

SUMMARY STATEMENT

State v. Maahs

Docket No. 49270-2021

The Idaho Supreme Court reversed the district court's decision denying the motion to suppress, vacated Maahs's judgment of conviction, and remanded for further proceedings.

Law enforcement responded to a report of suspicious conduct at a credit union. Before entering the credit union, the responding officer observed Patrick Maahs and Jordan Korona. After the men saw the officer, they left the bank counter and went into a single person bathroom. Neither officer had information that Maahs was armed or dangerous. As Maahs exited the bathroom, one officer drew his service weapon, pointed it at Maahs, advanced towards Maahs, and ordered Maahs to the ground. After Maahs complied, the officer handcuffed Maahs and later went through Maahs's pockets and wallet. Officers later placed Maahs in the back of a patrol vehicle while they questioned Korona. While Maahs was in the vehicle, a drug dog alerted on the car driven by Maahs. Inside, officers found a loaded 12-gauge shotgun; two safes containing methamphetamine and cocaine; a scale; a vacuum sealer; and packaging material.

The State charged Maahs with trafficking in methamphetamine, unlawful possession of a firearm, concealment, alteration or destruction of evidence, possession of cocaine, and possession of drug paraphernalia. Maahs moved to suppress the evidence seized from the search of his car on the basis that officers had conducted a *de facto* arrest and that his seizure was unsupported by probable cause or reasonable suspicion. The district court denied the motion to suppress, concluding that Maahs had not been arrested, but only subjected to an investigatory detention, or *Terry* stop, supported by reasonable suspicion.

The Idaho Supreme Court held that the district court erred in denying Maahs's motion to suppress because the officers arrested Maahs without probable cause. Specifically, the Court determined that under the totality of the circumstances known to the officers, the display of force in detaining Maahs exceeded the scope of an investigatory detention. Accordingly, the Court held that the items found in the car must be suppressed as fruit of the poisonous tree.

This summary constitutes no part of the opinion of the Court, but has been prepared by court staff for the convenience of the public.