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# **Alabama immigration law sweeps up Mercedes-Benz exec**

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by Jim Galloway

Over the weekend, Alabama discovered that its new illegal immigration law also applies to some pretty important Europeans. From the Associated Press:

A German manager with Mercedes-Benz is free after being arrested for not having a driver's license with him under Alabama's new law targeting illegal immigrants, authorities said Friday, in an otherwise routine case that drew the attention of Gov. Robert Bentley.

Tuscaloosa Police Chief Steven Anderson [said] an officer stopped a rental vehicle for not having a tag Wednesday night and asked the driver for his license. The man only had a German identification card, so he was arrested and taken to police headquarters, Anderson said.

The 46-year-old executive was charged with violating the immigration law for not having proper identification, but he was released after an associate retrieved his passport, visa and German driver's license from the hotel where he was staying, Anderson said.

Mercedes-Benz builds sport-utility vehicles at a large plant about 20 miles east of Tuscaloosa. The automaker's decision to open a factory in Alabama in 1993 was considered a major coup for the state's economic development efforts and launched a trend of other foreign automakers and suppliers who opened major factories in the South – including the Kia plant in Georgia.

Before Alabama's immigration law went into affect, the businessman – who was not named – would have been given a citation and sent along his way. How Alabama's governor was so quickly informed of the arrest remains a mystery – but no one seems surprised.

Bentley, who signed the illegal immigration law earlier this year, called the state's homeland security director, who in turn called the police chief.