


# Lawsuits Claim Canadian County Sheriff Fired Whistleblowers After Reports of Illegal Search, Seizure

 [news9.com/story/625a365c3bf82a07282b3319/lawsuit-claims-canadian-county-sheriff-fired-whistleblowers-after-reports-of-illegal-search-seizure-](https://news9.com/story/625a365c3bf82a07282b3319/lawsuit-claims-canadian-county-sheriff-fired-whistleblowers-after-reports-of-illegal-search-seizure-)

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## OKLAHOMA CITY -

A pair of wrongful termination lawsuits filed last week by former employees of the [Canadian County Sheriff's Office](#) claim the agency's leadership fired two whistleblowers.

Former lieutenant and forensic investigators [Marty Burns](#) and [Chelsea Adkins](#), respectively, said they reported possibly illegal actions by Major [Adam Flowers](#) in 2021. They said Sheriff [Chris West](#) ultimately fired them in August without reason.

The lawsuits, filed in [Canadian County District Court](#), name West and the county's board of commissioners.

District Attorney Mike Fields, who represents the county, said he does not comment on pending litigation.

Adkins said she witnessed two problematic incidents involving Flowers in late 2020 or early 2021 as well as April 2021.

In her petition, Adkins said the first incident followed her request for new computers in the forensics department.

"Some of our stuff was a little outdated," Adkins said.

In response to her request, Adkins said Flowers did not ask for additional funding, but instead gave her access to a computer seized from the home of a child pornography suspect.

"Immediately, I was like, 'No, we can't do that,'" Adkins said. "He just said, 'Well, don't tell anybody. Just keep it quiet. If anyone asks, it's ours. We won it in the forfeiture.' It's a very awkward and difficult position because you're putting me in a position to lie when I've already told you it's legally not ours. We just can't."

“The easiest way to explain it was it’s like stealing someone’s property,” Burns said. “That property was supposed to be protected and stay in the evidence until the case had been finalized. And it was being used to process other criminal cases.”

Additionally, Adkins and Burns allege Flowers used a different suspect’s personal cell phone and a county computer to break into the suspect’s personal Facebook and Google accounts.

Adkins said she saw Flowers access both accounts by resetting each password and verifying new ones using the suspect’s phone.

“Using someone’s private cellular device to access their private iCloud accounts is pretty egregious in my book,” Adkins said.

Following both incidents, Adkins said she reported her concerns to then-Lt. Burns. Burns said he told Undersheriff Kevin Ward, who then referred it to Sheriff West.

Adkins and Burns said they were called into separate meetings with West. Both said the sheriff seemed uninterested in pursuing their complaints.

“The sheriff, straight out of the gate, was like, ‘Do you understand that Adam Flowers is my best friend, like a brother to me?’” Adkins said.

“It was definitely shocking. What I believed was happening at the time was cover up,” Burns said.

According to the CCSO website, Flowers joined the office in 2011. West joined in 2013 as the undersheriff and was elected to sheriff in 2017.