

Policing for Profit: Jeff Sessions & Co.'s Thinly Veiled Plot to Rob Us Blind

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*"Laws are no longer made by a rational process of public discussion; they are made by a process of blackmail and intimidation, and they are executed in the same manner. The typical lawmaker of today is a man wholly devoid of principle — a mere counter in a grotesque and knavish game. If the right pressure could be applied to him, he would be cheerfully in favor of polygamy, astrology or cannibalism. It is the aim of the Bill of Rights, if it has any remaining aim at all, to curb such prehensile gentry. Its function is to set a limitation upon their power to harry and oppress us to their own private profit." — **H.L. Mencken***



Jeff Sessions

Let's not mince words. Jeff Sessions, the nation's top law enforcement official, would not recognize the Constitution if he ran right smack into it.

Whether the head of the Trump Administration's Justice Department enjoys being the architect of a police state or is just painfully, criminally clueless, Sessions has done a great job thus far of sidestepping the Constitution at every turn.

Most recently, under the guise of "fighting crime," Sessions gave police the green light to rob, pilfer, steal, thief, swipe, purloin, filch and liberate American taxpayers of even more of their hard-earned valuables (especially if it happens to be significant amounts of cash) using any means, fair or foul.

In this case, the foul method favored by Sessions & Co. is civil asset forfeiture, which allows police and prosecutors to "seize your car or other property, sell it and use the proceeds to fund agency budgets—all without so much as [charging you with a crime](#)."

Under a federal equitable sharing program, police turn asset forfeiture cases over to federal agents who process seizures and then return 80% of the proceeds to the police. (In Michigan, police actually get to keep up to 100% of forfeited property.)

This incentive-driven excuse for stealing from the citizenry is more accurately referred to as "policing for profit" or "theft by cop."

Despite the fact that 80 percent of these asset forfeiture cases result in no charge against the property owner, challenging these "takings" in court can cost the owner more than the value of the confiscated property itself. As a result, most property owners either give up the fight or chalk the

confiscation up to government corruption, leaving the police and other government officials to reap the benefits.

And boy, do they reap the benefits.

Police agencies have used their ill-gotten gains “to buy guns, armored cars and electronic surveillance gear,” [reports](#) The Washington Post. “They have also spent money on luxury vehicles, travel and a clown named Sparkles.”

Incredibly, these asset forfeiture scams have become so profitable for the government that, according to The Washington Post, “in 2014, law enforcement took more stuff from people [than burglars did](#).” As the Post notes, “the Treasury and Justice departments deposited more than \$5 billion into their respective asset forfeiture funds. That same year, the FBI reports that burglary losses topped out at \$3.5 billion.”

In 2015, the federal government [seized nearly \\$2.6 billion](#) worth of airplanes, houses, cash, jewelry, cars and other items under the guise of civil asset forfeiture.

According to [USA Today](#), “Anecdotal evidence suggests that allowing departments to keep forfeiture proceeds may tempt them to use the funds unwisely. For example, consider a 2015 scandal in Romulus, Michigan, where police officers used funds forfeited from illicit drug and prostitution stings to pay for ... [illicit drugs and prostitutes](#).”

Memo to the rest of my fellow indentured servants who are living through this dark era of government corruption, incompetence and general ineptitude: this is not how justice in America is supposed to work.

We are now ruled by a government so consumed with squeezing every last penny out of the population that they are completely unconcerned if essential freedoms are trampled in the process.

Our freedoms aren't just being trampled, however. They're being eviscerated.

At every turn, “We the People” are getting swindled, cheated, conned, robbed, raided, pickpocketed, mugged, deceived, defrauded, double-crossed and fleeced by governmental and corporate shareholders of the American police state out to make a profit at taxpayer expense.

Americans no longer have to be guilty to be stripped of their property, rights and liberties. All you have to be is in possession of something the government wants. And if you happen to have something the government wants badly enough, trust me, their agents will go to any lengths to get it.

If the government can arbitrarily freeze, seize or lay claim to your property (money, land or possessions) under government asset forfeiture schemes, you have no true rights.

Here's how the whole ugly business works in a nutshell.

First, government agents (usually the police) use a broad array of tactics to profile, identify, target and arrange to encounter (in a traffic stop, [on a train, in an airport, in public](#), or on private property) those individuals who might be traveling with a significant amount of cash or possess property of value. Second, these government agents—empowered by the courts and the legislatures—seize private property (cash, jewelry, cars, homes and other valuables) they “suspect” may be connected

to criminal activity.

Then—and here’s the kicker—whether or not any crime is actually proven to have taken place, without any charges being levied against the property owner, or any real due process afforded the unlucky victim, the property is seized by the government, which often divvies it up with the local police who helped with the initial seizure.

In a Kafkaesque turn of the screw, the burden of proof falls on the unfortunate citizenry who must mount a long, complicated, expensive legal campaign to prove their innocence in order to persuade the government that it should return the funds they stole. Not surprisingly, very few funds ever get returned.

It’s a new, twisted form of guilt by association, only it’s not the citizenry being accused of wrongdoing, just their money.

Motorists have been particularly vulnerable to this modern-day form of highway robbery.

For instance, [police stole \\$201,000 in cash](#) from Lisa Leonard because the money—which Leonard planned to use to buy a house for her son—was being transported on a public highway also used by drug traffickers. Despite the fact that Leonard was innocent of wrongdoing, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the theft on a technicality.

[Police stole \\$50,000 in cash](#) from Amanee Busbee—which she planned to use to complete the purchase of a restaurant—and threatened to hand her child over to CPS if she resisted. She’s one of the few to win most of her money back in court.

[Police stole \\$22,000 in cash](#) from Jerome Chennault—which he planned to use as the down payment on a home—simply because a drug dog had alerted police to its presence in his car. After challenging the seizure in court, Chennault eventually succeeded in having most of his money returned, although the [state refused to compensate](#) him for his legal and travel expenses.

Police stole \$8,500 in cash and jewelry from Roderick Daniels—which he planned to use to purchase a new car—and threatened him with jail and money-laundering charges if he didn’t sign a waiver forfeiting his property.

Police stole \$6,000 in cash from Jennifer Boatright and Ron Henderson and threatened to turn their young children over to Child Protective Services if they resisted.

Tenaha, Texas, is a particular hotbed of highway forfeiture activity, so much so that [police officers keep pre-signed](#), pre-notarized documents on hand so they can fill in what property they are seizing.

As the Huffington Post [explains](#), these police forfeiture operations have become little more than criminal shakedowns:

Police in some jurisdictions have run forfeiture operations that would be difficult to distinguish from criminal [shakedowns](#). Police can pull motorists over, find some amount of cash or other property of value, claim some vague connection to illegal drug activity and then present the motorists with a choice: If they hand over the property, they can be on their way. Otherwise, they face arrest, seizure of property, a drug charge, a probable night in jail, the hassle of multiple return trips to the state or city where they were pulled over, and the cost of hiring a lawyer to fight both the seizure and the criminal

charge. It isn't hard to see why even an innocent motorist would opt to simply hand over the cash and move on.

Unsurprisingly, these asset forfeiture scams have become so profitable for the government that they have expanded their reach beyond the nation's highways.

According to [USA Today](#), the U.S. Department of Justice received [\\$2.01 billion in forfeited items](#) in 2013, and since 2008 local and state law enforcement nationwide has raked in some \$3 billion in forfeitures through the federal "equitable sharing" program.

So now it's not just drivers who have to worry about getting the shakedown.

Any American unwise enough to travel with cash is fair game for the government pickpockets.

In fact, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has been colluding with the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and local police departments to seize a small fortune in cash from American travelers using the very tools—scanners, spies and surveillance devices—they claimed were necessary to catch terrorists.

Mind you, [TSA agents](#) already have a reputation for stealing from travelers, but clearly the government is not concerned about protecting the citizenry from its own wolfish tendencies.

No, the government bureaucrats aren't looking to catch criminals. (If so, they should be arresting themselves.)

They're just out to rob you of your cold, hard cash.

Think about it for a moment. You pay a hefty fee just to be able to walk free. It's called income tax. As former presidential candidate Ron Paul recognizes, "The Founding Fathers never intended a nation where citizens would pay nearly half of everything they earn to the government." And if you refuse to pay any of that so-called income tax, you'll be severely fined and/or arrested and put in jail.

One more thing: you don't really own your property. That is, your house or your land. Even when you pay off the mortgage, if you fail to pay your property taxes, government agents will evict you and take your home.

This is not freedom.

There was a time in our history when our forebears said "enough is enough" and stopped paying taxes (a pittance compared to what we are forced to shell out in taxes today) to what they considered an illegitimate government. They stood their ground and refused to support a system that was slowly choking out any attempts at self-governance, and which refused to be held accountable for its crimes against the people. Their resistance sowed the seeds for the revolution that would follow.

Unfortunately, in the 200-plus years since we established our own government, we've let the corporate elite and number-crunching bureaucrats pilfer our bank accounts to such an extent that we're back where we started.

Once again, we've got a despotic regime with an imperial ruler doing as it pleases.

But what if we didn't just pull out our pocketbooks and pony up to the federal government's outrageous demands for more money? What if we didn't just line up to drop our hard-earned dollars into the corporate collection bucket, no questions asked about how it will be spent? What if, instead of meekly tolerating the government's ongoing efforts to rob us blind, we did something about it?

As I make clear in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, if the government can just take from you what they want, when they want, and then use it however they want, you can't claim to be anything more than a serf in a land they think of as theirs.

It's up to "We the People" to demand reform.

These injustices will continue as long as we remain silent.

As American journalist H.L. Mencken observed:

The American of today, in fact, probably enjoys less personal liberty than any other man of Christendom, and even his political liberty is fast succumbing to the new dogma that certain theories of government are virtuous and lawful, and others abhorrent and felonious. Laws limiting the radius of his free activity multiply year by year: It is now practically impossible for him to exhibit anything describable as genuine individuality, either in action or in thought, without running afoul of some harsh and unintelligible penalty. It would surprise no impartial observer if ... the goddess of liberty were taken off the silver dollars to make room for a bas-relief of a policeman in a spiked helmet. Moreover, this gradual (and, of late, rapidly progressive) decay of freedom goes almost without challenge; the American has grown so accustomed to the denial of his constitutional rights and to the minute regulation of his conduct by swarms of spies, letter-openers, informers and agents provocateurs that he no longer makes any serious protest.

In other words, make them hear you.

And if they won't listen, then I suggest it's time for what Martin Luther King Jr. called for when government doesn't listen: "[militant nonviolent resistance](#)."

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<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/47520.htm>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-2786.html>