Émilie Brout & Maxime Marion, *Nakamoto (The Proof)*, 2014, forged passport scan, .jpg file, 2506 x 3430 px

This scanned image is the only existing trace of the passport of Satoshi Nakamoto.

Nakamoto is the creator of Bitcoin, a revolutionary and unfalsifiable payment system for performing online transactions anonymously. This virtual currency is widely used on darknets, networks guaranteeing anonymity which have bad reputation, especially because of the cybercriminal activities they facilitate (drug trade, counterfeits, etc.). Since his first public message until his disappearance on December 12, 2010, Nakamoto has made every effort to preserve his identity. Non-localizable by his always different IP addresses, his messages are published at random times and written in an English which doesn't permit to determine his nationality. Having created the first bitcoins, he has an estimated fortune of several hundred million Euros. The importance of his creation and the perfectly mastered mystery around him made him today a true contemporary myth, feeding a growing number of rumors and fantasies.

We decided to produce the evidence of the existence of Satoshi Nakamoto using the technology he created.

May 5, 2014 - After a few weeks of research, we find on the Tor network – at http://fakepasvv3holddd.onion – a group of forgers able to perform high quality Japanese passports, probably based in Cambodia. We contact them via their address fakepassport@safe-mail.net, Israeli high security email service where we did create an account too.

May 6, 2014 - We receive a response containing all the instructions.

May 22, 2014 - We pay a deposit of 0.328 BTC (125 € depending on the exchange rate on that date) on the Bitcoin account *1B3rf2CE3Stn7fmwbCU5BXEKgJ4ynsV7Zi* of the counterfeiters.

May 28, 2014 - With two days late compared to the announced date, we receive a picture of the scanned passport for validation. According to the document metadata, the ID was scanned on the same day at 12:01 with a HP Scanjet N6350 scanner. An extensive study on the image analysis website fotoforensics.com reveals no trace of manual retouching nor photomontage.
Passport photograph of Nakamoto, standards, looks like the low-definition portrait usually used to represent him on the internet and in the media. This image comes yet from the video *Seven Billion: Are you typical?* produced by National Geographic in 2011, which shows the average human face. The signature, where Kanji are correct, reveals that its author is right-handed. After searching web.archive.org and the Bitcoin forum reddit.com, it appears that the date of birth informed by Nakamoto himself is April 5, 1975. The date of the passport issue is the same as the date of registration of bitcoin.org by Nakamoto in Panama, several months before his first public message. Finally the MRZ passport number, corresponding to the ICAO standards, seems to include a sequence of numbers present in the first created block of bitcoins (Genesis block).

June 5, 2014 - We pay the remaining balance of 0.785 BTC (375 € depending on the exchange rate on that date) to the counterfeiters Bitcoin account. The passport is hidden inside a book and sent two days later. For safety, we know that it must transit through a third party transport service based in Romania, but we don't know where is the country of origin. Today, we haven't received anything; so we do have that image as the only evidence of its existence.

According to our information, the document is still in transit to the Romanian border...