



REFERRAL TO FEMA

# Countering Violent Extremism and Community Policing Online Training for Line Officers: Identifying the Threat: Sovereign Citizens

Course Design Document – Storyboard

*November 2014*



# FEMA

000322





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## Revision History

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Ver. #	Implemented By	Revision Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Reason
1	M. Casanova	11/14/2014			

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## Module #: Identifying the Threat

<b>Version #:</b>	0	<b>Date:</b> 3/17/2015
<b>Module Name:</b>	Identifying the Threat	
<b>Lesson Name:</b>	Sovereign Citizens	
<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC Transition Screen	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC Transition Screen	
<b>Content:</b>		
<i>Screen</i>	REFERRAL TO FEMA	<b>Graphic Notes:</b> Transition screen
		<b>Alt tag:</b>
<i>Narration</i>		
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC Introduction	
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<i>Screen</i>	REFERRAL TO FEMA	<b>Graphic Notes:</b>
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<b>Version #:</b>	0	<b>Date:</b> 3/17/2015
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<b>Lesson Name:</b>	Sovereign Citizens	
<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Who are they	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC - definition	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p>Sovereign Citizens (SC) are generally non-violent individuals who openly reject their citizenship status and claim to exist beyond the realm of government, law enforcement, and court authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They believe that these entities are actually commercial entities that cannot compel participation in a commercial contract.</li></ul> <p>SC believe that they are immune from federal, state, and local laws and that many Constitutional amendments are false.</p>	<b>Graphic Notes:</b>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Who are they	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SCE - definition	
<b>Content:</b>		
	Sovereign Citizen Violent Extremists (SCVE) <b>Key Difference between Sovereign Citizens and Sovereign Citizen Violent Extremists:</b> While both SC and SCVE believe that all forms of established government, authority, and institutions are illegitimate, <i>SCVE are willing to use of violence to defend their perceived rights against a perceived illegitimate government, its law enforcement, and its government officials.</i>	<b>Graphic Notes:</b> Highlight italicized text  <b>Alt tag:</b>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Who are they	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SCE - threat	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p>The Sovereign Citizen Violent Extremist Threat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are willing to and have the capacity to use lethal force</li> <li>• They are willing to participate in violent criminal acts such as weapons violations, assaults, murder, and threats of violence against law enforcement officers, public officials, financial institutions, and government facilities.</li> <li>• Sovereign citizen violent extremists’ violence is typically reactive and is unpredictable and unplanned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ It often results from minor law enforcement encounters at homes or during traffic stops.</li> <li>○ When violent acts are planned over time, they are typically in response to ongoing personal grievances, such as an arrest, or against individuals who they perceive to have violated their rights.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Lesson Name:</b>	Sovereign Citizens	
<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Who are they	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SCE – organizational structure	
<b>Content:</b>	<p><b>Sovereign Citizen Violent Extremists – Organizational Structure</b></p> <p>SCE likely exist in every state but because of their loose organizational structure no reliable estimates of numbers exist</p> <p>Many have no specific group affiliation.</p> <p>Limited reporting suggests sovereign citizen extremist violence is most common in the southern and western United States.</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Lesson Name:</b>	Sovereign Citizens	
<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – What they believe	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – What they believe intro	
<b>Content:</b>		
	While the beliefs and indicators that follow are indicative of sovereign citizens, <i>they are not necessarily indicators or predictors of violent action.</i>	<b>Graphic Notes:</b>
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<b>Lesson Name:</b>	Sovereign Citizens	
<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – What they believe	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Ideology 1	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Ideology</b></p> <p>They believe they are self-governing and not under the authority of the government, law enforcement, and the courts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May create their own parallel government institutions, such as courts as grand juries that have no actual legal authority.</li> <li>• Some sovereign citizens recognize the law enforcement authority of the elected sheriff.</li> </ul> <p>Believe they are exempt from paying taxes and license fees and often do not pay either.</p> <p>SC believe that they have unfettered authority to travel “on the land.”</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – What they believe	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Ideology 2	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Ideology</b></p> <p>Those who subscribe to sovereign citizen ideology may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry official-looking, but fraudulent, identification.</li> <li>• Organize “common law” courts to issue judgments against public officials. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ These “courts” have no actual legal authority.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reject state-issued identification such as license plates and driver’s licenses.</li> <li>• Aggressively question the authority of individuals who enforce laws such as law enforcement and court officials.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – What they believe	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Key indicators 1	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Key indicators</b></p> <p>SC and SCE cannot be identified by their age, ethnic background, gender or clothing. However, SCEs tend to radicalize at a later age, in their 30s and 40s, than most domestic violent extremists.</p> <p>Because there are no obvious outward indicators that an individual is a subscriber to the sovereign movement, law enforcement may not realize they are interacting with a sovereign until they begin to engage in a conversation with the individual(s).</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Key indicators Language	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Language</b></p> <p>They may call themselves “freemen,” “freemen of the land,” “constitutionalist,” and “state citizens.”</p> <p>Declare allegiance to the “original government.”</p> <p>Refer to their vehicle as a conveyance or machinery instead of a car.</p> <p>Refer to passengers as guests or friends.</p> <p>Say they are traveling or journeying instead of driving.</p> <p>Refer to themselves as a non-resident or inhabitant instead of a resident.</p> <p>May claim diplomatic immunity or membership in a Native American tribe (many of which are fictional).</p> <p><i>These behaviors, while indicative of sovereign citizen ideology, are not illegal in and of themselves.</i></p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – What they believe	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Key indicators False Documents	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<b>False Documents</b> Fraudulent identification License plates Fraudulent credentials conveying diplomatic or ambassadorial status <b>REFERRAL TO FEMA</b>	<b>Graphic Notes:</b>
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<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Key indicators Notations Documents	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Notations and Legal Documents</b></p> <p>SC believe they can avoid inadvertent subject to a false government by employing the following in documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List name in the following format [name-middle name;surname] followed by a copyright symbol and a Trademark symbol (TM) (to trademark).</li> <li>• Name spelled in all capital or all lower case letters. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SC believe that names appearing in all capital letters represents the “corporate shell”</li> <li>○ SC believe that names appearing in all lower case letter represents the “individual entity.”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Signature in red ink followed by “under duress,” “without prejudice,” or ARR (All Rights Reserved)</li> <li>• Zip code in brackets</li> <li>• United States written as “united States” or UNITED STATES</li> <li>• Reference to an “Artificial Person” or a “Strawman”</li> <li>• Documents stamped with the phrase “Accepted for Value”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>





	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Personal seals, stamps, notary seals/stamps, or red thumb prints</li><li>• Sovereigns like to have notaries stamp everything because they have a belief that notaries have exceptional powers</li></ul>	
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<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Sovereign citizen violent extremists</b></p> <p>Sovereign citizen violent extremists may engage in or exhibit the previous behaviors and indicators, some of which are not illegal or violent. However, SCEs may procure illegal weapons and explosives or engage in shootings and armed standoffs with law enforcement.</p> <p><b>REFERRAL TO FEMA</b></p> <p>Many of the violent incidents occur at traffic stops or at homes when warrants, evictions, or other legal documents are served or enforced, but some interactions may happen with public officials such as a judge or county clerk.</p> <p>SCVE tend to target individuals who they believe have violated their rights rather than public symbols or anonymous representatives of government.</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Content:</b>		
	<p>Victor White<sup>USPER</sup>, an Odessa, Texas SCVE, engaged in a 22-hour armed standoff and gun battle with police in 2010 and was convicted of shooting two officers and a utility worker. White initiated the violence because the police officer was escorting the utility worker onto White’s property. White claimed he was “defending and protecting my dignity and the sovereignty of my domain” in a jailhouse interview with media.</p> <p><b>REFERRAL TO FEMA</b></p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Tactics	
<b>Content:</b>		
	Sovereign citizens view contact with the government and private sector officials as a negotiable commercial transaction that is regulated by “common law” and the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC).	<b>Graphic Notes:</b>
	REFERRAL TO FEMA	<b>Alt tag:</b>
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<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Schemes	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Schemes, Frivolous Lawsuits, and “Common Law” Courts</b></p> <p>Some SC travel around the country and hold seminars teaching financial crimes, including debt elimination schemes, forgery, tax avoidance schemes, and mortgage and securities fraud.</p> <p>Examples of Schemes      <b>REFERRAL TO FEMA</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asset transfer to a third party as a way to illegally avoid taxes and foreclosure</li> <li>2. Purchases made with realistic looking but worthless documents known as “bills of exchange” or “bonded promissory notes”</li> <li>3. Debt transfer to the U.S. Treasury, through a process known as redemption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Redemption Scheme: Many SC and SCVE believe that US born citizens can use their birth certificate to access secret US Treasury bank accounts to pay debts and fines.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – What you should know	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Frivolous lawsuits	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Schemes, Frivolous Lawsuits, and “Common Law” Courts</b></p> <p>Many sovereign citizens will file lawsuits and liens against law enforcement and public officials (such as judges or court clerks).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you come in contact with a sovereign citizen, check your own credit to see if there are any liens ever placed against you. Don't file the liens filed against you and notify your superiors about any civil actions taken against you.</li> <li>• SC and SCVE may bury courts with paper filings and demand that they take actions on their behalf – also known as <i>paper terrorism</i>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – common law courts	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Schemes, Frivolous Lawsuits, and “Common Law” Courts</b></p> <p>Many sovereign citizens will hold “Common law” courts, which have no actual legal authority, and may issue subpoenas, indictments, warrants, and assess fines for “damages” like “copyright infringement.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you find yourself referred to any of these documents, notify your supervisor right away.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p>
		<p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – tactics	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Intimidation and Obstruction</b></p> <p>SC and SCVE may attempt to distract or stop perceived adversaries when challenged by officials.</p> <p>Methods may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claiming officials have no authority or are out of jurisdiction</li> <li>• Demanding officials produce an oath of office or bond prior to engaging in a contractual relationship</li> <li>• Videotaping or recording the contact, which may be posted on a sovereign citizen website or YouTube channel</li> <li>• Filing frivolous lawsuits or liens</li> <li>• Engaging in illegitimate “common law” court</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – What you should know	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Prison activities	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p>While in prison, SC and SCVE may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share tactics with other prisoners designed to interfere with law enforcement and judicial proceedings.</li> <li>• Continue to engage in “paper terrorism” tactics or other fraudulent activities using mail <b>REFERRAL TO FEMA</b></li> </ul> <p>Additionally, SCE may continue to plan violent acts or retribution.</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p>
		<p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Interaction	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Interaction_Dos_and_donts	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p>There are a number of things to be aware of when interacting with a SC or SCE in the field</p> <p>DO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle the contact like you would with any other citizen.</li> <li>• Follow department policies and procedures and call for a backup unit</li> </ul> <p>DO NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let sovereign citizens diversion tactics stop you from performing you duties.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Interaction	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC –Traffic	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p>For many law enforcement their first encounter with a sovereign will be in a traffic stop. Officers may see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improper or nonexistent license plates</li> <li>• License plates with the terms sovereign, sovereign citizen, freeman, or UCC</li> <li>• A sticker on the vehicle warning police not to enter or search the vehicle</li> <li>• The driver lower his/her window slightly and demand to see the officer’s oath of office or some other form of authority</li> <li>• Some may say their name is copyrighted and that the officer cannot say or write a citation without paying a fee</li> </ul> <p>While law enforcement may believe they are conducting a routine traffic stop, when interacting with a sovereign citizen violent extremists this routine activity may become violent.</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Interaction	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Other Offenses	
<b>Content:</b>		
	In addition to traffic offenses, other typical offenses include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misdemeanor or ordinance violations</li> <li>• Licensing, zoning, taxation, property usage, disorderly conduct, child support, firearm registration, fraud, and frivolous filings</li> <li>• Squatting</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>REFERRAL TO FEMA</b></p>	<b>Graphic Notes:</b>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – What you should know	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Officer Safety	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p>Maintaining Officer Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law enforcement officers should be aware that most sovereign citizen extremist violence is unpredictable because it is generally not planned and is usually reactive, which is hard to predict.</li> <li>• Sheriff's Offices that enforce no-ride, no-use restrictions and serve eviction notices should be aware that they may be met with resistance by a sovereign owner, who could be armed.</li> </ul> <p><b>REFERRAL TO FEMA</b></p> <p><i>The indicators alone do not imply that you are dealing with a sovereign citizen, you must look at the totality of the situation including behavioral indicators.</i></p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Examples	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Dennis Ronald Marx	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Dennis Ronald Marx, Cumming, Georgia:</b> At shortly before 10 a.m. on Friday, June 06, 2014, Dennis Ronald Marx, 48, a gun-trader, drove a rented SUV onto the sidewalk at the entrance to the Forsyth County Courthouse in Cumming, Georgia. He was wearing a gas mask and body armor and carrying smoke grenades and an AR-15 semi-automatic assault rifle. As he approached the building he threw homemade explosives from his SUV in an apparent effort to prevent anyone from driving up to his vehicle. He also initiated smoke devices. When Forsyth County Deputy Sheriff Daniel Rush attempted to stop Marx from driving at the building, Marx shot him in the leg. Other deputy sheriffs who happened to be in the area almost immediately engaged Marx in a gun-battle that ended when Marx was shot to death. Although Marx fired numerous bullets at the deputies, no one other than Deputy Rush was wounded. Forsyth County Sheriff Duane Piper stated that Marx had intended to enter the courthouse and take hostages. He based this opinion on the fact that Marx has on his person or in his vehicle such items as explosives, handguns, ammunition, zip ties, water, a second bullet proof vest, and other gear. Marx also had clipped a hand grenade with a wire to himself as an apparent booby trap.</p> <p>Marx was scheduled to appear in court on Friday morning where he was to sign a plea agreement that would allow him to receive a short jail sentence on marijuana and firearms charges dating back to 2011. An attorney who was to represent Marx in the hearing stated she waited 40 minutes for Marx to</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>



	<p>arrive, and when he failed to appear, she exited the courthouse through a rear entrance at which time as she heard gunshots.</p> <p>Local law enforcement officers knew Marx to be a self-proclaimed sovereign citizen who in August 2013, had made sweeping allegations against 30 law enforcement officers and other government personnel connected with their use to search warrants and seizure of property in a 2011 raid on his residence. Marx was representing himself in the lawsuit. Following Marx's death, deputies searched Marx's residence where they found explosive devices. Deputies also found a checklist on which Marx had written items that matched articles found in Marx' rented SUV. Investigators determined that Marx had not been at the house for several days.</p>	
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<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Examples	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Israel Rondon	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Israel Rondon, Middleburg Heights, Cuyahoga County, Ohio:</b> At around 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon, March 25, 2014 in Middleburg Heights, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, six deputy sheriffs attempted to arrest Israel Rondon, 65, at his residence on a probation violation warrant. Rondon responded by firing a rifle at the deputies who returned fire, killing him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>REFERRAL TO FEMA</b></p> <p>Rondon’s problems with law enforcement and the government dated back to 2009, and continued until his death. During a stop for a traffic violation, Rondon was arrested when they found he had a large military knife attached to his belt, and a loaded .38 caliber handgun under the seat of his vehicle. He pleaded no contest to the charges of carrying a concealed handgun without a permit. After he failed to appear for a status conference, a detective went to Rondon’s residence to arrest him. Rondon resisted and hit the deputy in the chest with his open hand. After the detective took him into custody, he found that Rondon had concealed two small hunting knives. Rondon was subsequently charged with assaulting a police officer and carrying concealed weapons.</p> <p>Between 2012 and 2013, Rondon filed a total of 15 lawsuits against various local and federal government officials and agencies, banks, and a property manager seeking hundreds of millions of dollars in damages. In every case the lawsuit was dismissed. An attorney who once represented Rondon as a standby counsel stated that Rondon described himself as a “freeman” who believed in no government. He stated that Rondon had returned his driver’s license, because he</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>





	did not believe that Bureau of Motor Vehicles had the right to regulate driving. At his residence investigators found that each corner of Rondon's house and his cars were spray-painted with "Title 18 1581-241 USC". That same writing appeared on the homemade license plate on Rondon's vehicle.	
<b>User Prompt:</b>	Click Next to continue	
<b>Programmer Notes:</b>		

## REFERRAL TO FEMA



<b>Version #:</b>	0	<b>Date:</b> 3/17/2015
<b>Module Name:</b>	Identifying the Threat	
<b>Lesson Name:</b>	Sovereign Citizens	
<b>Topic Name:</b>	SC – Examples	
<b>Screen Name:</b>	SC – Brent Douglas Cole	
<b>Content:</b>		
	<p><b>Brent Douglas Cole, Nevada County, California:</b> In late January 2014, a Nevada County deputy sheriff offered to help Brent Douglas Cole, 60, who was parked along the side of Highway 49. Cole was subsequently arrested when the deputy discovered that Cole was carrying a loaded firearm and had a second firearm concealed in his pickup truck. Prosecutors subsequently offered Cole a deal by which he would receive two years of probation and fines and use his weapons, if he would plead guilty to one of the firearms charges in exchange for the state dropping the second charge. Cole rejected the deal and pleaded not guilty. Cole told the court that he intended to represent himself, and presented nearly four dozen pages of documents in which he quoted the Second Amendment and alleged court malfeasance. He also stated that he was a target of a broad “seditious conspiracy... intended to bring the United States to absolute ruin.” Cole described himself as “a sovereign citizen attempting to thwart the obvious conspiracy and subterfuges of powers inimical to the United States.” In court documents Cole has referred to himself as being a “Statutory Attorney General of the United States,” a “natural born flesh and blood, living man,” and a “federal agent in good standing and exempt from this state law.” In one of his writings, Cole charged that the court system is controlled by a “private guild” that serves at the behest of foreign powers. Cole also claimed that the officers acted without a warrant or any probable cause to seize him. He claimed that he “...was attacked and molested, unconstitutionally arrested, unlawfully incarcerated, repeatedly intimidated and coerced to plead guilty to having committed a crime,</p>	<p><b>Graphic Notes:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Alt tag:</b></p>



	<p>held in secret for five days, and my property and liberty taken from me since January 26, 2014.”</p> <p>With respect to the gun charges against him, Cole filed documents with the Nevada Superior Court asking that the charges be dropped against him that that the deputy sheriff who arrested him pay him \$60,000 for violating his rights. He also asked that every legislator “who voted for enactment of the unconstitutional statutes” cited in his arrest pay him \$30,000. Cole’s trial was scheduled to commence at the end of June, 2014.</p> <p>On June 14, 2014, two weeks before his scheduled trial for the gun charges, Cole was involved in a shootout with a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ranger and California Highway Patrol (CHP) officer. The incident began when the ranger requested backup during an investigation of Cole’s camp, illegally situated on BLM land in Nevada County. The ranger was wounded in his right shoulder and the officer suffered a minor wound. Cole was hit several times and hospitalized. Cole has been charged with attempted murder.</p>	
<b>User Prompt:</b>	Click Next to continue	
<b>Programmer Notes:</b>		