



## Newly Unsealed Court Documents Reveal FBI Got Warrant For Beverly Hills Raid of 1,400 Safe-Deposit Boxes, Seizure of \$86 Million in Cash by Misleading Judge

### Description

**USA: As previously reported, the feds seized \$86 million in cash, precious metals and family heirlooms stored in about 800 safe deposit boxes in Los Angeles in spring 2021.**

A class-action lawsuit claimed the FBI “exceeded the search warrant approved by the court” when it raided storage provider, US Private Vaults (USPV) and snooped through the contents of the safe deposit boxes.

USPV was indicted by the feds for conspiracy to sell drugs and launder money, however the owners of the boxes are not accused of committing any crimes.

The search warrant only authorized the FBI to inspect the safe deposit boxes to “identify their owners in order to notify them” about claiming their property.

The FBI agents were caught on video going through the boxes, tearing open packages with coins after already identifying the owner’s name.

“Items appear to be missing” – The owner’s lawyer told the Los Angeles Times the FBI’s list of inventory left out \$75,000 in gold coins.

The Institute for Justice, a watchdog accountability group is spearheading the fight and filed a temporary restraining order last year on behalf of several owners who stand to lose the contents of their safe deposit boxes if a federal judge doesn’t intervene.

This is the “most outrageous Fourth Amendment abuse that the Institute for Justice has ever seen,” Frommer, the IJ attorney, said when it announced the case. “It is like the government breaking into every apartment in a building because the landlord was dealing drugs in the lobby.”

In June 2021, US District Judge R. Gary Klausner, a George W. Bush appointee issued a temporary restraining order preventing the federal government from seizing safe deposit boxes from four individuals who are seeking the return of their assets until the feds can provide the “specific factual and

legal basis” for trying to initiate civil forfeiture.

The judge scolded the feds and said the planned forfeiture likely violates the individuals constitutional due process rights.

### **Now this...**

According to newly unsealed court documents, the FBI and US Attorney’s office in Los Angeles obtained the raid by misleading the judge who approved of the raid.

Sound familiar?

“Records from dozens of lawsuits stemming from the raid make clear, though, that it produced a windfall of tens of millions of dollars for the Justice Department. Local police departments that assisted in the raid have sought shares of the money.” The Los Angeles Times reported.

The Los Angeles Times reported:

The privacy invasion was vast when FBI agents drilled and pried their way into 1,400 safe-deposit boxes at the U.S. Private Vaults store in Beverly Hills.

Eighteen months later, newly unsealed court documents show that the FBI and U.S. attorney’s office in Los Angeles got their warrant for that raid by misleading the judge who approved it.

They omitted from their warrant request a central part of the FBI’s plan: Permanent confiscation of everything inside every box containing at least \$5,000 in cash or goods, a senior FBI agent recently testified.

The FBI’s justification for the dragnet forfeiture was its presumption that hundreds of unknown box holders were all storing assets somehow tied to unknown crimes, court records show.

It took five days for scores of agents to fill their evidence bags with the bounty: More than \$86 million in cash and a bonanza of gold, silver, rare coins, gem-studded jewelry and enough Rolex and Cartier watches to stock a boutique.

The U.S. attorney’s office has tried to block public disclosure of court papers that laid bare the government’s deception, but a judge rejected its request to keep them under seal.

The failure to disclose the confiscation plan in the warrant request came to light in FBI documents and depositions of agents in a class-action lawsuit by box holders who say the raid violated their rights.

The court filings also show that federal agents defied restrictions that U.S. Magistrate Judge Steve Kim set in the warrant by searching through box holders’ belongings for evidence of crimes.

FBI agents drilled and pried their way into 1,400 safe-deposit boxes.

18 months later, newly unsealed court documents show that the FBI and U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles got their warrant for that raid by misleading the judge who approved it.  
<https://t.co/zygb4JQG3u>

— Los Angeles Times (@latimes) [September 23, 2022](#)

by Cristina Laila

### Category

1. Crime-Justice-Terrorism-Corruption
2. Main
3. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

### Date Created

09/27/2022