

SUMMARY STATEMENT

State v. Blythe
Case No. 46992

The Idaho Supreme Court vacated Nicholas Keith Blythe's judgment of conviction, reversed the district court's order denying Blythe's motion to suppress, and remanded the case for further proceedings.

In March 2018, Blythe was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled substance and possession of paraphernalia after a police officer found two baggies of what appeared to be heroin in his shoes during a traffic stop. Before trial, Blythe filed a motion to suppress, arguing the search of his shoes violated the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution. The district court denied Blythe's motion, determining the search was a lawful search incident to arrest. Blythe entered a conditional guilty plea, reserving his right to appeal the district court's denial of his motion to suppress.

On appeal, Blythe argued the district court erred in concluding that the police officer's search of his shoes was a valid search incident to arrest. The Idaho Supreme Court explained that there are two rationales—officer safety and evidence preservation—that are used to justify a search incident to arrest. The Court held that neither rationale was sufficiently present to support a search of Blythe's shoes under the search incident to arrest exception. Accordingly, the Court reversed the district court's order denying Blythe's motion to suppress the evidence found in his shoes, vacated his judgment of conviction, and remanded the case for further proceedings.