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Blockburger v. United States (1931)

– CASE BRIEF –

Citation: 284 U.S. 299

Docket No.: —

Date Filed: 1931-12-11



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Unknown Court

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<https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/101824/blockburger-v-united-states/>

Judges:

Sutherland

Procedural History:**Attorneys:**

Mr. Harold J. Bandy was on the brief for petitioner., Mr. Claude R. Branch, with whom Solicitor General Thatcher, Assistant Attorney General Dodds, and Mr. Harry S. Ridgely were on the brief, for the United States.

Facts:

The respondent, Blockburger, was indicted for violating the National Prohibition Act by selling liquor to two individuals within six months. He was tried and convicted in separate trials for each offense. The prosecution argued that these were the same offense under the National Prohibition Act (Page 300-301).

Issue:

Whether the test to determine whether offenses are the same, for double jeopardy purposes, should be based on the 'same evidence' or the 'same elements' standard (Page 302-303).

Rule of Law:

Under the 'same elements' test, also known as the Blockburger test, two offenses are considered the same if each of them requires proof of a fact which the other does not (Page 304).

Holding & Reasoning:

The Supreme Court held that the correct test is the 'same elements' test. The Court reasoned that the 'same evidence' test was too broad and would not serve the purpose of double jeopardy, which is to protect an individual from being tried twice for the same offense. The 'same elements' test, on the other hand, would prevent such trials while allowing for prosecution of distinct offenses (Page 304-305).

Disposition:

The Supreme Court of the United States affirmed the decision of the Circuit Court of Appeals, which upheld Blockburger's convictions and sentences for separate violations of the National Prohibition Act (Page 302).

Dissent:

There was no dissenting opinion in this case.

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