



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE PINAL COUNTY ATTORNEY

Contact: Tiffany Davila
Public Information Officer
520.866.6573

tiffany.davila@pinalcountyz.gov

PCAO CONVICTS MAN AT CENTER OF TRUCK SEIZURE CONTROVERSY WITH ACLU

FLORENCE, AZ (8/3/15) – Convicted felon Christopher Clark and his illicit actions remain the reason the seizure of a Chevy Colorado sits at the epicenter of a recent claim filed in Federal Court by the American Civil Liberties Union against Pinal County. That 2013 forfeiture and seizure process began after Clark used that truck to commit criminal acts against a local utility company.

In August 2013, the Pinal County Sheriff's Office arrested Clark after he broke into the Johnson Utilities substation off of Hunt Highway and stole a truck hood and bedcover from two different utility trucks. He then installed those stolen parts on the Chevy Colorado, which is registered to his mother, Rhonda Cox. As part of the investigation into Clark's criminal activities, the Chevy Colorado was lawfully seized. Ultimately, Clark pled guilty to one count of Burglary, a Class 4 Felony, and one count of Theft, a Class 5 Felony. The court sentenced Clark to four months in the Arizona Department of Corrections, plus probation, and ordered him to pay restitution to the victims of his crimes.

As a result of the facts uncovered in the criminal investigation, the Pinal County Attorney's Office started the civil asset forfeiture process, as authorized under the Arizona Civil Asset Forfeiture Laws, Arizona Revised Statutes §13-4301, et. seq, and §13-2301 et.seq. Although Cox was listed as the registered owner, facts obtained in the investigation showed the truck to be used by, and under the control of, Clark, supporting PCAO's lawful use of the civil forfeiture process. This process, now under attack by the ACLU, is not only a powerful weapon on the deterrence of crime, but also serves to enhance safety in local communities in many ways.

The Chevy Colorado used to commit criminal activity by Cox's son sits at the center of the controversy surrounding the ACLU's claim against Pinal County officials. While Cox originally claimed she was an 'innocent owner' entitled to return of the truck, she voluntarily withdrew her claim, and abandoned the opportunity to present her position before a neutral judge. Any remaining arguments about who owned the truck is without merit considering the truck was legally seized in the first instance, and Clark's underlying criminal misconduct, and the resulting forfeiture performed in accordance with State law have been validated by the trial court.



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE PINAL COUNTY ATTORNEY

Contact: Tiffany Davila

Public Information Officer

520.866.6573

tiffany.davila@pinalcountyz.gov

“Mr. Clark took a plea, thus admitting his guilt to the crime. Regardless of Ms. Cox’s knowledge of the truck’s whereabouts that night, her son used that truck for felonious purposes sparking the forfeiture process. Ms. Cox filed a motion to dismiss her claim to the Chevy Colorado thereby conceding any rights to that truck. While specifics about the ACLU’s lawsuit cannot be discussed at this time, I am confident justice stands on the side of the Pinal County Officials,” said Pinal County Attorney Lando Voyles.

For more information, contact Tiffany Davila at 520.866.6573 or by email at tiffany.davila@pinalcountyz.gov

###