1	IN THE SUPREME COURT	OF THE UNITED STATES
2		x
3	MARCUS SYKES,	:
4	Petitioner	:
5	v.	: No. 09-11311
6	UNITED STATES	:
7		x
8	Washington, D.C.	
9	Wedne	sday, January 12, 2011
10		
11	The above-enti	tled matter came on for oral
12	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States	
13	at 10:02 a.m.	
14	APPEARANCES:	
15	WILLIAM E. MARSH, ESQ., Indianapolis, Indiana; on behalf	
16	of Petitioner.	
17	JEFFREY B. WALL, ESQ., Assis	tant to the Solicitor
18	General, Department of Ju	stice, Washington, D.C.;
19	on behalf of Respondent.	
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:02 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	first this morning in Case 09-11311, Sykes v. United
5	States.
6	Justice Ginsburg is not on the bench, but
7	will participate in the argument through the transcripts
8	and and the tapes.
9	Mr. Marsh.
L 0	ORAL ARGUMENT OF WILLIAM E. MARSH
L1	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
L2	MR. MARSH: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
L3	please the Court:
L 4	The Armed Career Criminal Act enhances the
L5	punishment for possession of a firearm or ammunition for
L6	a person who has three previous convictions for a
L7	violent felony. This case involves, as you know,
L8	vehicular fleeing, which Indiana has divided into five
L9	categories. Indiana statute treats vehicular fleeing as
20	a continuum of behavior ranging from merely failing to
21	stop, on the low end, which is the crime Mr. Sykes was
22	convicted of violating, all the way to fleeing which
23	results in the death of a police officer, on the high
24	end, which in Indiana is a class A felony.
25	JUSTICE SCALIA: What's in between?

- 1 MR. MARSH: The second tier up is what we
- 2 refer to as (b)(1)(B), which is fleeing which either
- 3 causes bodily injury or creates a substantial risk of
- 4 bodily injury. The next category up is fleeing which
- 5 causes serious bodily injury. The fourth category is
- 6 fleeing which causes a death.
- 7 This Court recognizes --
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: So we can assume that the
- 9 conviction here did not involve any risk of bodily
- 10 injury to anybody?
- 11 MR. MARSH: That's our position, Your Honor.
- 12 When the court considers the conduct encompassed by the
- 13 elements of the offense --
- 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: Right.
- 15 MR. MARSH: -- then that conduct does not
- 16 involve conduct which creates a risk of bodily injury.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Why is that --
- 18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I'm sure you'll do so in
- 19 the course of your argument, but at some point give us
- 20 some examples of violations of -- of this -- this
- 21 statute which from a commonsense standpoint don't
- 22 involve a serious risk. There was something in the
- 23 brief about, oh, well, the defendant might want to just
- 24 find a safe place to pull over. I -- I didn't follow
- 25 that because it's an intent crime. I just don't see how Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 that would be a violation. But if at some point in your
- 2 argument you could address those points.
- MR. MARSH: Well, I'd be happy to respond
- 4 now, Justice Kennedy. The court -- the case that you
- 5 referred to is the Indiana case of Woodward, from the
- 6 Indiana Court of Appeals, in which the court held that
- 7 exactly that conduct did violate this statute because
- 8 the -- knowingly or intentionally, the mens rea element,
- 9 goes only to fleeing and using a vehicle. So that was
- 10 one example --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Looking --
- 12 MR. MARSH: -- of merely failing to stop.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'm sorry. Looking
- 14 -- looking -- I don't mean to interrupt your answer, but
- 15 looking for a safe place to stop violates the statute?
- 16 MR. MARSH: That was the holding of the
- 17 Indiana Court of Appeals, yes.
- 18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: You're supposed to stop
- 19 dead in your tracks and not pull off on the shoulder? I
- 20 mean, I don't -- I just don't understand this. I'll go
- 21 read the case, but --
- MR. MARSH: Well, the court didn't --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't drive in Indiana.
- 24 I think that's pretty tough.
- MR. MARSH: The court did not elaborate,
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- 1 Your Honor, on where the line is, but --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Maybe that's why -- why
- 3 it's a risk. You stop in the middle of the road and
- 4 then everybody --
- 5 (Laughter.)
- 6 MR. MARSH: That would be more likely to
- 7 create a risk, but the whole --
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: How can you say somebody is
- 9 fleeing? I mean, doesn't fleeing mean you're trying to
- 10 escape the -- the officer?
- 11 MR. MARSH: Justice Scalia, the holding of
- 12 the Indiana Court of Appeals was in response to a
- 13 position taken by the defendant, sort of along the lines
- 14 of the two lines of questioning, which is surely the
- 15 statute requires something more than merely failing to
- 16 stop, but the Indiana Court of Appeals used precisely
- 17 that language. It --
- 18 JUSTICE ALITO: I think the problem with
- 19 your argument is that the prosecution is not under any
- 20 obligation to charge any offense greater than the
- 21 offense for which your client was convicted in a case in
- 22 which there is a very grave risk created by a flight.
- 23 Isn't that true?
- 24 MR. MARSH: The prosecutor is not under any
- obligation; was that the question, Justice Alito?

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- 1 JUSTICE ALITO: Yes.
- 2 MR. MARSH: Yes, I think that's -- I think
- 3 that's correct. The prosecutor --
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: So you -- the fact that
- 5 someone is convicted of this offense does not show that
- 6 a broad category of offenses within this crime lack the
- 7 risk that's necessary under the Armed Career Criminal
- 8 Act.
- 9 MR. MARSH: Well, I suggest that it does,
- 10 Your Honor, because the -- the James case makes clear
- 11 that the court will determine whether the crime creates
- 12 a serious potential risk of physical injury to another
- 13 by looking at the conduct encompassed by the elements of
- 14 the offense. Now, the fact that some other offense
- 15 maybe could have been charged or was charged, I suggest,
- on the categorical approach is not relevant.
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: Are you familiar with the
- 18 case called Hape v. State, Indiana Court of Appeals
- 19 2009?
- 20 MR. MARSH: Tate versus --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Hape. H-a-p-e.
- MR. MARSH: I'm not, Your Honor.
- 23 JUSTICE ALITO: During a 45 -- and this
- 24 involved the offense at issue here. During a 45-minute
- 25 high-speed chase, officers shot at the defendant's truck Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 at least 20 times. The State's facts showed that the
- 2 defendant drove over 100 miles an hour and at times
- 3 drove into the oncoming traffic lane.
- 4 Do you think that creates a -- a serious
- 5 potential risk of -- of harm?
- 6 MR. MARSH: Well, those, of course, aren't
- 7 the facts here. And I would have to know what the
- 8 individual was convicted of, because, of course, under
- 9 the categorical --
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: I believe he was convicted
- 11 of the same offense as -- as Mr. Sykes.
- 12 MR. MARSH: But, of course, under the
- 13 categorical approach established by Taylor and followed
- 14 consistently by this Court since that time, the court
- 15 doesn't look at the facts of the individual case. The
- 16 court looks at it categorically. So if the --
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: But looking at it
- 18 categorically, I've always thought, means you look to
- 19 see not just what the elements are on paper, but whether
- 20 the elements as -- as used in reality in the State are
- 21 applied to cases that do present -- in general, you
- 22 apply it to cases that do present a serious risk of
- 23 physical injury. And you'd think the answer is we don't
- 24 know because no one's gone and looked. You could do it
- 25 through sampling, but no one's gone and looked. I've Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 just said that's my view of it.
- 2 The -- the -- so what do we do? I mean, I
- 3 can deal with a lot of other States, but Arizona has
- 4 exactly the same classification of felony when you use a
- 5 vehicle and when you use a vehicle creating a serious
- 6 risk of physical harm to others. It's in the same
- 7 provision, same statute, same category. How do we work
- 8 with that, in your opinion?
- 9 MR. MARSH: If the --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Are you following what I'm
- 11 doing? You understand the difference between Arizona
- 12 and 46 other States?
- MR. MARSH: Yes.
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: In the other States, they
- 15 grade it. But here they don't.
- MR. MARSH: Right. Well, Indiana, of
- 17 course, does grade it, Your Honor.
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: Indiana -- I'm sorry.
- MR. MARSH: And it is significant that the
- 20 second most serious category is where the conduct does
- 21 present a substantial risk of bodily injury.
- 22 JUSTICE SCALIA: And I -- I don't know how
- 23 we could proceed by looking at, you know, whether in
- 24 fact a majority of the cases that come into this first
- 25 relatively harmless category did indeed involve
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- 1 situations that involved physical risk because, as
- 2 everybody knows, prosecutors plea bargain, and it's
- 3 probably very often the case that the defendant is
- 4 charged only under -- under category 1, where, you know,
- if he went to trial, they'd charge him under 3; isn't
- 6 that so?
- 7 MR. MARSH: But, of course, Your Honor --
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes, yes. You want to say
- 9 "yes."
- 10 (Laughter.)
- 11 MR. MARSH: Thank you. Yes.
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, I still -- look, what
- 13 I'm thinking of -- and I need a little explanation -- we
- 14 look to see in (b), and it says it's a class D felony if
- 15 a vehicle is used. That's (A) under (1). Am I right?
- MR. MARSH: Yes.
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. Then we look to (B)
- 18 under (1), and it's also a class D felony -- in other
- 19 words, the same -- if a vehicle is operated in a manner
- 20 that creates a substantial risk of bodily injury.
- MR. MARSH: Yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: So a prosecutor looking at
- 23 that will say: Why don't I just charge (A); what's the
- 24 point of charging (B)?
- I mean, it makes no difference apparently.

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- 1 It's simpler to prove (A).
- MR. MARSH: Justice Breyer, in 2003, when
- 3 Mr. Sykes was convicted of this offense, what you said
- 4 is exactly right. Of course, we have no way of knowing
- 5 the motivation of prosecutors generally, let alone in
- 6 this case. And it wouldn't really matter what it was in
- 7 this case, what it is generally. But I think it's
- 8 significant that in 2006 the Indiana General Assembly
- 9 amended that statute so now the (B) violation carries
- 10 with it a mandatory jail sentence, 60 days.
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: I can deal with it more
- 12 easily then, at least I have -- but what's worrying me
- now is what we're supposed to do is: Is the offense an
- 14 offense that presents a serious risk of physical injury
- 15 to another?
- MR. MARSH: Yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: So we're here trying to
- 18 decide whether the (A) one does.
- MR. MARSH: Yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: And the answer is I don't
- 21 know, and the reason I don't know is I don't know how
- 22 that offense language of (A) is applied in Indiana.
- MR. MARSH: If the --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, do you know if
- 25 Indiana has an enhancement for convictions, sentencing Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 enhancement of any kind, for convictions that have an
- 2 element of -- of risk of harm to others?
- 3 MR. MARSH: Your Honor, there are a number
- 4 of habitual sentencing enhancements, one of which
- 5 specifically relates to driving. I can't say that it is
- 6 based on substantial --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So it's possible that
- 8 there is a -- there's a use of the difference between
- 9 the two categories that might not be implicated in this
- 10 case but may lay the foundation for an enhancement
- 11 later?
- MR. MARSH: Yes. Now, that's a good point,
- 13 Justice Sotomayor. The -- the enhancements generally in
- 14 Indiana relate to previous convictions, and so I can't
- 15 say for sure, but it's entirely possible that (B),
- 16 (b)(1)(B), would be a predicate crime for a habitual
- 17 traffic offender, which is what it's called.
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In your brief, you take
- issue with the Government's definition of "aggressive,"
- 20 but would you give us yours?
- MR. MARSH: Well, Your Honor --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How would you define it
- 23 and on what basis?
- MR. MARSH: Your Honor, the best definition
- 25 of "aggressive" that I've seen was in the First Circuit
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- 1 opinion in the Herrick case, which is cited in our
- 2 brief, which the First Circuit refers to as forceful
- 3 action, especially where intended to dominate or master.
- But on general everyday language, it strikes
- 5 me that when a law enforcement officer wants somebody to
- 6 stop, whether they're in a vehicle or not, the fight or
- 7 flee sort of comes into play. And the person who
- 8 responds by going toward the police officer and
- 9 resisting in that way, which is the first part of this
- 10 Indiana statute, would be acting in an aggressive way.
- 11 The person who flees is not acting in an aggressive way.
- 12 They're trying to avoid the confrontation. They're
- 13 trying to get away from the law enforcement.
- 14 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Marsh, I take it that
- 15 you would agree that (b)(1)(B) is a violent felony
- 16 under -- under ACCA; is that right?
- 17 MR. MARSH: Your Honor, it may very well be.
- 18 It certainly would satisfy the risk element, similar in
- 19 risk to the -- to the Begay case. I think it would
- 20 still have to be decided whether it's violent and
- 21 aggressive, but it may very well be.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, if we think that
- 23 (b)(1)(B) is a violent felony under ACCA, and we know
- 24 that (b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B) can receive the same
- 25 punishment, that they're both classed as a class D

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- 1 felony, why should we make the distinction between the
- 2 two under ACCA?
- 3 MR. MARSH: Your Honor, I would suggest
- 4 because the Indiana General Assembly has decided in
- 5 enacting this legislation that some vehicular fleeing
- 6 presents a substantial risk of bodily injury to another
- 7 and some doesn't, and they've drawn this distinction.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I presume that if --
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: But these are not nested
- 10 offenses. These are not --
- MR. MARSH: I'm sorry?
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: These are not lesser
- included offenses. Each has an element that the other
- 14 lacks, and both are classed with -- apparently that the
- 15 -- that the State thinks of them as equally severe. And
- if one is a violent felony under ACCA, there's an
- 17 argument that the other should be treated in the exact
- 18 same way.
- 19 MR. MARSH: Your Honor, I would suggest that
- 20 the State doesn't treat them as equally severe. The
- 21 range of punishment for a class D felony, which both of
- 22 those crimes are, is all the way from zero to 3 years in
- 23 prison, and the actual conduct undoubtedly is a factor
- in what the person's ultimate sentence will be.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: And it may well be that in Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 deciding whether to accept a plea bargain of being
- 2 guilty of (A) rather than going to trial on (B), if your
- 3 client has two violent felonies already on the book, you
- 4 might take -- take the plea bargain under (A) lest you
- 5 run afoul of the violent felony act.
- 6 MR. MARSH: Yes, Your Honor, that's, of
- 7 course, entirely possible. But, again, just as with the
- 8 categorical approach the court cannot take into account
- 9 the motives of prosecutors, I would suggest the motives
- 10 of defendants and defense lawyers can't be taken into
- 11 account, either. Further, I think it's more important
- 12 that when Indiana enacted this statute, it was not
- 13 thinking of ACCA and predicate crimes, I -- I assume. I
- 14 don't think the legislature takes those kind of things
- 15 into account.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Suppose the legislature were
- 17 to repeal (b)(1)(B). Would the offense for which Mr.
- 18 Sykes was convicted then become an ACCA offense?
- 19 MR. MARSH: Your Honor, I -- that would be a
- 20 question that would have to be decided on the basis of
- 21 whether there's some basis to -- well, first of all,
- 22 determine whether it's violent and aggressive. And my
- 23 position would remain it's still not violent and
- 24 aggressive. But even on the second part of the Begay
- 25 approach, this Court has not seen anything that gives
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- 1 you any basis for knowing what the risk of injury is.
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't understand your
- 3 answer to that question. I would have thought that your
- 4 answer, if you're insisting on a categorical approach,
- 5 would be "no," that there's nothing in -- in (3) that
- 6 requires any violence at all. Just fleeing by visible
- 7 or audible means, just -- just flees. That's all it
- 8 says.
- 9 MR. MARSH: I'm sorry. I understood the
- 10 question to be that (A) is repealed and (B) is left in
- 11 place; was that --
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: No, it's the opposite. If
- 13 the aggravated offense -- you rely on the aggravated
- 14 offense --
- MR. MARSH: Right.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: -- in large part as a basis
- 17 for your argument.
- 18 MR. MARSH: Right.
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: Your argument -- one of your
- 20 main arguments, as I understand it, is that -- what I'll
- 21 call the simple offense doesn't qualify under ACCA
- 22 because cases involving a serious risk of bodily injury
- 23 fall under the aggravated category. And my question is
- 24 whether a repeal of the aggravated offense would change
- 25 -- would then convert the simple offense from a non-ACCA
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- 1 offense to an ACCA offense. Or you could ask it a
- 2 different way. If State 1 has the simple offense and
- 3 the aggravated offense, State 2 has just the simple
- 4 offense, is the simple offense an ACCA offense in one
- 5 State and not in the other State even though the
- 6 elements are exactly the same?
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's a good question.
- 8 MR. MARSH: Your Honor, the equation would
- 9 be different because of the significance of the (B)
- 10 offense. So that's not exactly our case. But I will
- 11 adopt Justice Scalia's answer, which I think is exactly
- 12 right. I -- it still would not be something that's
- 13 violent or aggressive.
- JUSTICE ALITO: But you're -- you're
- 15 answering my question by making a totally different
- 16 argument. Insofar as you're relying on the aggravated
- 17 offense, the presence of the aggravated offense, I would
- 18 appreciate an answer to it.
- MR. MARSH: Justice Alito, the --
- JUSTICE ALITO: In other words, you're
- 21 saying -- maybe I haven't made myself clear. You're --
- 22 Justice Scalia's answer, which you have adopted, is that
- 23 if you look at (A) by itself, forget about the
- 24 aggravated offense completely; it doesn't qualify under
- 25 ACCA. And that's -- that's one argument.

- But your -- your other argument is that (A),
- 2 the simple offense, doesn't qualify because of the
- 3 presence of (B). And I'm trying to see whether that
- 4 makes sense.
- 5 MR. MARSH: Yes, Justice Alito, I think it
- 6 breaks down to the two parts of the Begay test. In
- 7 order to be a violent felony, it has to be similar in
- 8 kind and similar in degree of risk.
- 9 The existence of (B) makes clear that the
- 10 degree of risk for violating (A) is not the same,
- 11 because if you accept the continuum of behavior as
- 12 created by the Indiana General Assembly, the person
- 13 who's convicted of (A) has not created a substantial
- 14 risk of bodily injury. It's --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, have you done
- 16 or looked at -- not every burglary has a risk of harm to
- 17 another or results in harm to another. The general
- 18 definition of burglary is entering without permission
- 19 and intent to commit a crime, and generically the crime
- doesn't have to be physical injury to others.
- MR. MARSH: Right.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Yet, ACCA defines
- 23 burglary as a qualifying crime of violence. It's
- 24 measuring risk, not by the elements of that crime, but
- 25 by something else, by some measure of incidents in which Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 violence might occur.
- 2 So how is that different than the
- 3 Government's argument here and the question that Justice
- 4 Breyer asked you, which was: It is true, potentially
- 5 there's some forms of fleeing that might not pose a risk
- of injury, but statistically there's a large number of
- 7 incidents in which violence follows.
- 8 So, how is that different than burglary?
- 9 That's really my question. What -- it can't be that the
- 10 elements have to pose a risk of injury, because burglary
- 11 doesn't do that. So, what -- how do we measure it?
- MR. MARSH: Your Honor, the inquiry, as the
- 13 Court said in James, is whether the conduct encompassed
- 14 by the elements of the offense presents the risk. And
- 15 that's the -- the determination that the court has to
- 16 consider.
- It's not -- it is not necessary, and I'm not
- 18 contending, that this crime is a violent felony only if
- 19 every conceivable violation of the statute constitutes a
- 20 risk of danger. That --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So if you're not doing
- 22 that, that's my question: Where do we draw the line?
- 23 MR. MARSH: You draw it -- I'm sorry.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Where do we draw the
- 25 line?

- 1 MR. MARSH: You draw the line --
- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I think that was what
- 3 Justice Breyer was trying to ask you earlier, which is:
- 4 When do we say that, as in burglary, that some risk is
- 5 more likely to follow than not in a particular type of
- 6 crime?
- 7 MR. MARSH: Well, the line is defined by the
- 8 statute: Serious potential risk of physical injury to
- 9 another.
- Now, how do you make that determination?
- 11 Well, the Court made clear in Chambers that empirical
- 12 data is one way to do it. There isn't any here because
- of all the empirical data presented by the Government.
- 14 It relates to vehicular fleeing as if there was one
- 15 crime of vehicular fleeing, and most of it is -- is
- 16 calculated based on death or injury, and that, of
- 17 course, is not the category that we have here. If --
- 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: I suppose that if we agreed
- 19 with you that whether it is a violent crime depends upon
- 20 what other prosecutions for fleeing could have been
- 21 brought. If we agree with you that (1)(A) is negligible
- 22 because there are other bigger ones for which he wasn't
- 23 charged, we could leave open the question of what --
- 24 what happens in a State that has only one crime for
- 25 fleeing, and we would -- then we would have to confront Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 the question that Justice Sotomayor has asked.
- 2 But if we accept your notion that -- where
- 3 you have a gradation that is adopted by the State, the
- 4 lowest gradation cannot be determined to have a high
- 5 percentage of bodily risk, right?
- 6 MR. MARSH: Yes, that's correct, Justice
- 7 Scalia.
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: My problem is there is
- 9 arguably not here a gradation.
- 10 Suppose it only had (A). If it only had
- 11 (A), for me -- I'm not saying for you -- this wouldn't
- 12 be a tough case. That is to say, I can't imagine a
- 13 person running away from a police in a car where there
- 14 isn't a real risk to other people. He's speeding, you
- 15 know. I would think -- I don't see how you get away
- 16 from the policeman unless you speed, and there are going
- 17 to be pedestrians. Who knows? But I think that was
- 18 pretty -- at least as bad -- at least as much of a risk
- 19 as burglary. So that would be the end of the case. It
- 20 would be simple. At least assume that.
- Now, then, however, suppose we have a State
- 22 which says: But it's a worse thing to run away and
- 23 create a risk. In a separate provision. It's a worse
- 24 thing. All right? Then I'd say, huh, now I'm not so
- 25 sure. Why didn't they charge the worse thing? This Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 must be reserved for cases where it isn't.
- 2 So here we have a rather weird situation.
- 3 They're saying it's a different thing but not a worse
- 4 thing. So now I say: Well, why didn't they charge --
- 5 Huh? Now I don't know. I don't know why they didn't
- 6 charge the separate special one. I don't know what the
- 7 facts are. I'm puzzled.
- Now, that's your case. That's where I
- 9 needed the enlightenment. So, what's the enlightenment?
- 10 MR. MARSH: Your Honor, it's not a weird
- 11 situation, because the Indiana definition of the crime
- 12 of vehicular fleeing is not one all-encompassing crime.
- 13 It's -- they took the all-encompassing generic vehicular
- 14 fleeing and divided it into five subparts, which I
- 15 suggest makes it much easier to resolve the (b)(1)(A)
- 16 question.
- If there is no other categories, that would
- 18 be Justice Scalia's point, I think, and then it would be
- 19 a much harder question. And it may very well be that it
- 20 would be considered a violent felony. For one thing --
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: But isn't it still -- isn't
- 22 it still an empirical question? If we were to look at
- 23 all of the cases that are prosecuted under what I'll
- 24 call the simple offense, we might discover that those
- 25 are all cases in which there is no serious potential

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- 1 risk of physical injury created because all of the risky
- 2 cases are prosecuted under the aggravated label.
- We might also find that there are still a
- 4 great many cases that involve a serious potential risk
- 5 that are prosecuted under the simple category. So the
- fact that there's a gradation doesn't allow us to escape
- 7 the empirical issue, does it?
- 8 MR. MARSH: No, I think you're exactly
- 9 right, Justice Alito. That would be possible.
- 10 Empirical data could show what you have just suggested.
- 11 Of course, that would be indicating that the Indiana
- 12 General Assembly didn't have any rational basis for
- 13 dividing the two, but the important thing here is --
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: I wouldn't say that they
- 15 didn't have a rational basis for dividing it. It would
- 16 just show a pattern of prosecution and -- and plea
- 17 bargaining. That's what it would show.
- 18 MR. MARSH: But the important thing here,
- 19 Your Honor, is there simply is no such data before this
- 20 Court. There -- there is no empirical data regarding
- 21 (b)(1)(A).
- 22 JUSTICE ALITO: There never is really
- 23 reliable empirical data, almost never, for any of the
- 24 issues that have to be decided under the -- the
- 25 catch-all, the residual clause, of ACCA. It has to be Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 based on basically common sense and experience, doesn't
- 2 it?
- 3 MR. MARSH: Your Honor, I suggest that
- 4 common sense and experience is not a reliable,
- 5 predictable way of deciding these cases. You're right,
- 6 there frequently is not empirical data. If there's not
- 7 either empirical data that demonstrates the danger
- 8 involved or a crime that -- where the danger is pretty
- 9 obvious so that there would be widespread general
- 10 agreement -- common sense is what has led to a lot of
- 11 the conflicts in the circuits, I would suggest.
- 12 May I reserve my time, Your Honor?
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr.
- 14 Marsh.
- 15 Mr. Wall.
- 16 ORAL ARGUMENT OF JEFFREY B. WALL
- 17 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- 18 MR. WALL: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 19 please the Court:
- Just a very quick moment of history, I
- 21 think, provides some useful background, and I'm on
- 22 page 3a of the appendix to the Government's brief.
- 23 Until 1998, subsection (B), which we've been talking
- 24 about, was the only class D felony that involved
- 25 vehicular flight in Indiana law. In 1998, the Indiana Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 General Assembly broke out and enacted subsection (A) so
- 2 that in cases of vehicular flight prosecutors would not
- 3 have to prove risk; they would just have to prove that
- 4 defendant used a vehicle.
- 5 Since 1998, I have found 14 cases in the
- 6 Indiana Court of Appeals, one of which is the Hape case
- 7 that Justice Alito cited earlier. All of them, so far
- 8 as I can tell, proceeded under (A) and not under (B).
- 9 Of those 14 cases, 13 have enough facts to tell what the
- 10 flight was -- of what kind; 10 involved speeding,
- 11 disregarding traffic laws, or striking an officer with a
- 12 vehicle. Of the other three, only one involved
- 13 non-risky behavior, and even that was not a defendant
- 14 who drove a short distance and then pulled over. It was
- 15 a --
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: These were all litigated
- 17 cases?
- 18 MR. WALL: Yes, Justice Scalia, these were
- 19 all litigated to conviction and taken up on appeal, and
- 20 the Indiana Court of Appeals addressed various legal
- 21 issues --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but that's not
- 23 -- 14 isn't very many. And I assume the vast majority
- 24 of these cases aren't litigated.
- MR. WALL: I think that's right, Mr. Chief Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 Justice. The Government's point is that here we have
- 2 extensive data, both empirical and otherwise, that
- 3 indicates that flight as a basic offense is very
- 4 dangerous. In --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I read your
- 6 brief, and I was -- I read your brief and was surprised
- 7 that when you're -- the list -- one of the things you
- 8 talk about to show that is media reports. You usually
- 9 have a more concrete basis for -- for speculation than
- 10 media reports.
- 11 MR. WALL: Mr. Chief Justice, if that is all
- 12 we had put forward, I might agree with you, but we also
- 13 put forward extensive statistical data.
- 14 My point is just that Indiana is typical.
- 15 It's dangerous everywhere else. It's four times as
- 16 dangerous as arson. It's more dangerous than household
- 17 burglary. There's nothing different about Indiana. If
- 18 one looks through these cases, these flights in Indiana
- 19 are typically quite dangerous.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Suppose you have a State
- 21 that has a separate crime for trespassing, criminal
- 22 trespass. And you're saying that if -- if you could
- 23 show that a large number of cases that were brought
- 24 under criminal trespass in fact could have been
- 25 prosecuted under burglary, then criminal trespass would
  Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 qualify as a -- as a violent felony. That doesn't seem
- 2 -- that doesn't seem to me right.
- 3 MR. WALL: Justice Scalia, I thought --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: Just because prosecutors
- 5 make that choice, that doesn't establish that the
- 6 elements of the crime, which is what we focus on in
- 7 deciding whether it's a violent felony, fill the bill.
- 8 MR. WALL: That's right. This Court looks
- 9 at the conduct encompassed by the elements in a typical
- 10 case. And in a typical case of vehicular flight, what
- 11 we have, according to the data, is someone fleeing
- 12 police at an average of 25 miles an hour over the speed
- 13 limit; someone who is, in a typical case, young, male,
- 14 unlicensed, under the influence of alcohol; and who
- 15 places the lives of other motorists, pedestrians, and
- 16 police in harm's way.
- 17 Your approach to ACCA, Justice Scalia, has
- 18 been to look at the conduct encompassed by the elements
- 19 and ask whether the risk from that conduct is at least
- 20 as great as the -- the least risky enumerated offense.
- 21 And here --
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That ignores the in-kind
- 23 requirement of Begay, because you seem to be confusing
- 24 the risk of violence with the in-kind inquiry, and
- 25 that's where I'm trying -- I'd like you to concentrate a

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- 1 little bit on, which is in burglary the defendant is
- 2 breaking into, generally, a place and going without
- 3 permission, and -- with an intent to commit a crime.
- 4 How is that comparable to merely not
- 5 stopping when a police officer tells you not to stop?
- 6 How is that an in-kind --
- 7 MR. WALL: Justice Sotomayor, it's
- 8 absolutely true, there are two parts to the test, and
- 9 we've been talking about the first risk. On the second
- 10 prong, the purposeful, violent, or aggressive character
- 11 of the conduct -- here I think there are three distinct
- 12 things that make it purposeful, violent, and aggressive.
- 13 First, you have the defiance of the
- 14 officer's order, which can cause injury at the scene.
- 15 It has in some Indiana cases, but at least called the
- 16 officer to give chase.
- 17 Second, you have the very real prospect --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What you're doing is
- 19 saying I'm not -- you're not even saying I'm not
- 20 stopping; you're just driving away.
- MR. WALL: Well, yes, but you are driving --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Now, how is that
- 23 aggressive --
- 24 MR. WALL: You're driving away in response
- 25 to an officer's command to stop. You're calling the Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 officer to give chase. You're -- you're -- pursuit is
- 2 likely. And even when there isn't pursuit, these
- 3 offenders drive typically very recklessly, and then
- 4 you've got the confrontation when the officers have
- 5 to --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that's the risk
- 7 of --
- 8 MR. WALL: -- terminate.
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That -- that is all the
- 10 risk question, and you're confusing the police actions
- 11 with the defendant's, because you're talking about the
- 12 defendant responding to a police pursuit. So what --
- 13 what is in the act of the crime that makes it in-kind to
- 14 burglary?
- 15 MR. WALL: So, let me analogize --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I concentrate on
- 17 burglary because the others don't fit.
- 18 MR. WALL: No, let me concentrate on
- 19 burglary, then, and analogize it to what this Court said
- 20 in James. It said the risk of attempted burglary --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: James -- James predated
- 22 Begay. So you've got --
- 23 MR. WALL: That's right, but I -- the Court
- 24 has talked about -- even in Chambers, about the risk of
- 25 a violent confrontation with law enforcement officials,
  Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 and it's done that under the Begay part of the test.
- 2 And whereas that confrontation is only possible with
- 3 burglary, it's necessary with this crime. It requires
- 4 that an officer order you to stop and that you flee.
- 5 So that -- that confrontation, which is only
- 6 a possibility with burglary or attempted burglary, is
- 7 elevated to a certainty with this offense.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, Mr. Wall, wouldn't
- 9 that suggest that if I just ran from a police officer,
- 10 it would be a violent felony under ACCA?
- 11 MR. WALL: I think it -- it would suggest
- 12 that, Justice Kagan, but I think flight on foot is
- 13 unlikely to satisfy the risk part of the test. I think
- 14 certainly this case is much easier on the -- the James
- 15 part of this test. I think the -- the flight in a
- 16 vehicle poses risks, very real risks, to other motorists
- 17 and pedestrians and police that flight on foot doesn't
- 18 pose, although you'd still have the confrontation when
- 19 the flight on foot was terminated. So I think some of
- 20 the arguments would translate. You're right. I think
- 21 there would be more difficult questions, though, on the
- 22 risk prong. This is a much easier case.
- 23 JUSTICE SCALIA: Do -- do words mean
- 24 nothing? I mean, we're talking about a violent felony.
- 25 That's what the Federal law requires. And -- and you Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 want us to hold that failing to stop when a police
- 2 officer tells you to stop is a violent felony. That --
- 3 that seems to me a -- a big leap. I mean, words have
- 4 some meaning, and Congress focused on violent felonies.
- 5 MR. WALL: Justice Scalia, words do have
- 6 meaning, but the words here are very broad: "serious
- 7 potential risk of physical injury to others." And as
- 8 you yourself have recognized in -- in multiple opinions,
- 9 what those words call for is a comparison of risk
- 10 between an offense and ACCA's enumerated crimes.
- This offense, simply put, is more risky.
- 12 It's four times as risky as arson in terms of injuries
- 13 and fatalities.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, one of the --
- 15 MR. WALL: It's more risky than household
- 16 burglary.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Another word is
- 18 "aggressive" in Begay, and that's where I have a little
- 19 difficulty with your argument. It seems to me, this is
- 20 the exact opposite of aggressive. He's running away.
- 21 Certainly, the other option is to turn and confront, and
- 22 he doesn't want to. There's nothing aggressive about
- 23 running away.
- MR. WALL: Well, there is, Mr. Chief
- Justice, when you're doing it in a vehicle, and Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 typically at high speeds. So, in Chambers --
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that's the
- 3 risk of violence, I understand that, and purposeful,
- 4 which I quess everything is. But those are the three
- 5 words: "purposeful, violent, and aggressive." I'll
- 6 give you purposeful, I'll give you violent, but
- 7 aggressive?
- 8 MR. WALL: Mr. Chief Justice, if you give me
- 9 those two, I think we're home free, because this Court
- 10 said --
- 11 (Laughter.)
- MR. WALL: -- in Chambers --
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I think you're
- 14 two-thirds of the way home free.
- 15 (Laughter.)
- MR. WALL: I'll take it, and let's work on
- 17 the last third. So the -- what this Court said in
- 18 Chambers is not all attempts to evade authorities are of
- 19 the same stripe. So, it contrasted escape from prison
- 20 with failure to report. Failure to report, you could do
- 21 at home on your couch; you could just fail to show up.
- 22 And the Court said: Look, that's passive; it's a crime
- 23 of inaction.
- 24 This is not that. It's not sitting at home
- on one's couch. This is quintessentially a crime of Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 action.
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: There's a
- 3 difference. The opposite of passive is active. It's
- 4 not aggressive.
- 5 MR. WALL: Well, but --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: This is active.
- 7 He's running away, but --
- 8 MR. WALL: I think --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What's the
- 10 aggression?
- 11 MR. WALL: But it's very -- it's hard to see
- 12 what the difference would be between this and escape
- 13 from custody. And this Court clearly indicated in -- in
- 14 Chambers that escape from custody was different from
- 15 failure to report under the statute in front of it. And
- 16 I think this is as dangerous, maybe even more dangerous
- 17 than escape from custody.
- 18 If the Court were going to say that all
- 19 running away could not be aggressive within the meaning
- 20 of that word for Begay purposes, so too escape from a
- 21 maximum security Federal prison, which in some sense is
- 22 just running away, but it is extremely aggressive, and
- 23 it's extremely risky to others.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Wall, do you think that
- 25 speeding or drag racing qualifies under your

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- 1 understanding of the test?
- 2 MR. WALL: Justice Kagan, that's a difficult
- 3 question. I don't know that I've seen any attempt to
- 4 fit that offense in under the ACCA. I think that drag
- 5 racing, where you're talking about speeds of 150, 160,
- 6 170 miles an hour, might qualify, but I haven't seen any
- 7 cases like that.
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: What about speeding, just
- 9 -- you know, you're going 15 miles over the speed limit?
- 10 MR. WALL: I -- again, I --
- 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Is that a violent felony?
- 12 MR. WALL: Justice Scalia, I think then we'd
- 13 have a serious question about the first part of the
- 14 analysis and the -- the risk test. I mean, 10, 15 miles
- 15 over -- I mean, speeding as a generic offense is likely
- 16 to -- I mean, it encompasses categorically all speeding
- 17 offenses, many of which are, you know, not that -- not
- 18 likely to pose a serious risk to others. So I -- I --
- 19 we'd have to look at the -- the data. What we do have
- 20 here is data that says this offense is four times as
- 21 risky as the enumerated offense of arson. So I -- I --
- 22 speeding would be a difficult case. So far as I know,
- 23 we -- the Government's never tried to make the case.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Is speeding a felony?
- MR. WALL: Not as far as I know, not the Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 basic offense. Now, whether in a Begay-type sense you
- 2 might have some recidivism enhancement under State law
- 3 that would get you there, I don't know. But I -- again,
- 4 I haven't seen any case that involved that.
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Am I right about -- when
- 6 you replied to Justice Scalia, I thought that he had
- 7 said that we were dealing with a statute, and you seemed
- 8 to agree, that said it is a crime to flee a policeman
- 9 after being ordered to stop. But I thought we were
- 10 dealing with a statute that says it is a crime to flee a
- 11 policeman after being ordered to stop, in a vehicle.
- 12 MR. WALL: That's right. That's right.
- 13 That's the offense here.
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: And so you're -- okay.
- 15 MR. WALL: It's the vehicular flight
- 16 offense. And one -- you know, I will take one issue
- 17 with -- with -- you know, what my friend on the other
- 18 side has said, which is (A) and (B) are not tiered.
- 19 They're not greater and lesser offenses under State law.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: But, Mr. Wall, suppose they
- 21 were. I understand your point that they're not, and you
- 22 might be right about that. But let's suppose that they
- 23 were. Let's suppose you had a three-tier set-up. One
- 24 was simple flight; one was flight that causes risk of
- 25 injury; one that is a flight that causes injury. And Alderson Reporting Company

- let's even say that the simple flight -- no, let's --
- 2 let's call them all felonies but different classes of
- 3 felonies.
- What would happen in that case? Would you
- 5 still be here saying that the simple flight felony is a
- 6 violent crime?
- 7 MR. WALL: Yes. It's a tougher case, but we
- 8 would be here saying that, because when you're looking
- 9 at an offense categorically -- for instance, arson --
- 10 you've got to look at all fires, all intentionally set
- 11 fires, the ones that don't hurt anybody, the ones that
- 12 do, and the ones that kill people, even though the fires
- 13 that kill people will be prosecutable in most
- 14 jurisdictions as a greater offense, like felony murder.
- 15 And so when you're looking at it categorically, you've
- 16 got to look at all of the conduct in that category, even
- 17 conduct that may be prosecutable under some greater
- 18 offense.
- I think, you know, the other side sort of
- 20 relies on this assumption that all conduct which might
- 21 satisfy the greater will necessarily be prosecuted under
- 22 the greater. And as a legal matter, it's included
- 23 within the lesser, and as a factual matter, it's just
- 24 not true that it always gets prosecuted under that
- 25 greater offense.

- 1 So it's -- it would be a tougher case. It
- 2 would make our case more difficult, but I think legally
- 3 and factually the Government's answer would be the same.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: I -- I asked my clerk to
- 5 just do a survey of the States, and he came up with --
- 6 and I'm sure that this is rough -- but that 46 of the
- 7 States have these tiered systems. Now, there may be
- 8 some questions as to some of them, like you've raised
- 9 some questions about Indiana's, but that 46 States
- 10 essentially conceive of this as two different kinds of
- 11 conduct, one which is the violent kind and the other
- 12 which is the not violent crime.
- MR. WALL: Well, my State law research is a
- 14 little different from your clerk's. I've got 37 States
- 15 and D.C. But the -- the point is that under the nested
- 16 statutes, the aggravator isn't always like this one,
- 17 risk. Sometimes it's, as in Indiana, injury or death.
- 18 And where you're talking about actual injury or death,
- 19 those aggravators far outstrip the level of potential
- 20 risk that ACCA requires.
- 21 So I don't think in those States Petitioner
- 22 would give an argument that those aggravators would
- 23 affect at all the analysis of the basic offense. There
- 24 are a handful of States that, unlike Indiana, have as an
- 25 aggravator risk, though even some of those States treat
  Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 the basic offense as a felony, which is I think a
- 2 judgment by the State that, even in the basic case, this
- 3 is risky conduct, deserving of severe punishment under
- 4 State law. So, you know, there are nested statutes,
- 5 but --
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: Not necessarily risky.
- 7 Conduct that shows disrespect for the law.
- 8 MR. WALL: Justice Scalia, I mean I --
- 9 again, I think it is significant that in 1998 the
- 10 General Assembly broke this out as a separate subsection
- 11 and said: We're not even going to require prosecutors
- 12 to prove risk. I think that represents a judgment by
- 13 the State that the conduct is risky on a typical basis:
- 14 We just want the State to prove you used a vehicle.
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: Or even if it isn't risky,
- 16 you should not thumb your nose at the police when they
- 17 tell you to stop.
- 18 MR. WALL: Well, that's right, and the
- 19 reason --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Risky or not.
- 21 MR. WALL: The reason you shouldn't, Justice
- 22 Scalia, is because that's the kind of purposeful,
- 23 violent, and aggressive conduct the State wants to deter
- 24 by treating it as a felony. But I -- I mean, I --
- 25 whether one looks at the risk prong and the data and the Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 cases in Indiana or elsewhere, or whether one looks at
- 2 the character of the conduct, this offense is just
- 3 different in both degree and kind from the offenses that
- 4 this Court has said fall outside of ACCA's residual
- 5 clause.
- It's much more like escape from custody.
- 7 It's much more like the enumerated offenses. Indeed,
- 8 the risk of confrontation is certain. I mean, I -- it's
- 9 important, I think, that -- I mean, I -- these flights
- 10 are not calm affairs. They're dangerous events. The
- 11 average speed that the offender is traveling nationwide
- 12 is 25 miles an hour over the speed limit. This is
- 13 someone who on average is young, unlicensed, influenced
- 14 by alcohol --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I thought there was
- 16 -- I don't know where -- I don't remember where it was
- 17 from. I thought there was a development of best police
- 18 practices that you don't just chase people. You know,
- 19 if they're going 30 miles an hour over the speed limit
- 20 through a school zone, that doesn't mean the police
- 21 officer should do that. You know, you call ahead, they
- 22 put these strips on the road, whatever.
- 23 MR. WALL: Mr. Chief Justice, that's right.
- 24 I think police agencies have been struggling with this
- 25 question, which is why there's a lot of data on police Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 pursuits, frankly, especially in the last 10 or 15
- 2 years. I think some of them are becoming more
- 3 restrictive, and so the data picks up pursuits. It
- 4 doesn't pick up all flights. And I think if there were
- 5 sound evidence that when people were not pursued, they
- 6 were actually driving at low speeds and safely, that
- 7 would affect the data, though not so much that it would
- 8 move it outside of similarity to the enumerated
- 9 offenses.
- 10 But I think the -- the data is pretty good
- 11 in indicating that the typical flight is -- really does
- 12 pose a serious potential risk of physical injury to
- 13 others, a risk that materializes more often than with
- 14 other crimes that Congress clearly intended to fall
- 15 within the ACCA.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Could I ask you this: If a
- 17 person is convicted of vehicular flight that causes
- 18 death, is that aggressive conduct?
- 19 MR. WALL: Yes, the Government would say it
- 20 is, Justice Alito.
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: Is the conduct there any
- 22 different from the conduct when death doesn't result?
- 23 MR. WALL: No, Justice Alito. The
- 24 Government's answer is that categorically the behavior
- 25 is aggressive and that in some cases it will result in Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 injury or death and in some it will not, but in all
- 2 cases it carries that potential.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Doesn't whether it's
- 4 aggressive or not depend upon how it happened? I mean,
- 5 it could be -- I mean, the flight puts in place the
- 6 potential for -- for violence, I agree with that; but if
- 7 somebody just, you know, jumps out between two cars
- 8 while the fellow's fleeing, how has his conduct changed
- 9 to aggressive?
- 10 MR. WALL: Mr. Chief --
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's not like he --
- 12 it's not like he's aiming for the guy. I mean, it's
- 13 putting it in a dangerous situation. It's purposeful.
- 14 Again, I'll give you violent in the sense that it has
- 15 that potential. But he didn't want to hit the -- the
- 16 person.
- 17 MR. WALL: Mr. Chief Justice --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's not aggression
- 19 against the person.
- MR. WALL: There's no question that, on a
- 21 case by case basis, you could flee in a way that was not
- 22 very risky, that was not very violent, or not very
- 23 aggressive. And if this Court went on a case-by-case
- 24 basis, then we'd look at the conduct here, and the
- 25 Government would still win, because this is the typical Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 case.
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: But he's saying even when
- 3 it's risky, it's not aggressive.
- 4 MR. WALL: And I -- my --
- 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: You can be risky and not
- 6 aggressive, can't you?
- 7 MR. WALL: Yes, on a case-by-case basis.
- 8 But, categorically, which is what this Court looks at,
- 9 the conduct encompassed by the elements in the ordinary
- 10 case -- in the ordinary case -- the character of the
- 11 conduct is aggressive.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Who's he aggressing
- 13 against? When someone sees the police and says I'm
- 14 getting out of here and drives down the highway, say, at
- 15 80 miles an hour, you know, 25 miles above the speed
- 16 limit, who is he -- I'm sure it's not the right verb,
- 17 but who is he aggressing against?
- 18 MR. WALL: Well, I don't know that he is
- 19 aggressing against anyone, in the same way that if I
- 20 recklessly I fire a gun into a large crowd of people,
- 21 you know, I haven't aggressed against anyone in
- 22 particular. He's aggressed against anyone who strays
- 23 into his field of flight and who could be injured by
- 24 what is typically a high-speed flight and pursuit. So I
- 25 don't -- there is no specific target, but that will be Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 true of many of the crimes that are violent felonies,
- 2 that the -- the aggressive nature --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, no. It's not
- 4 that --
- 5 MR. WALL: -- of the conduct is directed
- 6 generally.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- there's no
- 8 specific target. There's no target. What this guy
- 9 hopes is that nobody gets in his way.
- MR. WALL: Well, so, too, with the burglar,
- 11 who hopes that no one will come home; maybe even the
- 12 arsonist, who hopes no one is in the house; or the
- extortionist, who hopes someone will pay, so he won't
- 14 have to use violence.
- 15 JUSTICE SCALIA: But they're mentioned;
- 16 they're mentioned. They're mentioned, and you're trying
- 17 to get this in under the residual clause.
- 18 MR. WALL: That's right, Justice Scalia, a
- 19 residual clause that, as you yourself have recognized,
- 20 is extremely broadly worded. It -- it abstracts out as
- 21 the quality of the enumerated offenses that they create
- 22 a serious potential risk of physical injury to others.
- 23 And I can't find any metric along which flight doesn't
- 24 do that, whether one looks through the cases, media
- 25 reports, the statistical data, whatever one -- Indiana,
  Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 nationally -- whatever standard or metric one uses, this
- 2 is an extremely risky offense to others.
- And I, you know -- so it's very difficult to
- 4 figure out what test, what interpretation of that
- 5 language would exclude this from -- from ACCA.
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: Suppose you have one of 36
- 7 States which treat this -- treat the general offense as
- 8 a misdemeanor and then make it a felony if you put
- 9 somebody at risk. Just reading that statute, you'd
- 10 think those 36 States, when they have the general
- 11 offense, do something where the guy acted pretty
- 12 trivially; and where it's a felony, he actually put
- 13 somebody at risk, sped off -- wouldn't that be your
- 14 normal instinct in just quessing from the -- from the
- 15 language?
- MR. WALL: Justice Breyer, the States --
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: How are we supposed to
- 18 treat those, where there's a misdemeanor --
- MR. WALL: The States --
- JUSTICE BREYER: In your opinion, it's just
- 21 a misdemeanor, we also treat it the same way; say it's a
- 22 violent felony?
- 23 MR. WALL: The States treat it differently.
- 24 Some, as Indiana --
- JUSTICE BREYER: All right. Then that's Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 actually my question. Are we supposed to, in this
- 2 Federal statute, try to track whether it's a
- 3 misdemeanor, what the language is? We're going to have
- 4 a nightmare of a Federal law for States to -- for judges
- 5 to figure this out. I mean, every little variation in
- 6 thousands and thousands of possible variations could
- 7 make a difference as to whether it's violent or not,
- 8 depending on data which no one will have.
- 9 MR. WALL: Justice Breyer, I don't think so.
- 10 If the Court were to affirm here, what that would mean
- 11 is that the offense of flight is a violent felony
- 12 insofar as you have a predicate conviction under a State
- 13 statute where it's been punishable by up to a year, and
- 14 so it could qualify for ACCA coverage.
- 15 Now, some State convictions will have been
- 16 treated as misdemeanors and won't be eligible for ACCA,
- 17 but to the extent a State treats it as a felony, it's
- 18 risky enough to satisfy the residual clause. Now, if
- 19 the Court treats (A) and (B) as what they are not, which
- 20 is greater or lesser, then, yes, I think there will be
- 21 problems with various State statutes, as Justice Kagan
- 22 pointed out, and this Court may have to clear it up down
- 23 the road.
- 24 But if it treats this basic offense as what
- 25 it is, not a greater or lesser, but alternative means of Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 proving a single offense that is risky, that would, I
- 2 think, take care of all flight cases going forward.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, on this question of
- 4 whether this statute is greater or lesser, it's greater
- 5 or lesser if you just understand (b)(1)(A) as confined
- 6 to vehicular flight. In other words, if one looks only
- 7 at vehicular flight, then (b)(1)(A) and (b)(1)(B) are
- 8 indeed greater or lesser offenses.
- 9 MR. WALL: Yes, Justice Kagan, if you're
- 10 looking only -- I take it you're looking only at the
- 11 vehicle prong of (B), but the test in Schmuck is whether
- 12 it's impossible to -- to commit the greater without
- 13 committing the lesser. It's not impossible to commit
- 14 (B), because it does have the two other prongs, and I
- 15 think --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, do you think that if I
- 17 flee in a vehicle, I could be prosecuted under both and
- 18 receive sentences under both?
- MR. WALL: No, I don't think so, because I
- 20 think the -- there is no evidence -- no case in Indiana
- 21 that I'm aware of. There's no evidence that the General
- 22 Assembly intended these to be multiple punishments for a
- 23 single incident. They're alternative means of proving a
- 24 single offense. The State has always treated them that
- 25 way, so far as I can tell. I have not seen -- I've seen
  Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 prosecutions since 1998 that were all under (A). I
- 2 haven't seen anything that went under (A) and (B) and
- 3 tried to get multiple punishments --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Wait a minute.
- 5 MR. WALL: -- and I think that would be a
- 6 serious problem.
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm a little confused by
- 8 what you said and what point you're making. You don't
- 9 think that (B) is a lesser included of (A)? Is that --
- 10 no, that (A) is a lesser included of (B)?
- 11 MR. WALL: Your Honor, the Government does
- 12 not think that (A) is a lesser included of (B).
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You can't commit (B)
- 14 without committing (A) first. (B) has just one
- 15 additional element, but all of the elements of (A) are
- 16 part of the elements of (B). So, how can it not be a
- 17 lesser included?
- 18 MR. WALL: Well, the element of (B) that's
- 19 different, Justice Sotomayor, is the "while committing
- 20 any offense described in subsection (a)." So you can be
- 21 resisting an officer or you can be obstructing the
- 22 service of process and you can endanger someone in
- 23 various ways, including with a vehicle, and you will
- 24 have violated (B), and you can be prosecuted for that,
- 25 and there are cases in Indiana like that. And you have Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 not -- you have not been fleeing in a vehicle from an
- 2 officer at any point, so you haven't violated (A).
- 3 So the existence of the other prong there --
- 4 that's what I was trying to get into with Justice
- 5 Kagan -- means that this is not a greater or lesser
- 6 under Schmuck.
- 7 JUSTICE KAGAN: But as a vehicular flight
- 8 only, it would be greater or lesser.
- 9 MR. WALL: If you divided up the prongs
- 10 under Schmuck, but I think the Schmuck -- what follows
- 11 logically from that test is that you look at the entire
- 12 offense and ask whether it's possible to commit it
- 13 without committing the lesser, and that test is not
- 14 satisfied here. I don't think you carve it up prong by
- 15 prong.
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: I'm -- this is greater or
- 17 lesser for purposes of what? Double jeopardy?
- 18 MR. WALL: No, it's greater or lesser for
- 19 purposes of Petitioner's argument that you should assume
- 20 that every risky flight gets prosecuted under (B), and
- 21 hence (A) is a non-risky offense. And that argument
- 22 fails for multiple reasons, one of which I was trying to
- 23 spin out. It's not even true that this is greater or
- 24 lesser.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I just don't follow that
  Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 argument. I mean, it -- it seems to me that, yes, you
- 2 could -- you could run afoul of (B) by committing an
- 3 offense under subsection little (a) in some other ways,
- 4 but if you run afoul of (B) by committing the offense
- 5 of -- of flight from a law enforcement officer, it seems
- 6 to me that that automatically includes (A).
- 7 MR. WALL: Well, except that there are two
- 8 alternative means of proving the same offense under
- 9 State law. They have the same State law penalties, so
- 10 the prosecutors can go under (A) or they can go under
- 11 (B). And as far as I can tell, for the last, say, 13
- 12 years, they've been going under -- they've been going
- 13 under (A).
- 14 So it's not -- Justice Scalia, it's not --
- 15 there are aggravators in this statute for injury or
- 16 death. They're the ones that are in (2) and (3), the
- 17 class C and class B felonies. But this is not a greater
- 18 or lesser. It's -- they're alternative means. I think
- 19 only if you got -- set that aside would you get to the
- 20 sort of Schmuck analysis that I was going through with
- 21 -- with Justice Kagan.
- 22 And I think one of the important things to
- 23 recognize about this offense is that, you know, in
- 24 the -- 50 percent of these offenders are ultimately
- 25 charged with a violation that's unrelated to their Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 flight, a serious felony unrelated to their flight.
- 2 And the reason I think that's important is
- 3 because what you will look -- the reason that they're
- 4 traveling at such high speeds, the reason they're
- 5 evading officers, the reason the typical case is not
- 6 someone just going a couple blocks and stopping, is
- 7 because they've got drugs in the car or guns, they have
- 8 parole violations or outstanding warrants. It is the
- 9 background against which I think you have to assess the
- 10 character of the -- of the conduct here. And whether
- 11 you're looking at it under risk or under the character
- 12 of the conduct, the Government submits that it easily
- 13 satisfies the residual clause.
- 14 If there are no further questions, thank
- 15 you.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr. Wall.
- Mr. Marsh, you have 4 minutes remaining.
- 18 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF WILLIAM E. MARSH
- 19 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. MARSH: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
- I would suggest that it's helpful to start
- 22 to look at the in-kind part of the Begay test on a more
- 23 general level than we've been discussing.
- 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Could you succinctly
- 25 tell me how this is any less purposeful, aggressive, or Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 violent than escape from custody? What's your best
- 2 answer to why this is just not identical to escape,
- 3 which is a fleeing-from situation just as this is.
- 4 MR. MARSH: Justice Sotomayor, the basic
- 5 distinction is that the person who's charged with
- 6 escape, assuming that escape means escape from a secure
- 7 institution or from a person, is that the person is in
- 8 custody, and it takes, in the ordinary case, aggression
- 9 and violence to get out of the custody of that person.
- 10 The person who is fleeing is trying to avoid being
- 11 taken.
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, here an officer
- 13 has told you to stop. They're trying to effect custody.
- 14 And I don't know what the aggression or violence is,
- 15 other than, you know, breaking a window, doing
- 16 something. It doesn't require the escape -- that you
- 17 actually injure someone to get out. It's just that you
- 18 run away.
- 19 MR. MARSH: I think the phrase that you just
- 20 used is the distinction that I was referring to. The
- 21 person who is fleeing is trying to avoid being in
- 22 custody. They're acting in a -- instead of going toward
- 23 the officer and resisting, they're going away from the
- 24 officer. The person who is in custody has to use some
- 25 kind of force, and in Johnson, of course the -- this Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 Court referred to violent as the --
- JUSTICE ALITO: That's not true. There are
- 3 a lot -- you can -- there are prison escapes all the
- 4 time where it's done through subterfuge.
- 5 MR. MARSH: That's -- that's true, Justice
- 6 Alito, but as the Court held in James, finding an
- 7 example of a case that would not be violent does not
- 8 solve the ordinary case. The ordinary case, I would
- 9 suggest, requires something more than that.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, it's, for me,
- 11 anyway, an important question. I'll -- I'm not sure the
- 12 ordinary case does. I assume the ordinary prison escape
- is -- I don't know -- over the wall, under the tunnel
- or, you know, while the quard's looking a different way,
- 15 or some -- I don't know that it's typical that when the
- 16 quard is there, you say now's my chance. The typical
- 17 case doesn't involve aggression.
- 18 MR. MARSH: Of course, the ordinary case or
- 19 the typical case, Mr. Chief Justice, is that the court
- 20 needs to look at the conduct encompassed by the elements
- 21 of the statute, and so we would have to look at exactly
- 22 what the statute requires.
- 23 The circuit courts have been very divided on
- 24 escape. In my circuit, the Seventh Circuit, the Federal
- 25 statute, 751, has been held not to be -- which is a Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 general escape statute -- not to be a violent felony.
- 2 But, again, the Court talks about the ordinary case in
- 3 the James case for the purpose of disabusing the idea
- 4 that one can't get out from under the violent felony
- 5 designation just by coming up with a hypothetical case
- 6 or an example where it can be done without -- without
- 7 violence.
- 8 Here, I would suggest that counsel has just
- 9 created for the Court some kind of a hypothetical case
- 10 to define the typical or ordinary case. This Court has
- 11 never done that, and this Court said in James that it's
- 12 important to stick to the conduct encompassed by the
- 13 elements of the offense, because if we start factoring
- 14 in other kinds of conduct, as several of the things
- 15 which have been mentioned by counsel for the Government,
- 16 that begins to raise Apprendi problems, which is another
- 17 whole issue. But the Court said in James -- and I would
- 18 acknowledge is the law -- that so long as the
- 19 determination as to whether there's a serious potential
- 20 risk of physical injury is made by focusing on the
- 21 conduct encompassed by the elements of the offense, then
- 22 there's not an Apprendi problem.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 24 The case is submitted.
- MR. MARSH: Thank you.

  Alderson Reporting Company

1	(Whereupon, at 10:58 a.m., the case in the
2	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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