Liberty, Security, and Technology

The fourth amendment states “the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures.” This means you and your possessions are protected and officials must have a probable cause and warrant to cross that line. As a part of the Supreme Court, we must decide which actions are legal and which actions are unconstitutional.

Cindy Lewis was going to the library one day to login to her Gmail account. When she went to the website, she found out that Lucy Johnson did not sign out of her account. Cindy was curious and scrolled through her messages, seeing the subject “IMPORTANT” sticking out like a sore thumb. Cindy opened it and saw that it had something to do with a kidnapping that had been all over the news. Cindy then called the police and gave an anonymous tip, which got the government involved. They then went through Lucy’s Gmail account which established proof. The government goes to arrest her to find out that she has fled the town. They go to track down the husband, using the GPS on his cell phone. They soon find the husband with his wife Lucy, who they are arrested on site. When taken to court, Mr. Johnson was let go on the charges of accessory to a crime because they found him in a way that violated his rights. His wife, on the other hand, was charged guilty in the kidnapping of a minor because the evidence they attained from Cindy was a probable enough cause to arrest her.

After one hundred and eighty days and a tip establishing a probable cause, the government accessing Lucy’s private emails is not a violation of the fourth amendment. Locating Cindy’s husband using his GPS on his phone is an infringement of his rights, and is a violation of the fourth amendment due to the fact that the fourth amendment protects not only a person but their possessions, papers, and effects.