



A Tennessee Trucker and the TSA

You might assume that unconstitutionally searching Tennessee's trucks while recruiting their drivers to snitch on us would keep the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) too busy for further evil. You would be wrong.

Just as groping aviation's passengers doesn't content this vile agency, neither do its VIPR attacks on our highways. And so it also licenses truckers despite the fact that each state already does.

Of course, the word "license" means "to allow" — and what Our Rulers permit, they can also prohibit. That's why 44-year-old Abdirazaq JeerJeer, "a Somali refugee who ... has been a [US] citizen since 2000"* sat sidelined for months instead of driving tankers, a tough and often dangerous job of enormous skill that supported Mr. JeerJeer, his wife and their seven-month-old son, Adam.



Our Rulers filed no charges against this breadwinner; they did not try nor convict him of any crime. They simply revoked his TWIC — Transportation Worker Identification Credential — and put this hard-working father out of business.

The totalitarian TSA administers TWIC, thanks to those cowardly curs in Congress and their [Maritime Transportation Security Act \(MTSA\) of 2002](#). Quick: how many shipyards and docks have alleged terrorists in trucks blown up? Yep, you're scratching your head because there are none, unless we count [Timothy McVeigh](#) and [Ramzi Yousef](#) — and their targets weren't "maritime." We face no crisis of exploding infrastructure, no rash of "transportation workers" trying to bomb us.

That didn't faze Congress. TWIC operates on the same principle as the rest of the War on Travel-sorry, Terror. Someone somewhere *might* try something sometime, so we serfs must cede Our Rulers more power over us.

No wonder TSA burbles that TWIC is "a vital security measure that will ensure individuals who pose a threat do not gain unescorted access to secure areas of the nation's maritime transportation system." And what, you ask, is a "secure area" of "the nation's maritime transportation system" — one that by its nature must remain open to millions of tons of cargo and the myriad "individuals" moving those tons worldwide every day? And haven't dockhands, truck-drivers, and many others enjoyed "unescorted access" — i.e., *liberty* — on the job for decades or even centuries? Such freedom is indispensable; otherwise, how will this industry get anything done? What, should the TSA turn adults into unproductive kindergartners who must ask teacher's permission before leaving their seats?



Written by [Becky Akers](#) on November 2, 2011

“Yes, we should!” TSA responds. To that end, it requires a broad array of employees to beg its leave before carrying out the most mundane tasks: [“Over 1 million workers](#) including longshoremen, truckers, port employees and others are required to obtain a TWIC.”

That’s neither easy nor cheap. The TSA decrees that “an individual must provide biographic and biometric information such as fingerprints, sit for a digital photograph and successfully pass a security threat assessment conducted by TSA.” The “individual” must also pay Our Rulers \$132.50 for their gracious permission to keep products moving through this desperate economy.

Fortunately for those “1 million workers” and we who consume the goods they transport, government’s usual ineptitude plagued TWIC. One snafu after another postponed its nonsense so that it didn’t actually take effect until 2009; [a typical headline in Today’s Trucking](#) announced in 2006, “[Internal s]ecurity problems may delay U.S. TWIC program for port truckers”; the article optimistically added “indefinitely.”

But now TWIC’s up and running with a vengeance, its inefficiency jacks up the prices customers pay for groceries, gas, imports — basically, everything that manufacturers must ship to market.

It’s also throwing taxpayers who are innocent of any wrong-doing, who have complied with all of TWIC’s expensive lunacy, out of work. Nor does the regime deign to inform its victims why.

Mr. JeerJeer is apparently an independent owner-operator who specializes in hauling gasoline. Our Rulers classify that as a “hazardous material,” which means Mr. J must not only buy a TWIC, he must also beseech the State to grant him a “Hazardous Materials Endorsement on his driver’s license.”

Mr. J [has been in business since at least 2005](#); he likely drove for a trucking company before that. So he’s experienced and boasts a clean record: [no crashes in the last two years](#). Mr. J’s occupation is essential, yet few folks have the temperament and talent to perform it, let alone succeed as he has.

But none of that matters to the TSA. Useless bureaucrats without the know-how even to start a truck, let alone run their own company after moving to a foreign country persecute a plucky entrepreneur. [“In January \[2011\], TSA sent JeerJeer](#) a letter saying the agency had determined he was ineligible for TWIC and HME credentials and that he had 60 days to appeal. But the letter was sent to an old address.” Why am I not surprised that these incompetent leeches can’t even get their mailing right? “In June, the agents showed up at his door” — we’ll presume the correct one this time.

They claimed “he was under suspicion and that the card was federal property that could be confiscated. They gave no further explanation, he said.”

However irrational or tragic the fate that befalls us, we try to make sense of it. And so Mr. J speculated that either these bumbling bureaucrats had mistaken him for someone else (names in a “security report” the TSA coughed up but heavily redacted before sending to him are similar to his but not identical), or they were prejudiced against Muslims. My money’s on both.

Mr. J appealed to his congresscritter for help. Alas, since it wasn’t his profession on the line nor his wife and baby going hungry, Rep. Steve Cohen (D-Tenn.) took a decidedly philosophical approach to this gross despotism: “... [we’re trying to facilitate](#) determining whether it is or isn’t [a case of mistaken identity]. If it is ... we will have helped clear up the matter and correct an injustice. And if it’s not the (case), we will have cleared up the matter. ... We’re trying to get down to that kernel of truth.” None too hastily, I’m sure.

While squirrely Steve ambled after his kernel, Mr. J [“support\[ed\] his family by driving a cab](#). He went



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from a steady paycheck driving the tanker trucks to living off tips. One day he might bring in \$50 in tips. Other days he has gone home without a dime.”

He also naïvely sent “his fingerprints to the FBI” in the “hopes they’ll help federal authorities identify who he is.” This admirable immigrant insists “he will do everything he can to hold on to the American dream he has built with his family ... ‘I’m proud to be an American,’ he said. ‘The 18 years I’ve lived in America, I’ve worked hard. I’ve paid my taxes. I’ve never left the country. ... I am innocent of anything. And I want my life back....

” “This is America,’ he said. ‘I believe in the system.’ ” Oh, my dear Mr. J, *why?* Not only is the “system” the problem, it’s utterly unconstitutional.

Amazingly, his misplaced faith was rewarded. Mr. J “[received two letters by certified mail](#) Monday that say ‘after further review’ the suspension of his Transportation Worker Identification Credential and the Hazardous Materials Endorsement on his driver’s license have been withdrawn.”

Our gung-ho naturalized citizen generously credits Squirrely Steve (“ ‘ ... Steve Cohen’s office never gave up on me. Without them I don’t know where I would be today’ ”). But I suspect the expose of his travails in Memphis’ *Commercial Appeal* and the reporter’s calls to the TSA had a lot more to do with it. Demands for this imbecilic agency’s abolition echo through the country, so the last thing it needs is another dozen eggs on its face.

Meanwhile, Squirrely Steve pontificates Our Ruler’s typical tyranny: “...[I]t’s good that when [TSA] became aware of the fact they made a mistake, they reversed themselves and gave this gentleman the opportunity to earn a livelihood, which he never should have had interrupted.”

But TSA doesn’t give Mr. J or its other prey any such “opportunity”: the Creator does. Nor is earning a living an “opportunity.” It’s a right — and an inalienable one at that.

Licensing it is the very definition of dictatorship.

* This article originally appeared in Memphis’ *Commercial Appeal*, but its URL is faulty. I have therefore linked to a reprint in the *Mogadishu Times*.



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