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Buyers of bogus degrees named

Bill Morlin and Jim Camden
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July 30, 2006

Hundreds of people working in the military, government and education are on a list of almost 10,000 people who spent \$7.3 million buying phony and counterfeit high school and college degrees from a Spokane diploma mill.

The complete list of buyers, which the U.S. Department of Justice has refused to release to the public, has been obtained by The Spokesman-Review.

"There are people in high places with these degrees, and only one of them has been charged with a crime," a source familiar with the list said Monday.

A preliminary analysis of the list by The Spokesman-Review shows 135 individuals with ties to the military, 39 with links to educational institutions and 17 employed by government agencies. Those numbers were derived from e-mail addresses that are part of the list obtained by the newspaper.

However, the exact number of individuals with ties to the military, government and education is believed to be far greater because many of those buyers used their personal e-mail accounts.

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Audio: Reporter Bill Morlin talks about who is named in the list

Previous coverage: Diploma mill

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The list includes NASA employee Timothy Francis Gorman, who bought an electrical engineering degree using his e-mail account at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory to correspond with the diploma mill, and U.S. Department of Health oncology expert Frank S. Govern, who purchased a doctorate in health care administration.

National Security Agency employees David W. Barden and Barry A. Hester both bought degrees. Hester, who was a

computer Web trainer and designer for the NSA with top-secret clearance, paid \$1,187 for an information systems and technology degree, the list shows.

Eric Gregory Cole, who was a contract employee for the Central Intelligence Agency, paid \$3,801 for a degree in information systems management. His top-secret clearance at the CIA was revoked late last year, months after his name was forwarded to the Office of Inspector General, according to one source.

"It was like pulling teeth to get them to do anything about this guy," the source said.

Eight people who set up and operated the diploma mill, including ringleader Dixie Ellen Randock, were indicted and convicted of federal crimes. Randock, a 58-year-old high school dropout, was sentenced to three years in prison.

Government prosecutors will recommend that same sentence for her husband, Steve, who is scheduled to be sentenced Aug. 5. The Randocks sold thousands of counterfeit degrees and transcripts from legitimate colleges, and phony degrees and transcripts from nonexistent online universities and schools.

Only one buyer - former deputy U.S. marshal David F. Brodhagen, who was forced into early retirement - has been charged criminally as an outgrowth of the case.

At least one other deputy U.S. marshal, Michael Cameron, is on the list showing he bought a criminal justice degree from the Spokane diploma mill.

Also on the list are William R. Church, a senior military adviser working in the White House, and George Michael Navadel, a U.S. State Department computer systems negotiator, who paid \$5,400 for a doctorate in network engineering.

Duwayne Huss, an employee of Nuclear Management Co., operator of two nuclear plants in Minnesota, bought degrees in nuclear engineering and accounting.

"I can't give you information about our employees," company spokeswoman Mary Sadock said Monday when asked if Huss was still employed.

Author Bonita E. Broyles, who has written a series of books about prescription dosages and nursing care, bought a doctorate in education for \$2,225, the list shows.

Richard J. Caverly, of Colbert, paid \$236 for a degree in construction management before getting a job in May 2006 as a building inspector with the city of Spokane. He worked as a temporary building inspector before getting a job in December 2006 as a

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project employee, tracking down construction under way without a permit, said city spokeswoman Marlene Feist.

Caverly was "released" from that job in December, according to Feist, who couldn't provide specifics.

Brett C. Jarmin paid \$1,041 for a bachelor of science degree in criminology and criminal justice. Jarmin had worked as chief of police in Edgemont, S.D.

Jarmin was fired in October 2000 after helping his department to unionize. He later sued Edgemont city officials, settling out of court in 2006.

His telephone number has been disconnected.

Michael J. Hollen, who worked for the Air Force in Fayetteville, N.C., bought a medical degree. His current employment status couldn't be immediately confirmed.

Alan P. Hernandez, a police officer in San Antonio, paid \$2,630 for a bachelor's and a Ph.D. in criminal justice, then went to work as an adviser and counselor for one of the Randocks' bogus online universities.

Roger L. Anderson, an enlisted man in the military, and his wife, Karen R. Jones-Anderson, who also was enlisted, bought counterfeit degrees from Texas A&M – one of 66 legitimate universities whose diplomas were copied and sold by the Spokane diploma mill. With their degrees, they became officers but now may face court-martial or ouster from the military.

Bogus college degrees were purchased by Marilyn Clark Kennedy, who worked as director of health services for the Barstow, Calif., School District, and Bruce Yampolski, director of operations for the Department of Health in St. Louis, Mo.

John G. Simmers, employed by Virginia's Department of Corrections, paid \$2,682 for three degrees. It couldn't be confirmed if he used the degrees for job promotions, pay increases or a boost in retirement checks.

In the education field, Bart G. Anderson, superintendent of a school district in Columbus, Ohio, bought a doctoral degree in public administration, and Douglas Lane Gill, who worked as an ROTC instructor for the Norwalk Public Schools in Bridgeport, Conn., bought two degrees. Investigators are attempting to determine whether Gill was reimbursed by the federal government for the \$1,431 he paid for his advanced education.

Remah Moustafa Ahmed Kamel, a 43-year-old Saudi Arabian, bought degrees in obstetrics and gynecology, but investigators don't know whether he's practicing in those medical fields in his home country.

"No one is looking at any of the foreign purchasers to see what they're doing with these degrees," one law enforcement source said.

Jim McDevitt, the U.S. attorney for Eastern Washington who had refused to release the buyers' list, expressed only mild displeasure Monday when told the list was in the public domain.

"We did not release the list because it was our legal obligation not to release it, and I stand by that decision," McDevitt said when reached at a conference in Sun Valley, Idaho.

Investigators who worked Operation Gold Seal are in the process of forwarding the list to all 50 state attorneys general and various other agencies, including the Washington State Department of Health.

"There's a leak in every system," McDevitt said when asked if he was surprised that the list was on the newspaper's Web site.

The reluctance of the Justice Department to prosecute at least some additional buyers may soon change.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, it was learned Monday, is considering pursuing charges against an estimated 300 federal employees who bought bogus or counterfeit degrees.

Investigators are considering using a federal law that allows them to charge individuals who have fraudulently obtained credentials giving them access to or jobs in U.S. government facilities.

"There are a number of different public safety concerns out there," one source said.

Reached in Seattle on Monday, Homeland Security spokeswoman Lorie Dankers said, "We're aware of this issue, and we will take the appropriate action, but because it's an ongoing investigation, I cannot discuss the specifics with you at this time."

Some numbers gleaned from the list of 9,612 names of people who bought counterfeit or bogus degrees and certificates from Spokane-based diploma mills:

•Anthony McGugan, of Barnegat, N.J., spent \$24,088 on 16 different degrees and certificates between 1983 and 2002, including a doctor of theology, a masters of theology in systematic theology, a Master of Social Work in addiction counseling, bachelor's degrees in human services and biblical studies, and certificates in addiction therapy, family and youth counseling, ministry education, Christian education, interpersonal relationships, addiction counseling, professional counseling, substance abuse counseling and social development. That was twice as many degrees and certificates as anyone else on the list.

•Randall Dale McVay, of Washington, D.C., and Thurman Towry, who has no address in the list, each bought eight degrees or certificates. Towry bought a Ph.D. certificates indicating an associate professorship and a full professorship in business administration, and multiple degrees in business administration.

•McVay, who was a senior official at Bolling Air Force Base, bought a Ph.D. in management and a Ph.D. in occupational health, and certificates in project management, production management and organizational management.

•Four people bought seven degrees or certificates; 10 bought six degrees or

Kathy Forech had nightmares that her daughter would disappear on her birthday and be found in the Spokane River. It's just a mother's fear, she thought. It was more of a premonition. »



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certificates; 22 bought five degrees or certificates; and 76 bought four.

•Of the 9,612 purchasers, 826 bought at least one Ph.D. and 41 bought two doctorates. •Some of those doctorates were awarded in health-related fields, including at least two naturopathic doctorates, two doctorates in naturopathic medicine, one Ph.D. in medicine and one "medical" Ph.D. An Australian bought a Ph.D. in natural and nutritional sciences. A customer without a listed address bought a Ph.D. in molecular medicine. Another customer, also without an address listed in the database, bought a Ph.D. in veterinary medicine and epidemiology, and a Master of Science in veterinary clinical medicine.

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