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IMPERSONATION IN HAWAII

HAWAII CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA CENTER
APRIL 1989



STATE OF HAWAII

DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

HAWAII CRIMINAL JUSTICE DATA CENTER

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IMPERSONATION IN HAWAII

117265

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ACQUISITIONS

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INTRODUCTION

The Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center (HCJDC) studied impersonation related the occurrence of to State Identification (ID) cards. Individuals fraudulently obtain or attempt to obtain a State Identification card by impersonating another person using their personal documents. The objectives of this report were to identify common factors among the impersonators, to determine basic motivations behind the impersonation attempts, and to determine if the 1986 statutory amendment changing the legal drinking age from 18 to 21 years was a major influence in the occurrence of this offense.

CIVIL IDENTIFICATION

The Hawaii Civil Identification office is part of the Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center of the State Department of the Attorney General. It is authorized, under Chapter 846 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to issue State ID cards to anyone residing or present in Hawaii. In the case of applicants under the age of 16, a parent or guardian must apply for the State ID on the minor's behalf. In the case of an incompetent, a person with custody or control of maintaining the incompetent person must apply for the State ID card on the person's behalf. The purpose of the ID card is to establish identity and not residency.

The information printed on a State ID card include:

- 1. social security number;
- citizenship status;
- 3. the issue date of the card;
- date of birth;
- 5. a composite description of the person;
- 6. the person's signature;
- 7. a facsimile signature of the Attorney General;
- 8. the signature of the Administrator of the Data Center;
- 9. fingerprints of the index and middle fingers of both hands (except in the case of children under six years, unless otherwise requested by the accompanying parent or guardian); and
- 10. the name and address of the person's nearest relative. 2

The documents needed to obtain a State ID card are an original social security card and the original birth certificate for U.S. born applicants. A marriage license is also required for married people who have undergone name changes. U.S. National applicants need a valid U.S. passport or birth certificate with Certificate of Identity. Foreign born applicants need a valid passport, a valid VISA, or an alien resident card.

IMPERSONATION

An impersonation attempt may be discovered at the Civil Identification office if the person being impersonated had previously been issued an ID card. All applications are checked against existing Civil ID files for duplicate cards and previous applications. In the case of a positive file check, fingerprints on file are compared to the applicant's

fingerprints. When a mismatch is discovered, the person is detained by the Civil ID staff and then taken into police custody.

An impersonation offense may also be detected when a person applies for an ID card, without having previously applied, and the Civil ID staff finds that a card with the person's name had already been issued to someone else. Upon verification of the identity of the true person, the investigation division of the Attorney General's office opens an investigation. Investigators work to locate the identity and location of the impersonator. If the identity and location of the impersonator is discovered, a warrant of arrest is issued by the police.

State ID cards are often confiscated by liquor serving establishments when the proprietors believe the ID to be false. The impersonator may be arrested if the proprietor makes a formal complaint to the police. The proprietor usually returns the confiscated State Identification card to the Attorney General's office for further investigation.

All documents used for impersonation are confiscated and kept by the Civil ID staff for evidence. Photocopies of the documents are given to the arresting officer and filed in Civil ID office files to be used as evidence. The person impersonated may request the return of the confiscated

documents from the Attorney General's office investigation division. The documents may be returned if the documents are no longer needed.

1986 HAWAII REVISED STATUTES AMENDMENT

from 18 to 21 years.³

On June 13, 1986, Act 342, of the 1986 Session Laws, was enacted by the State Legislature. The purpose of the Act was to establish a minimum drinking age of twenty-one years. The Act amended several sections of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to accomplish this purpose. HRS Section 281-1 was amended by revising the definition of "minor". "Minor" means any person below the age of twenty-one years. This statutory change increased the legal drinking age in Hawaii

HRS Section 281-78 was amended by adding a subsection which permitted persons between the age of 18 to 21 to sell or serve liquor as part of their employment duties under proper supervision.⁴

HRS Section 712-1250.5 was amended by adding subsections to be used as further prima facie evidence by the prosecution for cases involving defendants charged with promoting intoxicating liquor to a minor. The prima facie evidence establishes that the defendant knew that the transferee was below the age of twenty-one and that the defendant also knew the character, nature and quantity of the liquor promoted, except as provided in subsection (2)(c). Subsection (2)(c) provides the defendant the legal defense against the

prosecution that the defendant had ample reason to believe that the transferee had attained the age of twenty-one. Legal documents which verify age, among others, include the State ID card. 5

PENALTIES

The Hawaii Penal Code lists the penalties for misdemeanor offenses in HRS Section 706-640 and HRS Section 706-663. Convicted offenders may be fined an amount of not more than \$1,000 or given a sentence of imprisonment not to exceed a period of one year or both. In 1988 an amendment to HRS Section 706-640 increased the maximum fine amount for a misdemeanor offense from \$1,000 to \$2,000.

Impersonators who fraudulently obtain State ID cards, before they are discovered upon application of the true person for an ID, may be charged with HRS Section 708-0853, Forgery in the third degree. HRS Section 708-0853 is a misdemeanor. Forgery in the third degree is broadly defined to encompass the many ways an impersonator completes or alters written instruments. Written instruments, as used in this offense, are papers or documents of identification. The offense is committed when the impersonator forges or signs application with the intent to defraud.

Impersonators who are discovered at the Civil ID office are usually charged with one of two offenses listed in the Hawaii Penal Code. The choice is dependent upon the individual circumstances of the case and upon the discretion of the arresting officer.

The first offense is HRS Section 710-1017, Tampering with a Public Record. HRS Section 710-1017 is a misdemeanor. This offense is committed when the impersonator knowingly and falsely makes or completes a public record which is created, issued, received, or kept by any government office or agency. To be guilty of this offense, the impersonator does not need to possess the intent to defraud another, as in the case of Forgery in the third degree.⁸

The second offense is HRS Section 710-1063, Unsworn Falsification to Authorities. HRS Section 710-1063 is a misdemeanor. This offense is committed when the impersonator makes a fraudulent written statement on an application in a record or report submitted to a government agency with the intent to mislead a public servant in the performance of his duty. This offense does not require the person to be under an oath when the crime is committed. 9

Impersonators can also be charged with violating HRS Section 846-31, Identification certificates not to be altered, etc. This statute is from the section of the Hawaii Revised Statutes relating to the duties of the Civil Identification Office. The penalty for this violation is a maximum fine of

\$500, or a maximum prison sentence of six months, or both. This penalty is printed in bold print on the State ID application. This offense is committed when an impersonator knowingly uses the certificate of identification of another person without adequate excuse. "Adequate excuse" includes a cause beyond the person's control. An "adequate excuse" cannot be the result of a person's malfeasance, nonfeasance, or gross negligence. 10

METHOD

The Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center examined a total of 64 incidents of impersonation offenses and attempts from July of 1984 through December of 1988. The 64 incidents involved 64 impersonators. The incidents were recorded on files kept in the Civil ID section. The files included information on the date and time the offense was committed, demographic information about the impersonator and the person impersonated, and photocopies of the social security card, birth certificate, and any other evidence used in the attempt. Arrest data was gathered at the Honolulu Police Department (HPD) from police beat reports filed at the HPD records division. Court and sentencing data were gathered from HCJDC's Offender-Based Transaction Statistics/Computerized Criminal History (OBTS/CCH) files.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations in this study include a small population and incomplete records. Many of the records examined did not address the question of motivation for the attempt, the relationship to the impersonated person, or the method used to obtain the personal documents of the impersonated person. Before July of 1984, official records of impersonation offenses or attempts were not kept by the Civil ID section.

The records kept in Civil ID and the HPD records division included information about the impersonator. Statements in the records were volunteered by the impersonator to a member of the Civil ID staff or the arresting officer during booking. Arrestees are not procedurally questioned by the arresting officer. The person impersonated was often not procedurally notified or questioned about the incident.

OCCURRENCE

FREQUENCY OF OFFENSE

On the average there were about 14 offenses committed per year from 1985 through 1988. The greatest number of impersonation attempts, 18, were committed during 1988. Impersonation attempts seemed to increase throughout the years.

TABLE 1
TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFENSES COMMITTED PER YEAR

<u>Year</u>	Number Of Offenses	Percent
1984 ^a	9	14
1985	10	16
1986	13	20
1987	14	22
1988	18	28
Total	64	100

Data for July through December only.

TABLE 2
PERCENT CHANGE OF OFFENSE PER YEAR
FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

<u>Year</u>	Number of Offenses	Percent Change from previous year
1984 ^a 1985 1986 1987 1988	9 10 13 14 18	+2 +4 +2 +6
Total	64	

a Data for July through December only.

Impersonation crimes were committed throughout the year with no seasonal variation or notable trend in occurrence. The greatest number of total offenses, reported between 1984 and 1988, occurred during the months of March and June.

TABLE 3
TOTAL NUMBER OF OFFENSES PER MONTH

<u>Month</u>	<u>1984</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1986</u>	<u>1987</u>	<u>1988</u>	<u>Total</u>	Percent
January	0	0	2	2	2	6	9
February	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
March	0	2	1	3	3	9	14
April	0	0	2	0	2	4	6
May	0	1	2	3	0	6	9
June	0	3	1	3	2	9	14
July	1	1	1	1	2	6	9
August	0	2	1	0	3	6	9
September	0	0	2	1	1	4	6
October	1	1	1	1	1	5	8
November	3	0	0	0	1	4	6
December	4	. 0	0	0	1	5	8
Total	9	10	13	14	18	64	100 ^a

a Percentages in the table may not add to 100 due to rounding.

TYPE OF OCCURRENCE

Twelve of the impersonators (19 percent), were issued Hawaii State ID cards but were not discovered to be impersonators until the true person applied for an ID card at the Civil ID office. Forty-four of the impersonators (69 percent) were discovered at the time of the offense. They were detained by the Civil ID staff and taken into police custody.

TABLE 4
TYPE OF OCCURRENCE

Type	Number of Impersonators	Percent
Impersonator fled from the scene of the crime	8	13
False ID card issued; offense not discovered till true person applied for State ID card	i 12	19
Impersonators discovered at time of offense	44	69
Total	64	100 ^a

^a Percentages in the table may not add to 100 due to rounding.

FINDINGS

AGE

Date of birth information was found on 54 of the impersonators (84 percent). The ages of ten of the impersonators (16 percent) were unknown. The unknown impersonators either fled from the scene of the crime or have not been located during an investigation of their impersonation attempt.

Thirteen of the impersonators (20 percent) were juveniles, 41 were adults (64 percent) and 10 were unknown (16 percent). The average known age for juvenile impersonators was 17, and the average known age for adult impersonators was 23.

TABLE 5
AGE OF THE IMPERSONATORS

<u>Age</u>	Number of Impersonators	Percent
under 18 18-20 21 or older unknown	13 22 19 10	20 34 29 16
Total	64	100 ^a

a Percentages in the table may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SEX

Of the 64 impersonators, 41 were female (64 percent) and 20 were male (31 percent).

TABLE 6
SEX OF THE IMPERSONATORS

<u>Sex</u>	Number of Impersonators	Percent
Male	20	31
Female	41	64
Unknown	3	5
Total	64	100

RACE

The greatest number of impersonators, 17 (27 percent), were Caucasian. Fourteen (22 percent) were Hawaiian or of part Hawaiian ancestry.

TABLE 7
RACE OF THE IMPERSONATORS

Race	Number of Impersonators	Percent
Caucasian ^a Hawaiian/part Hawai Japanese Chinese Samoan Korean Black American Indian Unknown Other ^b	17 .ian 14 .5 .2 .2 .1 .4 .0 .13 .6	27 22 8 3 3 2 6 0 20 9
Total	64	100

a Caucasian includes Portuguese and Spanish.
b "Other" race category includes Mexican,
Puerto Rican, and mixed ethnic backgrounds.

MOTIVE

Twenty-three of the impersonators (36 percent) revealed that they wanted the false ID to show an increase in their age so they could go to a disco, bar or nightclub. No reason, however, was recorded on the majority, 41 (64 percent), of Civil ID records and Police beat report sheets.

RELATIONSHIP TO IMPERSONATOR

Of the 64 cases reviewed, 21 of the impersonators (33 percent) were family relations of the person impersonated.

TABLE 8
RELATIONSHIP OF THE IMPERSONATOR TO THE PERSON IMPERSONATED

Relationship	Number of Impersonators	Percent
Family Relations Friend No Response Given	21 15 28	33 23 44
Total	64	100

TRANSFERENCE OF DOCUMENTS

Fourteen of the impersonators (22 percent) stated that the person impersonated had allowed them to use their personal documents. Four of the impersonators (6 percent) admitted to stealing the documents from the person they impersonated.

The majority of impersonators, 43 (67 percent), did not reveal to the police or the Civil ID staff how they gained possession of the personal documents of the person they impersonated.

TABLE 9
METHOD OF TRANSFERENCE OF PERSONAL DOCUMENTS

	Number of Impersonators	Percent
Person allowed use of documents	14	22
Impersonator stole documents	4	6
Person had documents stolen by someone other than impersonator	2	3
Person lost documents	1	2
No response given	43	67
Total	64	100

ARRESTS

Twenty-four of the impersonators (38 percent) were arrested and booked by the police. Of the arrestees, the majority, 17 (71 percent), were first time offenders with no previous arrest records.

TABLE 10
NUMBER OF IMPERSONATORS ARRESTED

	Number of Impersonators	Percent
Arrested Not Arrested	24 40	38 62
Total	64	100

Forty of the impersonators (63 percent) were not arrested. Of the 40 impersonators not arrested, 27 were adults and 13 were juveniles. All the juvenile impersonators were taken to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Division (JCPD) located in the Honolulu Police Department. They were counseled and released to their parents or guardians with no charges filed.

TABLE 11
IMPERSONATORS NOT ARRESTED

Reason	Number of Impersonators	Percent
Juveniles	13	32
Was not located after the offense was discovered	14	35
Fled from the scene of the crime	8	20
Investigation pending	2	5
Released at the discretion of the Police or Civil ID Staff	3	8
Total	. 40	100

CHARGES

Of the 24 arrestees that were booked, the majority, 19 (79 percent), were charged with violating HRS Section 710-1017, Tampering with a Public Record.

TABLE 12
CHARGES FILED FOR ARRESTED IMPERSONATORS

Charges	Number of Impersonators	Percent
710-1017 (Tampering with a public record)	19	79
710-1063 (Unsworn Falsification to Authorit	2 ies)	8
708-0853 (Forgery, 3rd Degree)	1	4
846-0031 (Identification certificate not to be altered; etc.)	2	8
Total	24	100 ^a

a Percentages in the table may not add to 100 due to rounding.

FINAL DISPOSITIONS

The majority of the impersonation cases, 26 (41 percent), were closed pending no further course of action or investigation; 15 of the impersonators (24 percent) were granted deferred acceptance of guilty pleas (DAGP); and 5 of the impersonators (8 percent) were found guilty and sentenced. Of the 15 DAGP impersonators, 11 had their cases dismissed.

TABLE 13
FINAL DISPOSITIONS OF IMPERSONATORS

Final Disposition	Number of Impersonators	Percent
Case Closed Pending DAGPDismissed DAGP Guilty Dismissed	26 17 11 4 5	41 27 17 6 8 2
Total	64	100 ^a

a Percentages in the table may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SENTENCES

Of the five offenders who were found guilty, four received fines averaging \$100.00. None received prison terms.

TABLE 14
SENTENCES OF OFFENDERS

		Imprisonment	Fine Pr	obation	Community Service
Offender	1	0	\$100	0	0
Offender	2	0	\$ 50	0	0
Offender	3	0	\$150	0	0
Offender	4	0	\$100	1Y	20H
Offender	5	0	Q.	1 Y	0

PREVIOUS ARREST HISTORIES

Of the 64 impersonators, 13 (21 percent) were previously arrested for other offenses prior to their impersonation attempt. The greatest number of impersonators with previous arrest histories, 11, were arrested for Criminal Contempt of

Court, HRS Section 710-1077, of which 7 were convicted. For the 13 impersonators with previous arrest histories, a total of 52 previous arrests and 27 previous convictions were counted.

TABLE 15
ALL PREVIOUS ARRESTS AND CONVICTIONS

Statutes	Charge	Severity	Arrests	Convictions
708-0840	Robbery First Degree	FA	7	3
712-1241	Promoting A Dangerous Drug, First Degr		3	0
707-0731	Rape Second Degree	FB	1	0
712-1243	Promoting A Dangerous Drug, Third Degi		7	0
708-0831	Theft First Degree	FC	4	3
710-1029	Hindering Prosecution First Degree	n FC	1	0
708-0836	Unauthorized Control A Propelled Veh		3	3
707-0712	Assault Third Degree	MD	1	1
710-1077	Criminal Contempt Con		11	7 1
329C-0002	Imitation Controlled Substances Act		1	1
134-0051	Carrying Deadly Weap	ons MD	1	1
712-1200	Prostitution	PM	6	5
710-1010	Obstructing Government Operations	nt PM	1	0
13.04.02	Drinking in Public	PM	1	1
286-0102	Driving Without Lice	nse PM	2	
291C-0076	Ped on Roadway	VL	2	1 1
Total			52	27

TABLE 16
SUMMARY OF ALL PREVIOUS ARREST
FELONIES AND MISDEMEANORS

<u>Severity</u>	Total Arrests	Total Convictions
Felonies Misdemeanors	26 26	9 18
Total	52	27

SEVERITY OF PREVIOUS ARRESTS

Of the 13 impersonators with previous arrest histories, the most severe charge was for HRS, Section 708-0840, Robbery in the First Degree, a Class A felony. Seven of the 13 impersonators were arrested for this offense, of which three were convicted and sentenced.

TABLE 17
MOST SERIOUS ARREST CHARGES OF IMPERSONATORS
WITH PREVIOUS ARREST HISTORIES

Statutes	Charge	<u>Severity</u>	Arrests	Convictions
708-0840	Robbery First Degree	e FA	7	3
712-1243	Promoting A Dangerou		1	0
	Drug, Third Deg	gree		
708-0831	Theft First Degree	FC	1	1
708-0836	Unauthorized Control	. FC	2	2
	Of A Propelled			
	Vehicle			
712-1200	Prostitution	PM	2	2
Total			1.2	o
TOCAL			13	8

EFFECT OF STATUTORY CHANGES

LEGAL DRINKING AGE

Half of all the impersonation attempts examined, 34 (54 percent), were committed by individuals who were under the legal drinking age. Although motives were usually not recorded, the ages that would have been printed on the false IDs were above the legal drinking age.

After the 1986 amendment took effect in October, impersonation attempts by persons under age 21 increased by 33 percent in 1987.

TABLE 18

NUMBER OF IMPERSONATORS THAT ATTEMPTED TO INCREASE
THEIR AGE TO THE LEGAL DRINKING AGE

<u>Year</u>	Number of Impersonators under 21	Total Number <u>Per Year</u>	Percent under 21
1984 ^a 1985 1986 ^b 1987 1988	6 5 6 11 6	9 11 13 14 17	67 45 46 79 35
Total	34	64	

^aData for July through December only. ^bDrinking age increased from 18 to 21. Effective October

TABLE 19
PERCENT CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF
IMPERSONATORS UNDER 21 PER YEAR

<u>Year</u>	Number of	Total	Percent Change
	Impersonators	Number	Per Year
	under 21	Per Year	From Previous Year
1984 ^a	6	9	0
1985	5	11	-22
1986 ^b	6	13	-1
1987	11	14	+33
1988	6	17	-44
Total	34	64	

^aData for July through December only. ^bDrinking age increased from 18 to 21. Effective October 1, 1986.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

A total of 64 incidents of impersonation offenses and attempts occurred between July of 1984 through December of 1988 at the State Civil ID office. On the average there were about 14 offenses committed per year from 1985 through 1988. The greatest number of impersonation attempts, 18, were committed during 1988. Impersonation attempts seemed to increase throughout the years. Impersonation crimes were committed throughout the year with no seasonal variation or notable trend in occurrences. Half of the impersonation attempts, 34 (54 percent), were committed by individuals who were under the legal drinking age.

Of the 64 impersonators involved in those incidents, 13 were juveniles (20 percent), 41 were adults (64 percent), and 10 were unknown (16 percent). The impersonators consisted of 41 female (64 percent) and 20 male (31 percent). The greatest number of impersonators, 17 (26 percent), were Caucasian. Fourteen (22 percent) were Hawaiian or of part Hawaiian ancestry.

Twenty-three of the impersonators (37 percent) revealed on record that they wanted the false ID to show an increase in their age so they could go to a disco, bar or nightclub. Fourteen of the impersonators (22 percent) stated that the

person impersonated had allowed them to use their personal documents. Four of the impersonators (6 percent) admitted to stealing the documents from the person they impersonated.

The majority of impersonators 43 (67 percent), did not reveal to the police or the Civil ID staff how they gained possession of the personal documents of the person they impersonated. In 21 (34 percent) of the incidents, however, a family member was impersonated.

Twenty-four of the impersonators (38 percent) were arrested and booked by the police. Of the arrestees, 17 (71 percent), were first time offenders with no previous arrest records.

All of the juvenile impersonators were taken to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Division (JCPD) located in the Honolulu Police Department. They were counseled and released to their parents or guardians with no charges filed. Of the 24 arrestees that were booked, the majority, 19 (78 percent), were charged with violating HRS Section 710-1017, Tampering with a Public Record.

The greatest number of impersonation cases, 26 (41 percent), were closed pending no further course of action or investigation. Of the arrestees that were booked, 15 out of 23 (65 percent) were granted Deferred Acceptance of Guilty

Pleas (DAGP) in court. Eleven of the DAG pleas were dismissed with four still in-progress. Five impersonators were found guilty. None received the maximum fine or prison sentence for their crime.

There were various underlying motives why people committed a Civil ID impersonation offense. Findings show that the increased legal drinking age did appear to be a reason, especially in the year following the passage of the drinking age law. The incidence of impersonation attempts by persons under age 21 increased substantially in 1987. The number of impersonation offenses and attempts in 1987 by persons under age 21 totaled 11, as compared to an average of about six offenses per year from 1984 through 1986. In 1988, however, impersonation attempts by persons under age 21 returned to the average figure.

NOTES

- 1. Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) section 846-27 and HRS section 846-35.
- 2. HRS section 846-32.
- 3. Act 342, Session Laws of Hawaii 1986.
- 4. Act 342, Session Laws of Hawaii 1986.
- 5. Act 342, Session Laws of Hawaii 1986.
- 6. HRS 1987 Supplement section 706-663, section 706-640, and section 706-606.
- 7. HRS section 708-853.
- 8. HRS section 710-1017.
- 9. HRS section 710-1063.
- 10. HRS section 846-36.

GLOSSARY

Gross negligence	The intentional failure to perform a manifest duty in reckless disregard of the consequences as affecting the life or property of another.
Impersonator	Person who impersonates another using their personal documents.
Malfeasance	Comprehensive term including any wrongful conduct that affects, interrupts or interferes with the performance of official duties.
Nonfeasance	Nonperformance of some act which ought to be performed, omission to perform a required duty at all, or total neglect of duty.
Offender	Person who is convicted of a crime.
Prima Facie evidence	Evidence good and sufficient on its face.
Transferee	He to whom a transfer is made.
Written instrument	Any paper, document, or other instrument containing written or printed matter or its equivalent; or any token, coin, stamp, seal, badge, trademark, or other evidence or symbol of value, right, privilege, or identification.