

JOAN LARSEN ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

Highlights:

- Joan Larsen did not hold law enforcement accountable for their mistakes.
 - Larsen ruled that that qualified immunity protected several police officers who followed and stopped a Black man in Michigan.
 - Larsen sided with officers who shot a schizophrenic man who was unresponsive.

Larsen Did Not Hold Law Enforcement Accountable For Their Mistakes

LARSEN RULED THAT THAT QUALIFIED IMMUNITY PROTECTED SEVERAL POLICE OFFICERS WHO FOLLOWED AND STOPPED A BLACK MAN IN MICHIGAN

Larsen Wrote An Opinion That Held That Police Officers Who Stopped Christopher Bey, A Black Man In Michigan, Were Protected By Qualified Immunity. According to the ABA Journal, “In a 2019 opinion for the 6th Circuit, Larsen held that qualified immunity protected several police officers who followed and stopped Christopher Bey, a Black man in Michigan who drove with friends to a Meijer store and then a Walmart in search of space heaters. A dissenter said ‘the only crime Bey and his friends had committed was shopping while Black.’ Larsen’s opinion did allow the suit against the police officer who began following Bey and his friends because of the beat-up van that they were driving, according to a summary of the opinion by the liberal group People for the American Way.” [ABA Journal, [9/24/20](#)]

The Case Eventually Settled With The City Paying \$260,000 For The Actions Of The Involved Officer

The City Of Livonia Took Responsibility For The Actions Of The Officer Who Pulled Bey Over And Paid Out \$260,000 To Settle The Racial Profiling Case. According to USA Today, “After years of legal jousting, the City of Livonia took full financial responsibility for the \$260,000 settlement of a racial profiling lawsuit. Assistant City Attorney Eric Goldstein confirmed that the city paid the full amount last year because the other defendants in the lawsuit — Canton Township and township officer Adam Falk — did what they were supposed to do when arresting African-American Christopher Lee-Murray Bey, then 26, in 2013. Court documents filed in the U.S. District Court, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit, and U.S. Supreme Court detail that Bey and some friends caught the attention of undercover Livonia officers Andrew McKinley, Eric Eisenbeis and Megan McAteer while traveling in a beat-up minivan to a Meijer store in the early morning hours of March 16, 2013.” [USA Today, [1/26/21](#)]

LARSEN SIDED WITH OFFICERS WHO SHOT A SCHIZOPHRENIC MAN WHO WAS UNRESPONSIVE

Law Enforcement Officers Used Force Against A Man Who Was Unresponsive

Police Shot And Tasered A Schizophrenic Man Who Was Unresponsive. According to Justia, “On the day the events at issue occurred, Plaintiff Ronald ‘Ronnie’ Graves was experiencing an episode of severe mental illness. In a delusional state, he attacked his grandmother with a knife—a crime for which he was eventually found not guilty by reason of insanity. [...] When deputies entered Graves’s trailer, they found Graves sitting still in the bathtub, with his legs dangling over the side of the tub. Graves’s eyes were open, but he was completely nonresponsive to the commands of the deputies. Graves then raised his fist, which contained an unknown small, dark object. One of the responding officers, purportedly perceiving a threat to himself, shot at Graves but missed. Another, purportedly perceiving a threat to his partner, shot at Graves twice with an AR-15. One of the bullets hit Graves in the face, leading to serious facial disfigurements. Several seconds later, a third officer tased Graves.” [Justia, accessed [6/26/24](#)]

The United States Court Of Appeals Sixth Circuit Ruled That The Involved Officers Did Not Have Qualified Immunity

The Majority Remanded To The District Court The Case Regarding The Officers Involved For Further Proceedings, Essentially Removing Their Qualified Immunity. According to Justia, “For the foregoing reasons, we affirm the district court’s order dismissing the claims against Sergeant Hedger for supervisory liability and for failure to protect against the use of force. We reverse the district court’s order as to the individual liability claims against Sergeant Hedger, Deputy Myers, and Deputy Potratz, and remand to the district court for further proceedings consistent with this opinion. [Justia, accessed [6/26/24](#)]

Larsen Dissented From The Majority Ruling That The Officers Did Not Have Qualified Immunity

Larsen Wrote In A Dissenting Opinion That She Believed The Majority Erred In Ruling That The Officers Did Not Have Qualified Immunity. According to Justia, “LARSEN, Circuit Judge, concurring in part and dissenting in part. In qualified immunity cases, our ultimate inquiry is not whether the officers in question acted reasonably; it is instead whether existing law established ‘beyond debate’ that they acted unreasonably. *City of Escondido v. Emmons*, 139 S. Ct. 500, 504 (2019) (per curiam) (quoting *District of Columbia v. Wesby*, 138 S. Ct. 577, 581 (2018)). And although we must construe the facts in the light most favorable to Graves, the objective reasonableness of the officers’ actions is “a pure question of law” that is for the court to decide, not a jury. *Scott v. Harris*, 550 U.S. 372, 381 n.8 (2007). [...] I disagree, however, with the majority opinion’s denial of qualified immunity to the three officers for their uses of force.” [Justia, accessed [6/26/24](#)]