

[21365001]

The Justice Department has revised certain internal guidelines and clarified others in a move that could restrict the use of criminal racketeering charges against white-collar defendants .

[21365002]

The most significant changes in department policy are new requirements that federal prosecutors avoid disrupting " the normal business functions " of companies charged under the racketeering law , a senior department official said .

[21365003]

Another important revision of department policy is a new guideline warning prosecutors " not to take steps that would harm innocent third parties " in a case brought under the racketeering law , the official , David Runkel , said .

[21365004]

The department distributed the revisions and clarifications to U.S. attorneys around the country this summer as part of a routine process of updating prosecutorial guidelines . Mr. Runkel said .

[21365005]

The changes apply to prosecutions brought under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations law .

[21365006]

Under that law , defendants who allegedly commit a pattern of crimes by means of a " criminal enterprise " may be charged with racketeering and forced to forfeit the proceeds of the enterprise .

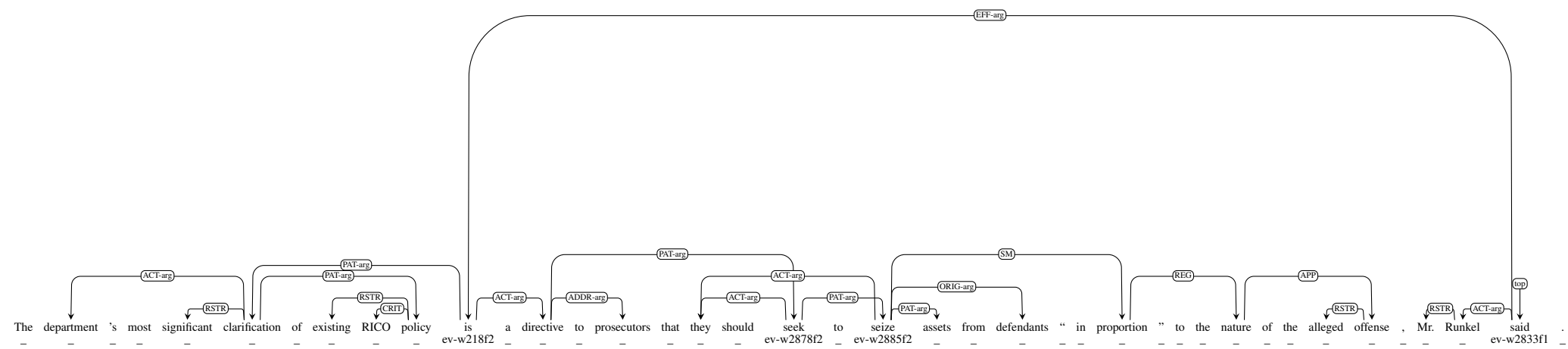
[21365007]

The RICO law has come under criticism from some defendants and defense lawyers .

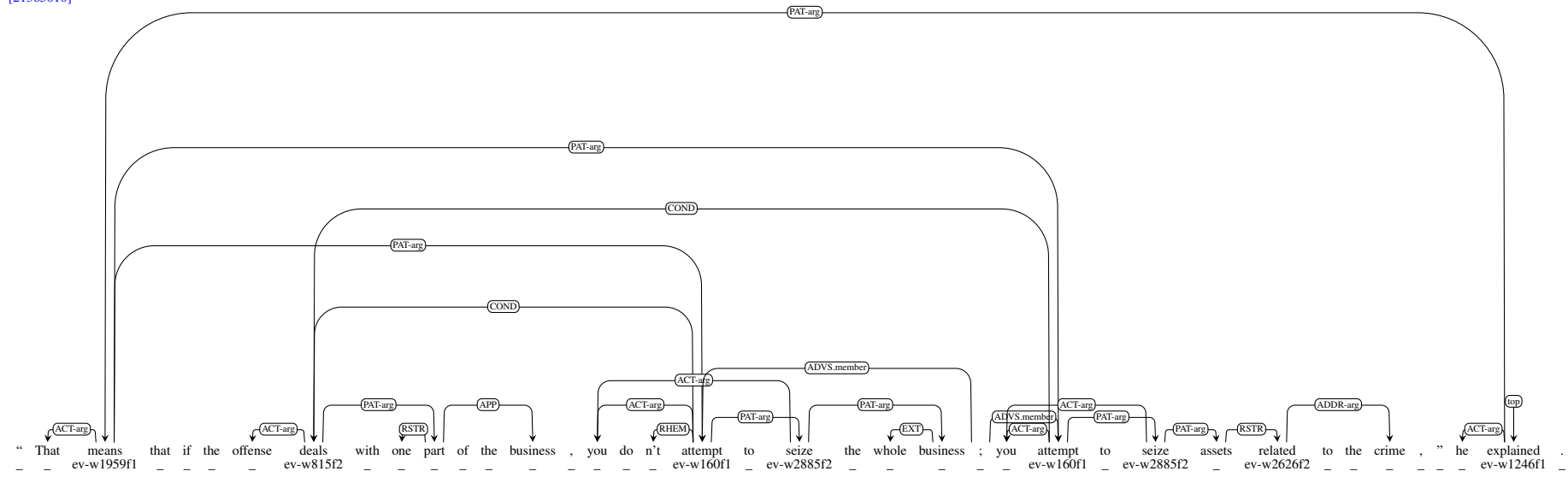
[21365008]

They argue that the rights of RICO defendants and third parties not named in RICO indictments have been unfairly damaged .

[21365009]



[21365010]



[21365011]

