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Fake ID's: Real Problems

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Most college students don’t get a fake identification card for the reasons Brian in The Breakfast Club would, and they certainly don’t let their age be 68 on the fake.

Sophomore Rob* wanted a fake ID in order to buy his own alcohol without the hassle of a middle man and to be able to go to a bar with his friends if he felt like it.

According to Geoff Huff, Ames police department’s Criminal Investigations Division Commander, there are two types of fake IDs. The more common fake is another person’s real ID that looks like the underaged person using it. The other type is one that is completely fictitious and usually purchased online.

Sophomore Elizabeth* says there are many ways to get a fake ID. They’re online, friends of friends make them or personal friends can have them made. Elizabeth says the price of a fake could reach as high as $150—the better ones can be scanned and even have the holographic markings on them.

Rob spent $100 on his fake to get a New York ID that has the

holographics and scanning capabilities, although he says that only a few venues will actually scan the ID.

Commander Huff says the completely fictitious IDs are easier to spot because they require security fields that aren’t usually present.

Senior Kyle* has had experience with using a fake ID that was real, but wasn’t his. He once got asked for a second form of ID because the fake looked weird. Kyle was able to keep the fake but he couldn’t get in the bar. When asked about the bouncers checking IDs at the bars on Welch Avenue, he says, “I think it must be a little random. It just depends on who’s checking.”

A bouncer on Welch says he looks at the facial features, specifically the nose region. He typically sees two or three fake IDs a night, most of them being real IDs from other people. There are different ways bouncers determine if the ID is fake. One is to ask the “owner” to name some of the streets near the address provided on the fake. If he determines it’s a fake, the bouncer says he would usually give the ID to the police.

Commander Huff says that they have tools and extensive training in picking out the fake IDs or just another person’s old ID.

If you’re thinking about getting a fake, consider the consequences of getting caught.

Commander Huff says that most of their Minor on Premise charges are a result of using someone’s ID and trying to pass it off as you. Commander Huff cited that, under the 2013 Iowa Code 321.216B, if a person under the age of 21 is using an altered or fictitious ID to obtain alcohol, they have committed a misdemeanor and will be fined $200 plus court costs.

Junior Dan* got his fake ID when he was in high school and it worked for two years. He paid about $75 for it from a contact in Cedar Rapids.

During his freshman year, Dan got his ID taken away at a liquor store that he had been to many times before. When the cashier asked to see his ID, he had forgotten that his real ID was behind the fake. The liquor store kept the fake with all of the other IDs they confiscated.

“It just took the convenience out of everything,” Dan says.

For Dan, his fake worked more times than he could count. Fortunately for Dan, no legal action was taken.

You’re probably 18 by the time you hit campus, and by second semester you will have friends who know how to get alcohol—if you didn’t already. Is it really worth the trouble of getting caught and possibly being fined $200 just to get into bars?

Just think how much cheap vodka you could buy with $200. You’ll be legal soon anyway.