

Supreme Court: You are concerned ONLY with the Constitutionality of the search of A.B.C.'s purse by Principal Chopstick, the other facts in this case have no relevance in your Court. Your questions to the attorneys should attempt to understand the events surrounding only the issue of the search.

In 1980, a teacher at Piscataway High School in Florida found two girls smoking in a restroom. One of the girls was A.B.C., a freshman who was 14 years old. Smoking in the restrooms was a violation of school rules (but was permitted in other areas of the school). The teacher took the two girls to the principal's office, where they met with Assistant Vice Principal Theodore Chopstick. The second girl admitted that she had been smoking. A.B.C. said she had not been smoking and said that she did not smoke at all.

Chopstick took A.B.C. into his office and instructed her to turn over her purse. He opened the purse and found a pack of cigarettes. He took the cigarettes out of the purse and showed them to A.B.C. He accused her of having lied about smoking in the restroom. As he removed the cigarettes, he noticed a package of cigarette rolling papers. He believed that cigarette rolling papers were a sign of involvement with marijuana. Therefore, he decided to search further in A.B.C.'s purse. He found the following items: a small amount of marijuana, a pipe, empty plastic bags, a significant amount of money in one-dollar bills, a list of students who owed A.B.C. money, and letters implicating A.B.C. in dealing marijuana.

Chopstick then called A.B.C.'s mother and the police. The mother came to the school. The police asked her to take her daughter to the police station. Chopstick gave the items from the purse to the police. At the police station, A.B.C. admitted that she had been selling marijuana at school. As a result of her admission and the evidence from the purse, the State of Florida brought delinquency charges against A.B.C. in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court of Middlesex County.

A.B.C. tried to have the evidence from her purse kept out of court, saying that the search violated the Fourth Amendment. She also argued that her confession should be suppressed, because it resulted from the illegal search. The juvenile court turned down her Fourth Amendment arguments, although it did agree that the Fourth Amendment applies to searches by school officials. However, it held that a school official may search a student if that official has a "reasonable suspicion that a crime has been or is in the process of being committed, or reasonable cause to believe that the search is necessary to maintain school discipline or enforce school policies."

The juvenile court concluded that Chopstick's search was reasonable. Chopstick was justified in searching the purse, the Court said, because of his reasonable suspicion that A.B.C. had violated school rules by smoking in the restroom. When he opened the purse, evidence of marijuana use was in plain view. This justified the further search of the purse. A.B.C. was found to be a delinquent and, in January 1982, she was sentenced to one year of probation.

A.B.C. appealed her case in the Florida courts. The Supreme Court of Florida found that Chopstick's search was unreasonable. The state appealed.

In 1983, the Supreme Court of the United States granted the State of Florida's petition for *certiorari*. In 1985, the Court handed down its decision.