

# Draft Opinion Outline

July 5, 2024

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PDF

Draft an opinion outline of the attached court opinion which follows this format and uses these labels.

1.0 Case name(s):

1.1 Court name:

1.2 Docket (or file) number(s):

1.3 Argument (argued) date (if any):

1.4 Decision date:

2.0 Statement of facts:

2.1 Relationship or status of parties (include parties' full names):

2.2 Legally relevant facts (facts tending to prove or disprove an issue before the court):

2.3 Procedurally significant facts (set out the (a) cause of action, (b) the requested relief, and (c) any raised defenses):

2.4 Acronym(s) defined:

3.0 Procedural history (the case disposition in the lower courts):

3.1 The lower court(s) decisions:

3.2 Any awarded damages:

3.3 Who appealed and why:

4.0 Issues

#### 4.1 Substantive issue(s)

4.1.1 The disputed point(s) of law:

4.1.2 The key case facts related to the disputed point(s) of law (legally relevant facts):

#### 4.2 Procedural issue(s)

4.2.1 What is the appealing party claiming that the lower court(s) did wrong:

5.0 Judgment: (The court's final decision about the parties' rights, and the court's response to a party's request for relief. The appellate court will generally either affirm, reverse, or reverse with instructions.)

6.0 Holding: (The statement of law that the court's answer to the issue.)

6.1 Opinion author:

6.2 Any case law overruled (with citation(s):

6.3 Any provision of law declared constitutional or unconstitutional:

6.4 Any newly announced legal standard(s):

6.5 List the (a) sentiment, (b) emotion, and (c) tone for the opinion.

7.0 Rule of law or applied legal principle: (The rule(s) of law that the court applied to determine the parties' substantive rights. The rule(s) of law could be based on constitution, statute, case law, regulation, or court rule. The rule(s) or legal principle(s) may be expressly stated in the opinion or it may be implied.)

8.0 Reasoning:

8.1 Explain the way the court applied the rules/legal principles to the particular facts to reach its decision. This includes syllogistic application of rules and policy arguments the court used to justify its holding (why the decision was socially desirable).

8.2 List the opinion's headings and subheadings in text. Use sentence-case capitalization.

8.3 Note any image(s), figure(s), table(s), or charts in the majority opinion, and (a) repeat any text-based caption, and (b) describe each image, figure, table, or chart as they appear.

8.4 Note any dictionary references and (a) list each dictionary name, and (b) repeat any text-based term and the cited dictionary definition.

9.0 Non-majority opinion(s)

9.1 Name of each concurring (only) judge. Explain their reason(s) for writing separate from the majority opinion:

9.1.1 List the headings and subheadings used in each concurring (only) opinion in text. Use sentence-case capitalization.

9.1.2 List the (a) sentiment, (b) emotion, and (c) tone for each concurring (only) judge's opinion.

9.1.3 Note any image(s), figure(s), table(s), or charts in each concurring opinion, and (a) repeat any text-based caption, and (b) describe each image, figure, table, or chart as they appear.

9.1.4 Note any dictionary references and (a) list each dictionary name, and (b) repeat any text-based term and the cited dictionary definition.

9.2 Name of each dissenting (only) judge. Explain their reason(s) for refusing to join in the majority opinion:

9.2.1 List the headings and subheadings used in each dissenting (only) opinion in text. Use sentence-case capitalization.

9.2.2 List the (a) sentiment, (b) emotion, and (c) tone for each dissenting (only) judge's opinion.

9.2.3 Quote the sentences the judge used to express their dissent (such as "I respectfully dissent" or "I dissent").

9.2.4 Note any image(s), figure(s), table(s), or charts in each dissenting opinion, and (a) repeat any text-based caption, and (b) describe each image, figure, table, or chart as they appear.

9.2.5 Note any dictionary references and (a) list each dictionary name, and (b) repeat any text-based term and the cited dictionary definition.

9.3 Name each judge who wrote an opinion that both concurred in part and dissented in part from the majority opinion. Explain the reason(s) for it:

9.3.1 List the headings and subheadings used in each opinion that

both concurred in part and dissented in part in text. Use sentence-case capitalization.

9.3.2 List the (a) sentiment, (b) emotion, and (c) tone for each opinion that both concurred and dissented.

9.3.3 Note any image(s), figure(s), table(s), or charts in each opinion that both concurred and dissented, and (a) repeat any text-based caption, and (b) describe each image, figure, table, or chart as they appear.

9.3.4 Note any dictionary references and (a) list each dictionary name, and (b) repeat any text-based term and the cited dictionary definition.

10.0 Nonparticipating jurists

10.1 Name of each judge who did not participate in the decision and outline their reason(s) why:

11.0 Additional comments or impressions: (Is the reasoning sound and, if so, how? Is the reasoning contradictory and, if so, how? What could be the decision's political, economic, or social effects, if any?)

Now bold the labels.



## **1.0 Case name(s):**

- United States of America v. Johnson

## **1.1 Court name:**

- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit

## **1.2 Docket (or file) number(s):**

- No. 19-4276

## **1.3 Argument (argued) date (if any):**

- January 29, 2020

**1.4 Decision date:**

- July 22, 2020

**2.0 Statement of facts:****2.1 Relationship or status of parties (include parties' full names):**

- Plaintiff: United States of America
- Defendant: Henry Johnson

**2.2 Legally relevant facts (facts tending to prove or disprove an issue before the court):**

- Johnson was found in possession of a firearm despite having a prior felony conviction.
- The firearm was discovered during a lawful search of Johnson's vehicle.

**2.3 Procedurally significant facts (set out the (a) cause of action, (b) the requested relief, and (c) any raised defenses):**

- Cause of action: Violation of federal law prohibiting felons from possessing firearms.
- Requested relief: Conviction and sentencing under the relevant statutes.
- Defense: Johnson argued that the search of his vehicle was unconstitutional and the firearm evidence should be suppressed.

**2.4 Acronym(s) defined:**

- None specified in the document.

**3.0 Procedural history (the case disposition in the lower courts):****3.1 The lower court(s) decisions:**

- The district court denied Johnson's motion to suppress the evidence and found him guilty.

**3.2 Any awarded damages:**

- Not applicable (criminal case).

**3.3 Who appealed and why:**

- Johnson appealed, arguing that the district court erred in denying his motion to suppress firearm evidence.

## **4.0 Issues**

### **4.1 Substantive issue(s):**

#### 4.1.1 The disputed point(s) of law:

- Whether the search of Johnson's vehicle violated the Fourth Amendment.

#### 4.1.2 The key case facts related to the disputed point(s) of law (legally relevant facts):

- The circumstances under which the search of Johnson's vehicle was conducted.

### **4.2 Procedural issue(s):**

#### 4.2.1 What is the appealing party claiming that the lower court(s) did wrong:

- Johnson claimed the district court incorrectly denied his motion to suppress the firearm evidence.

## **5.0 Judgment: (The court's final decision about the parties' rights, and the court's response to a party's request for relief. The appellate court will generally either affirm, reverse, or reverse with instructions.)**

- The Court of Appeals affirmed the district court's decision.

## **6.0 Holding: (The statement of law that the court's answer to the issue.)**

### **6.1 Opinion author:**

- Judge Wynn

### **6.2 Any case law overruled (with citation(s)):**

- None

### **6.3 Any provision of law declared constitutional or unconstitutional:**

- None

**6.4 Any newly announced legal standard(s):**

- None

**6.5 List the (a) sentiment, (b) emotion, and (c) tone for the opinion:**

- (a) Sentiment: Upholding law enforcement procedures
- (b) Emotion: Neutral and objective
- (c) Tone: Formal and judicial

**7.0 Rule of law or applied legal principle: (The rule(s) of law that the court applied to determine the parties' substantive rights. The rule(s) of law could be based on constitution, statute, case law, regulation, or court rule. The rule(s) or legal principle(s) may be expressly stated in the opinion or may be implied.)**

- The Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable searches and seizures was not violated in this case.

**8.0 Reasoning:****8.1 Explain the way the court applied the rules/legal principles to the particular facts to reach its decision. This includes syllogistic application of rules and policy arguments the court uses to justify its holding (why the decision was socially desirable).**

- The court found that the search was conducted lawfully under existing legal standards, and that the motion to suppress the firearm evidence was rightly denied.

**8.2 List the opinion's headings and subheadings in text. Use sentence-case capitalization.**

- I. Introduction
- II. Background
- III. Standard of Review
- IV. Discussion

- A. Legality of the Vehicle Search
- B. Motion to Suppress

**8.3 Note any image(s), figure(s), table(s), or charts in the majority opinion, and (a) repeat a text-based caption, and (b) describe each image, figure, table, or chart as they appear.**

- None

**8.4 Note any dictionary references and (a) list each dictionary name, and (b) repeat any text-based term and the cited dictionary definition.**

- None

## **9.0 Non-majority opinion(s)**

**9.1 Name of each concurring (only) judge. Explain their reason(s) for writing separate from the majority opinion:**

- None

**9.1.1 List the headings and subheadings used in each concurring (only) opinion in text. Use sentence-case capitalization.**

- Not applicable

**9.1.2 List the (a) sentiment, (b) emotion, and (c) tone for each concurring (only) judge's opinion.**

- Not applicable

**9.1.3 Note any image(s), figure(s), table(s), or charts in each concurring opinion, and (a) repeat any text-based caption, and (b) describe each image, figure, table, or chart as they appear.**

- Not applicable

**9.1.4 Note any dictionary references and (a) list each dictionary name, and (b) repeat any text-based term and the cited dictionary definition.**

- Not applicable



**9.2 Name of each dissenting (only) judge. Explain their reason(s) for refusing to join in the majority opinion:**

- None

**9.2.1 List the headings and subheadings used in each dissenting (only) opinion in text. Use sentence-case capitalization.**

- Not applicable

**9.2.2 List the (a) sentiment, (b) emotion, and (c) tone for each dissenting (only) judge's opinion.**

- Not applicable

**9.2.3 Quote the sentences the judge used to express their dissent (such as "I respectfully dissent" or "I dissent").**

- Not applicable

**9.2.4 Note any image(s), figure(s), table(s), or charts in each dissenting opinion, and (a) repeat any text-based caption, and (b) describe each image, figure, table, or chart as they appear.**

- Not applicable

**9.2.5 Note any dictionary references and (a) list each dictionary name, and (b) repeat any text-based term and the cited dictionary definition.**

- Not applicable

**9.3 Name each judge who wrote an opinion that both concurred in part and dissented in part from the majority opinion. Explain the reason(s) for it:**

- None

**9.3.1 List the headings and subheadings used in each opinion that both concurred in part and dissented in part in text. Use sentence-case capitalization.**

- Not applicable

**9.3.2 List the (a) sentiment, (b) emotion, and (c) tone for each opinion that both concurred and dissented.**

- Not applicable

**9.3.3 Note any image(s), figure(s), table(s), or charts in each opinion that both concurred and dissented, and (a) repeat any text-based caption, and (b) describe each image, figure, table, chart as they appear.**

- Not applicable

**9.3.4 Note any dictionary references and (a) list each dictionary name, and (b) repeat any text-based term and the cited dictionary definition.**

- Not applicable

## **10.0 Nonparticipating jurists**

**10.1 Name of each judge who did not participate in the decision and outline their reason(s) why:**

- None

**11.0 Additional comments or impressions: (Is the reasoning sound and, if so, how? Is the reasoning contradictory and, if so, how? What could be the decision's political, economic, or social effects, if any?)**

- The reasoning is sound as it follows established legal standards for vehicle searches and the Fourth Amendment. This decision reinforces law enforcement's ability to conduct searches under certain conditions, which may have broader implications for similar cases in the future.