



Self-Reliance Institute Newsletter

March 2014 Volume 2, Issue 3

National License Plate Database

Due to minor surgery, I spent the last several days a bit disconnected from the news. Not completely disconnected. After all, I'm a news junkie. But I tried to stay away from news sources and stories that I knew would raise my ire — if you know what I mean.

This morning, feeling almost human again, I returned to my daily routine of reviewing news and commentary impacting privacy, security and liberty issues.

I didn't go far before coming across a worrisome report from WTOP, the all-news radio station I used to listen to when I lived in the belly of the beast — Washington, DC.

The report concerns the creation of a national license plate database.

Before I share what I learned, and what I think members of the Self-Reliance Institute should do, I want to provide you with the link to this month's Self-Reliance Institute Newsletter.

The February edition of the Self-Reliance Institute can be found by clicking — [HERE](#).

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Home Owner Stops Intruders With Shotgun

When it comes to exercising the right of self-defense against outside intruders from within a private residence, the first weapon most Americans chose is a shotgun.

And while an expert marksman who is well-trained and experienced in the use of handguns or long guns for close-quarter combat might select a gun other than a shotgun, it's hard to argue against shotguns as the best weapon for home defense.

Still, no matter what weapon you select for home defense, it is critical to think through and practice how you will respond and potentially use your weapon in various home defense scenarios.

Here's a case in point as reported by KTTV FOX 11 this week in, ["Home invasion attempt stopped by woman with a shotgun."](#)

"I'm not a sitting duck," says Carla. She prefers to keep her last name private. Carla is a Cheviot Hills (California) homeowner who scared away burglars when she grabbed her shotgun and fired.

"Carla told us her dog woke her up when he started barking. She looked outside and saw a man in her backyard, another waiting by a car.

"Carla wasted no time. Wearing her nightgown, she went outside and

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ObamaCare Is Failing

Before I turn to the latest example of how ObamaCare is failing, I want to share some good news on an entirely different subject.

Remember how I used last week's advisory to warn you about the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) plan to develop a national license plate tracking system and database?

Remember how I asked you to contact your Senators and Representatives in Washington, D.C., to speak against the creation of that database?

Remember how I even gave you a link to easily locate the names and phone numbers for your elected representatives?

Well, I am extremely happy to let you know that it worked.

Many of you, joined by many of your fellow Americans, quickly contacted your representatives in Washington and spoke out. Because of the rapid negative reaction from Americans like you, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security — the parent agency to ICE — pulled the plan this week.

Many of you also wrote me with your thoughts, concerns and suggestions

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Data Broker Opt Out List

One of the most important and valuable services we provide at the Self-Reliance Institute is to alert our members to services and methods you can use to protect your privacy and security from criminals who use the Internet to hunt victims.

As a private detective, I investigated two murder cases where the killer used the Internet to stalk and kill his victim. As one of the nation's leading experts on identity theft, I can say with certainty that the Internet has led to an epidemic of identity crimes around the globe.

And while I know I can't keep everyone safe from deranged stalkers, killers and identity thieves, I've dedicated myself to educating as many people as possible about the dangers that lurk on the Internet.

While the age, sex, occupation, and location of the two victims in the Internet murders I investigated were vastly different, the common denominator was the use of information maintained by data brokers by the killers to locate and kill the victims.

For that reason, I'm always hypersensitive to what information is being gathered by data brokers and who is able to access that information.

Unfortunately, it is next to impossible to prevent any of our personal information from ending up in commercial and government databases. To pretend otherwise is just foolish.

But, that doesn't mean we can't or shouldn't take every step possible to keep as much of our personal information out of databases as possible. And, whenever possible, it's important to learn what aspects of our lives are available to prying eyes and then determine if we can eradicate that information from the database where it is contained.

This week, I ran across an excellent article by Julia Angwin at the investigative journalism publication Pro Publica that provides a good overview of the difficulty in regaining control of our personal information from data brokers. More important, the article includes a comprehensive list of data brokers and instructions on how to check or remove your information where possible.

“... it is next to impossible to prevent any of our personal information from ending up in commercial and government databases”

The article is [Privacy Tools: Opting Out from Data Brokers](#).

Angwin, in discussing the challenges posed by data brokers, notes:

“I sought to obtain the data that brokers held about me. At first, I was excited to be reminded of the address of my dorm room and my old phone numbers. But thrill quickly wore off as the reports rolled in. I was equally irked by the reports that were wrong — data brokers who thought I was a single mother with no education — as I was by the ones that were correct — is it necessary for someone to track that I recently bought underwear online? So I decided to opt out from the commercial data brokers.”

“It wasn't easy. There is no law requiring data brokers to offer opt-outs. Of the 212 data brokers that I managed to identify, less than half — 92 — accepted opt-outs. Of those, a majority — 65 — required me to submit some form of identification, such as a driver's license to opt out. Twenty-four sites required the opt-out forms to be sent by mail or fax. In some cases, I decided not to opt-out because the service seemed so sketchy that I didn't want to send in any additional information.”

“Still, I achieved some minor successes: A search for my name on some of the largest people-search websites, such as Intelius and Spokeo, yields no relevant results.”

Angwin then provides two spreadsheets she created “with the names of companies that track your information, links to their privacy pages, and instructions on how to opt out, in the cases where they offered them.”

To read the entire article and use Angwin's spreadsheets as a guide to removing your information from as many databases as possible, click — [HERE](#).

Again, I must be honest and tell you that currently there is no way to completely remove your information from all government and commercial databases. And currently there is no way to prevent that information from being misused, transferred or sold.

But, I can personally attest to the fact that if you are vigilant and remove your personal information whenever and wherever possible, you will greatly reduce the amount of your information that can fall into the wrong hands.

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fired once toward the ground. Carla says, it was just to scare them off. It worked. The two suspects ran back to a white sedan and drove off.

*“Carla says she heard one of them screaming, ‘Crazy b**ch has a gun!!”*

According to KTTV,

local detectives said two homes had already been burglarized by two men when they were about to hit Carla’s place.

“As they tried to gain access to the home, 59-year-old Carla came out with her shotgun.

“She says, ‘You have to at some point in time, take responsibility for your own safety and that’s all I was doing.”

Personally, I admire Carla and the intent behind her response. If we had more Americans with the courage and determination of Carla, we’d have fewer punks burglarizing homes.

Professionally, I need to offer a few words of legal caution and offer a safer way to respond tactically if you find yourself in a similar situation. After all, in any life-threatening situation, you want to be the one who comes away alive.

First, the legal caution.

While I don’t know the relevant law in California or the local jurisdiction where Carla lives – and since I’m not a lawyer, I won’t offer specific legal advice – I do know that in many states and localities it is illegal to fire warning shots, even in your yard or home. So, if you own a gun, be sure

you know the law for your state and locality when it comes to discharging a gun in various scenarios – including warning shots.

That doesn’t mean you might not decide to fire your weapon in a manner that might be technically illegal if the circumstances lead you to believe that breaking the law is necessary to protect your life or the life of someone else in your home.

It does mean you’ll be better able to explain to your attorney (after any discharge of a gun, do not speak to the police until you’ve spoken with a competent attorney) why you chose the course of action you did. Presumably, that reason will be because you were in fear of serious bodily harm or death if you did not fire your weapon to stop the threat.

Now, let’s talk tactics.

By physically going outside into the yard, Carla exposed herself to additional danger. In other words, it is quite possible the burglars could have shot or overpowered Carla before she was able to act. In fact, there could have been more than the two criminals Carla saw from her windows. In short, Carla increased the threat to her physical safety instead of decreasing it.

Remember, no matter how clearly you can see the individual(s) posing a threat to your safety, that individual may have a weapon that you haven’t observed or may be physically able to harm you with his hands and feet. Therefore, the first rule is to seek or maintain cover as

a means toward reducing your exposure to danger.

In this particular situation, Carla would have been better advised to:

- 1) Call the police and stay inside with the inside lights off – and outside lights turned on – as she monitored what the burglars were doing outside. Almost always, by turning the outside lights on, burglars will run away. (I’ll discuss actual home invasion defense in an upcoming advisory)
- 2) Be prepared to use her gun (in this case a shotgun) from a covered position within her home if the burglar(s) force entry and she is in fear of serious bodily harm or death.
- 3) Don’t fire a warning shot. While it may “feel” or “seem” like the better course of action, in actuality it could have placed her and other family members and innocent bystanders in greater danger.
- 4) Fire at the burglars from a position of cover as soon as she decided she or others in her home (Carla’s mother was in the home) were under threat of serious bodily harm or death because the burglar(s) had entered her home.
- 5) Continue to fire until the threat is stopped.

Again, I’ll admit that I personally applaud Carla’s courage and determination.

I also recognize that it’s easier to offer advice on how Carla should have responded when I wasn’t there. I’ll even admit that when I lived in Washington, D.C., and I was faced with a situation where a violent man was trying to force entry

“do not speak to the police until you’ve spoken with a competent attorney”

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Now, back to the report from WTOPTOP: ["National License Plate Database Sparks Privacy Fears."](#)

According to WTOPTOP:

"The Department of Homeland Security is now seeking a vendor to build and operate a smartphone-based national database of vehicle license plate information that would be shared with law enforcement."

"Under the DHS plan, an agent could snap a photo with a smartphone, upload it to the database, and immediately be notified whether the plate is on a 'hot list' of 'target vehicles.'

"This system is supposed to be for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement branch of DHS, for the tracking of illegal immigrants," says WTOPTOP National Security Correspondent J.J. Green.

"ICE spokesperson Gillian Christensen tells Federal News Radio, 'the database could only be accessed in conjunction with ongoing criminal investigations.'"

Now I suspect most folks across the country who saw or heard this report believe a national database of license plates used to track illegal immigrants is a good tool for law enforcement.

Perhaps it is.

But, when it comes to the government, I believe in the slippery slope theory. In other words, once the government has information in a database that is supposed to be used for

one purpose, it won't be long before it uses the information for other, more nefarious, purposes.

In fact, WTOPTOP's report gives credence to that concern by indicating how this system has been used in the U.K.

"Green says a similar plate recognition system has been in use in the United Kingdom, using an extensive network of closed-circuit television cameras."

"It pretty much catches all the movements of cars, people, buses - pretty much anything that moves, at least in the cities," says Green."

Given the increased use of cameras across the United States, how long do you think it will be before the U.S. government coordinates this new national license plate database system with cameras as a means to photograph and analyze "all the movements of cars, people, buses - pretty much anything that moves."?

Personally, I believe that will happen almost immediately. I believe the purpose of the system will grow from ongoing criminal investigations of illegal immigrants to the collection of real-time data about American citizens.

Can there be any doubt, given the ongoing revelations of domestic spying and data collection by the NSA, that the government will use

a national license plate database for more than just tracking illegal immigrants?

Even the WTOPTOP reporter acknowledges these concerns.

"There are some significant concerns," says WTOPTOP's Green, 'and probably rightly so, in light of the Edward Snowden revelations, that it could be used for something other than what it's intended for.'

"Green says the increased use of technology in maintaining public safety makes some people nervous."

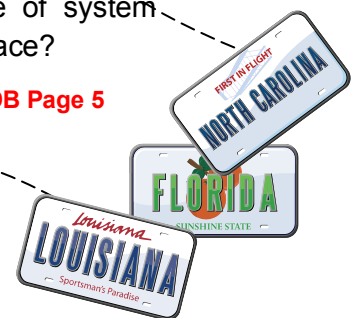
"You walk out of your house with a smartphone, you're on the grid. You walk to your car, there possibly is a camera that tracks you to your car. You get in your car, you probably have some sort of WiFi capability in your car, so your car is on the grid. You go into your building there are cameras in the building."

"According to Green, 'People are concerned this is going to be another piece of information the government could use to keep tabs on them 24 hours a day.'"

Personally, I don't think there's any question that a national license plate database will become one more surveillance tool used by the federal government against American citizens.

So what do we do if we don't want this type of system put in place?

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We have to call our elected representatives in Washington, D.C. and tell them to stop the establishment of a national license plate database.

And I do mean call.

I can tell you from observation and inside knowledge that the email systems in Congress are ignored. They only pay attention to actual phone calls and letters from constituents.

And here's the important part. They do pay attention. Other privacy-invading legislation has been stopped before. If enough Americans speak out and call Congress, this can be stopped.

If you'd like to call or write your members of Congress – House and Senate – you can find their phone numbers and addresses by clicking — [HERE](#).

Finally, let me know what you think.

Do you believe the U.S. government should create a national license plate database?

If it is created, do you believe the government will use the database to track all Americans, not just illegal immigrants?

Email me at Rob@SelfRely.com and let me know.

Be safe and secure,
Rob



Opt Out cont. page 2

Now I have a question for you. And, as I've testified before Congress and advised federal and state agencies on privacy and security issues, I'd really love to get your response.

Should the companies and government agencies that have your personal information in their databases

have to obtain your permission before sharing or selling it to anyone else?

Please tell me by emailing me at Rob@SelfRely.com

Also, as you use Angwin's spreadsheets, I'd like to hear about your experience. Anything you tell me

will be kept confidential.

Thank you.

Be safe and secure,
Rob Douglas



ObamaCare Cont from Page 1

about the issue. I appreciate the emails, and I will answer each one of them this week. I had some forced down time for a medical issue the last few weeks, but I'm glad to say I've been given the all-clear and should be firing on all cylinders this week. Before anything else, I'll be answering all your emails tomorrow morning. So keep an eye on your inbox!

OK, let's turn to ObamaCare.

As a nation, we're entering the phase of ObamaCare where we are now seeing enough data following the October 1, 2013 start date that we can assess whether ObamaCare is living up to the Obama administration's hype.

And, as I predicted, it's not.

I had a talk radio show when ObamaCare was first introduced as a plan and was in the legislative phase in the U.S. Congress. Not a week went by that we didn't have at least one expert on the show to talk about different aspects of ObamaCare. In other words, for years I was educating myself every week about one facet or another of Obamacare.

I quickly became convinced that the program could not and would not work.

Now, we are seeing that is in fact the case.

This week, the Denver Post ran an article headlined, ["Young avoid coverage in Colorado, posing problem for health care law."](#)

Let me share a few key paragraphs from the article that illustrate how ObamaCare is not the program the

Obama administration claimed.

"Matt Leising spends about \$3,600 a year on medication to treat asthma and sinus problems, so he was supportive when Washington politicians were debating the Affordable Care Act.

"After the law passed and then began rolling out last fall, Leising went to Colorado's health care exchange website to look for coverage, but the 29-year-old Littleton resident quickly realized he couldn't afford any of the plans. He said he checked single plans and family plans because he is engaged.

"The family plan with the lowest monthly premium had a deductible of \$10,000, meaning he would still have to pay for his medication and other expenses, he said. He decided to just pay for his medication out of pocket and take the tax penalty.

"How could a young person nowadays afford it?" asked Leising, the manager of a small business that doesn't provide health insurance. 'I don't see how anyone in my age group can afford insurance unless they have a really good job.'"

After providing an example of a young person who is signed up for ObamaCare, the Denver Post told another story.

"But 27-year-old Fort Collins resident Sarah Hardin would rather save the money and pay out of pocket for treatment than spend the roughly \$800 a month she said

it would cost to cover her and her husband.

"When we're not paying anything now, anything is a significant jump," said Hardin, who owns a hair salon and makes too much to qualify for a subsidy. 'Paying anything monthly is a lot.'

"Hardin doesn't like that the Affordable Care Act is shifting costs onto young, healthy people to subsidize care for older and sicker people.

"They would have young people paying more for insurance and people don't want to pay into the system," she said. 'They're not going to want to do that.'

"Hardin said the only way she and her husband would buy health in-

urance is if the federal tax penalty is more than the annual costs of the policy. The maximum family penalty next year is \$285 and increases to \$695 a person in 2016.

Those annual penalties pale to the cost of coverage for Hardin.

"The penalty 'would have to be pretty significant,' she said. 'Most of my network connections and friends or colleagues pretty much feel the same way.'"

Among so many other issues with ObamaCare – issues you may have experienced yourself or with your family and friends – the stories of Sarah Hardin and Matt Leising tell one of the biggest problems of all.



Intruders

cont page 3

into my home while family and friends were present, my best friend and I tactically chose to fight the potential intruder outside in the street while waiting for the police – a story I'll share in detail in the near future.

But, the purpose of these advisories is to offer you the best overall advice and to get you thinking and preparing for how you will handle various situations that can threaten differing aspects of your well-being.

So think about the scenario Carla was confronted with and decide how you will handle a similar situation if it ever happens at your home.

Finally, send me an email and let me know what you think. Did Carla do the right thing? How would you respond? My email address is Rob@SelfRely.com

Be safe and secure,

Rob Douglas



ObamaCare Continued from Page 2

Young people are not signing up in large enough numbers to provide the premiums that will be needed to keep ObamaCare afloat.

And why should they. These young people are doing the math and responding rationally to the reality that the tax penalty is far, far lower than the costs (premiums, plus deductibles and out of pocket expenses) of the policies that are available. And, many of the policies don't allow patients to use the doctors and medical facilities they need or have used in the past.

There are many folks – myself included – who believe that President Obama and those in Congress who supported the passage of ObamaCare never cared whether it worked or not because their true goal is single-payer, fully socialized medicine.

Given the current state of ObamaCare's failures, it's hard to see how that won't be the next step.

What do you think? What has been your personal experience with

ObamaCare?

Do you think the actual goal is to move the country toward fully socialized health care?

Have you decided to pay the tax penalty instead of enrolling in ObamaCare?

Have you seen any impact from ObamaCare at the company you own or work for?

Write me at Rob@SelfRely.com and I'll use your experiences as the basis for future advisories as we discuss a topic that impacts the health and safety of every American.

Be safe and secure,

Rob Douglas



Self-Reliance Institute Newsletter

Privacy:

HERE'S THE BOTTOM LINE: WE WILL NOT EVER GIVE, SELL, OR RENT YOUR INFORMATION TO ANYONE – EVER.

Questions or comments?

Please email me at Chris@SelfRely.com or call me at my Freedom Writer's Publishing office at 970-367-7624.



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