

## The Latest News

# The Battle For American Poker



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By Alexander Baron



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America is the home of poker, as can be seen from [this timeline](#). The World Series of Poker has been held in the USA since its inception; With the development of the on-line game, it was sure to become even bigger business, until one day in 2011, American poker players – and indeed players around the world – turned on their computers and were greeted with notices like the one here.

The Black Friday Domain Seizures caused chaos, and a number of poker rooms vanished forever, including [Absolute Poker](#), a site which offered a larger variety of games than most. Its sister site [UltimateBet](#) took longer to die, but die it did.



This domain name has been seized by the F.B.I. pursuant to an Arrest Warrant in Rem obtained by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York and issued by the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

Conducting, financing, managing, supervising, directing, or owning all or part of an illegal gambling business is a federal crime. (18 U.S.C. § 1955)

For persons engaged in the business of betting or wagering, it is also a federal crime to knowingly accept, in connection with the participation of another person in unlawful Internet gambling, credit, electronic fund transfers, or checks. (31 U.S.C. §§ 5363 & 5366)

Violations of these laws carry criminal penalties of up to five years' imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000.

Properties, including domain names, used in violation of the provisions of 18 U.S.C. § 1955 or involved in money laundering transactions are subject to forfeiture to the United States. (18 U.S.C. §§ 981 & 1955(d))

*A notice explaining why the F.B.I. took down the website and seized the domain name*

Now, four years on from these ludicrous raids by the American authorities, on-line poker has recovered somewhat, but American players are still in the doldrums, although hopefully not for much longer, even though the madness is continuing with something called *RAWA*.

The *Registration of America's Wire Act* would effectively ban all forms of on-line gambling including the lottery, and would likewise extend the power of the state to interfere in both business and the lives of ordinary people. It has been criticised severely by among others elder statesman Ron Paul.

Likewise the **Poker Players Alliance** has had enough of this nonsense, and has launched a petition against it. Without wishing to sound in any way conspiratorial, there are those who want on-line poker banned and to stay banned for reasons that have nothing to do with protecting people from predators and everything to do with protecting their own interests. If people can gamble in comfort from their own homes, they might not want to visit the casino so often, or at all!

If you are an American citizen or even if you are not, please make your voice heard. Poker is a game partly of luck and partly of skill; played between consenting adults for money, entertainment or both, it is no business of the American Government or any other.

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