LIBERTY & LAW
April 2025
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GRANTED!

SUPREME COURT WILL HEAR FBI WRONG-HOUSE RAID CASE

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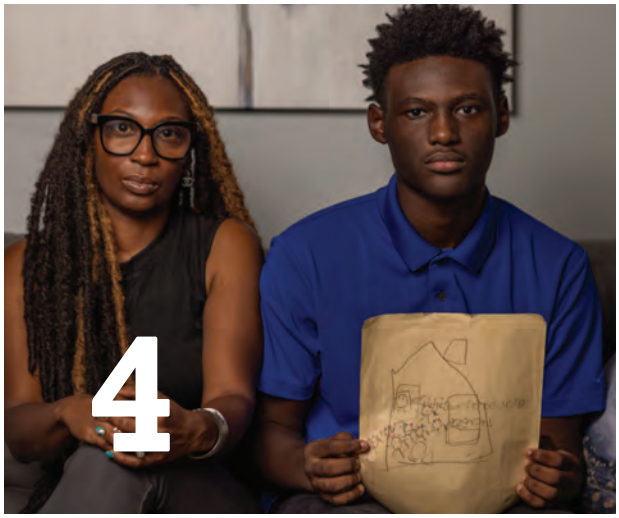
contents



LIBERTY & LAW

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About the publication:
Liberty & Law is published bimonthly by the Institute for Justice, which, through strategic litigation, training, communication, activism, and research, advances a rule of law under which individuals can control their destinies as free and responsible members of society. IJ litigates to secure economic liberty, educational choice, private property rights, freedom of speech, and other vital individual liberties, and to restore constitutional limits on the power of government. In addition, IJ trains law students, lawyers, and activists in the tactics of public interest litigation.

Through these activities, IJ illustrates and extends the benefits of freedom to those whose full enjoyment of liberty is denied by government.

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GRANTED!

Supreme Court Will Hear FBI Wrong-House Raid Case

BY DYLAN MOORE

The Institute for Justice is headed back to the U.S. Supreme Court!

This is our 13th trip to the nation's highest court, the third in our five-year-old Project on Immunity and Accountability, and the first in our growing cohort of cases representing innocent victims of SWAT raids.

Early one morning, before the sun began to rise over Atlanta, Trina Martin, her then-partner Toi Cliatt, and her son, Gabe, were jolted awake by a loud bang in their living room. Thinking they were being robbed, Toi pulled Trina into their closet and reached for his legally owned firearm, prepared to defend his family. Just as he was about to grab it, a masked man yanked Toi out of the closet, threw him to the ground, and handcuffed him.

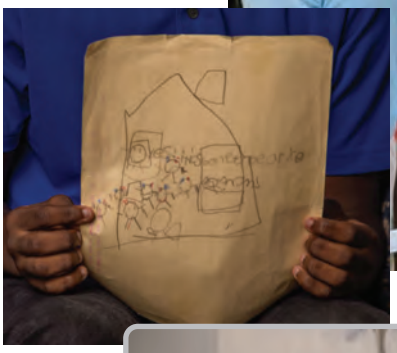
Toi soon learned that the intruders weren't robbers. They were heavily armed FBI SWAT agents who had busted down the family's front door and detonated a flashbang grenade in their living room. As the agents shouted questions at Toi from behind the barrel of a rifle, Trina pleaded with them to let her see her son (then 7 years old), who was cowering under the covers in his bedroom. But the agents refused. Toi eventually told the officers his address, and all the noise stopped.

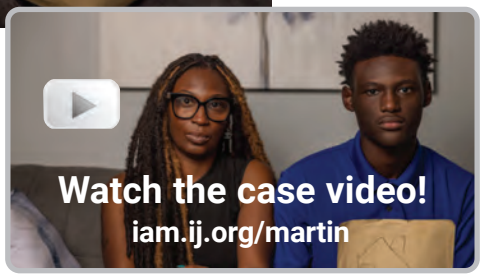
The SWAT team had a warrant—for a house with a different address, on a different street, owned by a different person. Once the agents realized their mistake, they left and proceeded to raid the correct house, which was about a block away. The agent in charge of the SWAT team later returned, said he was sorry, and handed Toi a business card.

But when Toi called the number on the card, the federal government refused to make things right. Out of options, Trina and Toi sued the United States under the Federal Tort Claims Act. Congress passed the FTCA in 1946 to ensure that innocent people harmed by federal employees could receive a remedy. And in 1974, Congress expanded the FTCA specifically to ensure that victims of federal wrong-house raids—just like Trina, Toi, and Gabe—could hold the government accountable.

Congress, in other words, could not have been clearer. But still, the 11th Circuit ruled that the family was out of luck.

Right: **Toi, Gabe**, and **Trina** around the time the FBI wrongly raided their home. Bottom: A picture Gabe drew shortly after the raid, showing officers swarming the house.





To bar their lawsuit, the court expanded the FTCA's limited exceptions and invented new ones out of whole cloth.

But Trina and Toi weren't done fighting. That's when IJ stepped in to petition the Supreme Court to take up their case. To bolster our persuasive petition, we even secured a bipartisan amicus brief from members of Congress affirming our interpretation of the FTCA. And in January, the Court accepted the case on an accelerated schedule—we're gearing up for argument at the end of April, when we'll ask the Court to confirm that Congress meant what it said when it amended the FTCA to cover wrong-house raids.

In our fight to restore accountability, IJ must contend with decades of entrenched court-created immunities for government officials and an often-reflexive deference to government. But if anything is certain, it's that courts cannot snuff out claims that Congress explicitly allows. The FBI raided the wrong house. Now the Supreme Court can make things right by ensuring the victims have a remedy. ◆

Dylan Moore is an IJ attorney.

IJ WIN CLOSES CIVIL FORFEITURE LOOPHOLE IN NEVADA

BY BEN FIELD

Stephen Lara's life savings were seized in February 2021. IJ made sure Stephen got his money back, and—after nearly four years of litigation—a Nevada court has ruled that the government violated state law when it took his money. It's a landmark ruling that will have repercussions across the Silver State and beyond, reining in a pernicious legal loophole that law enforcement uses to disregard property rights.

Stephen is a Marine Corps veteran who was traveling to spend time with his daughters when he was pulled over outside Reno, Nevada, on a bogus traffic stop. The Nevada Highway Patrol officer asked intrusive questions unrelated to traffic safety, and Stephen honestly told the officer he was traveling with his life savings in cash. Even though Stephen had copious documentation that his money came from his legitimate paychecks and veterans benefits, the Highway Patrol seized his money. But it didn't follow Nevada law.

Nevada Highway Patrol officers seized **Stephen Lara**'s life savings, despite not charging him with any crime. Now the state high court has ruled that the state broke the law in taking Stephen's money.

This is a groundbreaking decision–the first by a court to recognize that state property rights protections can't be circumvented through the equitable sharing loophole.

Instead, it used a loophole called "equitable sharing," under which state law enforcement hands seized property to the federal government to forfeit under federal law. This procedure evades any state-law protections for property owners—and the feds return up to 80% of the proceeds to state law enforcement to use virtually however they want. In effect, the federal government pays state officials to disregard state law—to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

Nevada law is far from perfect in protecting property owners against civil forfeiture abuses. But it does provide critical safeguards, including requiring a real judge to rule on all forfeitures; giving property owners an avenue to challenge a seizure within 60 days; setting a high burden of proof on the government to forfeit property; and imposing reporting requirements to improve transparency. But thanks to federal equitable sharing, state officials can side-step all those critical protections for Nevadans' property rights.

The court's reasoning would apply to law enforcement statewide in Nevada–and in several other states with similar laws.

Together, IJ and Stephen sued the federal government to get his life savings back—and following seven months of silence, the government finally returned his cash the day after we filed suit.

But we also sued the Nevada Highway Patrol in state court to ensure that this never happens to anybody else. Our claim was simple: The state Legislature did not intend to allow an end-run around its protections for property rights through equitable sharing.

In January 2025, a state trial court agreed. It held that it is unlawful "for Nevada to participate in the federal equitable sharing program." The court issued an injunction barring the Highway Patrol "from participating in the federal equitable sharing program until and unless they achieve full compliance with Nevada's statutory requirements."

This is a groundbreaking decision—the first by a court to recognize that state property rights protections can't be circumvented through the equitable sharing loophole. The court's reasoning would apply to law enforcement statewide in Nevada—and in several other states with similar laws.

Meanwhile, Stephen's case continues. He has other claims that the government violated the state Constitution in seizing his life savings, and he intends to fight to the state Supreme Court if necessary to ensure nobody else's property rights are violated. But this latest victory is a critical step in ensuring that when states act to protect property owners, those protections must be respected. ◆

Ben Field is an IJ attorney.

PROPERTY OWNER HIT WITH $7 MILLION FINE

WILL HAVE HER DAY IN COURT

BY JARED MCCLAIN

Humboldt County, California, fines people millions of dollars for things they didn't do because it doesn't care if they're innocent. Now, IJ is a big step closer to dismantling this unconstitutional scheme thanks to a major win at the 9th Circuit.

Part of California's "Emerald Triangle" (three northern counties famous for cannabis growth), Humboldt expected to cash in on legalization. While Humboldt made permits for commercial growth available to anyone willing to pay, the county also amended its ordinances to make sure no one could afford to grow cannabis without buying a permit—complete with $10,000 daily fines for any land-use violation that might be related to cannabis.

Rather than investigate, however, the county relies on satellite images to find unpermitted land uses and then just presumes the owner must be growing cannabis—no proof required. IJ client Rhonda Olson faces $7.4 million in fines for a property she recently bought for $60,000 because the prior owner grew

Humboldt County residents **Rhonda Olson** (page 8), **Blu Graham** (left), and **Corinne** and **Doug Thomas** (right) are facing massive fines for bogus cannabis-related violations. Now the 9th Circuit has ruled that their challenge to the fines can continue.

cannabis near an old logging road that a *different* prior owner had graded without a permit—all before Rhonda bought the place.

Once accused of cannabis-related violations, a landowner gets just 10 days to "return the land to its pre-cannabis state." That's often impossible because the notices don't explain how the property violates the code, and the mere accusation of unpermitted cannabis makes landowners categorically ineligible for *any* permits—including ones they need to "abate" the nuisance. The county then delays hearings indefinitely so that paying a settlement is the only way to escape from under the fines.

IJ is currently litigating more than a dozen cases against municipalities that impose excessive penalties without due process. Humboldt's scheme is so egregious that our 2022 class action there brought five claims targeting different constitutional deficiencies. But in May 2023, a trial court rubber-stamped the county's actions and dismissed our case. It held that because our clients had not yet paid the impossibly high fines, they hadn't suffered an injury they could sue over.

HUMBOLDT'S SCHEME IS SO EGREGIOUS THAT OUR 2022 CLASS ACTION THERE BROUGHT FIVE CLAIMS TARGETING DIFFERENT CONSTITUTIONAL DEFICIENCIES.

On December 30, the 9th Circuit reversed the dismissal almost entirely. The court recognized that our clients had already suffered serious financial and psychological harm. And by ruling that people don't have to pay an unconstitutional fine before challenging it, the court's decision will help many people far beyond Humboldt who would otherwise be frozen out of court.

The appellate court also ruled that Humboldt's scheme might violate due process because it uses vague notices, imposes penalties without probable cause, delays hearings indefinitely, and punishes innocent people for someone else's conduct.

After two and a half years of litigation, we're now headed to discovery in the trial court. There, we will finally have a chance to prove our claims about Humboldt's revenue-driven regime—and vindicate once and for all the principle that no American should be charged astronomical penalties for something they didn't do. ◆

Jared McClain is an IJ attorney.

Victory:

IJ Client Accused Of "Unfair Competition" Now Free To Open Shop

BY CHRISTIAN LANSINGER

The wheels of justice often turn slowly. But not for an African hair braider in South Fulton, Georgia. Less than four months after Awa Diagne filed a lawsuit with IJ's help, a judge ruled that the city violated her right to engage in a lawful business and ordered the city to let her open her braiding shop immediately.

As described in this publication's December issue, Awa's case came together quickly. After braiding hair in downtown Atlanta for nearly 30 years, she needed to move her business closer to her home and family in South Fulton. Fortunately, she found the perfect storefront near her twin daughters' school. She signed a lease, invested thousands of dollars in renovations, and secured recommendations from the city's zoning staff and planning commission. All she needed was a special use permit from the South Fulton City Council.

But in July 2024, the council complained that Awa's business might be too successful and that customers might prefer her to a politically favored hair salon. One councilwoman argued it was "not fair" that existing salons should "have to compete" in the same area.

With a council vote scheduled later that month, friends of IJ reached out because of our work defending natural hair braiders' constitutional right to earn an honest living. And on the morning of the vote, we sent the council a letter reminding it that we recently vindicated this right in Georgia in 2023 on behalf of lactation consultants. It ignored our warning and voted to deny Awa's permit solely to protect existing salons' profits. Weeks later, IJ sued.

Then, in December, a judge held that the city violated Awa's constitutional rights. In his ruling, the judge explained

Awa Diagne is free to open her braiding salon after IJ quickly secured a court victory holding that a Georgia city violated Awa's rights by denying her a permit in order to protect another business.

that the city's *only* basis for denying Awa's permit was to protect an existing salon's "haircare monopoly." Citing IJ's 2023 victory at the Georgia Supreme Court, the judge reaffirmed that a city can infringe on the ability to engage in a lawful business only if reasonably necessary to advance public health or safety.

This recent win extends precedent we established in an occupational licensing case to the zoning context. In both areas, courts are often reluctant to enforce constitutional protections, instead acting as a rubber stamp for government overreach. As IJ's first challenge under our new Zoning Justice Project, Awa's victory serves as a warning to government officials that they cannot abuse zoning laws to pick winners and losers in the marketplace.

In the first week of 2025, Awa opened her South Fulton braiding shop: Awa Best Braids. Now she is free to share her passion for African hair braiding with the community she calls home. And Georgia courts have once again proven that they take rights seriously. We'll continue to build on this precedent nationwide to protect the rights to earn an honest living and to use your property productively. ◆

Christian Lansinger is an IJ attorney.

Take A Deeper Dive With IJ LIVE

Restrictive zoning practices, accumulated over the course of more than a century, have eroded property rights nationwide and spawned a host of detrimental social and economic consequences. Barriers to new housing exacerbate the Unites States housing shortage. Entrepreneurs like Awa are forced to comply with restrictions that make it exceedingly difficult to start and grow a small business.

To take stock of the realities on the ground, *Liberty & Law* editor Kim Norberg recently sat down with Ari Bargil and Bob Belden—the IJ attorneys spearheading our Zoning Justice Project. The engaging conversation about the project's aims, challenges, and cases can be viewed using the QR code below or at iam.ij.org/IJ-live-jan-25.

The discussion originally aired as an installment in our ongoing IJ LIVE webinar series, which is available exclusively to members of IJ's Partners Club (comprising supporters giving $1,000 or more annually) and Four Pillars Society (honoring those who have included IJ in their long-term financial plans). This generosity is crucial to sustaining our efforts to combat government overreach and unleash individual freedom nationwide—thank you!

For questions about IJ's Partners Club, please contact Sarah Grassilli at sgrassilli@ij.org or (703) 682-9320 x209.

If you have questions about the Four Pillars Society or are considering a planned gift to IJ, please contact Ross Ward at rward@ij.org or (703) 682-9320 x210. ◆

Watch the IJ LIVE recording!
iam.ij.org/IJ-live-jan-25

BUSTED!

Wilmington Agrees To Overhaul Its Predatory Impound Scheme

Wilmington, Delaware, residents **Ameera Shaheed** and **Earl Dickerson** lost their cars to the city's predatory tow-and-impound scheme. Now the city has worked with IJ to create a new, just system.

BY WILL ARONIN

Ordinarily, when a city contracts government services to private companies, it pays them. But the city of Wilmington, Delaware, thought it came up with a clever way to avoid paying tow companies for their services: Rather than offer money, why not let the companies keep the cars they seize? Then, by devising a predatory impound scheme that ensures people can't get their cars back, the city could get all the towing services it needed—without paying a penny!

In 2021, Ameera Shaheed and Earl Dickerson—Wilmington residents who lost their cars to this "government theft auto" racket—partnered with IJ to end it. After four years of litigation, the city backed down. It agreed to compensate Ameera and Earl and reform its impound procedures.

Here's how the scheme operated. A private towing company would offer its services to the city at zero cost. In exchange, the company could tow any legally parked car with at least $200 in unpaid parking fines without any advance notice or hearing. From there, a car owner had just 30 days to pay every penny of the parking tickets, towing fees, storage fees, and other fines. There was no opportunity for a hearing before this ransom payment. If the owner failed to come up with the money, the towing company kept the car. Worst of all, the owner still owed the parking ticket debt—meaning her next car could be impounded, too.

After IJ scored a preliminary win in trial court, the city finally agreed to work with us to overhaul its impoundment practices in line with the U.S. Constitution—including multiple violation notices, accessible payment plans, and expedited hearings. And most importantly, if a car is ultimately scrapped or sold, the owner's remaining tickets and fees are dismissed. Once predatory, Wilmington's impound system now serves as a model for cities nationwide.

Similar IJ cases continue in Chicago, Detroit, and Brookside, Alabama. Though the details of each city's scheme may vary, each case advances the same principle we vindicated in Wilmington: Government (and its private contractors) cannot take property without a good reason and without procedural protections demanded by the Constitution. ◆

Will Aronin is an IJ senior attorney.

New IJ Research Makes Case For A CLEAN CUT FROM LICENSING

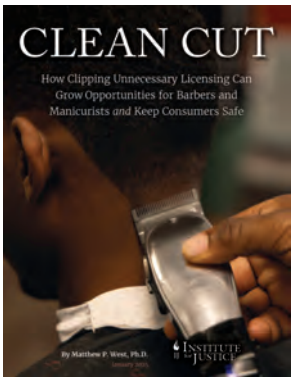
BY MATTHEW P. WEST

Des Moines, Iowa, barber Craig Hunt started cutting hair very young. He grew up in a community where family, friends, and neighbors cut one another's hair out of necessity—they wanted to look good but couldn't always afford a trip to the barbershop. When Craig got older, he decided to make it his career. But first he had to get the government's permission. Among several other requirements, Iowa required Craig to spend thousands of hours in school before it would allow him to work as a barber.

So Craig went to school. But after completing nearly 75% of the required hours, he threw in the towel. School was too frustrating, and he had to earn a living. He didn't give up on his dream of being a barber entirely, however. Over a decade later, he returned to school and, despite having to do everything again, he did it—he finished school and became a legitimate barber in the eyes of the state. Finally, he had a license to cut.

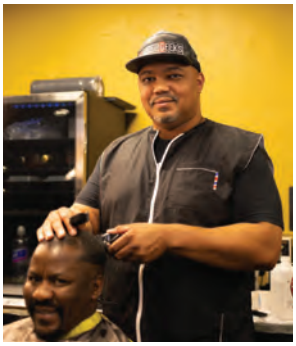
Barbering is among the many lower-income occupations in the United States that require a license to practice. And the purported reason that stamp of approval is necessary is to protect your health and safety. A new IJ study, titled *Clean Cut*, puts that logic to the test with real-world evidence. The study compares the outcomes of thousands of health inspections for barbershops, as well as nail salons, in neighboring states with different licensing requirements.

The results of the study show that barbershops and nail salons are overwhelmingly compliant with health and safety standards regardless of licensing requirements for workers. During the study period, Mississippi required 50% more training hours for barbers than Alabama, but comparable barbershops in both states passed health inspections over 95% of the time. Similarly, although New York required a license for manicurists and Connecticut did not, comparable nail salons in both states met at least 95% of health and safety standards in inspections.



ij.org/report/clean-cut

Des Moines barber **Craig Hunt** got his license, but IJ's new report shows licenses aren't needed to keep the public safe.



To *Liberty & Law* readers, the results of the study may not be surprising. Previous research, from IJ and others, has demonstrated that licensing—and licensing requirements—have no measurable impact on service quality. Previous research has also shown that most people are on the losing side of the licensing racket. The evidence is weak that licensing achieves its goals, but the evidence is strong that consumers pay more and that the people who do put themselves through the licensing rigamarole often see a negative return on their investment.

Licensing shouldn't prevent people from making an honest living, especially when it doesn't make us any safer. Our intrepid legislative and activism teams are already using *Clean Cut* to show state lawmakers that they can give barber and beauty licenses a haircut without risking public health and safety.

The special interests behind barber and beauty licenses are mighty. But facts are mightier. And they are on our side. ◆

Matthew P. West is an IJ senior research analyst.

Building On Sylvia Gonzalez's Historic Supreme Court Win

BY BRIAN MORRIS

In the United States, elected officials, citizens, and journalists must feel free to express differences of opinion. And they must be able to do so without fear of government retaliation. Anything less violates the First Amendment.

That's what IJ told the U.S. Supreme Court last year, after the city of Castle Hills, Texas, charged Sylvia Gonzalez with a bogus crime because she organized a petition to remove her city manager. Castle Hills had never charged someone with the same crime for a similar reason. And the Supreme Court agreed: Evidence that the government used a novel crime to charge Sylvia supports a First Amendment retaliation claim.

IJ is now building on Sylvia's historic win across the country.

Americans must feel free to express differences of opinion without fear of government retaliation. Anything less violates the First Amendment.

In Atmore, Alabama, local officials went after IJ clients and school board members Sherry Digmon and Cindy Jackson because they refused to support failing superintendent Michele McClung. After teachers complained, Sherry and Cindy voted "no" on renewing McClung's contract. But as it turned out, McClung had friends in high places. After the vote, the local district attorney and the county sheriff started a public campaign to intimidate Sherry and Cindy into changing their vote.

As part of that scheme, the district attorney set up a trap by sending a sham subpoena to the school board. Then, after more public threats by the district attorney and the sheriff, a local journalist for the *Atmore News* published a story disclosing the subpoena and highlighting the coordinated attack against anyone who questioned McClung. In response, the district attorney, the sheriff, and his deputies went after McClung's critics using the fake subpoena to concoct made-up crimes. The officials then arrested and criminally charged four locals, including Sherry and Cindy.

That retaliation violates the First Amendment. So IJ teamed up with Sherry, Cindy, and others to file a federal lawsuit relying on IJ's recent Supreme Court win to hold the district attorney, the sheriff, and their cronies accountable.

In Newton, Iowa, discovery confirmed the retaliatory motives of local officials. IJ sued Newton after Noah Petersen was arrested at a city council meeting for criticizing his local mayor and police chief. During depositions, Newton confirmed that it has never charged someone with the same crime for the same conduct. After Sylvia's win, that's textbook evidence of retaliation.

In Marion, Kansas, local officials raided the home of IJ client Ruth Herbel for exposing corruption and criticizing her mayor. But the warrant was bogus—part of a larger retaliatory scheme involving the police chief and two county sheriffs. The federal court refused to dismiss Ruth's claims, and further investigation has exposed the depths of the conspiracy.

With these cases, the tailwind is building in IJ's First Amendment retaliation cases. Sylvia's Supreme Court case set the standard, and now IJ clients across the country are using that standard to hold officials responsible for violating the First Amendment. ◆

Brian Morris is an IJ attorney.

Government Asserts: All Your Cash Belongs To Us

BY ROB JOHNSON

Do you own your money? To most people, the question might seem silly. If it's your money, of course you own it. If you don't, who does?

But ask a lawyer for the federal government, and you may get a different answer. "Money," the government recently asserted in a brief in one of IJ's cases, "is not necessarily 'property' for constitutional purposes."

The government's brief offered three rationales for that argument: (1) The government creates money when it prints it; (2) the government can take your money by taxing it; and (3) the Constitution allows the government to spend money for the "general welfare."

In other words, if you ask a government lawyer who owns your money, the lawyer might answer, "We do."

The government advanced this argument in a case that IJ filed challenging the federal government's practice of imposing fines through "administrative" courts, where both prosecutors and judges are employed by the same agency. Readers of *Liberty & Law* may remember the case: A judge employed by the Department of Labor sided with agency prosecutors to hold IJ's client, small-business owner Chuck Saine, liable for over $50,000.

Now the government was arguing that Chuck had no right to an independent judge because, when the government took his money, it was not taking his "property" at all.

"Money," the government recently asserted in a brief in one of IJ's cases, "is not necessarily 'property' for constitutional purposes."

IJ client and small-business owner **Chuck Saine** is facing $50,000 in penalties without an independent judge.

These are the kinds of arguments that you normally hear from people who are suspicious of government. We may *suspect* the government of believing these things. But these are not arguments you expect the government to advance on its own behalf.

Still, seeing it in print, it explains a lot about the government's behavior. Take our forfeiture cases, where the government regularly seizes cash and tries to keep it for its own benefit. At IJ, we have litigated cases involving cash seized at airports, on highways, inside homes, from safe deposit boxes, and out of bank accounts. Wherever money is found, the government tries to seize it.

IJ's landmark civil forfeiture study, *Policing for Profit*, looked at 15 states for which data were available and found that, on average, cash made up nearly 70% of forfeited property.

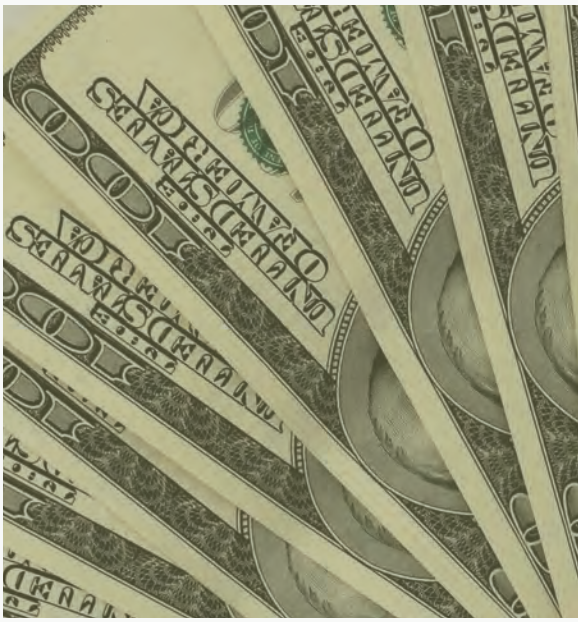
And when the government isn't seizing cash with civil forfeiture, it's finding other creative ways to take it. Excessive fines. Bogus fines. Fees to use your property. Fees for using your property the "wrong" way. Liability imposed by kangaroo courts and biased judges.

At IJ, we've challenged all these things. And we win. In this same issue of *Liberty & Law*, we report on our success curbing equitable sharing—which Nevada officers used to take Stephen Lara's life savings—alongside a victory against a fining scheme in Humboldt County, California.

The government may act like it owns all the country's cash, but it doesn't. And IJ is here to make sure the courts agree. ◆

Rob Johnson is an IJ senior attorney.

At IJ, we have litigated cases involving cash seized at airports, on highways, inside homes, from safe deposit boxes, and out of bank accounts. Wherever money is found, the government tries to seize it.



Victims of civil forfeiture like **Stephen Lara** face a system that treats money like it's the government's property, not theirs.

Viva Pat Caswell

1941–2025

BY SCOTT BULLOCK

Pat Caswell never sought the limelight—and she sure never thought that, in her late 60s, she would have to take on the U.S. Attorney's office in Boston to save the motel that she and her husband, Russ, and their family had owned since the 1950s. But that's exactly what the family had to endure when, in 2009, the federal government and the local police department filed a civil forfeiture action—not against Russ and Pat, of course, but against the motel: *United States v. 434 Main Street, Tewksbury, Mass*.

The government never claimed that Pat or Russ had been involved in any criminal activity. Indeed, they had always lived quiet, law-abiding lives. But the feds insisted that they should be held responsible for the unlawful activities of the guests at the motel, a tiny fraction of whom committed drug crimes while staying at the budget spot. (Drug crimes also routinely occur at much larger and more expensive hotels, but the government never seems to file forfeiture actions against those properties.)

When IJ heard about the forfeiture suit against the motel, we were honored to represent the Caswells in a vitally important lawsuit early on in our initiative challenging civil forfeiture. During the course of a four-year ordeal, Pat suffered from a life-threatening heart ailment. So not only did the Caswells stand to lose their family business (which was essentially their retirement plan), but they also stood to lose the matriarch of this wonderful family. Displaying the bravery typical of so many of our clients, the Caswells nevertheless stood firm and continued the fight. In early 2013, we won: The motel was saved from forfeiture.

The Caswells eventually sold the motel, but the proceeds went to the Caswell family rather than to federal and state law enforcement agencies. Pat continued to live for over another decade, a time she enjoyed in peaceful retirement as she and Russ spent time with their family and cruised around in his hot rod, listening to Elvis along the way. The Caswells celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in September, but they lost Pat in January of this year. Russ is heartbroken but takes comfort in knowing that we will continue to build upon their powerful legacy of challenging forfeiture abuse—and prevailing. ◆

Scott Bullock is IJ's president and chief counsel.

Scan the QR code or visit **iam.ij.org/april-2025-headlines** to read the articles.

Newsweek

Supreme Court Ruling Could Change How FBI Operates

By Sophie Clark | January 31, 2025

The Supreme Court has fast-tracked oral arguments for a case that could change how the FBI conducts raids.

The court is getting ready to hear arguments in *Martin v. United States*, a case that considers whether people can sue the federal government over SWAT raids conducted in the wrong home.

Why It Matters

The federal government is largely immune from lawsuits brought by private individuals. However, individuals are able to bring the United States to court under the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA).

If the court rules in favor of Martin, then the FBI will have to be much more careful about who they target when entering people's homes.

If the court rules in favor of the United States, then police cannot be held accountable in court for any physical or mental damage they may inflict on innocent individuals during an accidental raid on their private property.

To continue reading, scan the QR code above or visit iam.ij.org/april-2025-headlines.

FOX NEWS

'This Is Personal': Marine Veteran Reacts To Judgment On Federal Loophole Police Used To Seize His Cash
January 20, 2025

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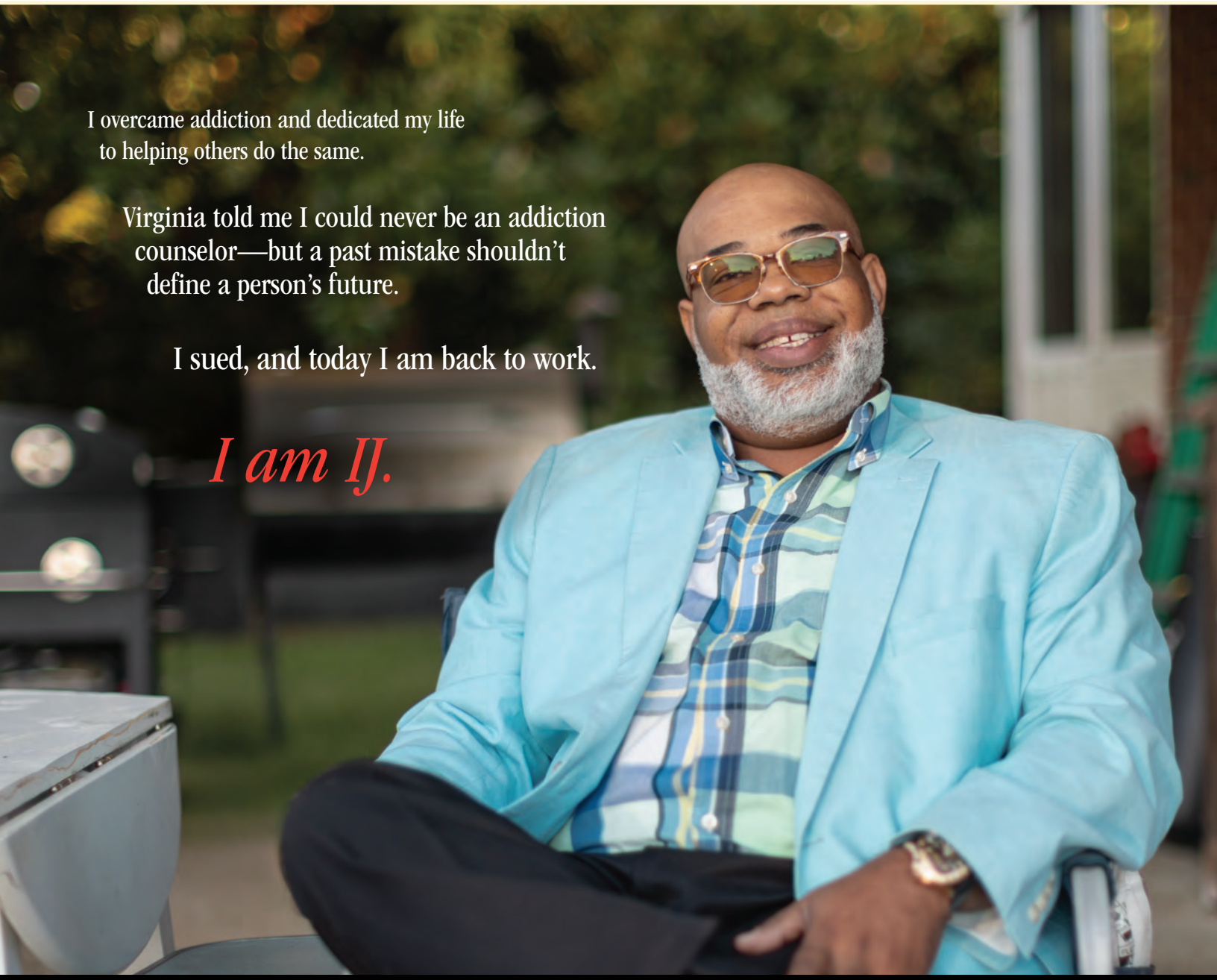

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