angels and other motorcycle gangs adopted this notion and now display a 1% logo on their vests, or "colors" as they are commonly called. A "one percenter" has become the term used for outlaw motorcycle gangs.

Hell's Angel's is now a legitimate nonprofit organization in the United States with their trademark patented. They are considered the most sophisticated motorcycle gang with a tight management structure, strict discipline, and a sophisticated communica-

tions system. They often greet each other with a bear hug, which is also a convenient way to check for possible wires on each other. Hell's Angels has been attempting to control the world's drug market and is the fastest growing organized crime group in the United States and Europe. Their numbers in the United Kingdom are also growing rapidly. Interpol estimates 96 Hell's Angels chapters in 16 different countries. The club is now turning their attention to the former Eastern Bloc countries for expansion into their markets.

Becoming a full member of Hell's Angels is not a simple procedure. Applicants who wish to join Hell's Angels must first fill out an application form and pass a background and credit check. If an applicant passes, then he must commit specific crimes to prove he is tough enough to join. The official policy for membership is that only white males over age 21 may join. In the past, a criminal record was required for membership, however, many in Hell's Angels today do not have criminal records. Law enforcement officials and politicians are barred from membership. A prospective member must own a Harley Davidson bike, possess a desired skill, and speak English.

In Hell's Angels there is not a single international leader and every member is considered equal. Also every chapter, known as a "charter" by Hell's Angels, is considered equal. Every chapter has weekly meetings that members must attend. The club even has a copyright on their "Filthy Few" skull emblem. The club has their own attorney who has successfully sued companies for unauthorized use of the Hell's Angels name and insignia. A winged death's head sticker on a motorcycle means "Don't mess with this bike."



Bandidos

“I think the Bandidos are going to win. They’re the meanest. Hurt one of us and we all bleed—hat’s what they believe. That’s their honor code.”—A Swedish youth.

The Bandidos motorcycle gang is the third largest outlaw motorcycle gang in the world and is only slightly smaller than the Outlaws motorcycle gang. Excluding Brazil, the Bandidos have chapters in every major motorcycle market along with the Hell’s Angels. This gang was started in Texas by Vietnam War veterans in 1966. They shifted their headquarters from Houston to Corpus Cristi, Texas. Most of their membership includes white, middle-aged men who prefer heavy drinking, drug use, and violence. Their headquarters is Wolfy’s, a topless bar, owned by a club member who is a millionaire. Many of the Bandidos have jobs in his assorted businesses. The Bandidos are concentrated in the southern and northwestern regions of the United States. Their overseas chapters can be found in most of Europe, Australia, and North America.

Police believe the Bandidos’ colors are modeled after the Frito Bandito. This occurred after a gang member known as the “Fat Mexican” posed for a picture wearing a serape and sombrero while holding a pistol and a knife. Some gang members thought he resembled the Frito Bandito and patches were made in his likeness. The gang’s activities consist of dealing narcotics, prostituting their women, and stealing

and selling motorcycles and motorcycle parts to be shipped overseas. Since motorcycles and parts are in higher demand overseas, some of the profits are sent back to the mother headquarters.

Pictured are back and front view of the Bandidos colors. The top photo shows the name of the motorcycle gang on top rocker with country name on lower rocker. The 1% rocker indicates the Bandidos as part of the one-percent which are outlaw motorcycle gangs, The logo in the middle is that of the Frito Bandito.



Lower photo shows the front view of the Bandidos colors. On the jacket is the name of the Bandido chapter on lower rocker “Northland.” The location is probably in Stenlose, Denmark. The BFFB stands for “Bandidos forever, forever Bandidos.”

Some Terms Defined

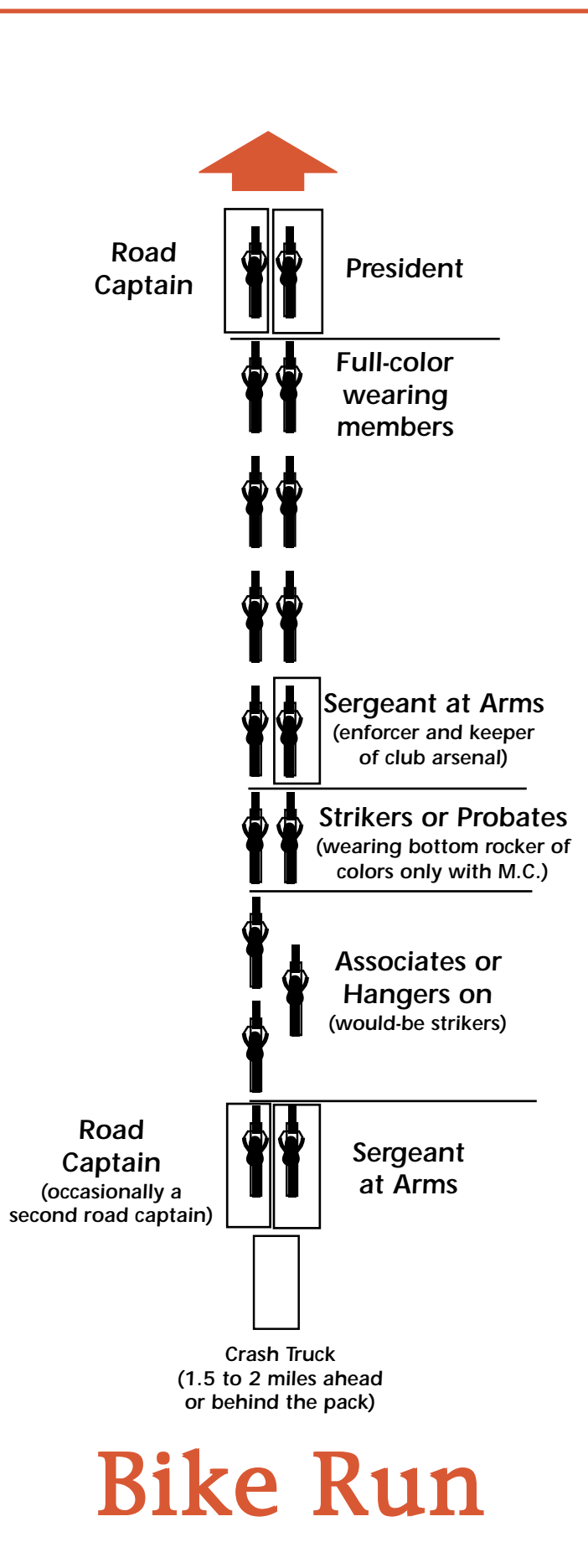
Bike Run

Basically a run consists of a group of bikers traveling together on an outing for a special reason. In Hell's Angels, prospects are required to go on Angels bike runs or get-togethers as are full members. These mandatory runs are held each year in the United States and overseas. Each chapter is expected to send at least two members for overseas world-runs. The latest Hell's Angels world-run was held in November 1997 in South Africa.

The formation during a run is two bikers abreast and club officers and members in certain formations. The president and road captain will lead the run with full members behind. The sergeant at arms is next followed by probationary members and associates or honorary members in back. The motorcycles do not pass or leave this formation unless a bike has mechanical problems. A crash truck will be either a mile in front of the group or behind. Normally the crash trucks will carry spare motorcycle parts, beer, drugs, and weapons. They are also equipped with mobile phones and police scanners to alert the bikers to approaching police. This formation is used by most biker gangs but not in all instances.

Colors

Refers to the black leather vest and patches worn by biker gang members and prospects. Normally the front of the vest will depict a members' chapter and have the motorcycle club logo. The back will have the logo with the club name on top and the country name on the bottom.



Fly Colors

To ride a motorcycle wearing colors.

Hag or Hog

Harley-Davidson Motorcycle Owner Group.

Honorary Member

Usually a member in good standing and retired from the club. Also retains club's colors and is required to attend club funerals.

Prospect

A prospect is always sponsored by a member and will be able to wear colors that have the rocker "prospect" emblazoned on their jacket where the club name usually appears. A person will serve as prospect anywhere from 6 months to 1 year and may have duties including watching members' bikes. They are frequently required to commit one or more crimes, which help to eliminate potential unsuitable members. This also helps eliminate undercover law enforcement officials who will be reluctant to commit criminal acts. A prospect will get their top rocker with the club's name when they become a full member. The application process for a chapter is similar to that of an individual. The chapter will be a hanger-on and then a prospect chapter before full membership.

Road Captain

He rides at the front with the president. Some clubs have two road captains, one of which will ride at the rear of the pack with the sergeant at arms.

Rocker

Has two meanings. It is the term for the patches that a member wears on their vest. Also in the Nordic countries, bikers are called "rockers" which comes from a 1960s British term "mods and rockers." The patch with the number "13" on it indicates the member is either a drug user or supporter of drug use. The letter "M" is the 13th letter in the alphabet and signified "Methamphetamine" and/or Marijuana." Normally the number will be followed by something innocuous such as "13 motorcycle." The number "22" will signify that the gang member has been in prison.

Sergeant at Arms

Keeps order during all club meetings and outings and usually rides at the rear of the pack on club runs.

Supporters/Hangers-On/Hangaround

These are individuals who act as apprentices in the hopes of joining the ranks as full members in the future. A hanger-on or hangaround may be someone who is interested in the organization and will literally hang around social events the motorcycle club is involved in. They will usually do this from 6 months to a couple of years but have no responsible duties.

War Lord

Will carry out orders of the president when club battles with another club. Often keeps the club's arsenal.

TRAVEL SMART



by
Carl F. Troy

Office of Citizen Services
Bureau of Consular Affairs

TRAVEL SAFE

Know Before You Go

One of the most important things that a U.S. citizen can do before traveling abroad is to consult the State Department's travel information program, administered by the Bureau of Consular Affairs. The Bureau issues Consular Information Sheets, Travel Warnings, Public Announcements, and country or regional "Tips for Travelers" booklets. The objective of the program is to inform the American public of practices, conditions, problems, and security concerns that they should consider before traveling to a particular country. Our Foreign Service posts also provide crime and security-related information to American citizens in their respective countries through their consular sections and registration and warden systems.

This continually updated travel information is available on the Internet at "<http://travel.state.gov>" and through the Bureau of Consular Affairs' automated telephone (202-647-5225) and telefax (202-647-3000) systems. It is also available from any of the 13 regional passport agencies, at U.S. Embassies and consulates abroad, through airline computer reservation systems, or by sending a self-addressed, stamped business-sized envelope to the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, Bureau of Consular Affairs, Room 4811, U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-1813. The Department's Public Affairs Office also disseminates this information to the media.

Consular Information Sheets

Consular Information Sheets are available for every country of the world. In addition to crime and security information, they include the location of the U.S. Embassy or consulate in the subject country, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, and drug penalties. If an unstable condition exists in a country that is not severe enough to warrant a Travel Warning, a description of the condition(s) may be included under an option section entitled "Areas of Instability." Consular Information Sheets generally do not

include subjective advice, but present information in a factual manner so the traveler can make his or her own decision concerning travel to a particular country.

One of the most frequent questions that travelers will ask when planning a trip overseas is whether it is safe and whether crime is a problem. Consular Information Sheets will help travelers be better informed on crime. For example, the crime section in the Department's Consular Information Sheet for Italy tells travelers that "Italy has a low rate of violent crime." It also includes information about petty street crime and thefts and what travelers should do in the event they become a victim of crime. The Consular Information Sheet also gives the address for the U.S. Embassy and consulates where travelers can get country-specific security information and even replace a stolen passport.

Travel Warnings

Travel Warnings are issued when the State Department decides, based on all relevant information concerning the safety of American travelers, to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. Countries where avoidance of travel is recommended will have Travel Warnings as well as Consular Information Sheets. As of January 1998, there were Travel Warnings in effect for 24 countries.



Public Announcements

Public Announcements are a means of disseminating information about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or transnational conditions posing significant risks to the security of American travelers. They are made any time there is a perceived threat that could include Americans as a particular target group. Public Announcements have been issued to deal with short-term coups, bomb threats to airlines, violence by terrorists, anniversary dates of specific terrorist events, and outbreaks of contagious diseases, such as Ebola.

Tips for Travelers

Millions of U.S. citizens travel abroad each year. When you travel abroad, the odds are in your favor that you will have a safe and incident-free trip. However, crime and violence, as well as unexpected difficulties, can befall U.S. citizens in all parts of the world. This series of brochures offers additional safety and other information to Americans who are contemplating safe travel or residence overseas. Included with Consular Affairs' pamphlets is a brochure entitled, *A Safe Trip Abroad*. In that publication, the Department tells Americans what they need to do to help ensure an incident-free trip. Crime is a growing problem worldwide and tourists or business travelers are particularly targeted by criminals because they are usually carrying cash and are often easy to distract. Any traveler can become a victim of crimes such as pick-pocketings, robberies, assaults, or muggings. That booklet also has information on protection against terrorism, travel to high-risk areas, and hijacking and hostage situations. Other brochures in this series provide tips for Americans residing abroad, for older Americans, and for travelers to specific countries or regions, including Russia and the Newly Independent States, Sub-Saharan Africa, Mexico, the Caribbean, South Asia, and the People's Republic of China.

Assistance Abroad

Once you have departed the United States, you may contact an American embassy or consulate to obtain updated information on the crime and security situation in that country. If you plan to stay more than 2 weeks in one place, if you are in an area experiencing civil unrest or a natural disaster, or if you are planning travel to a remote area, it is advisable to register at the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate. This will make it easier if someone at home needs to locate you urgently or in the unlikely event that you need to be evacuated in an emergency. It will also facilitate the issuance of a new passport should it be necessary.

If, despite these precautions, your possessions are lost or stolen, you should report the loss immediately to the local police and keep a copy of the police report, both for insurance claims and as an explanation of your plight. After reporting missing items to the police, report the loss or theft of:

- travelers checks to the nearest agent of the issuing company,
- credit cards to the issuing company,
- airline tickets to the airline or travel agent
- passport to the nearest U.S. Embassy or consulate.

In addition to replacing a stolen passport, the embassy or consulate can also assist American victims of crime abroad by contacting family, friends, or business associates in order to obtain funds and provide listings of English-speaking attorneys and physicians, if needed.

For additional travel information, the following pamphlets are available from the Consular Affairs home page on the Internet (<http://travel.state.gov>) or the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20420, tel. 202-512-1800:

- Your Trip Abroad (\$1.25)
- A Safe Trip Abroad
- Tips for Americans Residing Abroad
- Travel Tips for Older Americans
- Tips for Travelers to Canada
- Tips for Travelers to the Caribbean
- Tips for Travelers to Central and South America
- Tips for Travelers to Mexico
- Tips for Travelers to the Middle East and North Africa (\$1.50)
- Tips for Travelers to the Peoples Republic of China
- Tips for Travelers to Russia and the Newly Independent States
- Tips for Travelers to South Asia
- Tips for Travelers to Sub-Saharan Africa (\$1.50)

The price of each publication is about \$1.00, except where noted. Prices and availability are subject to change without notice. Please check with the Government Printing Office for more information.

Now You
See It,



Now You
Don't...

In 1996 approximately 265,000 laptop computers valued at \$805,000 were stolen. In 1997, the number of laptop thefts increased to 309,000 with a dollar value of \$1,026,000.

—SAFEWARE

If industry estimates are correct, by the year 2000, three out of every five computers in the corporate world will be laptops, we can expect to see an increase in the theft of these computers. With some laptops weighing less than 4 pounds and costing upwards of \$10,000, they are an attractive target for criminals. Laptops can be resold for up to 50 percent of their retail value, and their parts (i.e., hard drive, rechargeable batteries, CD-ROMS, etc.) stripped and sold individually. This does not take into account the loss of proprietary information contained inside the computer that can be sold to a business competitor and/or ransomed, nor the lost time in replacing the data.

Thefts of laptop computers are most vulnerable in high traffic areas—restaurants, hotels, train and bus stations, airports, tourist sites. According to SAFEWARE, automobiles, airports, and hotels are, in order of priority, primary locations for these thefts. It is also estimated that 20 percent of laptop thefts occur in office buildings by employees or people with inside information.

The number and types of scams used to steal laptops are limited only by one's imagination, however, the following scams are recognized as the most commonly used.

-LAPTOP THEFT

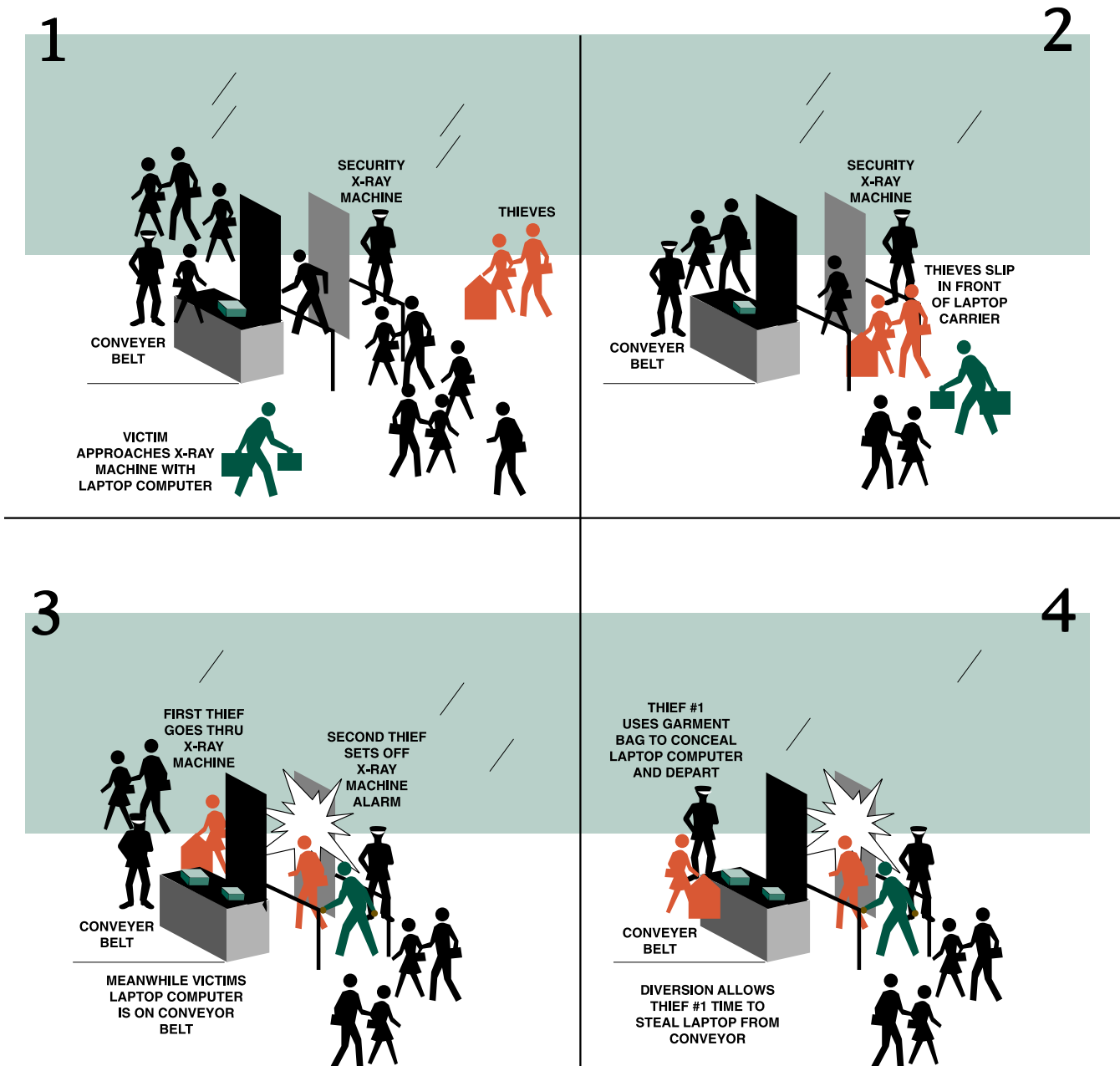


The X-Ray Machine

This scam is also referred to as a “diversion theft,” and occurs primarily at airports. Thieves, working in teams, will look for a traveler carrying a laptop, usually by the carrying case. As the victim puts his or her laptop on the conveyor belt of the security x-ray machine, two thieves will slip in front of the victim. The first thief, sometimes carrying a large coat or garment bag (used to cover up the theft of the laptop), will go through the metal detector without a problem and loiter around the area where the carry-on bags come out of the x-ray machine. Meanwhile, the second thief will carry a

metal object to intentionally set off the alarm. (Sometimes, they will carry more than one metal object to set off the metal detector a second time causing further delay and distraction for the victim.)

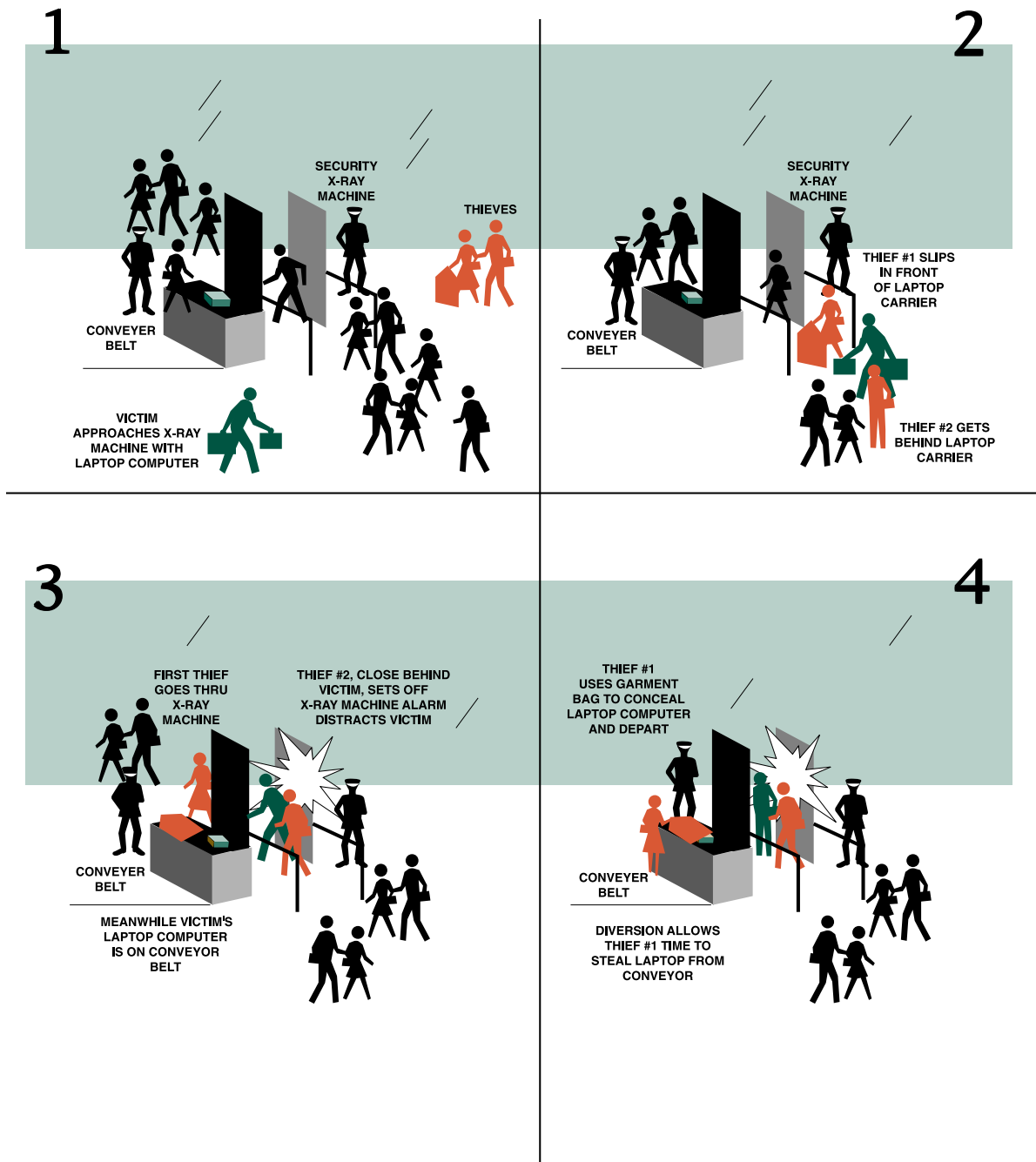
As the second thief holds up the line emptying his or her pockets “looking” for the metal object(s), the first thief will pick up the laptop as it comes through the x-ray machine. He will hide it under his coat or garment bag and either continue walking into the terminal or turn around and walk out of the area, sometimes passing it to a third accomplice.



A variation of this scam has one thief in front and one in back of the victim. After the first thief goes through the metal detector, the second thief will pass through the metal detector immediately after the victim and set off the alarm. The commotion will momentarily distract the victim, allowing the first thief to steal the laptop. Keep in mind, that it takes only a few seconds for a professional thief to steal a laptop. There have also been instances, where security personnel operating the x-ray machines were involved in the scams.

The following security tips will help safeguard your laptop against the x-ray scam. However, basic security precautions against all scams and thefts of laptops should include, (a) obtaining

specialized computer insurance for your laptop—remember, insurance does not cover the data stored in the laptop, (b) keeping propriety information on a separate diskette and in a separate location rather than on the hard drive, and (c) keeping the make, model, and serial number separate from your laptop should you have to report it stolen. You can also place your business card both inside and outside the computer and use an engraving pen to etch your initials, date of birth, etc., on the laptop for further identification purposes. Do not etch your social security number on the machine. These and other security tips are contained in the section entitled Securing Your Laptop Computer on page 102.



SECURITY TIPS

1. When traveling, allow yourself plenty of time. A harried traveler has a tendency to be preoccupied with other concerns (i.e., getting tickets, confirming seating location, etc.) and less security conscious.
2. Place your laptop in a nondescript briefcase or larger piece of luggage. Computer carrying cases are a "red flag" for thieves.
3. During check-in, notify the ticket agent that you have a laptop computer and would like to maintain control of it during the screening process. The ticket agent will be able to advise you of the screening procedures at that particular airport. (The age and sophistication of x-ray machines vary at different airports domestically and overseas.)
4. Try to avoid long lines at x-ray machines. If unavoidable, do not put your laptop on the x-ray conveyor belt until you know that you are the next person to go through the metal detector. Visually follow your laptop as it goes through the x-ray machine and rolls down the conveyor belt.
5. When going through the x-ray machine, do not pay attention to the person in front of you. Watch what is happening in front of him or her.
6. Ask the security guard at the screening station if they would do a security check of your laptop (i.e., by powering it up) without putting it through the x-ray machine.
7. Ask security personnel at the screening station to help watch your laptop after it goes through the x-ray machine.



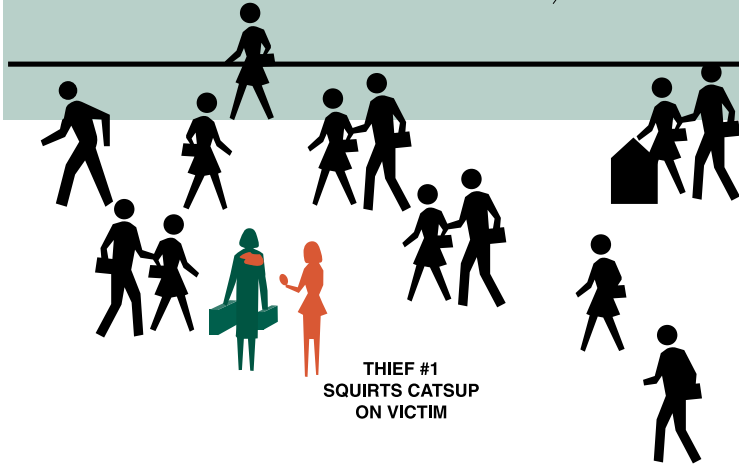
The Condiment Scam

In this scam, a victim is approached, usually in a busy location by a stranger who tells him that he has ketchup or mustard (which he just squirted) on the back of his jacket. The thief is usually very polite and may even offer the victim a tissue to wipe it off. As the victim puts down his luggage and laptop to take off his jacket to look at the mess, an accomplice walks off with the laptop.

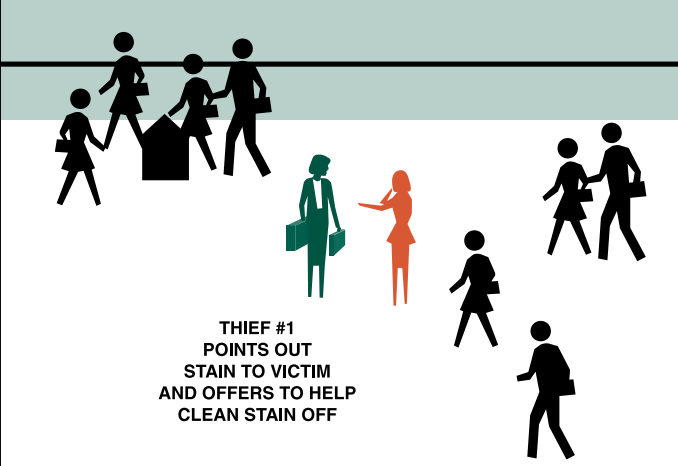
Another twist to this ruse has a thief eating a hot dog or hamburger bump head-on into the victim spilling mustard or ketchup on his clothes. The thief distracts the victim by apologizing profusely while trying to wipe the condiment off his clothes. As soon as the victim puts down his laptop to clean off the mess, an accomplice will pickup the laptop and walk away. In both scenarios, the laptop may be passed to a third accomplice.

1

2



THIEF #1 SQUIRTS CATSUP ON VICTIM



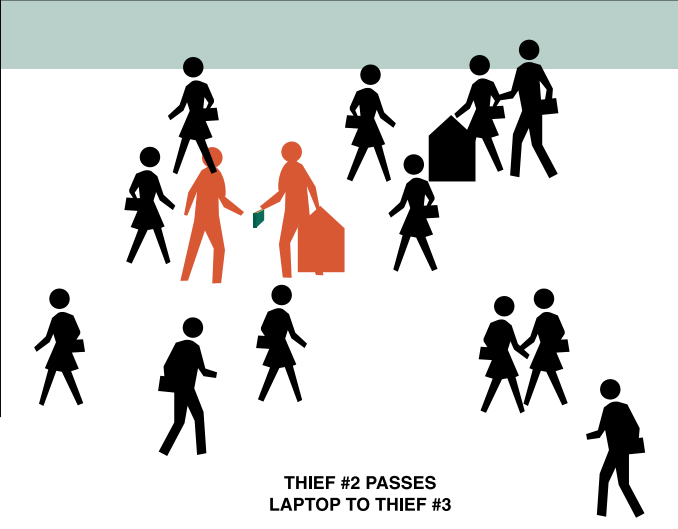
THIEF #1 POINTS OUT STAIN TO VICTIM AND OFFERS TO HELP CLEAN STAIN OFF

3

4



WHILE THIEF #1 HELPS CLEAN STAIN OFF, THIEF #2 STEALS UNATTENDED LAPTOP



THIEF #2 PASSES LAPTOP TO THIEF #3

SECURITY TIPS

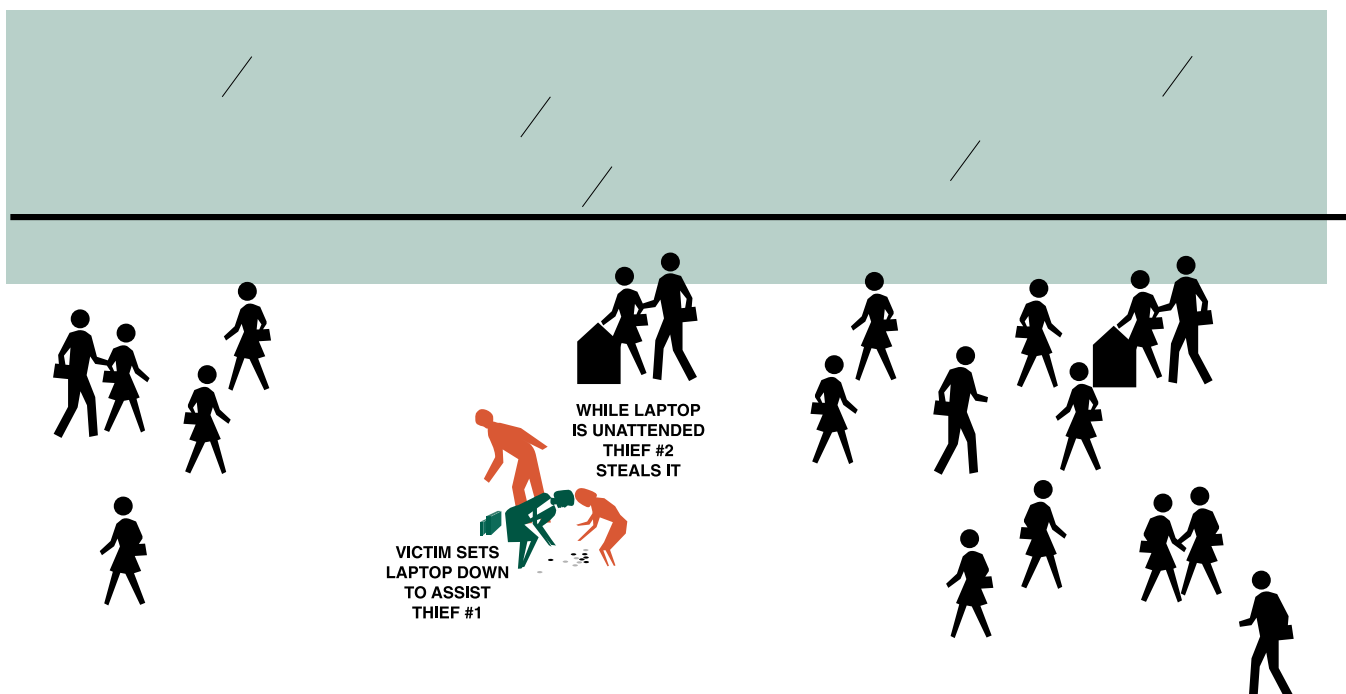
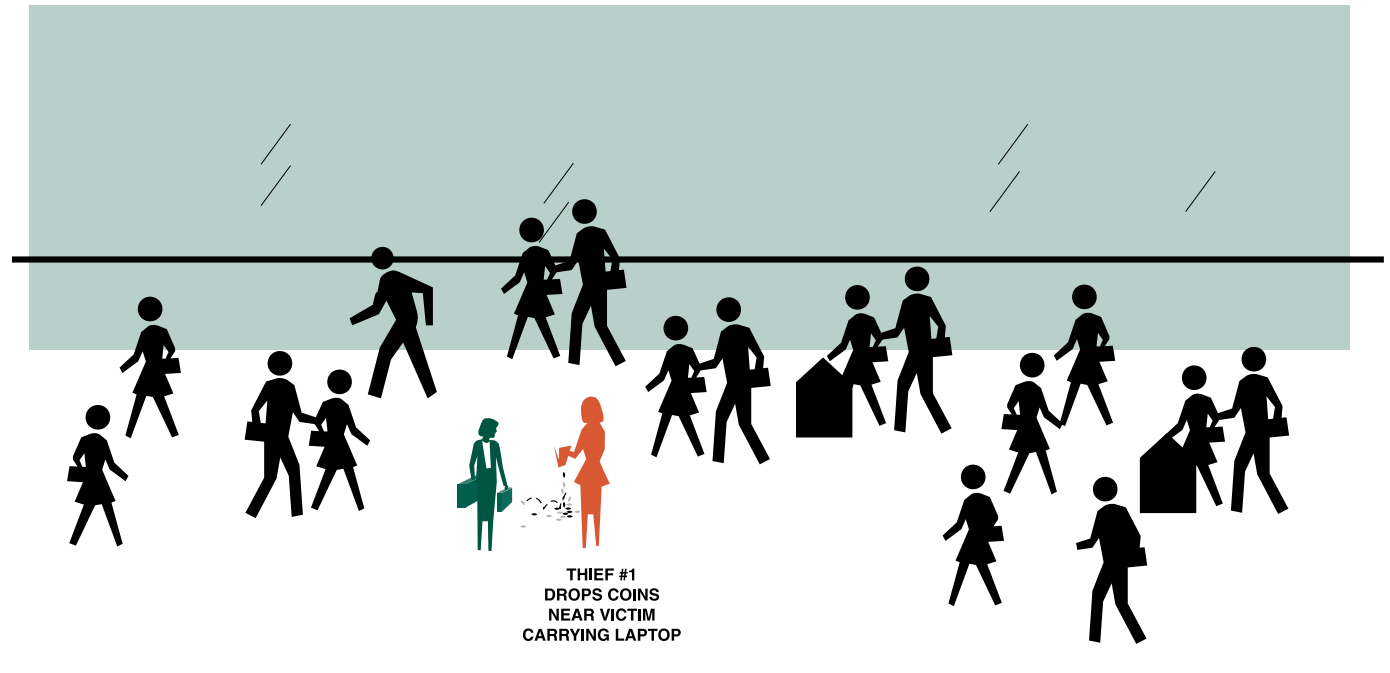
1. Try to get to a restroom and/or a less crowded area before removing your coat. This will enable you to better safeguard your laptop.

2. If you remove your coat at the site of the "accident," place your laptop between your legs or rest it diagonally across your foot to maintain control of your items—never have your laptop out of sight or touch!

Other Scams

Thieves will carry a computer carrying case filled with paper or a book approximating the weight of a laptop. When they come upon a victim with a similar carrying case who appears inattentive or preoccupied, one thief will distract the victim, while a partner switches the computer case.

A thief "accidentally" drops some coins near a victim. As the victim bends down to help pick up the coins, a second thief will steal the victim's laptop.



CHECK-IN



CHECK-IN



A thief carrying luggage will “bump” into a victim on the opposite side of where his laptop is sitting. As the thief apologizes to the victim, an accomplice will approach the victim from the opposite side and steal the laptop. This scam is another example of the “bump diversion” and occurs primarily at ticket and check-in counters.

Security Tip

Place the laptop on the counter and keep it in front of you at all times. Again, if you must put the laptop on the floor, place it between your legs or resting diagonally across your foot.



"While the rate of increase in desktop theft dropped dramatically, laptop computer thefts increased 17 percent, a slower increase than reflected by 1996 figures, but still accounting for more than 53 percent of all dollar losses."

—SAFEWARE Insurance Company

No security precautions are 100 percent fool-proof, but the following security tips will reduce the chances of your laptop being stolen and/or help in its recovery.

1. Obtain specialized insurance for your laptop. Remember, insurance does not cover the data stored inside the computer.
2. Do not take an expensive laptop on trips. If possible, buy the cheapest one that will meet your needs.
3. Keep the make, model, and serial number separate from your laptop should you have to report it stolen. Place your business card both inside and outside the computer and also use

an engraving pen to etch your initials, date of birth, etc., on the laptop for further identification purposes. Do not etch your social security number on the machine.



4. Disguise your laptop by placing it in your briefcase or in nondescript luggage. Thieves are on the look out for computer carrying cases. A shoulder bag is one way to secure your laptop.

5. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to the airport, train station, etc. A harried traveler has a tendency to be preoccupied with other concerns (i.e., getting tickets, confirming seating location, etc.) and less security conscious.

6. At a ticket or check-in counter, keep your laptop on the counter and in front of you at all times.

7. At the airport, do not check your laptop as luggage. Be especially alert at check-ins counters, and security screening stations.

8. When going through the x-ray machine, do not pay attention to the person in front of you. Watch what is happening in front of him or her.

9. Do not store your laptop in the overhead compartment of a plane. When seated, keep your laptop under the seat in front of you, and resting on your foot.

10. If you must leave your laptop in your car, keep it in the trunk. Remember, vehicles are a prime target for laptop thefts.

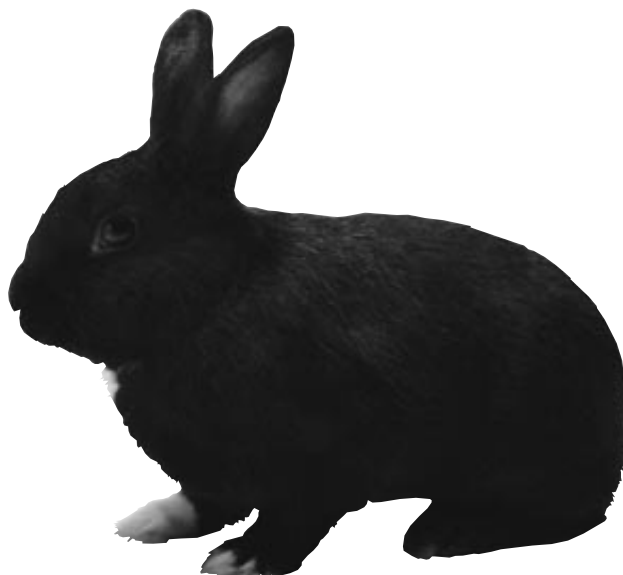
11. On the road, do not keep sensitive proprietary information on the hard drive. Back up the files onto diskettes every day. Keep the diskettes separate from your laptop.

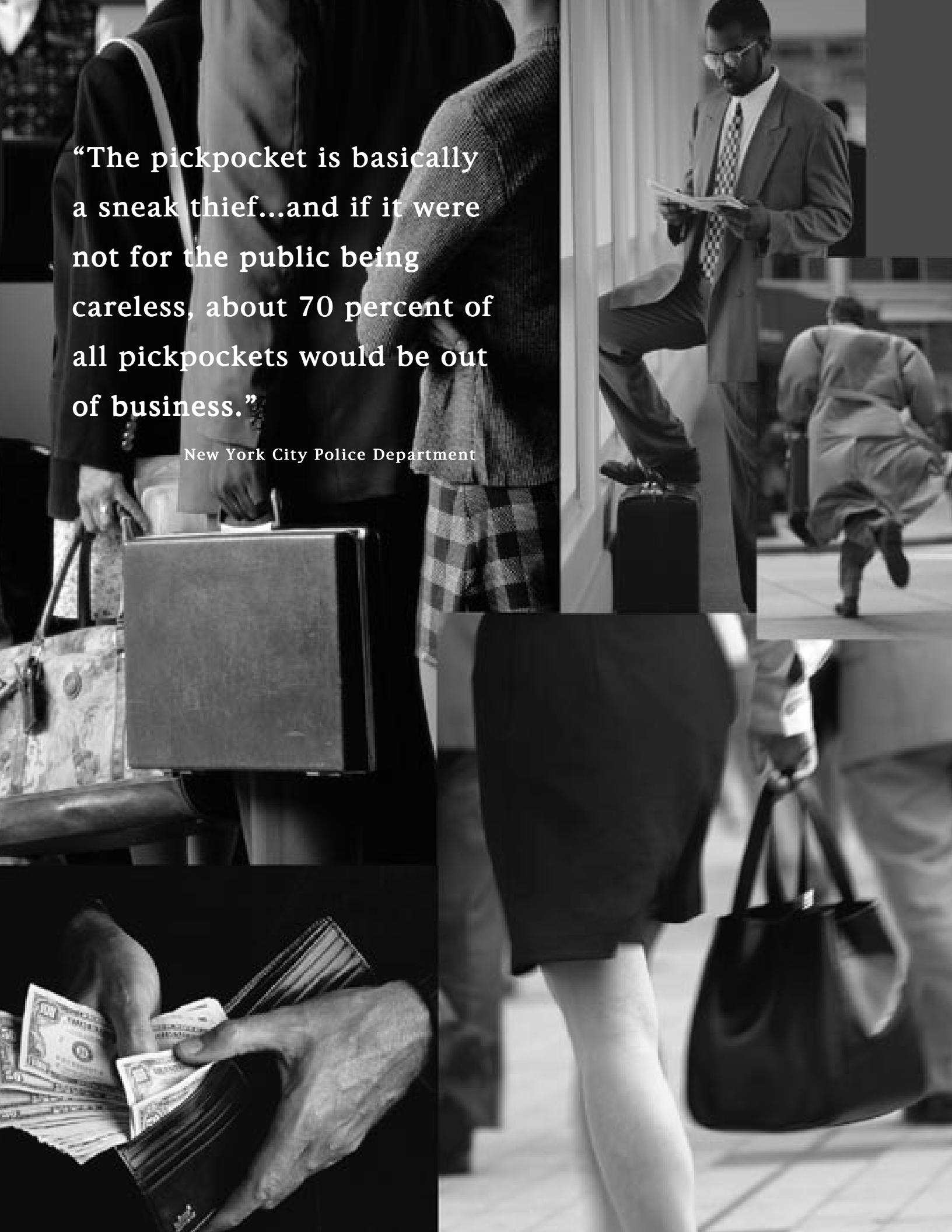
12. If you must put the laptop on the floor, keep it between your legs or resting diagonally across your foot.

13. Look into the various security products on the market to protect your laptop and software.

14. If you are staying in a hotel, and cannot leave sensitive company information at the office, store your diskette in the hotel safe. Laptops and hard drives should be locked in your hard side luggage. Laptops can also be secured by a portable drawer-lock device.

15. Remember, common sense is the best deterrent against laptop theft. Never leave it out of sight or touch!





“The pickpocket is basically a sneak thief...and if it were not for the public being careless, about 70 percent of all pickpockets would be out of business.”

New York City Police Department



Tips to Avoid Being A Victim of Pickpockets

By Peggy Brown

Special thanks to Sergeant Elizabeth Mahaney, Special Frauds Squad, New York City Police Department

Pickpocketing is a common crime everywhere and statistics indicate that this type of crime will continue to be popular to thieves looking for quick cash. One of the reasons it may be favored over other crimes, could be the smaller number of risk factors involved, rather than in other crimes such as the use of weapons and complicated logistics. Although several tactics are used in pickpocketing, many of these common elements are followed by most pickpockets around the world. Public awareness and common sense are the best defenses against pickpocketing. New York City's Transit Police note that approximately 70 percent of all pickpockets would be out of business if the general public became more aware of their tactics and were more cautious.

Travelers overseas are especially vulnerable to pickpocketing and purse snatching since they are in unfamiliar surroundings and unaware of the support they may receive from host country police. Also, many business travelers or tourists never inquire about security conditions or crime statistics before embarking on their journey overseas. A 1995 survey by the Visa credit card company, conducted in Europe, showed that more than half of the business travelers interviewed worry about being mugged while they travel abroad. Two-fifths of those surveyed complained that their companies failed to provide them with adequate security information on the countries they planned to visit. Approximately 59 percent of those interviewed worried about muggings and 40 percent worried about pickpocketing. Despite these growing concerns by the business community, few of those interviewed obtained information concerning their personal safety prior to their travel.

Pickpockets can come in many guises such as children, pregnant women, or as tourists. Some of these pickpockets are so well trained, they can steal someone's money without the victim noticing or feeling anything suspicious. Travelers should give themselves ample time to arrive at their mode of transportation—trains, airports, etc. A harried traveler is vulnerable to pickpockets and other types of petty criminals. Once the thieves note where a visitor keeps his or her money, they are able to go after their "mark." It is a good idea to keep money in more than one spot to avoid having everything stolen at once. It is also beneficial to have exact change or cash handy before entering subway stops or airports so wary pickpockets will not note where the remaining money is hidden. Several scenarios are commonly used. For example:

I. In Eastern Europe, which has seen a steady increase in crime since 1991, pickpocketing has become quite common. One tactic used involves a group of three or four thieves. Often they will block a pedestrian's path as one member distracts the intended victim while another will steal the money. On crowded subways, they may elbow the victim and get close enough to easily grab a purse or fanny pack without the victim becoming suspicious.

II. Child migrants are another type of thief becoming more commonplace in Western Europe. These young children, some as young as 8 years old, work in organized teams, and are often supervised by an adult. The children will crowd around an intended victim, often waving and shouting, while the youngest child steals the person's purse or wallet. They may all grab at the victim's clothing so the actual theft is not felt. If a child is ever caught, he or she has probably passed the stolen item to an accomplice and will claim not to speak English.

Foreign visitors are particularly vulnerable in busy crowded areas such as tourist sites, train stations, subway areas, and even in airports. In fact, some may have their belongings stolen in airports before they even get to their destinations if they are not aware of their surroundings. Many of the methods are used worldwide and some are common to certain geographic areas. The following are several crime tips and suggestions for a safer vacation or business trip:

Crime Tips for Air Travelers

Travelers in airports are especially attractive targets since they carry large sums of money or travelers checks.

- ❑ Ensure that tickets, travelers checks, and important documents are within reach. They should not be placed in checked luggage or unattended baggage.
- ❑ Passengers should keep an eye on purses and other personal belongings while passing through metal detectors and customs in airports. This precaution will work if the passenger proceeds directly through the metal detector rather than having to wait in a long line while the luggage is passed through first.
- ❑ In restrooms, women should not hang their purses on stall doors since they can easily be grabbed from outside the stall and stolen. If a team of two or three is involved in this, the initial thief will have passed the stolen purse by the time the victim attempts pursuit.

According to the New York City Police Department, “The subway environment presents an unparalleled target for pickpockets; it has all the ingredients: crowds, constant movement of people, exchange, and display of money.”



Subways and Subway Stations

Pickpockets often target people in places where crowds gather such as tourist attractions, street markets, or subway stations. When traveling by public transportation or in popular tourist areas, try to take appropriate precautions to avoid becoming another victim of these crimes.

- ❑ Especially avoid crowding in the area of subway car doors, when entering or exiting. This will minimize the chance of losing property to a pickpocket.
- ❑ Beware of loud arguments or commotions as pickpockets work in pairs or gangs. Often these incidents are staged to distract a potential victim while their wallet or purse is stolen.
- ❑ If traveling on a subway or bus, keep your purse in your lap, as well as holding on to it. Try to stay alert and not fall asleep since this will only make you more vulnerable to purse snatchers.
- ❑ Always keep your bag or briefcase where you can see or feel it, such as between your feet or on your lap. Do not hang purses over the backs of chairs.
- ❑ Avoid carrying your wallet in a rear trouser pocket. Instead, use a money belt or inside jacket pocket. Women should carry handbags with a zipper and/or the flap facing in toward their body.

- ❑ If your purse is stolen or pocket is picked, call out immediately to warn the driver, conductor, or others in the area. Alert everyone that a pick-pocket is in the area.
- ❑ Place other items, such as credit cards, travelers checks, or passports, in inner pockets but not all together. Traveler's checks and their numbered receipts should be kept separately. Also take only a minimum number of credit cards. If something is stolen, hopefully not all the valuables will be taken at once. (However, don't leave valuables in your jacket or coat pockets if you are likely to take it off.) Wearing a money belt is also recommended in particularly high crime areas.



While Walking

- ❑ Always drop your hotel key in a drop box or hand it to a hotel employee at the desk before exiting your hotel. Don't leave keys at an unattended reception desk. If you are issued a hotel security card, keep the room number separate from the card.
- ❑ Be on guard if a stranger draws your attention to a stain or spot on your clothes. This stranger may be a pickpocket attempting to distract you before stealing your wallet or purse. If this happens, continue walking and check your clothing when you are in more secure and familiar surroundings.

- ❑ In cities with many motorcyclists, hang your purse strap on your shoulder facing away from the street traffic. Many snatch-and-crab tactics include speeding by an unsuspecting pedestrian with a dangling purse. Do not hang the purse strap diagonally across your chest. If a purse snatcher grabs your bag, you may lose your balance and fall.
- ❑ In some countries thieves commonly will slash the rear pockets of trousers or sides of purses with a razor blade. In this case, the victim is unaware of the theft until looking for the wallet or purse. This is another reason to place items in inner pockets or in money belts.
- ❑ Be careful and aware of your surroundings while banking at a money machine. Also, if a stranger claims you have dropped money, be aware that this is another con used to distract a potential victim. Continue to walk on.

Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) indicated 26,660 reported pickpocketing incidents in 1996, with the average loss being \$320. The number of reported purses stolen that year was 35,233, with an average loss estimated at \$290.

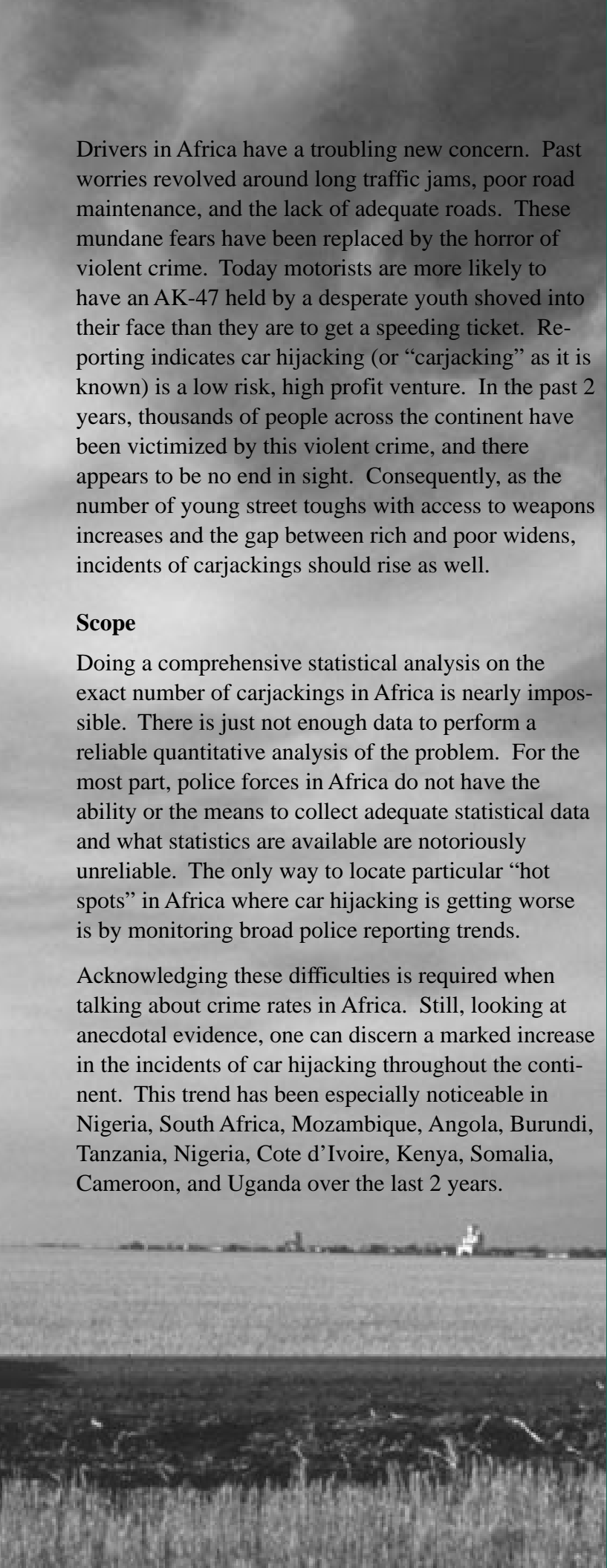
The good news is these totals were down from those reported the previous year. Pickpocketing incidents were down 3.3 percent and purse snatching incidents were down 7.3 percent from 1995 statistics. The increase in activity prior to 1991 can be attributed, in part, to a variety of reasons including increased gang activities and the use of crack cocaine. Consequently, the decline of pickpocketing incidents after 1991 can partially be explained by the higher number of arrests and lengthy incarceration of criminals. (Statistics for 1997 will not be available until the fall of 1998. Worldwide figures on pickpocketing are almost impossible to obtain.)

Carjacking in Africa

By Stephen L. Capelli



Special thanks to Michael Ross, former RSO U.S. Embassy Yaounde, Cameroon; Nancy Rolph-O'Donnel, RSO, U.S. Embassy Lusaka, Zambia; and Seymour Dewitt, former RSO, U.S. Embassy Nairobi, Kenya.



Drivers in Africa have a troubling new concern. Past worries revolved around long traffic jams, poor road maintenance, and the lack of adequate roads. These mundane fears have been replaced by the horror of violent crime. Today motorists are more likely to have an AK-47 held by a desperate youth shoved into their face than they are to get a speeding ticket. Reporting indicates car hijacking (or “carjacking” as it is known) is a low risk, high profit venture. In the past 2 years, thousands of people across the continent have been victimized by this violent crime, and there appears to be no end in sight. Consequently, as the number of young street toughs with access to weapons increases and the gap between rich and poor widens, incidents of carjackings should rise as well.

Scope

Doing a comprehensive statistical analysis on the exact number of carjackings in Africa is nearly impossible. There is just not enough data to perform a reliable quantitative analysis of the problem. For the most part, police forces in Africa do not have the ability or the means to collect adequate statistical data and what statistics are available are notoriously unreliable. The only way to locate particular “hot spots” in Africa where car hijacking is getting worse is by monitoring broad police reporting trends.

Acknowledging these difficulties is required when talking about crime rates in Africa. Still, looking at anecdotal evidence, one can discern a marked increase in the incidents of car hijacking throughout the continent. This trend has been especially noticeable in Nigeria, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Burundi, Tanzania, Nigeria, Cote d’Ivoire, Kenya, Somalia, Cameroon, and Uganda over the last 2 years.

Victims

Expatriates, business executives, aid agency workers, tourists, and diplomats have all been victimized, because they drive the luxury and four-wheel-drive vehicle that the carjackers crave. Police officials say thieves are looking for brand names, such as BMW, Nissan, and Toyota that can be resold quickly for large profits. They are also looking for four-wheel-drive sports utility vehicles (particularly, Land Rover “Discoverys,” Toyota “Land Cruisers,” and Mitsubishi “Pajeros”). Thieves particularly like Japanese sports utility vehicles, especially white ones that are easily concealed. Of the 300 cars stolen in Nairobi, Kenya, last April, 95 percent were white. This has prompted Kenyan authorities to advise expatriates to stop driving them for their own safety. Lastly, criminals are looking for vehicles with diplomatic tags, because the tags allow them to go through military checkpoints without being questioned.

It’s important to point out that carjackers are not only looking for new cars. Due to the lack of spare-parts on the continent, a lucrative trade exists in used car parts. Stolen cars can be quickly stripped at chop shops and their parts resold for a large profit. Thus in Africa, older cars are definitely worth more broken up than the sum of their parts.

Modus Operandi

Carjackings occur with such frequency and in so many different locations that it is difficult to isolate a particular pattern. To say that carjackings occur more often in urban or rural areas, day or night, weekday or weekend, is problematic. Consequently, the best way to describe the phenomenon is to detail the criminal’s tactics, which can then be used to help explain the width and depth of the problem.

Although car thieves in Africa vary in method and skill, they do share some basic techniques, five of which will be discussed below. Depending on the country and the groups involved, one scenario may be more common than another. The tactics are ranked based only on their prevalence against Westerners, with the understanding that some patterns are more likely in one nation than another.

Roadblocks

The most common technique employed against Westerners is the “roadblock.” In this scenario, criminals place various objects in the middle of the road to force cars to stop. These makeshift roadblocks are made from both innocuous and treacherous objects, including twigs, cardboard beer boxes, rocks, and wood planks with nails sticking out of them. The use of common debris often makes them difficult for drivers to detect. However, drivers ignore them at their peril. Many a driver has had their back windows shot out, while “accidentally” driving through a roadblock. Most roadblocks are set up in isolated spots within both rural and urban areas, outside the purview of local police.

The Trap

Next, is a technique that is most appropriately labeled as the “trap.” This method involves carjackers search for potential victims, by watching the traffic from key traffic “chokepoints.” These chokepoints are located near traffic circles or at the entrance roads to exclusive residential areas. Criminals also watch major thoroughfares, such as highways leading to and from airports, looking for unsuspecting travelers loaded down with large amounts of spending money. These chokepoints provide the thieves with a good view of the road and easy access to their prey. In this scenario, the thieves will follow the victim to his or her driveway, hoping to drive right up behind the victim, trapping him or her between the garage door and the criminals’ vehicle. This way the thieves are able to quickly remove the victim from the vehicle, gather the car keys, and in some instances the house keys as well, and then leave the scene in a matter of minutes.

Hit and Drive

The third scenario can be labeled the “hit and drive.” This tactic is very simple, yet effective. The criminals again await their victim at a chokepoint, usually an intersection. Once a suitable target is spotted, they run up to the victim with their weapons drawn and then commandeer the vehicle. This direct approach takes place mainly in crowded urban areas, where carjackers can observe passing motorists without drawing attention to themselves.

Ambush

The fourth most common targeting technique used against Westerners is the “military-style ambush.” This technique is slightly more coordinated than the previous three techniques and usually involves military weapons, AK-47s and pistols. Ambushes are usually take place in isolated rural areas rather than in urban centers. Sometimes these ambushes are more than just “military-style.” In several instances, the military has been directly involved in the planning and carrying out of this type of assaults.

Go Slows

Lastly, the fifth most common technique, is a variation on the military-style ambush, which occurs in Africa’s notorious “go-slows.” These go slows are interminable traffic jams, that can stretch out for miles and last for many hours. Go slows are an everyday occurrence in many African metropolitan areas. Since motorists are trapped in their vehicles, they are helpless against carjackers. Bandits simply approach the vehicle, pull out their weapons and seize the vehicle. If the driver attempts to resist, bandits will not hesitate to shoot or stab them.

Carjackers usually want to get themselves in and the driver out of the vehicle as quickly as possible. This is one of the reasons people get hurt during carjackings. Often times the carjacker will assault the driver and passengers if they take too long to get out of the vehicle. However in some cases, thieves take time to steal small personal items, like watches, wallets, and jewelry before driving away.

Hostage taking is a disturbing new trend in carjacking. With the advent of complicated security systems, such as cut off switch and electronic monitoring devices, criminals are starting to take the driver hostage so that they can deactivate the system. In some instances carjackers have taken passengers hostage for a few hours or days, driving around town weighing their victim’s fate. There have been several reported cases of sexual assault and murder of kidnaped victims. Hostages are often dumped by the side of the road in remote rural areas or left for dead in a locked trunk. Thus what the owner thought would be an ideal security device, not only fails to prevent car theft but also end up getting the driver killed.

Perpetrators

Carjackers often work in teams. These groups can be as small as two members or as large as ten. They are not gangs, in the American sense of the term, rather they are an *ad hoc* gathering of opportunists. One person may have a car, while the others supply the weapons. This coincidence of needs is all that is necessary to bring the thieves together.

These *ad hoc* groups also need a more sophisticated organized criminal network in order to fence their stolen vehicles. While organized crime is believed to be behind most carjackings in Africa, there is little substantiated evidence to support this claim. Only in Southern Africa is a discernible level of organized criminal activity evident. It appears that vehicles are being stolen in South Africa and then resold in neighboring countries. Police officials in Swaziland say that cars taken from South Africa appear regularly for resale in the capital Mbabane. To get cars across national borders—past customs officials, police, and military checkpoints—for resale in another country takes a certain level of criminal sophistication. This suggests that there must be a greater level of organization involved in Southern African carjackings than typically seen throughout the rest of Africa.

Although usually loosely grouped, these thieves are nevertheless always heavily armed. Many bandits use knives, pistols, or AK-47s in the commission of their crimes. Weapons abound in Africa, because of the various nationalist and internal struggles that have proliferated in the past 2 decades. In addition, there are many cheap weapons that were dumped into the African market by former Soviet states looking for a quick profit. For example, a person can buy an AK-47 in South Africa for as little as \$10.

Why Now?

There are many factors that contribute to the rising crime rates in Africa. The four most important are high rates of unemployment, particularly among young males; high inflation; increased levels of poverty; and a deterioration of police prevention measures due to a lack of public sector funds. For Africa, the 1980s was a lost decade. All nations on the continent showed a marked decrease in most relevant economic categories. Understandably, where the economic conditions are deteriorat-

ing, crime rates are rising. For example, Nigeria is currently running an estimated 400 percent per year inflation rate, while its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita has fallen dramatically from \$1,000 in 1980 to less than \$300 in 1994. (Figures provided by USAID.) This pervasive poverty has driven many young men to cities looking for work. Unfortunately, there are few opportunities for these unskilled and uneducated young men. African cities continue to fill-up with young men who are unemployed with few prospects on the horizon. They eventually become desperate, which often leads them to pursue a life of crime.

Deteriorating economic conditions have not only caused more people to become involved in crime, but have also severely limited the state's ability to deter crime. Police forces in Africa have very little money. Most police officers are poorly paid, overworked, untrained, and lack the basic necessities needed to combat crime, like police vehicles, and radios. This police incompetence has created a new generation of criminal who are bolder and more arrogant in their tactics because they no longer fear the police. It is now common to hear of car hijackers operating in the middle of town during the day, even in areas with a heavy police presence.

The situation for impoverished police officers has become so bad that many are now turning to crime themselves to supplement their meager incomes. There have been several incidents reported, where police officials, either allowed criminals to operate freely or where the police were complicit in the criminal act themselves. Police officers have been known to serve as lookouts for the carjackers, by allowing drivers to pass first through the police check point, only to be robbed further on down the road. Other incidents include painfully slow response times or no response at all to a victims request for assistance. When police do arrive and provide adequate service, they often demand a gratuity from the victim.

Travelers in Africa should be wary of soldiers as well as the police. African armies are usually better funded than the police, but in some remote sections, they may not have received their pay in some time. This creates a situation in which troops are forced to live off the populace. They do this by “shaking down” travelers along main highways and by stealing basic necessities. Since their vehicles are usually in need of repair, it is common for soldiers to commandeer vehicles when they need to respond to outbreaks of violence. Usually the vehicles are not returned, and if they are, they tend to be damaged. Drivers should be cautious of the military, always remembering to obey their commands and never challenging their authority.



How to Avoid Becoming a Carjacking Victim

Below are some commonsense safety tips to keep in mind while traveling throughout Africa.

Safe Driving Tips

Be aware of all potential threats. Check with the Embassy's Regional Security Officer for information on areas to avoid.

Take on a lower profile. For example, driving an older sedan, rather than an expensive four-wheel drive vehicle, is one good way to become less conspicuous.

Planning is the key to avoiding dangerous situations. Always think of an alternative route, just in case your primary pathway is closed for some reason.

Be aware of your surroundings and conscious of potential pitfalls. Make sure your air conditioner is in proper working order, especially in warm climates, so that you can keep your car doors locked and your windows rolled up at all times.

Avoid police and military checkpoints, if at all possible. When confronted by police or military officials, always obey their commands and never challenge their authority.

Always be aware of vehicles with a driver and passengers in them parked along the side of the road. Bandits often work in teams and as mentioned earlier, look for potential targets at various vehicle chokepoints, like thoroughfares leading into residential areas and at traffic circles.

If you are being followed, go directly to a crowded public area.

Try to maintain a safe distance (at least a half a car length away) from the vehicle in front of your own. The goal is to be able to take evasive action if it should become necessary.

Try to keep your vehicle in the lane next to oncoming traffic. This will help if you are suddenly confronted with a dangerous situation up ahead, such as a demonstration or a roadblock. With the vehicle next to the oncoming traffic lane, you can more easily perform a U-turn and avoid a troubling situation entirely.

When pulling into a gated-front driveway, make sure no one is loitering around outside. If the coast is clear, then drive up to the gate remembering to not pull up directly behind the gate. This will allow you room to escape if attacked. Otherwise bandits can take advantage of you by positioning their vehicles directly behind yours, trapping you in between them and the gate. To avoid this, stay immediately outside on the street and honk your horn to alert the guard that you want them to open the gate.

Keep travel after dark, especially to rural areas, to an absolute minimum. If you do have to travel at night, inform someone where you are going and when you should be expected. Also bring along a portable radio, so you can contact someone in case of an emergency.

Never travel alone at night, this is even more important to remember than during the day.

Remove all valuables from your vehicle, such as expensive tool sets or luggage, to reduce your loss if the vehicle is stolen. Make a copy of your vehicle registration form and keep that in a separate location, preferably your place of business to avoid having it stolen.

Always keep car keys and house keys separate from one another. If you do lose your car, you won't automatically lose your household possessions as well.



What To Do When Confronted

When confronted by armed gunmen, do not resist.

When confronted by a gunman, it is better to show the thieves your hands, making only slow deliberate movements, if asked to hand over car keys, wallet, or personal belongings. Do not make any sudden moves, particularly reaching under the seat or into the glove box.

Give up your vehicle and any valuables readily, because thieves in Africa would rather shoot you than argue with you.



Selected Incidents of Car Hijackings Involving Westerners

In Nigeria on December 6, 1994, an American citizen and a Nigerian national were attacked in their Toyota Land Cruiser on the highway between Ibadan and Ife, about 150 miles north of Lagos. After passing through a military checkpoint, they encountered three vehicles barricading the road. The Nigerian took evasive action and attempted a U-turn back towards the military checkpoint, only to find it gone. The three vehicles took up the chase and began firing automatic weapons. The Nigerian was grazed in the head by a bullet, forcing him to pull over. Once the Land Cruiser had stopped, five men emerged from the three vehicles and pulled the two out of their vehicle. The thieves began firing their weapons into the ground and threatening to kill the victims unless they surrendered U.S. currency. After they stole \$1,000 from the American, they then took both victims' laptop computers and various personal items, including the American's passport, and before driving off, they shot out the Land Cruiser's tires. While not a car hijacking per se, this incident does highlight the various tactics used in car thefts, particularly the military complicity and the ambush-style assault.

In Abidjan on June 6, 1995, the dependent son of a French diplomat was abducted from the parking lot of the International School in Abidjan (ICSA). The dependent son was picked up by a driver in the parking lot of the ICSA at approximately 2030 hours. The car was immediately surrounded by three armed bandits. Both the driver and the boy were taken on a long harrowing ride through the city before being released unharmed in a forested area near Yopougon.

In Addis Ababa on July 5, 1995, the Deputy Chief of Mission, Regional Security Officer, their spouses and a Foreign Service national driver had their vehicle seized by five gunmen. It was later learned that the bandits were escapees from the prison at Awassa. Their motive appears to have been the need for quick transportation rather than strictly robbery. Ethiopian police eventually found the suspects at a bar in Addis Ababa.

In Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, on August 5, 1995, five American citizens were kidnaped and their vehicle seized by three armed bandits near Mikumi National Park. Three men armed with AK-47s approached the American missionaries' parked vehicle head-on along the shoulder of the road. The armed bandits ordered everyone down on the ground. When one man did not move quickly, he was struck in the face with the butt of an AK-47. At one point, the bandits discussed shooting the victims one by one, but when they discovered the victims were missionaries, they stopped discussing this option. Shortly after this, the victims were given an unknown liquid to drink, apparently a drug given to induce sleep, and then were left on the side of the road.

In Nairobi on August 17, 1995, the Headmaster of the Japanese Community School, was shot at point blank range in the course of a carjacking, when he did not respond fast enough to the criminals' instructions.

In Abidjan on September 21, 1995, a Peace Corps vehicle was hijacked by four or five armed men. The six Peace Corps volunteers were unharmed, but the thieves made off with their personal items and clothing. The vehicle (a Mitsubishi Pajero) was able to avoid a police checkpoint because of its diplomatic tags.

In Lagos on November 15, 1995, an American citizen was carjacked at gunpoint, beaten, thrown into the trunk of her vehicle and then driven around the capital for hours. Her car was then used to terrorize other motorists, and in one case, to rob and sexually assault a Lebanese woman. After several hours both women were released.

In Nairobi on November 24, 1995, a British High Commission diplomat was partially paralyzed during an attempted carjacking. As the victim drove home from an diplomatic function, he noticed he was being followed. After taking evasive action, he believed he had eluded his stalkers, but he suddenly his found his path blocked and shots were fired into the vehicle. The first shot struck only the windshield, the second struck the victim, causing instant paralysis. His vehicle crashed into a gate and the assailants drove off into the night.

In Burundi on January 29, 1996, an American living in the capital had his vehicle stolen from outside his home by six assailants armed with revolvers. The bandits were able to force themselves past his private security guard and steal several small personal items before commandeering the vehicle.





RAPE
What Everyone
Needs To Know

**By
Lynda M. Graham
Rape Awareness Coordinator,
and Lisa C. Meeks
Special Agent
Mobile Support Division
Bureau of Diplomatic Security**

Rape is a crime of violence, not passion. Everywhere in the world, rape is the most violent crime against a person, short of homicide. It is motivated by a sense of powerlessness and a need to humiliate others. It is a violation of a person's personal space. Rapists receive satisfaction from the psychological effects of supreme control over another person, alleviating their own feelings of inadequacy. Experiencing rape transforms people into victims and seems to change their lives forever. It will affect each and every day of their lives.

Sexual violence is a worldwide problem. Increased rape and sexual assault incidences usually occur when other crime statistics rise. Carjackers no longer just want your vehicle. Breaking and entering is not always for your personal belongings. Rapes have also occurred in countries where there has been political strife or declining economies. Americans are perceived as being wealthy, with their nice homes, vehicles with drivers, roving patrols, or their personal security guards. Anger is one of the driving factors in these crimes overseas. In one particular case, an angry gang believed that the American husband and wife had put pressure on the government and it had affected the price of the market goods being purchased by the local people. Gang members broke through the steel fence and for several hours repeatedly raped both husband and wife.

When selecting a victim, a rapist will often choose someone who appears vulnerable. What does a vulnerable victim look like? Someone they believe will be paralyzed by fear and not put up a fight. They are the ones not paying attention to their surroundings and may be burdened with packages or small children. American women may be singled out since they are considered “loose.” In a foreign culture, we may send a completely different message than we intend simply by the clothing we wear or by our actions. It gives the rapist the perception that you are begging to be treated roughly and “asking” to have your personal body space violated.

The denial syndrome is alive and well both in the United States and overseas. Many people think that rape only happens to young, pretty women, that it cannot happen to them. It can happen to anyone regardless of age,



race, social class, personal appearance, or sex. Elderly women, infants, pregnant women, and men have all been victims of rape. Most rape victims had a sense that something was wrong but did not trust their instincts.

A common misconception is that rape only happens in dark parking lots, unoccupied buildings, and unpopulated areas. The crime does occur in these areas, but several of the most recently reported incidents have occurred in the victims' home. Simple “Peeping Tom” activities can provide the information necessary to plan the attack. With this information, perpetrators can enter through unlocked doors or windows knowing they will meet little or no resistance. Once inside, the home provides the rapists with the isolation they desire.

The majority of rape cases are not reported to law enforcement officials. Rape is considered the most underreported of all criminal offenses. It is estimated

that for every rape reported, 10–20 go unreported. Humiliation is cited as one of the main reasons for not reporting these crimes. The most silent group is the 15–19 year old age group. Imagine your 16-year-old daughter having to come home and tell you that her body has been violated.

The emotional impact of any traumatic event, to include being the witness to a violent crime, was first studied in the mid 1970s. It was found that many victims suffered from an acute stress reaction to a life threatening situation. Victims of crime experience crisis reactions similar to those experienced by victims of war, natural disaster, and catastrophic illness. While victims' specific emotional and physical symptoms varied, they fell into a discernible pattern, which became known as Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. This includes a wide range of feelings such as shock or disbelief. Confusion, along with sleep disturbances, and eating disorders are some of the most common occurrences. As one victim put it, “It’s like being on an ‘emotional rollercoaster.’”

Men feel that rape is a “women’s issue.” Men have been victims of rape, both in the United States and overseas. During Desert Storm, military personnel were briefed on this subject. Rape against a man is just as humiliating and degrading as with a woman. It carries the same emotional impact, only men are more silent with their feelings.

Responding to the victims' needs is a very important step toward their full recovery. Many people do not realize that rape is a “brush with death.” At any time during this violent attack, the victim could lose her or his life. Victims need to be taken to a safe place. Let the victim be part of that decision making process. This will aid in the recovery since during these crimes, the victims are not in control of their lives and cannot make decisions.

Reporting the crime and seeking medical help are essential to the well-being and recovery of rape survivors. Overseas, report to the Regional Security Officer or domestically to police or law enforcement. Treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and testing for possible pregnancy is recommended. Medical facilities may also be a resource for information concerning this subject. Victims should start a positive support system early.

Local Rape Crisis Centers may be available to assist in this process.

Acknowledging that rape is a crime of violence, understanding victim selection, trusting your instincts, reporting to law enforcement, and seeking help are the key factors to understanding the crime of rape. Victims of rape must realize that nothing they did would make it their fault or justify that they deserved it. Bad judgment is not a rapeable offense.

Home

- Lock doors and windows
- Do not admit strangers
- Close drapes to prevent surveillance
- Report suspicious activity
- Keep areas around the home well lit
- If you have an alarm, use it

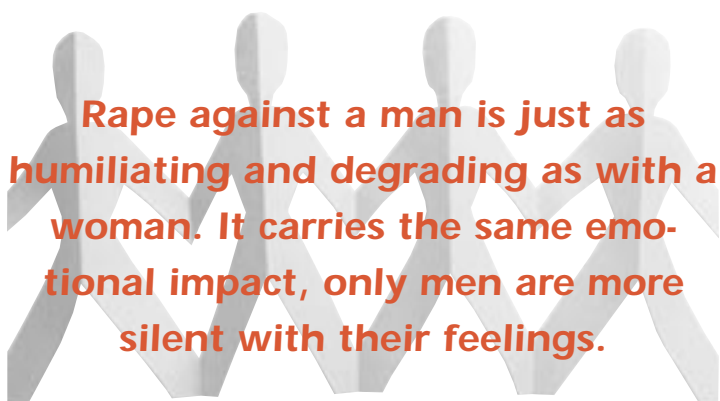
Vehicle

- Control access to your vehicle
- Never pick up hitchhikers
- Keep vehicle properly maintained
- Park in well lit areas
- Check the back seat
- Know safehavens along the way

Public Places

- Walk with confidence
- Don't flaunt valuables
- Travel in groups
- Stay in well lit areas
- Be aware
- If followed, seek a crowded area

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS



Rape against a man is just as humiliating and degrading as with a woman. It carries the same emotional impact, only men are more silent with their feelings.

Alert Overseas Kids:

The Bureau of Diplomatic Security
Provides Safety Information for
American Children Living Overseas



By
Jane S. De Kay

Opening illustration by Jacob Starnes, grade 3, in Asuncion.



One of the primary responsibilities of the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) is to protect our employees overseas. People working at U.S. diplomatic missions are at risk at post, on the street, and in their homes; and their families are often at equal risk.

The Bureau has many programs to protect these people, and one of the most important is A-OK—a security program for children.

Initiated in 1987, the A-OK program (which stands for Alert Overseas Kids) is an awareness program that provides elementary school-level safety information and education to American children living overseas. A-OK is designed to reach children of State Department and other foreign affairs agency employees serving abroad, children of expatriate U.S. business families, and children attending American Schools. The A-OK program is managed by DS's Security Awareness staff (SA).

Through networking within Diplomatic Security and with other offices in the Department, as well as with other agencies and representatives of private business and national safety organizations, SA researches current threats to children's security and safety at our posts. Security officers and community liaison officers periodically are asked about issues of current concern and what materials are needed.

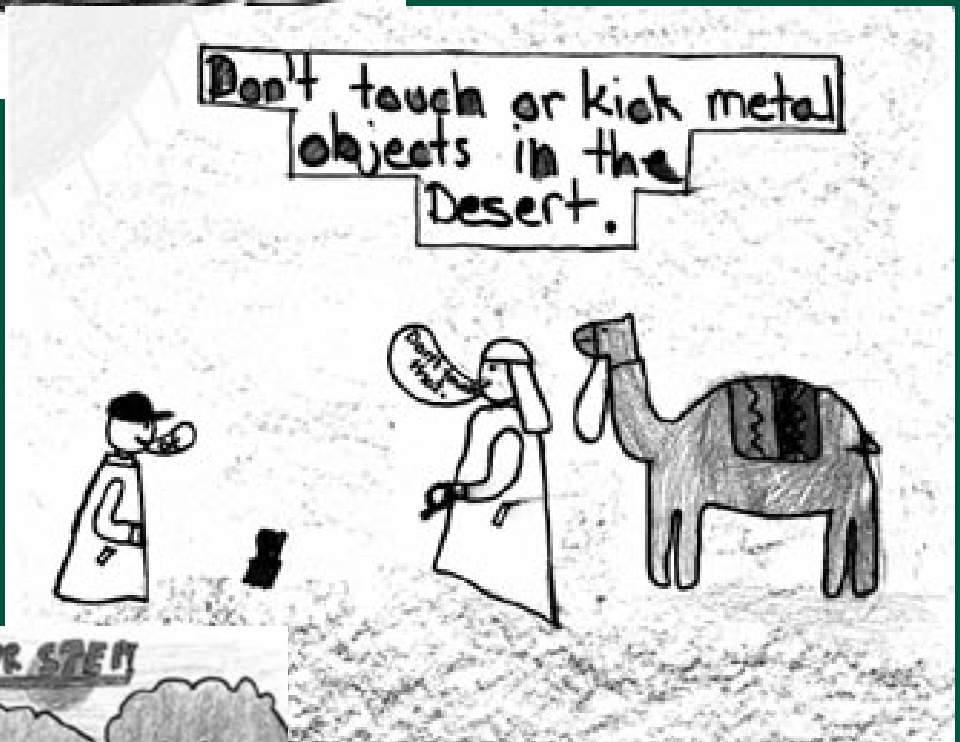
In response to defined needs, a range of security and safety materials are distributed to posts, usually once or twice a year. Materials can consist of coloring books, activity booklets, pamphlets for parents and children to read and discuss together, and videos. The principal focus is personal security and safety-at home, at school, and on the street. The materials are directed at enabling children to become more aware of measures to be taken to avoid danger and react appropriately in threatening situations or emergencies. At the same time, security awareness messages for adults are reinforced through participation in and the results of children's program activities. Occasionally, specific problems at post may create a need for special materials. For example, a rise in child abductions may instigate a post's request for "stranger safety" materials. We also have had requests for information on drug and substance abuse, first aid, and baby sitter guidelines.

These packets of information are meant to encourage each post to conduct a security program or activity for children. Most posts conduct some type of security awareness event at least annually and, with the help of A-OK program materials, many add a segment specifically for the children. SA attempts to respond to post requests for materials and give-aways that might make their programs more effective and interesting.



David Mattei, grade 5, in Canberra, was given a special award for this illustration. Nesting magpies are very protective; about 50 people a year lose their sight from swooping magpies.

Ellyn Echols, grade 4 in Kuwait depicts the dangers of landmines, a hazard unknown in America but prevalent in many parts of the world.



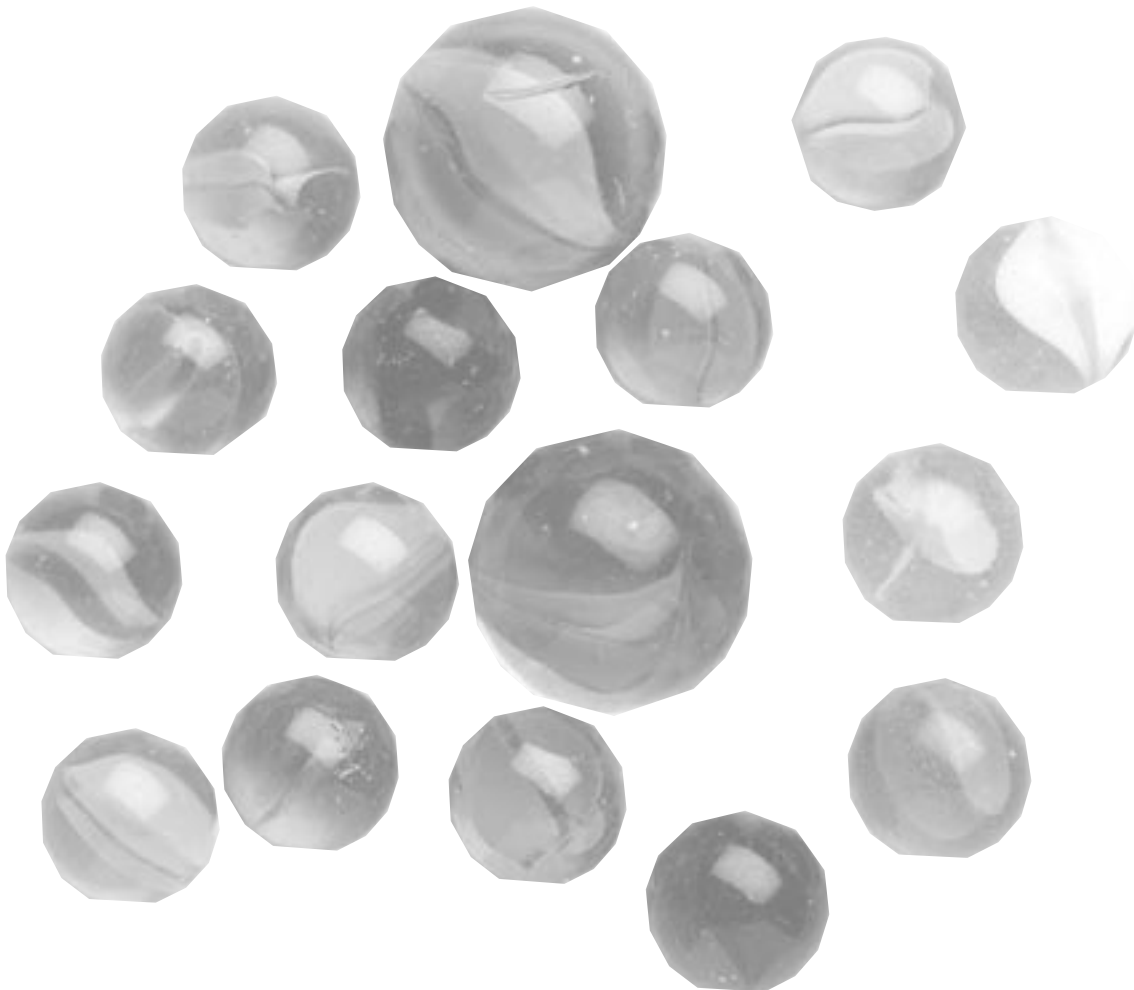
John Edwards, grade 5, in New Delhi, shows us a hazard all of us would like to avoid.

To maintain interest and reward participation in program activities, SA conducts an annual contest in which children demonstrate their security awareness by producing entries that depict security awareness rules and practices. In years past, we have produced posters, stickers, a coloring book, and most recently, calendars.

For the past 4 years, a calendar has been produced with drawings submitted by children from posts around the world. Entries are judged in three grade categories, K-2, grades 3-4, and grades 5-6. Within each grade group, a first, second, third, and fourth place is awarded. This allows us to feature a different drawing for each month. Within the first year or two of the contest, however, the judges had great difficulty in limiting themselves to

12 winners. We then began giving “special awards” and “honorable mentions” for additional drawings that appear on the cover and in a smaller size in the back of the calendar. This gives us the opportunity to have more “winners” in the contest and encourages participation in the program. Every child whose drawing is selected for the calendar receives a special certificate signed by the Assistant Secretary of DS and by their own ambassador. Every other entrant also receives a certificate of appreciation for their participation.

Over the years, we have found that the A-OK program is successful in teaching our smallest diplomats basic security and safety information.

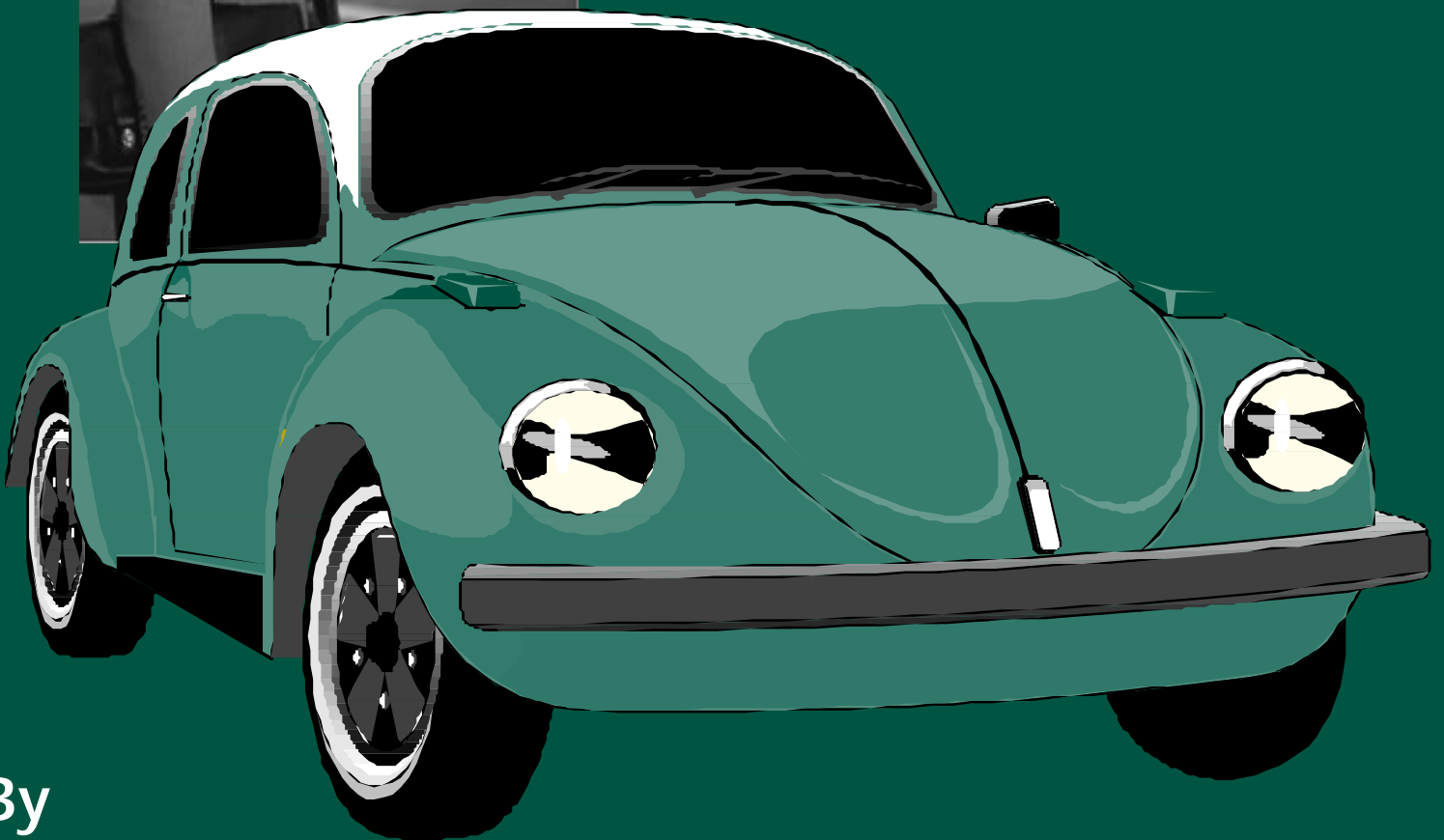


Taxicab Violence:

A Growing Concern for U.S. Travelers in Mexico



Do not hail cabs on the street. Always ask your host or hotel to call and reserve a “*Sitio*” (pronounced “C-T-O”) taxi cab which is located at legal taxi stands throughout the city .(For more security tips see page 120.)



By
Danny Rothstein

Special thanks to the Regional Security Office
of the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City.

“U.S. citizens visiting Mexico City should absolutely avoid taking any taxi not summoned by telephone or on their behalf by a responsible individual or contracted in advance at the airport. Robbery assaults on passengers in taxis have become more frequent and violent, with passengers subjected to beatings and sexual assault.”

— U.S. Department of State’s
Consular Information Sheet,
April 29, 1998

The United States Department of State warns American travelers that crime in Mexico City has reached critical levels. The one crime that has placed Mexico City in a glaring spotlight within the last 2 years is taxicab robberies.

Taxicab assaults and robberies frequently occur in roving Volkswagen bugs that are typically painted green and white or yellow and white. These cabs are called “*Libre*” taxis, and can also be identified by a green stripe on the vehicle’s license plate.

In addition to being robbed, passengers often are subjected to physical brutality, including severe beatings and sexual assaults while riding in these roving Volkswagen bugs. Assaults and robberies in these illegal taxicabs usually occur in one of two ways. In one scenario, the driver will stop unexpectedly and several armed accomplices will jump into the vehicle. In another scenario, a vehicle carrying armed assailants will follow a cab and target the passenger when the two vehicles are on a side street or idling at a red light. On many occasions the driver in both scenarios is directly involved with the planned assault and robbery.

Furthermore, what may start off as a robbery can rapidly turn into a “quick-napping,” when an unsuspecting passenger is held hostage in the cab while the criminals drive throughout the city emptying the victim’s bank account with his or her ATM card. These quick-nappings and robberies have lasted as long as 24 hours, with victims usually beaten and women passengers sometimes raped.

To be fair, many taxi drivers in Mexico City are by and large an honest and hardworking lot in a dangerous profession. Many legal taxi drivers themselves are victims. Bandits beat them up, steal their taxi and start cruising the city for fares and potential victims.

Case Examples and Statistics

Mexico City's Office of the Attorney General recently reported that 664 tourists were robbed in taxicabs in the first 4 months of 1998—536 of whom were Mexicans and 128 foreigners. During 1997, more than 1,300 violent crimes were committed in taxicabs, with 165 cases involving foreign tourists. The numbers were even more staggering for 1996. Drawing upon Mexican government figures, the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City reports 2,215 persons were assaulted while riding in taxicabs.

Taxicab robberies crossed a threshold in December 1997, when an American businessman living in Mexico City was shot and killed. His body was eventually dumped in the same neighborhood where he lived with his wife and four children. More recently, in April 1998, four American journalists from Texas hailed a green-and-white sedan taxi in Mexico City. Unfortunately, the

four passengers did not see another green-and-white Volkswagen taxi following their sedan. Within minutes, the sedan pulled over and two male Mexican perpetrators from the Volkswagen bug, armed with a revolver and a pistol, entered the sedan. The four passengers were robbed and one was shot in the back after struggling with one of the armed assailants.

Due to the growing accounts of taxicab assaults and robberies, the Department of State has issued Public Announcements cautioning Americans from hailing one of the many roving Volkswagen bug taxicabs. Following suit, authorities in Canada, Germany, and France have issued their own advisories, urging citizens against the use of these pirate taxicabs.

The Mexican government has estimated that over 26,000 of the city's 110,000 taxis are operating illegally without having obtained the required license.



(pictured above and left)
Illegal taxis picking-up passengers
at Mexico City's Benito Juarez
International Airport.

TAXI!

How and Why They Exist

Taxi “piracy” is defined as using unregistered vehicles as legitimate or authorized taxis. The Mexican government has estimated that over 26,000 of the city’s 110,000 taxis are operating illegally without having obtained the required license. This leaves a large number of taxicabs not registered, unregulated, and untraceable, driving the streets of Mexico City.

Taxi piracy plagues Mexico City for many reasons. Separate from the many cabs that are stolen from legitimate drivers, shady lawyers help provide false documentation and legal cover for would-be taxi drivers and conspire to prevent the legal system from taking action. These lawyers supply the would-be taxi driver with a legal writ to get their business started. Consequently, the pirate taxi driver who robs his passengers cannot be traced because his vehicle was never legally registered.

In addition, pirate taxis exist because penalties for drivers are considerably light and offer no serious deterrent. When a taxi pirate is caught, the vehicle is confiscated and the driver must pay a fine equivalent to \$656. However, once the fine is paid, the driver can reclaim his car and return to the street. Furthermore, since the many pirate taxicabs are considerably cheaper than legally sanctioned taxis, pirate drivers know they will always be in demand.

Another factor which contributes to the everyday proliferation of the pirate taxicab is the simple fact the since many legal cabs are stolen from honest drivers, it is becoming more difficult for authorities to differentiate between legal and illegal cabs, especially when the stolen cab is a vehicle other than the familiar Volkswagen bug. Likewise, when unsuspecting tourists see a green-and-white or yellow-and-white Volkswagen bug with a working meter, displaying a company shield and driver’s certificate, and large black identification numbers on the vehicle’s rooftop, they think the vehicle is a legitimate taxicab.

Finally, the lack of police presence and rampant police corruption throughout Mexico City aids in the proliferation of these renegade taxicabs. On many occasions, the police are either accomplices of the cab driver or they turn a blind eye while the crime is being committed.

So, What is Being Done?

“We do not deny the problem of taxi robberies. We are telling you what the size is and what we are doing about it.”—A spokesman for the Mexican government.

Although Mexico City police claim they are holding spot checks on cab drivers and fining those not displaying proper identification cards, tourists visiting Mexico City continue to be victims in taxicab robberies. Fearing a negative impact upon its tourism trade, Mexico City officials have implemented several security initiatives in the hopes of curbing this crime.

Travelers arriving at Mexico City’s International Airport can now obtain security advice from information booths set up throughout the airport on how to obtain the services of a legally sanctioned taxi. Similarly, many hotels throughout the city now distribute to all guests information cards in English on safe taxi usage and other security tips which can aid visitors to the capital.

In the final months of 1997, Mexico City officials also announced plans to establish special security zones where police presence and surveillance would be increased, especially in the Zona Rosa, a popular shopping and restaurant district. Along these same lines, city officials announced special taxis and buses would be designated solely for tourists. However, while a few more police officers have been assigned to patrol the Zona Rosa, the city government has yet to implement any police security zones or establish special means of transportation for tourists visiting Mexico City.

Helpful Security Tips

Unless a concentrated effort is undertaken to stop taxicab robberies and assaults, this criminal activity will continue to flourish. In the mean time, there are a few things that travelers can do to ensure a safe stay in Mexico City. The following security procedures are recommended:

- ❑ Travelers should never hail or ride in a roving green or yellow Volkswagen bug taxi. Most major hotels do not allow these illegal cabs on hotel property.
- ❑ The U.S. Embassy in Mexico City is aware of no cases of criminality involving the passengers of taxis officially and permanently marked as airport taxis, with taxis operating from *Sitio* stands, nor with tourists cars located at most major hotels.
- ❑ Always make sure that the driver's identification is displayed and that the photo matches the driver's face. All *Sitio* cab drivers wear a large identification card around their necks.
- ❑ If at all possible, do not travel alone in any taxicab. Try to travel in pairs and be extra cautious after dark. While in the cab, lock the door and roll up the windows and demand the driver do the same.
- ❑ Avoid cabs lined up or those cruising outside theaters, night clubs, or other tourist areas.
- ❑ Always enter a cab that has a working meter. If no meter exists, determine a price before you enter the vehicle. Along these same lines, always have your money ready when you enter or exit the cab, and never flash jewelry or other expensive items during the cab ride.
- ❑ Pay attention to your surroundings. Indicators that you are being targeted include another vehicle following your taxi, a driver who appears to be taking a roundabout route, or a driver who is trying to spot someone on the street. If you feel you are being targeted while riding in a taxicab, insist the driver take you to the U.S. Embassy, a well-known hotel, or the nearest public facility.



- ❑ While at the airport, take only authorized airport taxis. These taxis are not Volkswagen bugs, but are instead yellow-and-white cars with an airplane pictured on one side of the vehicle. A traveler can safely purchase an airport taxicab ticket while inside the terminal.



- ❑ Do not hail cabs on the street. Always ask your host or hotel to call and reserve a "*Sitio*" (pronounced "C-T-O") taxicab which is located at legal taxi stands throughout the city. While *Sitio* cabs are more expensive than the roving Volkswagen bugs, they are far safer. In addition to not being a Volkswagen bug, a *Sitio* cab can be recognized by the red stripe on the car's license plate.
- ❑ Above all, if you do become a robbery victim, do not resist. Give the perpetrator your valuables without hesitation. Your valuables are not something to lose your life over.

While crime in Mexico City has reached crisis proportions, the U.S. Embassy stresses that travelers need not cancel travel plans to Mexico's capital. By taking security precautions which are necessary when visiting any large and unfamiliar city, millions of visitors can enjoy the city without incident.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman

MEXICO

March 26, 1998

The U.S. Embassy in Mexico strongly urges American citizens to only use taxis summoned by telephone. We are reissuing the Announcement that was made in the aftermath of the shooting death of a U.S. citizen resident in Mexico City on December 15, 1997, in an apparent taxi robbery.

It is possible to call Mexico City radio taxis and fixed site taxis (sitios) by phone, and receive positive identification of the taxi and/or driver. Travelers may also wish to use "tourist taxis," to which their hotels can direct them. U.S. citizens should especially avoid taking taxis parked outside the Bellas Artes Theatre, in front of nightclubs, restaurants, hotels, or cruising throughout the city. In particular, Volkswagen "bug" taxis are to be avoided. Americans arriving at the international airport in Mexico City should only take "airport" taxis (yellow in color and marked with an airplane), after purchasing a ticket in the airport arrival hall.

Although the December 15 incident was the first robbery we know of leading to the death of a U.S. citizen, taxicab robberies, which affect not just U.S. citizens but all Mexico City residents, are becoming more frequent and violent.

For further information about travel to Mexico, please consult the Consular information Sheet for Mexico, dated June 18, 1997.

This extends the Department of State's Public Announcement for Mexico, which expired March 18, 1998, to June 27, 1998, reissued without change.

Department of State travel information and publications are available at Internet address: <http://travel.state.gov>. U.S. travelers may hear recorded information by calling the Department of State in Washington, D.C. at 202-647-5225 from their touchtone telephone, or receive information by automated telex by dialing 202-647-3000 from their fax machine.

Taxicab Crime



U.S. citizens visiting Mexico City should absolutely avoid taking any taxi not summoned by telephone or on their behalf by a responsible individual or contracted in advance at the airport. Robbery assaults on passengers in taxis have become more frequent and violent, with passengers subjected to beatings and sexual assault. In December 1997, a U.S. citizen was murdered in a taxi robbery. When in need of a taxi, telephone a radio taxi or *sitio* (pronounced C-T-O). Ask the dispatcher for the driver's name and the cab's license plate number. If you walk to a *sitio* taxi stand, use only a driver known to you. Ask the hotel concierge or other responsible individual calling on your behalf to write down the license plate number. Passengers arriving at Mexico City's Benito Juarez International Airport should take only airport taxis (yellow, with an airport symbol on the door) after prepaying the fare at one of the special booths inside the airport. Radio taxis may be called at tel. 271-9146, 271-9058, and 272-6125. U.S. citizens should avoid taking taxis parked outside the Bellas Artes theater, in front of nightclubs, restaurants, or cruising throughout the city.

U.S. Department of State
Consular Information Sheet