1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UN	NITED STATES
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3	LISA WATSON, ET AL.,	:
4	Petitioners	:
5	v.	: No. 05-1284
6	PHILIP MORRIS COMPANIES, INC.,	:
7	ET AL.	:
8		- x
9	Washington	n, D.C.
10	Wednesday,	, April 25, 2007
11		
12	The above-entitled	matter came on for oral
13	argument before the Supreme Court	t of the United States
14	at 11:18 a.m.	
15	APPEARANCES:	
16	DAVID C. FREDERICK, ESQ., Washing	gton, D.C.; on behalf of
17	the Petitioners.	
18	IRVING L. GORNSTEIN, ESQ., Assist	tant to the Solicitor
19	General, Department of Justice	e, Washington, D.C.; on
20	behalf of the United States, a	as amicus curiae,
21	supporting the Petitioners.	
22	THEODORE B. OLSON, ESQ., Washingt	ton, D.C.; on behalf of
23	the Respondents.	
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:18 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next in case 05-1284, Watson versus Philip Morris
5	Companies.
6	Mr. Frederick.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID C. FREDERICK
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
9	MR. FREDERICK: Thank you, Mr. Chief
LO	Justice, and may it please the Court:
L1	The Eighth Circuit held that Philip Morris
L2	is subject to such specific and detailed regulations by
L3	the Federal Trade Commission that it is entitled to
L 4	remove this purely State law case from State court to
L5	Federal court under the Federal officer removal statute.
L 6	That holding is erroneous and should be reversed for at
L7	least three reasons.
L8	First, the court articulated the wrong test
L9	for determining when a person is acting under a Federal
20	officer.
21	Second, the court misunderstood the Federal
22	Trade Commission's regulatory regime with respect to the
23	marketing of so-called light cigarettes.
24	And third, the court's approach ignores the
25	long history and purposes of the federal officer removal

- 1 provision to protect the Federal Government operations
- 2 from interference by State court proceedings.
- In this case, and in this Court, Philip
- 4 Morris largely abandons the Eighth Circuit's rationale
- 5 and offers an alternate ground of affirmance. It should
- 6 be rejected. The FTC has not delegated authority to
- 7 conduct testing to Philip Morris, and the complaint in
- 8 any event challenges only the company's marketing and
- 9 not its testing of so-called light cigarettes.
- Now with respect to the first point, the
- 11 Eighth Circuit applied and articulated the wrong test
- 12 for determining when a person is acting under a federal
- 13 officer. The proper test, as this Court's case in the
- 14 City of Greenwood versus Peacock Casey elucidates, is
- 15 when the person is aiding or acting on behalf of the
- 16 Federal officer in a subordinate role in the officer's
- 17 discharge of official functions. That is not what is
- 18 happening here.
- 19 What is happening here is that the Federal
- 20 Trade Commission for a time conducted testing on the tar
- 21 and nicotine levels of cigarettes and stopped doing so.
- 22 Philip Morris asserts that that sequence of events
- 23 caused, in effect, a delegation of this authority. But
- 24 what is really happening is that Philip Morris --
- 25 JUSTICE SCALIA: Do they cite any particular

- 1 document or statement --
- 2 MR. FREDERICK: No.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: -- that constitutes the
- 4 delegation?
- 5 MR. FREDERICK: No. There is nothing,
- 6 Justice Scalia. There is no regulation, this is no
- 7 order, there is no policy statement, there is no
- 8 statement by the chairman of the FTC before Congress.
- 9 There is nothing.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So it's perfectly
- 11 all right for them to adopt a new method of testing tar
- 12 and nicotine that yields numbers that are far lower than
- 13 the Government's method, and to publish an ad saying
- 14 these are our tar and nicotine figures, and the FTC
- 15 would have no problem with that?
- 16 MR. FREDERICK: Mr. Chief Justice, the
- 17 answer to your question is no. And the reason is that
- 18 what the FTC did at the time was, it determined that
- 19 this particular Cambridge filter method was the
- 20 preferred method for ascertaining the level of tar and
- 21 nicotine in cigarettes. And in the D.C. Circuit
- 22 opinion of Federal --
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Not just the
- 24 preferred method, but presumably the only one they would
- 25 allow. If you used another one, they would bring a

- 1 deceptive trade practices action very quickly.
- 2 MR. FREDERICK: That is correct. But what
- 3 was clear in the Brown & Williamson case decided by the
- 4 D.C. Circuit, a panel of Judges Bork, Scalia and
- 5 Edwards --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: They still might
- 7 have gotten it right.
- 8 (Laughter.)
- 9 MR. FREDERICK: They most assuredly did get
- 10 it right, Mr. Chief Justice. What they held was that
- 11 that method, the Cambridge filter method, had not been
- done according to rulemaking, a trade regulation rule;
- 13 and that, therefore, there might be a testing mechanism
- 14 that would be different and better, but that with
- 15 respect to undertaking the deception analysis, which is
- 16 what the FTC is charged by -- with doing under Section 5
- 17 of the Federal Trade Commission -- Federal Trade Act, it
- 18 had to determine whether or not there would be some
- 19 method that the cigarette makers were attempting to use
- 20 that would be deceptive; and what the court in the D.C.
- 21 Circuit held was that there was no other method that had
- 22 been determined at that time. There had been no
- 23 statement or proposed rule made by the FTC, and so for
- 24 purposes of determining deception, that was the best
- 25 that could be done, while leaving open the possibility

- 1 that the FTC would promulgate the appropriate --
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I understand
- 3 you have a dispute about whether that is this case, but
- 4 there are many areas where the Government requires
- 5 testing of products. You know, the strength of seat
- 6 belts and stuff, and they specify very precise means to
- 7 which those tests have to be conducted.
- And if someone, a manufacturer is complying
- 9 with those requirements, and a challenge is brought,
- 10 saying something to the effect that that test doesn't
- 11 give you a good measure or something, in that situation
- would this removal provision apply?
- MR. FREDERICK: No. Because that's merely
- 14 compliance with rule and not aiding or acting on behalf
- of the Government officer in a subordinate relationship
- 16 in the discharge of function.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What if the
- 18 Government says you've got to test your cars, you know,
- 19 every three months or something, and you've got to send
- 20 us the results of a random -- random test?
- 21 MR. FREDERICK: The reporting of results
- 22 doesn't change the hypothetical. That's also compliance
- 23 with the law, and that happens all the time in the
- 24 Government. The Department of Labor, the Department of
- 25 Commerce, the Federal Reserve, all of those agencies

- 1 routinely require reporting on the part of industry.
- 2 But the reporting of information does not
- 3 transform a regulated entity into a Federal officer for
- 4 purposes of these cases. And the court's cases are
- 5 highly instructive in this regard. Beginning with the
- 6 act of 1815 that began the Federal officer removal, the
- 7 court's cases have held that when a person is deemed to
- 8 be acting under, the person is acting in a subordinate
- 9 relationship to the Federal officer, merely complying
- 10 with the law does not transform a regulated entity into
- 11 someone subordinate to the officer.
- 12 And that subordinate relationship is what is
- 13 critical to understanding when in other contexts someone
- 14 might have a better claim to being a person acting under
- 15 a Federal officer than Philip Morris can assert in this
- 16 case.
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: That is -- this is
- 18 certainly not your revenue officer needing help from a
- 19 citizen or the Federal agent going to close down a still
- 20 during Prohibition. But what about the Government
- 21 contractor cases that are cited, the Agent Orange was
- 22 one example?
- MR. FREDERICK: The Government contractor
- 24 cases present a quite distinct set of issues that, of
- 25 course, is not present in this case because there is no

- 1 contract between the Federal Trade Commission and Philip
- 2 Morris. But I think that the proper way of looking at
- 3 Government contractors is to look at contextually what
- 4 is the nature of the contract? Does the contract
- 5 provide for ongoing supervision by the Federal officer
- 6 and give the Federal officer the power to change or
- 7 alter the conduct of the contracting party? Otherwise,
- 8 mere specifications, detailed as they might be,
- 9 constitute simply compliance with the terms of the
- 10 contract rather than a subordinate relationship.
- 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Do all these contracting
- 12 cases involve the contractor imposing law upon somebody,
- 13 executing law? On behalf of the Government?
- MR. FREDERICK: In a couple --
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Because that's your test.
- 16 I mean, and if that is the proper test, it ought to
- 17 apply in the Government contractor situation, too.
- 18 So, for example, the Government can hire a
- 19 private company run prisons; but that would be the
- 20 Government hiring somebody to perform Government --
- 21 Government functions. Now, do all of those -- a
- 22 function that remain as Government function, keeping the
- 23 incarcerated incarcerated. Now do, do all of the
- 24 contract cases involve that?
- MR. FREDERICK: No. I think and that's why

1 it would be --2 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well --3 MR. FREDERICK: -- a mistake for the Court to either categorically say all Government contractors 4 5 are in or all Government contractors are out. 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: But that puts a whole new 7 theory on your --8 MR. FREDERICK: No, it doesn't. 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: Oh. 10 11 MR. FREDERICK: Because my theory is that 12 the person acting under has to be aiding or acting on behalf of a Federal officer in a subordinate 13 14 relationship in the performance of the officer's 15 official functions. And in the case of some Government 16 contractors, like the chauffeur in Maryland versus 17 Soper, for instance, who was an employee of the Reliable 18 Transfer Company, he was hired by the Maryland Director 19 of Prohibition to serve with the agents when they went 20 out doing their investigations. 21 JUSTICE SCALIA: And he was acting under color of law as you've described that in your petitions? 22 23 I don't think so. 24 MR. FREDERICK: That's a different question, 25 Justice Scalia. The question of under color of office

- 1 as the statute defines it depends on the nature of the
- 2 acts and whether there is a causal relationship between
- 3 the acts that are charged by the State in the State case
- 4 and the actions of the people involved.
- In the Soper case, the problem wasn't the
- 6 color of office, because the chauffeur was out with the
- 7 four agents, and when there was a death that they
- 8 stumbled upon, the question arose what were the nature
- 9 of the facts, not whether the chauffeur was acting under
- 10 color of office. That would be a distinct inquiry not
- 11 related specifically to whether a person is acting
- 12 under, but that's the third part of this question.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, I, I it seems to me
- 14 color of office, you say color of office, it means that
- 15 its appearance to somebody else is that -- that he is
- 16 being an official. And I would think that that requires
- 17 the fact that he's assisting a Government agent in
- 18 enforcing the law against somebody.
- 19 MR. FREDERICK: And in the Medicare context
- 20 this happens. Blue Cross-Blue Shield, hired out by the
- 21 Government to pursuant to a very detailed contract to
- 22 engage in intermediary payments, and audits, forming
- 23 Government functions. I think that is a paradigmatic
- 24 instance where the Government consists -- and has
- 25 ongoing supervisory relationship and a control over the

- 1 conduct as it is implementing the Government's function.
- 2 The Government employment example, like
- 3 Soper, where the chauffeur is hired and brought into
- 4 work with the agents, they're having a ongoing
- 5 supervisory relationship, telling him where to drive,
- 6 what to do, where to go. They are able to alter his
- 7 conduct in the same way.
- In many procurement instances, that is not
- 9 true.
- 10 JUSTICE KENNEDY: How, how do you
- 11 distinguish your Blue Cross example from the instance
- 12 where drug companies are doing testing required by the
- 13 FDA?
- MR. FREDERICK: That's compliance with the
- 15 regulation. There are all sorts of instances,
- 16 Justice Kennedy, where industry is required to do
- 17 certain things before they can bring their product to
- 18 market. That's not acting --
- 19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Blue Cross is different
- 20 because there they are acting as an intermediary of the
- 21 Government?
- MR. FREDERICK: They are performing a
- 23 function at the Government's direction for the
- 24 Government. The Government used to --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that doesn't

- 1 seem to be a distinction. The drug companies -- the
- 2 Government wants to make sure that drugs are safe and
- 3 effective and so they issue regulations saying here's
- 4 how you have to test it. They're just, you could say,
- 5 delegating the testing to the companies.
- 6 MR. FREDERICK: No. Compliance doesn't
- 7 constitute a delegation, Mr. Chief Justice. And the
- 8 reason is quite clear from the fact that the Code of
- 9 Federal Regulations is full of all sorts of very
- 10 specific instructions to industry actors. But when they
- 11 comply with those rules they are not acting on behalf of
- 12 the Government. They are simply fulfilling a legal
- obligation that all Americans have to fulfill when
- 14 confronted with a question of Federal law.
- The situation for acting under is different,
- 16 and in the Medicaid context, there's a very special
- 17 bureaucracy that has been created under the Secretary of
- 18 Health and Human Services to perform Government
- 19 functions that used to be performed that are now
- 20 contracted out to Blue Cross-Blue Shield, and I
- 21 acknowledge that that is a very different kind of
- 22 situation.
- But the Government, of course, in a
- 24 multi-trillion-dollar budget purchases all sorts of
- 25 items all the time. Many of them are off the shelf.

- 1 And others are subject to very specific and detailed
- 2 specifications.
- 3 But the compliance by a contractor with
- 4 specific and detailed instructions would not itself
- 5 transform that entity into a person acting under a
- 6 Federal officer.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: There's a difference
- 8 between you are providing products and complying with
- 9 testing. In other words, and if, in fact, the
- 10 Government specifies precisely how the testing is
- 11 supposed to be done to determine whether it, the
- 12 Government, will approve the marketing of a particular
- 13 drug, and the challenge, the litigation is to the
- 14 testing. Somebody sues as drugs company and says you
- 15 know, you tested this drug wrong, we think you should
- 16 have tested it some other way, and the drug company says
- 17 the Government told us how to test it -- why in that
- 18 situation aren't they acting under a Government
- 19 official?
- MR. FREDERICK: Because it would be
- 21 transforming a preemption defense into an opportunity to
- 22 use a Federal officer removal to have a case from State
- 23 court to Federal court. This Court has said many times
- 24 that preemption is an issue that can be decided by State
- 25 courts, and the mere fact that someone is complying with

- 1 detailed Federal regulations, and therefore is able to
- 2 claim the cause of action is preempted as a result of
- 3 those Federal regulations, does not transform the person
- 4 into a person acting under a Federal officer.
- 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: Just out of curiosity,
- 6 what, what happens to the, the employees of the private
- 7 companies that run prisons? Could they removed under
- 8 this provision?
- 9 MR. FREDERICK: It depends on the nature of
- 10 the contract, Justice Scalia. The things that the Court
- 11 would look at would depend --
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: They either run the prison
- 13 for a State, or for the Federal Government.
- MR. FREDERICK: What the Court --
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- or the Federal
- 16 Government.
- 17 MR. FREDERICK: What the Court would look at
- 18 is whether there is a ongoing supervisory relationship
- 19 and whether the Federal officer has the power to
- 20 transform or alter the conduct. If those circumstances
- 21 are met, then there would be a very strong argument that
- 22 the person is acting under the Federal officer.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, the prison case,
- 24 there's not any if about it. A State, municipality, has
- 25 a contract with a private entrepreneur to run a prison.

1 One question that I think must have come up 2 in that context comes under the 1983 action in --3 against a, a prison guard, a privately hired prison 4 quard. 5 MR. FREDERICK: Of course, this Court has 6 held that in that context there is not State action in 7 that particular circumstance. In fact, in the Third 8 Circuit, Philip Morris defended its actions against a very similar claim regarding its marketing, that it was 9 10 not a State actor for purposes of a Bivens action or a Section 1983 claim. 11 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Is that the test here? Is 13 that the test here? If it is State action, it is 14 covered by this statute. If it isn't, it is not? 15 MR. FREDERICK: There -- that would 16 certainly be a simple way to determine whether a person 17 is acting under a Federal officer, if it meets the 18 entwinement test articulated by this Court in that case. 19 JUSTICE SCALIA: But suppose it doesn't. 20 MR. FREDERICK: If it doesn't --21 JUSTICE SCALIA: Should I conclude it therefore is not covered? 22 23 MR. FREDERICK: No, I think that the proper 24 standard, Justice Scalia, as I've said, is whether there 25 is a ongoing supervisory relationship and the Government

- 1 has the power to alter the actor's conduct. If those
- 2 two conditions are met then a person can be said to be
- 3 acting under the Federal officer within the meaning of
- 4 this statute.
- 5 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I don't follow that. The
- 6 Government is always altering people's conduct when it
- 7 regulates them.
- 8 MR. FREDERICK: But not on a basis that is I
- 9 think appropriate to understand a subordinate
- 10 relationship. The fact that there is alteration through
- 11 Government regulation is simply compliance with law.
- 12 But to be acting under within the meaning of this
- 13 Court's cases -- and I would direct the Court to the
- 14 Greenwood case, which the other side basically
- 15 ignores -- in that case, in footnotes 17 and 20, this
- 16 Court made clear that the phrase "acting under" is
- 17 acting in that kind of subordinate relationship in the
- 18 execution of laws. Compliance is insufficient.
- 19 Otherwise, it would blow the whole statute apart.
- 20 Everybody in a regulated industry would able to remove
- 21 under the Federal officer statute.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Has it been done? I
- 23 mean, this is -- I don't recall any case like this. Are
- 24 there other product liability cases that are removed
- 25 from State court to Federal Court on a similar basis?

1	MR. FREDERICK: Justice Ginsburg, in our
2	cert papers, and we didn't repeat them in our merits
3	papers, we give examples where a window blinds
4	manufacturer, a medical device manufacturer, a whole
5	series of others, a bank, a credit union, have attempted
6	after the Eighth Circuit's decision in this case have
7	removed cases to Federal court on the grounds that they
8	are Federal officers because they are subjected to far
9	more extensive regulations than Philip Morris.
10	In fact, if you turn to volume 16 of the
11	Code of Federal Regulations and turn to part 408,
12	there's a heading, and it says Deceptive Unfair
13	Advertising of Cigarettes For Health Benefits. Then
14	underneath it it says "intentionally left blank." And
15	the argument that these other entities have made is
16	there are no Federal regulations concerning the
17	marketing of "light" cigarettes but there are
18	regulations concerning our products. So therefore, we
19	must be a Federal officer because the regime governing
20	us is far more specific and detailed than it is for
21	cigarettes.
22	If I could reserve the balance of my time.
23	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
24	Mr. Frederick.

Mr. Gornstein.

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1	ORAL ARGUMENT OF IRVING L. GORNSTEIN,
2	ON BEHALF OF UNITED STATES AS AMICUS CURIAE,
3	SUPPORTING PETITIONERS
4	MR. GORNSTEIN: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
5	it please the Court.
6	Manufacturers of cars, drugs, medical
7	devices, pesticides, home appliances and numerous other
8	consumer good market their products in accordance with
9	detailed and specific Federal Government regulation.
10	If that in a colorable preemption defense
11	were sufficient to trigger removal, then it would create
12	the potential for a very major shift of traditional
13	State law litigation from State to Federal court.
14	JUSTICE SCALIA: Do they test their products
15	before they're marketed under rigid Federal testing
16	regulations which are supervised by the Federal
17	Government?
18	MR. GORNSTEIN: Let me talk about there
19	are, there are numerous testing requirements. The
20	automobile industry has to test for fuel efficiency; it
21	has to test for crash testing under very specific
22	requirements. The home appliances have to be tested for
23	energy efficiency under Federal requirements
24	JUSTICE SCALIA: Is the Government
25	supervising those?

1 MR. GORNSTEIN: Is -- the Government often 2 says exactly what the test has to be. 3 JUSTICE SCALIA: Yeah, but is there some 4 Government official who's there to make sure that the 5 testing is being done the way, the way it's supposed to 6 be, which is what, what is argued is the case here? 7 MR. GORNSTEIN: Well, I -- I -- I can't say in every case that somebody is there to make sure --8 JUSTICE SCALIA: They don't have to be there 9 10 every day. 11 MR. GORNSTEIN: But -- the Government is --12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Policing --13 MR. GORNSTEIN: Policing and enforcing the 14 testing requirements, and there's testing in all these 15 areas. The other thing to say is that there's no --CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What's -- what's 16 17 your conclusion? That those are not people acting under 18 Federal officers --19 MR. GORNSTEIN: They are not people acting, 20 because if they --21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Because policing sounds like --22

their products in accordance with detailed and specific

enforcing the law. People who are, who are regulating

MR. GORNSTEIN: The Government's policing is

23

24

25

- 1 Federal Government regulation are acting on their own
- 2 behalf in marketing the products in -- on -- in
- 3 compliance with Federal law.
- 4 They are not acting under Federal officers
- 5 -- within the meaning of the Federal -- within the
- 6 meaning of this statute.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What about -- what
- 8 about USDA food inspection? Isn't a lot of that
- 9 delegated to the producers rather than the Government
- 10 officials?
- MR. GORNSTEIN: The Government --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But you still get a
- 13 Government stamp.
- 14 MR. GORNSTEIN: You can have different
- 15 situations. And I'm not sure about the precise one
- 16 you're talking about. But you can have situations and
- 17 the FAA is one, where the FAA has a statute which says
- 18 you can delegate to third parties inspecting aircrafts,
- 19 and the Agency certifies through regulation that this
- 20 person is inspecting as a representative of the FAA.
- 21 Now that's a varied situation. In that kind of
- 22 situation the person would acting under. But if the
- 23 person is simply complying with Federal requirements
- 24 about how to test, that is private behavior, acting on
- 25 their own behalf, in order to further the marketing of

- 1 their products.
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if you are a
- 3 federally certified inspector you are acting under --
- 4 MR. GORNSTEIN: Certified as a
- 5 representative of the FAA, yes, you are.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What about private
- 7 transportation of mail? Is the private contractor who's
- 8 carrying U.S. mail, is that person -- could he remove a
- 9 case under this provision.
- 10 MR. GORNSTEIN: The standard for contracts
- 11 is some contracts are in and some contracts are out in
- 12 our minds, depending on whether the -- they are subject
- 13 to the guidance, supervision, or control of federal
- 14 officers. And so if they are performing a service on
- 15 behalf of the federal government and they are subject to
- 16 control or supervision, then they could be acting under
- 17 federal officers.
- 18 Now the situation here, the test that the
- 19 court of appeals used, simply acting in conformity with
- 20 detailed and specific Federal regulation, is one that
- 21 would lead, as I said, to a very substantial change in
- 22 where State court claims have been litigated up until
- 23 now.
- 24 JUSTICE SCALIA: I have a contract to
- 25 provides food to the Senate cafeteria, okay. And the

- 1 Senate or maybe the Executive Branch, for that matter,
- 2 closely supervises my preparation and service of that
- 3 food. Am I acting under, even though I'm not assisting
- 4 the Government in any governmental function at all?
- 5 Don't you have to be assisting in the performance of a
- 6 governmental function?
- 7 MR. GORNSTEIN: But the problem with that,
- 8 what you're saying, is the 1948 statute expanded it all
- 9 Federal officers. So if Federal officers were running
- 10 that cafeteria, those Federal officers could remove
- 11 because they are performing a duty under Federal law to
- 12 provide that service to Federal employees.
- Now, once the statute expanded out in 1948
- 14 to cover Federal officers who perform any function, not
- 15 just enforcement functions, it carried with it persons
- 16 who act under Federal officers in performing those very
- 17 same functions. So if the Federal Government hired an
- 18 employee to serve food who was acting under a Federal
- 19 officer who was responsible for the delivery of food,
- 20 that person would be acting under a Federal officer
- 21 within the meaning of this statute, assuming that the
- 22 person was subject to the control, guidance, and
- 23 oversight in the delivery of that food.
- Now, this case is very far from the
- 25 historical examples of citizens being called upon by

- 1 customs officers to assist in the enforcement of the
- 2 revenue laws or the chauffeur who was, under a Federal
- 3 employment contract, who then -- assisted revenue
- 4 officers in carrying out a raid on a distillery, or the
- 5 military corporal who was involved in assisting Federal
- 6 officers in making an arrest.
- 7 Those are the historical examples. They
- 8 point to the principle that you are talking about people
- 9 who are in a subordinate position and who are acting on
- 10 behalf of or otherwise assisting Federal officers in
- 11 carrying out their duties.
- 12 As for the alternative ground for affirmance
- 13 here, that is that there has been a delegation, testing
- 14 delegation of authority, there has been no delegation of
- 15 authority. It is unusual for the Government to delegate
- 16 out its own regulatory responsibilities to the very
- industry it is regulating and it didn't do that here.
- 18 What the Government did is that it had at one time its
- 19 own testing program. It eliminated that testing program
- 20 altogether, which had not been required by statute but
- 21 was simply the result of a commission vote. And after
- 22 that, the industry continued to carry on the very
- 23 testing that it had been doing all along as a result of
- 24 an agreement among industry participants. Now, even if
- 25 --

- 1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You don't care what
- 2 kind of testing they do? They can change the method and
- 3 change the way to resolve --
- 4 MR. GORNSTEIN: Actually, the Federal Trade
- 5 Commission cannot require the particular testing method.
- 6 But even if you assume it could, Mr. Chief Justice, that
- 7 would simply be a regulatory condition on the marketing
- 8 of a product. And acting in accordance with a
- 9 regulatory condition on the marketing of a product is
- 10 not acting under a Federal officer, for the reasons I've
- 11 discussed.
- 12 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Gornstein, was there
- 13 any Government litigation against the cigarette
- 14 companies?
- 15 MR. GORNSTEIN: There has been Government
- 16 litigation against the cigarette companies for
- 17 allegations that are very similar to the complaint in
- 18 this case except that it is being brought under the RICO
- 19 statute. That litigation is pending in the D.C. Circuit
- 20 and the basic allegation, one of the allegations of the
- 21 complaint, is that the cigarette companies have falsely
- 22 marketed their products as being lest dangerous than
- 23 other products when, in fact, they are not.
- Now, the final point to be made is, even if
- 25 there was a delegation of authority here, it would not

- 1 affect the disposition of this case because this
- 2 complaint does not challenge the testing itself.
- 3 What this complaint says is that these --
- 4 that the Respondent here engaged in deceptive
- 5 advertising by essentially designing cigarettes that
- 6 would cheat the test and then marketing the cigarettes
- 7 as light when in fact they are not.
- 8 If the Court has no further questions --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 10 Mr. Gornstein.
- Mr. Olson.
- 12 ORAL ARGUMENT OF THEODORE B. OLSON
- 13 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS
- 14 MR. OLSON: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
- 15 and may it please the Court:
- 16 The heart of this lawsuit is that official
- 17 FTC tar and nicotine ratings generated by testing
- 18 performed by Respondents under the FTC's supervision and
- 19 transmitted to the public in Respondent's advertising at
- 20 the FTC's insistence is misleading; therefore, the
- 21 creation and transmission of the allegedly misleading
- 22 data for which Respondents are being sued were acts
- 23 performed by Respondents to assist the FTC in performing
- 24 its official responsibilities.
- 25 JUSTICE SOUTER: Did the FTC ever adopt a

- 1 regulation saying you've got publish these measurements?
- 2 MR. OLSON: No. The FTC did not do it
- 3 through a regulation. If the Court were to look at
- 4 pages 93 to 110 of the Joint Appendix, you would see
- 5 testimony by the Chairman of the FTC and the head of the
- 6 consumer protection part of the FTC saying: We chose
- 7 not to do it by regulation because we found that it was
- 8 much more efficient, much more fast, and much for
- 9 effective to force the tobacco companies into what is
- 10 called a voluntary agreement requiring precisely that
- 11 information.
- 12 JUSTICE SOUTER: But if one of the companies
- 13 had said, we're sick of doing this, we don't like the
- 14 numbers we're getting, whatever, we're just not going to
- 15 do it, presumably if we, you know, accept that testimony
- 16 at face value, the FTC would have moved and said, okay,
- 17 I guess we're going to have to have a reg or a statute
- 18 or what-not. During that period of time, the company
- 19 wouldn't be committing any offense?
- MR. OLSON: Yes, it would. In a 1978
- 21 advisory opinion, which is found on pages 202 of the
- joint appendix, the FTC stated categorically -- and the
- 23 joint appendix, by the way, Justice Souter, is full of
- 24 exactly what I'm talking about. The FTC said tar values
- 25 in cigarette advertising must be consistent with the

- 1 latest FTC number and stated that it would be deceptive
- 2 to advertise higher numbers or lower numbers or
- 3 different numbers. In other words, the enforcement
- 4 wouldn't be through the enactment of a regulation. The
- 5 FTC -- again, I refer to the testimony of the Chairman
- of the FTC: The FTC does things this way because --
- 7 JUSTICE SOUTER: What is this -- I'm just
- 8 not following it. What is the source of the so-called
- 9 "FTC number" to which advertising must conform?
- 10 MR. OLSON: The source of the FTC number is
- 11 the FTC test, alternatively called the Cambridge filter
- 12 test.
- 13 JUSTICE SOUTER: The Cambridge test, yes.
- MR. OLSON: But the FTC calls it the FTC
- 15 test. It was devised by the FTC. It has a specific set
- 16 of requirements. The FTC itself performed that test for
- 17 a number of years. Then in 1987 the test was
- 18 transmitted -- the FTC stopped doing it and allowed the
- 19 industry to do it itself because the -- again, in that
- 20 same testimony by the Chairman of the Commission, he
- 21 said that: It will be more effective and easier for us,
- 22 and we can use our funds for other purposes if the
- 23 industry does it.
- 24 JUSTICE SOUTER: I understand that. But if
- 25 the -- if a given cigarette manufacturer simply said,

- 1 we're not going to give any numbers, we're simply going
- 2 to say "Smoke Marlboros," and the FTC wanted numbers and
- 3 they wanted the numbers in accordance with the Cambridge
- 4 testing method, they would then have had to regulate,
- 5 adopt a regulation, or get Congress to pass a statute.
- 6 MR. OLSON: It's fairly -- what happened,
- 7 it's fairly clear from what the FTC has said, they would
- 8 bring an action for deceptive advertising if there was
- 9 anything involved in the marketing of those cigarettes
- 10 that had to do with tar and nicotine levels.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Okay. Now, in my hypo they
- 12 just say: Look, we're just going to say "Smoke
- 13 Marlboros." We're not going to say the nicotine is low
- or anything. The FTC would not at that point have any
- 15 basis to charge a violation?
- MR. OLSON: No, they wouldn't. But that is
- 17 not of course this case. This case involves --
- 18 JUSTICE SOUTER: All I'm getting at is the
- 19 FTC had no basis other than a voluntary agreement to
- 20 require them to publish any numbers or to publish any
- 21 numbers in accordance with the Cambridge --
- MR. OLSON: The history of that is set forth
- 23 in the record and it's clear.
- JUSTICE SOUTER: Right.
- 25 MR. OLSON: And the answer is that the FTC

- 1 announced a proposed rule. It then sent a letter to the
- 2 tobacco companies saying, it would be much easier for us
- 3 and much easier for you to enter into a voluntary
- 4 agreement. It gave them 30 days to come up with a
- 5 voluntary agreement. They produced an agreement which
- 6 the FTC rejected because it allowed certain flexibility
- 7 with respect to the testing and didn't adhere
- 8 specifically to the FTC test that you're referring to.
- 9 It rejected that first agreement. The
- 10 tobacco companies came back with another agreement. The
- 11 FTC accepted that agreement and said that it would
- 12 enforce the voluntary agreement against the tobacco
- 13 companies and if they deviated from it they'd return to
- 14 the rulemaking process.
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Again, you're talking
- 16 about an agency that has set certain standards that the
- 17 entity its regulating must meet. They must meet all
- 18 kinds of requirements for certain kinds of tests by
- 19 OSHA, say, for example. Think of pesticides, think of
- 20 hazardous substance -- quite precise tests that the
- 21 Government says you must make this test before you
- 22 market that dangerous product.
- I don't see how cigarettes are any different
- 24 from hazardous wastes, pesticides, just the vast number
- 25 of potentially dangerous to health products that are

- 1 marketed and the Government says: We're not going to
- 2 let you put those things out on the market unless you go
- 3 through a certain testing regimen. That doesn't make
- 4 the party an agent of the Government for the testing
- 5 purposes.
- 6 MR. OLSON: Let me see if I can answer that
- 7 question, Justice Ginsburg. This is not merely
- 8 compliance with the rule. This is not merely testing of
- 9 products. The FTC created the standard. It created the
- 10 testing mechanism. It performed the tests according to
- 11 very detailed criteria. Those tests are now performed
- 12 by the industry for the FTC. Those test results must be
- 13 reported to the FTC. The FTC then reports those results
- 14 to Congress and publishes them in the Federal Register
- 15 as the official FTC tobacco ratings, and then the FTC
- 16 requires --
- 17 JUSTICE SCALIA: They are called FTC
- 18 ratings?
- MR. OLSON: Yes.
- 20 JUSTICE SCALIA: And they are called -- in
- 21 the regulations it's called the FTC test, even after it
- 22 has been done by the companies?
- MR. OLSON: Yes, yes, Justice Scalia. And
- 24 in the case that you --
- 25 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's very careless, isn't

- 1 it?
- 2 MR. OLSON: It's not careless. They are
- 3 pronouncing the facts.
- 4 And in a case that you participated in in
- 5 the D.C. Circuit, the brief in that case, the Brown and
- 6 Williamson case that was mentioned before Justice Bork
- 7 wrote the opinion, in that brief I counted -- I stopped
- 8 counting about 10 or 12 times after the words "the FTC
- 9 test methodology," the "FTC official ratings," the FTC
- 10 this, the FTC that.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But there must be many
- 12 times when an agency prescribes a test that a regulated
- 13 party must comply with. It's still a relationship of a
- 14 regulator, the FTC, sets standards that the regulated
- 15 party has to meet. I just don't see -- it could be
- 16 called "the FTC test," but it's a test for what? Are
- 17 you complying with the law when you're manufacturing and
- 18 marketing this product?
- 19 MR. OLSON: Let me try again,
- 20 Justice Ginsburg. If the FTC had said to four local
- 21 hospitals, please perform this test according to this
- 22 specification for us, the FTC, and then give us these
- 23 results, which we will then publish as the FTC official
- 24 ratings of cigarettes, and then if those hospitals were
- 25 sued because the testing and the results were alleged to

- 1 be misleading, I think even the government would admit
- 2 that that case could be removed under the Federal
- 3 officer removal statute. There is nothing --
- 4 JUSTICE SOUTER: What if in your hypo the
- 5 Government came along and said, in order to run your
- 6 hospital, you've got to disclose certain facts.
- 7 Otherwise we're going to shut it down. And those facts
- 8 from that point on are like your hypo. Would your
- 9 conclusion then follow, that they were acting under?
- 10 MR. OLSON: No. It would be a vastly
- 11 different situation.
- 12 JUSTICE SOUTER: Why isn't that the
- 13 situation that we've got here?
- MR. OLSON: The difference, the difference
- is, is that, A, the test is, is -- the FTC and the
- 16 record is full of this, too; the FTC set a goal for
- 17 itself very early in the regulatory process. It wanted
- 18 consumers to purchase lower tar and nicotine cigarettes.
- 19 Now how was it going to accomplish that, the FTC goal?
- 20 It devised this test. It made it official FTC test.
- 21 Official FTC ratings. What this is doing is
- 22 conscripting in a way or accepting here's what the --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought that,
- 24 Mr. Olson, that the cigarette companies wanted to make a
- 25 light brand so that they could keep customers who might

- 1 be tempted to quit if there was only the heavy kind.
- 2 But to say that, the light cigarettes were forced on the
- 3 cigarette companies by the FTC certainly --
- 4 MR. OLSON: Well, in, in 29 -- this is in
- 5 the record. The FTC set forth goals, it's 29 Federal
- 6 Register 530, in -- on January 22, 1964, that the FTC
- 7 described its goal as to encourage the development of
- 8 less hazardous cigarettes. That was done in conjunction
- 9 with a earlier or a contemporaneous -- nearly
- 10 contemporaneous Surgeon General report which is reported
- 11 at joint appendix pages 57 to 60, that the Government
- 12 had as its goal the responsible promotion of cigarettes
- 13 low in tar and nicotine. Now I'm not saying --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, any product that
- 15 the Government supervises, certainly the Government
- 16 would want to promote a safer -- I mean, think of a jet
- 17 ski. Think of -- products are marketed because people
- 18 want them, and off course the Government as supervisor
- 19 will want to encourage a safer product. But let me ask
- 20 you a different question, Mr. Olson.
- 21 The removal area has been really closely
- 22 guarded by Congress. You know it's not easy to get a
- 23 case out of State court and move it to the Federal
- 24 court. In fact, Congress has said if the Federal court
- 25 shifts it back, no matter how wrong a that decision was,

- 1 it stays in the State court.
- One can't remove -- you may have a wonderful
- 3 Federal defense, a preemption defense. You can't remove
- 4 on that basis. You may have a counterclaim, so you're
- 5 really the same as a plaintiff. You can't remove on the
- 6 basis of a counterclaim.
- 7 Well, Congress has been so careful to let
- 8 the State courts do State tort litigation. Then we are
- 9 supposed to read into a Federal officer removal statute,
- 10 that kind of, the removal of a State tort case from
- 11 State court to Federal court? Because that's quite the
- 12 fashion.
- MR. OLSON: The Government says that the
- 14 test is -- is, that if an individual, private actor, is
- 15 assisting the Federal Government in performing the
- 16 official Government function, the case is appropriate to
- 17 be removed. That is what the Government says section
- 18 1441(a)(1) means. This Court has said that section
- 19 shall be liberally construed, not narrow or limited in
- 20 its construction, and not frustrated by a narrow,
- 21 grudging interpretation.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Is this right? If I have
- 23 it -- I'm using sort of a silly example to explain it to
- 24 myself. But I'm thinking the FDA -- or no, the
- 25 Agriculture Department decides they're really interested

- 1 in red apples not being red. So they say we hire
- 2 thousands of apple lookers, and the apple lookers look
- 3 at all the apples and they devise a redness test which
- 4 is really fabulous, you know, very precise.
- 5 MR. OLSON: The apple lookers' device?
- JUSTICE BREYER: No. The FDA. The FDA has
- 7 the apple looking redness test, and the apple lookers
- 8 apply the test. And if you pass the test, you can say
- 9 red apple, and if you don't pass the test you don't.
- 10 Now I'll give you two different things that happen. One
- 11 day because of budget cuts the FDA hires a lipstick
- 12 company to look, because they're experts on redness;
- 13 they know how to perform a test.
- 14 (Laughter.)
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: The other possibility is
- 16 they say to the apple companies, you do your own
- 17 looking. Now I think there'd be the difference that
- 18 you're trying to argue, and I don't think it cuts or
- 19 you. Because in the first case, what they've done is
- 20 hire somebody to perform a governmental function. In
- 21 the second case, what they've done is to the people who
- 22 are regulated and have the interest, in announcing they
- 23 have red apples, they've said, you do it yourself.
- MR. OLSON: Ah, but Justice Breyer, what
- 25 happens here is they say you do it yourself, and the

- 1 Chairman of the -- Chairman of the FTC said why. Here's
- 2 why; he said it's better undertaken by private
- 3 researchers. It's a mechanism that we can rely on to
- 4 ensure accurate reporting.
- 5 Then, what the FTC did is to supervise the
- 6 performance of the test. It goes into the laboratories.
- 7 It makes sure it has done it its way. And then it
- 8 accepts those results --
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: That wouldn't be relevant,
- 10 because the -- the problem with the, with the approach
- 11 that you're taking, as I see it, would be that, that
- 12 there are probably a lot of instances where a regulated
- 13 firm, the regulation meaning yes/no, market/not market;
- 14 yes/no, advertise/not advertise, performs all kinds of
- 15 tests to see if it is yes or no.
- 16 And if you're going to start taking that
- 17 kind of firm and breaking it apart to say whether it's
- doing the testing part or some other part, you're really
- 19 opening the gates.
- MR. OLSON: But we're -- we're not. We're
- 21 suggesting -- you're -- what you're doing in your
- 22 question and your statement is to disaggregate the
- 23 pieces of the process here. Here it is the FTC's goal,
- 24 it's FTC's method; it's the FTC's test which is
- 25 supervised but done by the companies. And then it

- 1 becomes the FTC official ratings which they then must
- 2 transmit to the company in their advertising. And now
- 3 they're sued because those ratings that they've done
- 4 according, for the FTC, according to the FTC standards,
- 5 are alleged to be misleading.
- 6 So it's -- it's not possible to disaggregate
- 7 it. It is a whole spectrum; the testing itself and the
- 8 reporting -- is done by the industry because the
- 9 FTC wants it as its official numbers, and it wants its
- 10 official numbers given to the consumers. And it is
- 11 setting an advisory opinion, even if you tell them that
- 12 your cigarettes have higher tar or lower tar, if you
- don't report our numbers, you will be sued for deceptive
- 14 advertising.
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. So what you are
- 16 saying is that this function is so separable and it is
- 17 so much a FTC function and it is so much like delegating
- 18 it to the third party that did nothing of the testing,
- 19 that even if you delegate it to the second party which
- 20 does testing and then benefits from the testing, that's
- 21 still not enough to take it out.
- MR. OLSON: What I was saying in answer --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Is that -- have I got that
- 24 right?
- MR. OLSON: I think so. Let me restate it,

- 1 because I think I understand what you've said.
- 2 And I think what I was trying to say with
- 3 respect to Justice Ginsburg's question, if the -- all
- 4 those private hospitals did it, I think the Government
- 5 would admit, the Federal -- and then is there an
- 6 exception in the statute? If the regulated entity, in
- 7 this case the tobacco company, does it rather than the
- 8 hospital? And there's nothing in the statute that says
- 9 that.
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: No. But I -- so, so to use
- 11 my silly example, I mean, it is like the lipstick
- 12 company. You're saying, well if they did it to the
- 13 lipstick company it would be clearly that they're the
- 14 Government agent. And it is so technical, so
- 15 governmental, so heavily involved with the Government
- 16 for testing, that even though you give it to the apple
- 17 growers themselves, they are still Government agents
- 18 when they perform it.
- MR. OLSON: The Agency decided they are any
- 20 --
- JUSTICE BREYER: I, I see the argument now.
- MR. OLSON: Yeah.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Then is there any, any
- 24 authority ever, that you found for that?
- 25 (Laughter.)

- 1 MR. OLSON: This is, as the Eighth Circuit
- 2 said, a very unusual situation. But the closest
- 3 analogies are, are to the Government contractor cases.
- 4 And by the way, it doesn't require a contract to be
- 5 acting under the supervision. I heard the Government
- 6 say that what you had to have is someone supervised by
- 7 the Government with the Government's power to alter the
- 8 actor's conduct.
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well there's one
- 10 different. If you're doing it for the Government, the
- 11 Government says we want Agent Orange; we know it's a
- 12 very dangerous substance. So they give you an order;
- 13 we're going to make very precise specifications. But
- 14 you're doing it for us. We, the Government, want that,
- 15 and so we are going to put tight controls on your
- 16 manufacturing it for us.
- 17 A little was different from a commercial
- 18 company going out to sell market goods to the public at
- 19 large?
- MR. OLSON: Justice, I understand there's a
- 21 distinction. Because the Government is the actual
- 22 consumer of that product. But here the Government
- 23 announced that its goals were to accomplish a market in
- lower tar cigarettes. And it said with respect to the
- 25 testing, it's better undertaken by private researchers.

- 1 So it was fulfilling the Government's desire to have
- 2 something they could save the money, if they close down
- 3 the laboratory, they said in this testimony, we'll use
- 4 the money for enforcement pumps against the cigarette
- 5 company. We can regulate and determine, fulfill the
- 6 official functions of the Government more effectively,
- 7 more efficiently if we do it this way.
- 8 So it is the Government's objective. It is
- 9 the Government's results they are seeking to obtain.
- 10 And they've conscripted voluntarily the industry to do
- 11 the thing for it and then it calls it its official
- 12 results.
- 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: Have, have they imposed its
- 14 official -- has it imposed, the FTC, its official
- 15 results on any company that was not a participant in
- 16 this -- in this testing lab?
- MR. OLSON: I don't know the answer to that.
- 18 I think the answer is no. I think that what, what the
- 19 FTC was able to accomplish at that time was to get every
- 20 -- the major players in the marketplace with respect to
- 21 participation in this. I don't know --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Your case would be stronger
- 23 if they weren't doing it just for themselves. If in
- 24 fact that they were doing it for the FTC who imposed it
- 25 even on somebody else.

- 1 MR. OLSON: That's the private hospital
- 2 example that we were talking about.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Yeah.
- 4 MR. OLSON: I don't know that it would be
- 5 stronger. Why would it be weaker --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Because here you're doing
- 7 it for yourself. You want to advertise low -- low --
- 8 low tar cases. And the FTC says the only way we'll let
- 9 you do it, the only way we'll let do you that
- 10 advertising is if you test them pursuant to this, this
- 11 system that we established.
- 12 And you say okay. We'll test them pursuant
- 13 to the system you've established and -- and everybody
- 14 goes happily away.
- MR. OLSON: Well, that happens to be --
- 16 there happens to be a coincidence of what the Government
- 17 wants to accomplish and what the industry is willing to
- 18 and wants to accomplish. I'll accept that. So does
- 19 that mean there's an exception to the Federal officer
- 20 removal statute, if the person who is asked to help the
- 21 Government, does help the Government, is sued because
- 22 his actions in helping the Government occasioned someone
- 23 to bring a law suit?
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Olson , you've
- 25 been talking a lot about testing. But when you look at

- 1 the complaint in this case, testing is a small part of
- 2 it. They're complaining about the modification of the
- 3 tobacco blend, the weight, rod length, the
- 4 circumference, use of reconstituted tobacco sheets. In
- 5 other words there's a lot going on here in the complaint
- 6 here besides the testing. And if the Government is in
- 7 no way specifying the tobacco blend, the weight, the
- 8 length, all these other things that are allegedly part
- 9 of the manipulation to affect the figures.
- 10 MR. OLSON: Well, in the first place if
- 11 there's anything in the complaint that allows a removal
- 12 then the case can be removed. That's the Exxon versus
- 13 Allapattah case that the Court decided just a couple of
- 14 terms ago. But secondly, let me address directly what
- 15 you are saying.
- 16 Throughout the complaint, in the complaint
- 17 itself, I found references to the testing machine or
- 18 method eight times in the complaint. They say -- they
- 19 complain about representations that cigarettes contain
- 20 less tar and nicotine than regular cigarettes. They
- 21 base that on the test results. They then say as
- 22 measured by the industry standard testing apparatus.
- 23 And let me refer to what the Petitioners
- 24 said in their motion to remand to the State court. They
- 25 complained -- they said the basis of this complaint is

- 1 misleading low tar and nicotine ratings as measured by
- 2 the company's testing procedures. That's in the
- 3 Petitioners' motion to remand. Furthermore, the
- 4 district court interpreted the complaint precisely the
- 5 way we are explaining this to the Court today. The
- 6 district court said that over and over again, words of
- 7 the district court at page 42a of the petition appendix,
- 8 the court concludes that the FTC's regulation of the
- 9 cigarette companies' testing and advertising cuts to the
- 10 heart of the plaintiff's lawsuit.
- 11 Well, the heart of the plaintiff's lawsuit
- 12 is testing and advertising. The testing is required by
- 13 the FTC. The results of the testings are the FTC's
- 14 numbers. And the advertising contains the FTC's numbers
- 15 because the FTC requires it. The circuit court
- 16 interpreted --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But the company is doing
- 18 it so it can stay in business and market this product,
- 19 not as a service to the U.S. Government.
- 20 MR. OLSON: I don't deny that the -- the
- 21 Respondents in this case are engaged in industry. A
- 22 regulated industry by the FTC. And that's correct,
- 23 Justice Ginsburg.
- I don't think there's an exception. And the
- 25 Government hasn't suggested there's an exception in the

- 1 Federal officer removal statute because someone happens
- 2 to be in the industry which is asked to help the
- 3 Government perform a particular function. There is no
- 4 logic to that, and it certainly would be not a liberal
- 5 interpretation of the Federal officer removal statute.
- 6 The circuit court also said the very -- and
- 7 I think this is worth noting, at page 15a of the
- 8 appendix to the cert petition, the very combination the
- 9 plaintiff challenges as deceptive is the same
- 10 combination the FTC requires not to be -- to put in your
- 11 advertising in order not to be deceptive.
- So what is required by the FTC of the
- 13 plaintiffs, the advertising of these test -- official
- 14 test results -- is precisely what the Petitioners say,
- 15 and the Petitioners say is deceptive. That's the basis
- 16 for their lawsuit.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well that's a good, that's
- 18 a good preemption argument.
- 19 MR. OLSON: If the --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I'm not sure it has much
- 21 bearing upon whether --
- MR. OLSON: Well, it is a good preemption
- 23 argument, Justice Scalia. That will be played out
- 24 either in the State court, depending upon how you rule,
- 25 or the Federal court. But it's -- that's the nexus and

- 1 the color of Federal authority that you talked about in
- 2 your dissenting opinion in that Acker case.
- 3 The Court in the Acker case, Jefferson
- 4 County versus Acker, said that the allegations in the
- 5 petition and in the removal petition must be -- and
- 6 especially since they weren't challenged in this case,
- 7 the factual allegations and the characterization of the
- 8 complaint were not challenged in this case -- must be
- 9 accepted as true by this Court. And Chief Justice
- 10 Roberts, it's not only the allegations in the complaint
- 11 and the characterization in the removal petition, but
- 12 it's what the district court decided the complaint said.
- 13 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I know all that's involved
- 14 here is the forum and removal; but if we were to rule
- 15 for you that there' is Federal officer status here,
- 16 would that effect any of the substantive determinations
- on the preemption question, etcetera?
- 18 MR. OLSON: No, I don't think so. I think
- 19 --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: It's just a forum
- 21 question?
- 22 MR. OLSON: Yes, it is. And this is an
- 23 appropriate case for evaluation of the conduct of the
- 24 person acting --
- 25 JUSTICE BREYER: I have a quick question.

- 1 Is there anything in the complaint that alleges you
- 2 didn't perform the tests properly?
- MR. OLSON: Yes. Yes. There is. But as I
- 4 said, that is not -- I mean, the part of the complaint,
- 5 as the district court saw it and the circuit court saw
- 6 it, is much more than that. It's the testing and so on
- 7 and so forth. And I don't think it would make any
- 8 difference because even if there's an allegation, which
- 9 there is in the complaint, that the test was manipulated
- 10 or gained or circumvented, it goes back to whether it's
- 11 a good test or not.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I don't understand
- 13 your response to Justice Kennedy. If we determine that
- 14 you're acting under the direction of a Federal officer,
- 15 that would seem to me highly pertinent on the merits of
- 16 a preemption argument. So it would not be just the
- 17 forum, but kind of getting into the preemption merits.
- 18 MR. OLSON: Well, it may perhaps be. But
- 19 what, it's an interpretation of the statute. I don't
- 20 think there's any doubt about that anyway, Chief Justice
- 21 Roberts, because it's clear that what was being done
- 22 here is something that the FTC wanted done in the way
- 23 the FTC wanted it done. I don't know how the -- I
- 24 believe that the preemption argument is very, very
- 25 strong, because the lawsuit, the substance, the guts,

- 1 the core, the heart of the lawsuit, as the district
- 2 court said and the Eighth Circuit said is, you're doing
- 3 what the FTC required you to do, and the plaintiffs say
- 4 that it's deceptive.
- 5 And by the way, it's very clear from the
- 6 record in the joint appendix and in the district court
- 7 decision and in the remand in the motion -- the motion
- 8 to -- the petition to remove, that the FTC knew exactly
- 9 the deficiencies that are alleged in the complaint.
- 10 The FTC has been aware of the fact that
- 11 people smoke differently, that cigarette -- the design
- 12 of a cigarette may affect the outcome of the test. But
- 13 what the FTC, knowing that full well, said, well, people
- 14 might smoke things differently and you might get more
- 15 tar and nicotine than the FTC ratings produce. And the
- 16 FTC with full awareness said, we understand all that,
- 17 but what we want is for the consumers to have an ability
- 18 to compare this cigarette with this cigarette, and we
- 19 have devised a test that will allow you to compare an
- 20 apple to an apple. Now there are other things that will
- 21 --
- 22 JUSTICE SCALIA: It all comes back to me
- 23 now, that case you mentioned. Lip drape, that was the
- 24 lip drape case, wasn't it, where people smoke
- 25 differently because some of them cover up the holes in

- 1 the filter when their lips -- the lip drape. The naked
- 2 lip drape.
- 3 MR. OLSON: That is the case. I don't know
- 4 if you've charactered it the same way I did, but the
- 5 apples to apples thing is tied in with your
- 6 hypothetical, Justice Breyer, about the apple
- 7 inspectors.
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: Is it the apple institute
- 9 who's doing the testing?
- 10 MR. OLSON: It's the Tobacco Institute
- 11 testing facility --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: No, I said apple institute.
- 13 You know, that seemed to me to be the case where it was
- 14 the apple institute or whatever it was that was the
- 15 delegate, and then they applied the test, and the people
- 16 they were applying the test to weren't.
- MR. OLSON: It's a facility of the tobacco
- 18 industry. The FTC perceives it as -- these industries
- 19 -- and these companies, and as I said, even the
- 20 petitioners in their remand petition are challenging the
- low tar and nicotine rate measured by the company's
- 22 testing procedures. So yes, I'd like to have it be
- 23 something different but it isn't something different.
- 24 It is what the companies have done, and through this
- 25 mechanism.

1	This case comes down to the fact that the
2	FTC wanted certain things done. It decided how certain
3	things would be done. It calls the results of those the
4	official FTC ratings. It wants those ratings delivered
5	to the people. And the tobacco companies have done that
6	and they're being sued because they say because that
7	information which they're delivering, that they're
8	creating and delivering at the request of the
9	Government, is alleged to be deceptive. This is the
10	perfect case for a removal under the federal officer
11	removal statute.
12	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Olson
13	Mr. Frederick, two minutes remaining.
14	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID C. FREDERICK
15	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
16	MR. FREDERICK: If this is a perfect case
17	for Federal officer removal, there are easily 40,000
18	others in the State courts waiting to he removed.
19	JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, how many others
20	involve the agency calling the result of the private
21	action the FTC figures and the FTC test?
22	MR. FREDERICK: I don't know the answer to
23	that, but I can tell you that in lots and lots of areas,
24	the Federal Government wants safer, cleaner cars, safer
25	refrigerators

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: But they don't -- they
- 2 don't put it out to the public as the Federal
- 3 Government's figures.
- 4 MR. FREDERICK: They do --
- 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: That makes a big
- 6 difference.
- 7 MR. FREDERICK: It does not make a
- 8 difference. And the reason it doesn't make a difference
- 9 is if you look on your refrigerator, if you look on your
- 10 lawn mower, if you look on your automobile, there are
- 11 Government standard tests that have to be complied with
- 12 for an industry to be able to sell its products. And if
- 13 Philip Morris is correct here, you are going to be
- 14 announcing a dramatic transformation of the role of
- 15 Federal and State courts, because every time there is
- 16 even a colorable argument for preemption, the industry
- 17 will take the case to Federal court saying we're acting
- 18 under the Federal officer, and therefore, don't --
- 19 JUSTICE SCALIA: Just don't call it the
- 20 Government's test. Don't call it the Government's
- 21 figures. Call it the industry's figures.
- MR. FREDERICK: The description shouldn't
- 23 make a difference, particularly where it is in a
- 24 voluntary agreement that was not put out for notice and
- 25 comment rulemaking, and it was done for precisely this

reason, Justice Scalia. For decades, the cigarette

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2	companies were rightly perceived as deceiving the public
3	about the health content of their products.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Now the FTC told us
5	why they did it. They did it because they could save
6	the money by having the industry do it rather than them
7	doing it.
8	MR. FREDERICK: They also said, Mr. Chief
9	Justice, that they expected the companies to police each
10	other, which is exactly what happened when the Barclay
11	cigarette came up. Philip Morris was the one that
12	complained and said that cigarette doesn't comply, it's
13	been manipulating the FTC Cambridge filter method. So
14	the FTC found a cheaper way to do regulation.
15	Compliance with rules does not transform an entity into
16	a Federal officer. Thank you.
17	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Counsel.
18	The case is submitted.
19	(Whereupon, at 12:17 p.m., the case in the
20	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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