

# Reborn in Canada

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Government [surveillance dragnets](#) are now ubiquitous in America, so only attempting to maintain what semblance of individual privacy you have left might be not enough. While you may be able to present yourself out in public under an assumed name, this is insufficient if you are trying to perform some task that necessarily requires you to [go on a paper trip](#) first. Surreptitiously expatriating to a foreign country is another option to consider if you are truly serious about evading the invasive gaze of [Big Brother](#).

According to the author, there are more legal identity documents that Canadians must have, even on their person, compared to Americans. As he describes it:

*"Most of your identification will be issued by the provincial government...[f]ederally issued identification in Canada consists of the Canadian passport and the vital social insurance card. Provincially issued identification consists of birth certificates, medical identity cards, driver's licenses and provincial identity cards...[s]o just about every Canadian carries proof of citizenship with him in his wallet in two forms: proof of birth in Canada and the social insurance card...[a] person arrested or detained by police in Canada with only a provincial identity card and driver's license will almost always be asked about their citizenship. In the United States this would be rare unless you are Hispanic or speak with a foreign accent."*



Gee, I never thought of Canada as a police state before; I had always thought of it as an eccentric, albeit less alcoholically inclined, version of Alaska.

Acquiring originally generated Canadian ID, [like on any well-handled paper trip](#), requires the use of a mail drop through which to correspond with the government. Sands appears to prefer using the infant identity method for getting a birth certificate, provided you narrow your pool to those children who were born in one province, yet, who died in another. Naturally, this could be a problem should Canadian bureaucrats ever decide to cross-reference their birth and death records of such infants, but Sands just shrugs it off as not being a current problem because it's not being done yet (keep in mind that this book was written back in **1999**).

Next, it is suggested that secondary identification be gotten *before* continuing onward with the rest of the primary documents. Library, [voter registration](#), and universal medical insurance cards are all useful in "proving" residency. Supposedly, it is possible to acquire all these, armed only with the knowledge of what is on the birth certificate, but I am *greatly skeptical* of Sand's claim that if any of the forms for these documents requires you to give a social insurance number (SIN), then you should just fabricate one out of thin air.

When it comes to getting the provincial identity card and a driver's license, Sands recommends getting the former one first. He says:

*"The procedure is simple, if you have prepared in advance. In Canada you will be asked for one piece of primary identification and one secondary piece. The primary piece is your birth certificate. The secondary piece can be any identification with your signature on it. The biggest challenge is to review the various facts of your new identity. Write it all out on a sheet of paper: birthdate, birthplace, parents' birthdates, mother's maiden name, etc. When you go for the provincial identity card, the clerk will take your identification, ask you a few questions as to address and other personal data, and take your photograph. In most provinces, your card is mailed to you a few weeks later."*

With regard to the latter piece of government-issued identification, Sands says they are similar for the provincial identity card; for instance, he claims that Alberta demands a proof of *provincial* residency, such as a lease agreement or mortgage.

After jumping through some more hurdles, you are then ready to apply for the coveted social insurance card. Although it is technically possible to apply for a SIN by mail, more likely than not the intrepid paper-tripper will have to show up in person for an interview. Here, whatever [acting skills you have honed](#) while using your earlier Level One IDs becomes pivotal in convincing the interviewing bureaucrat of [your legend](#).

Applying for a Canadian passport is initially just a matter of filling out yet another form, but there is a catch. Just as with applying for US passports, there must be a witness or guarantor who is willing to vouch for your authenticity. Either that, or you must file a *Declaration in Lieu of Guarantor*, which automatically triggers an investigation by the passport office. Needless to say, inviting government investigations of your paper trip, or playing around with the technicalities of getting a work visa to the United States, pales in comparison to simply getting an individual to vouch for you, however, this requires you to once again [rely upon your acting skills](#).

There are some areas that need to be shored up during the course of "hardening" your alternate Canadian identity. Sands recommends giving yourself an employment reference through the assistance of a secretarial service. Although a diploma mill could be used, it might be better to "creatively" apply as a transfer student to a Canadian university in your field of study *as if you were* in your junior or senior year. Opening a bank account should be a snap once you have all your primary identification, and the debit card will serve as another piece of supporting legal ID. Getting credit cards, telephone service, and even renting an apartment should be similarly easy once you have a company front available as an "employer reference."

At this juncture, I should mention briefly about the Canadian secret police. They are known as the [Canadian Security Intelligence Service](#) (CSIS), and because there is no oversight of this agency by any other branch of government, their powers are quite extensive. Sands describes their behavior thusly:

*"CSIS could start investigations of any group or individual if they felt a person or group*

*threatened national security...[e]ssentially, this allows CSIS to start files on anyone at any time...[p]erhaps the most privacy destroying aspect of CSIS is its reaching of 'agreements of principle' with many Canadian provincial governments. These agreements in principle allow CSIS officers access to data on individuals held by the province. As pointed out previously, the amount of data is massive. Driver records, health records, tax data, etc., are all held by the province. Most provinces allow CSIS to troll through these databanks at will."*

Because CSIS is civilian run and *technically* not “law enforcement,” like the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#), the latitude of what they can get away with is literally enormous. Imagine, if you will, absolutely no official limits placed upon the FBI; CSIS is literally [a snitch's dream come true](#) – all the privacy invasion *without* the threat of incarceration.

Although I can appreciate the wisdom of the “two-wallet” method in avoiding the need to carry two sets of ID in different names while crossing the border, it still avoids the crux of the issue regarding paper-tripping itself. If you cannot rent a private mail box or purchase the assistance of a mail-receiving service without giving proof of your identity, you are screwed before you even start. Even if you *somehow* surmount that problem, then if you need to provide a SIN at any point before getting the SIN itself, you are totally screwed, especially if you are caught and prosecuted for fraud (or some such [violation of mala prohibita](#)).

[Trend Sands' \*Reborn in Canada\*](#) is a most unique look into how paper-tripping could work in Canada, although I am concerned that if there were a break in the chain of going on a paper trip, then it would seem to me to be better not to attempt it at all. Ultimately, it would require a current, updated knowledge of the Canadian government's own administrative rules and legislative statutes to discover whether or not paper-tripping is still even possible (the same could be said for the American situation as well). Although, if playing a game of wits with the bureaucracy sounds like a fun hobby to you, then perhaps going on a paper trip here in America, or up in Canada, might suit you better than the arduous task of moving along towards the right side of [the other \(not so\) thin line](#).