

for more generalized law enforcement purposes.²⁷⁷ Once police have validly stopped a vehicle, they may also, based on articulable facts warranting a reasonable belief that weapons may be present, conduct a *Terry*-type protective search of those portions of the passenger compartment in which a weapon could be placed or hidden.²⁷⁸ And, in the absence of such reasonable suspicion as to weapons, police may seize contraband and suspicious items “in plain view” inside the passenger compartment.²⁷⁹

Although officers who have stopped a car to issue a routine traffic citation may conduct a *Terry*-type search, even including a pat-down of driver and passengers if there is reasonable suspicion that they are armed and dangerous, they may not conduct a full-blown search of the car²⁸⁰ unless they exercise their discretion to arrest the driver instead of issuing a citation.²⁸¹ And once police have probable cause to believe there is contraband in a vehicle, they may remove the vehicle from the scene to the station house in order to conduct a search, without thereby being required to obtain a war-

²⁷⁷ *City of Indianapolis v. Edmond*, 531 U.S. 32 (2000) (vehicle checkpoint set up for the “primary purpose [of] detect[ing] evidence of ordinary criminal wrongdoing” (here interdicting illegal narcotics) does not fall within the highway safety or border patrol exception to the individualized suspicion requirement, and hence violates the Fourth Amendment). *Edmond* was distinguished in *Illinois v. Lidster*, 540 U.S. 419 (2004), upholding use of a checkpoint to ask motorists for help in solving a recent hit-and-run accident that had resulted in death. The public interest in solving the crime was deemed “grave,” while the interference with personal liberty was deemed minimal.

²⁷⁸ *Michigan v. Long*, 463 U.S. 1032, 1049 (1983) (holding that contraband found in the course of such a search is admissible).

²⁷⁹ *Texas v. Brown*, 460 U.S. 730 (1983). Similarly, because there is no reasonable privacy interest in the vehicle identification number, required by law to be placed on the dashboard so as to be visible through the windshield, police may reach into the passenger compartment to remove items obscuring the number and may seize items in plain view while doing so. *New York v. Class*, 475 U.S. 106 (1986). And, because there also is no legitimate privacy interest in possessing contraband, and because properly conducted canine sniffs are “generally likely, to reveal only the presence of contraband,” police may conduct a canine sniff around the perimeter of a vehicle stopped for a traffic offense. *Illinois v. Caballes*, 543 U.S. 405, 409 (2005).

²⁸⁰ *Knowles v. Iowa*, 525 U.S. 113 (1998) (invalidating an Iowa statute permitting a full-blown search incident to a traffic citation).

²⁸¹ See *Atwater v. City of Lago Vista*, 532 U.S. 318 (2001) (police officers, in their discretion, may arrest a motorist for a minor traffic offense rather than issuing a citation); *New York v. Belton*, 453 U.S. 454 (1981) (officers who arrest an occupant of a vehicle may make a contemporaneous search of the entire passenger compartment, including closed containers); *Thornton v. United States*, 541 U.S. 615 (2004) (the *Belton* rule applies regardless of whether the arrestee exited the car at the officer’s direction, or whether he did so prior to confrontation); *Arizona v. Gant*, 556 U.S. ___, No. 07–542, slip op. at 18 (2009) (the *Belton* rule applies “only if the arrestee is within reaching distance of the passenger compartment at the time of the search or it is reasonable to believe that the vehicle contains evidence of the offense of arrest”); *Arkansas v. Sullivan*, 532 U.S. 769 (2001) (pretextual arrest of motorist who has committed a traffic offense is permissible even if purpose is to search vehicle for evidence of other crime).