

News Roundup

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The unexpected death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia continues to dominate the national news this week. USA Today [reports](#) that the high court appeared to be split in a 4-4 deadlock at oral argument of a criminal case involving the exclusionary rule on Monday; Orin Kerr has more analysis of the legal issue [here](#). President Obama made a [guest post to SCOTUSblog](#) where he explains that he takes his constitutional duty to appoint judges to the Supreme Court seriously, and vows to nominate someone to fill Scalia's seat in the coming weeks. The Washington Post [reports](#) that Scalia was in the company of "high-ranking members of an exclusive fraternity for hunters called the [International Order of St. Hubertus](#)" at the Cibolo Creek Ranch on the weekend of his death. More news after the break:

IRS Returns Man's Life Savings. The Wall Street Journal [reports](#) that the IRS has returned a North Carolina man's life savings after confiscating the money via civil forfeiture in 2014. Reportedly, the IRS suspected that Khalid "Ken" Quran, a business owner from Greenville, N.C., was concealing financial activity from the government by splitting large bank transactions into smaller ones. Quran contended that he was simply making bank withdrawals in the amount necessary to run his business. The IRS never charged Quran with a crime, but the report suggests that the return of his money nevertheless was an act of grace. The Institute of Justice assisted Quran and has a report about the incident [here](#).

Eyewitness Identification. The American Psychological Association [posted an article](#) that suggests that some psychologists think that eyewitness identification may be more reliable than it has been made out to be in recent years. Eyewitness identification reform has been a recent hot topic in criminal law because many exonerations have occurred in cases that involved eyewitness misidentification during investigation or trial. The conviction of Ronald Cotton based on Jennifer Thompson-Cannino's misidentification of him as her rapist is the classic example in North Carolina and is mentioned in the article. The article indicates that sequential lineups, now common in many states and mandated by the [North Carolina Eyewitness Identification Reform Act](#), may not produce more accurate identifications than traditional lineups.

Jail. The Vera Institute of Justice has released a project entitled [The Human Toll of Jail](#) which it describes as a "platform for true stories about and by ordinary people . . . who are or have caught up in the criminal justice system." The project is a collection of stories and photojournalism focusing on people's experiences in jail and related topics.

Body Cameras. A few weeks ago the News Roundup [mentioned](#) that Jeff wrote an [op-ed in the News and Observer](#) about police body cameras and the need to balance privacy and transparency with regard to public access to recorded footage from the cameras. Well folks, he's back at it this week with an [NPR interview](#) on the same topic. It's not to be missed.

Guns at School. The Houston Chronicle [reports](#) that some faculty members at the University of Houston are concerned about a new Texas law that allows students at public universities to bring guns to class. The law allows people to carry concealed weapons on public university campuses including classrooms and dormitories. Faculty members are concerned that the presence of deadly weapons in classrooms may chill discussion of "sensitive topics."

Raleigh PD Not Boycotting Queen Bey. WRAL [reports](#) that the Raleigh Police Protective Association voted

unanimously on Tuesday to not boycott an upcoming Beyoncé concert at Carter-Finley stadium. The singer's recent music video for her song "Formation" as well as her performance at the Super Bowl have been interpreted by some police unions as "anti-police" according to the report. The association is encouraging police officers to make their own decision about whether to volunteer to work off-duty at the concert. Presumably, officers also will make their own decisions regarding whether to carry hot sauce in their bags.