1	IN THE SUPREME COURT	OF THE UNITED STATES
2		x
3	LAMAR EVANS,	:
4	Petitioner	: No. 11-1327
5	v.	:
6	MICHIGAN	:
7		x
8	Washi	ngton, D.C.
9	Tueso	lay, November 6, 2012
10		
11	The above-enti	tled matter came on for oral
12	argument before the Supreme	Court of the United States
13	at 11:03 a.m.	
L4	APPEARANCES:	
15	DAVID A. MORAN, ESQ., Ann Ar	cbor, Michigan; on behalf of
16	Petitioner.	
17	TIMOTHY A. BAUGHMAN, ESQ., I	Detroit, Michigan; on behalf
18	of Respondent.	
19	CURTIS E. GANNON, ESQ., Assi	stant to the Solicitor
20	General, Department of Ju	astice, Washington, D.C.; for
21	United States, as amicus	curiae, supporting
22	Respondent.	
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:03 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next in Case 11-1327, Evans v. Michigan.
5	Mr. Moran.
6	ORAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID A. MORAN
7	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
8	MR. MORAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
9	please the Court:
10	A long and unbroken line of this Court's
11	precedents stand for the principle that a judge's final
12	determination that a defendant is not guilty is a final
13	determination of an acquittal for for double jeopardy
14	purposes, even if that determination is wrong as a
15	matter of law or as a matter of fact. And even if
16	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Do we give credence to
17	how the judge labels what the acquittal is?
18	MR. MORAN: No. No. This Court must
19	determine whatever its label, what has the judge
20	done. Has the judge made a determination that the
21	government has failed to prove its case, as in Martin
22	Linen, or has the government has the judge made a
23	determination of something else, as in Scott, for
24	example, pretrial delay.
25	Now, the Michigan Supreme Court

- 1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But once -- once the judge
- determines, quite erroneously, that it has to be a
- 3 dwelling -- midway during the trial, I'm the judge, I
- 4 consider this has to be a dwelling, is there any way I
- 5 can make that point, make that ruling, without invoking
- 6 double jeopardy?
- 7 MR. MORAN: Well, you could reserve that
- 8 ruling to the end of the case. You could make a ruling
- 9 as to the jury instructions without -- or what the jury
- 10 instructions are going to be without applying them to
- 11 the facts of the case; in other words, without making a
- 12 determination of the defendant's guilt or innocence.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: But -- but if I persist in
- 14 that view, there's nothing the government can do?
- 15 MR. MORAN: The government can try -- we
- 16 learned from Smith -- try to get you to reconsider that
- 17 view before the defendant puts on his case. But once
- 18 the defendant -- once the judge has made a final
- 19 determination that the defendant is not quilty, even on
- 20 an erroneous view of the law, this Court has held
- 21 multiple times that that is a final determination --
- that is an acquittal, for double jeopardy purposes.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Because, I suppose, the
- 24 judge is the government, too.
- MR. MORAN: Exactly. Once -- once the

- 1 government --
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: So whether the unfairness
- 3 adheres in the prosecution or in the judge, the guy's
- 4 been treated unfairly.
- 5 MR. MORAN: If a state chooses,
- 6 Justice Scalia, to vest acquittal power in its judges,
- 7 it must accept the double jeopardy consequences of that.
- 8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Even when the defendant
- 9 interjected this issue and the defendant urged the judge
- 10 to make this incorrect notion that you have to negate
- 11 the higher crime, in order to convict of the lesser
- 12 crime, it was the defendant that led the -- the trial
- 13 judge into error. The trial judge didn't come up with
- 14 this on his own.
- 15 MR. MORAN: The judge came up with this,
- 16 Your Honor, on defendant's motion, that's correct. But
- 17 it was actually supported by the jury instructions that
- 18 were in use. And actually, it was supported by the
- 19 structure of the statute in question. The statute in
- 20 question, under which Mr. Evans was charged, explicitly
- 21 said that the building other than one specified in the
- 22 preceding subsection --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you're not arguing
- 24 that that was the correct charge that --
- MR. MORAN: No. We're precluded now from

- 1 arguing that that's correct.
- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But you don't --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Counsel often encourage
- 4 judges to do the wrong thing. In fact, in every case,
- 5 there is one of the two counsel urging the court to do
- 6 the wrong thing; right?
- 7 MR. MORAN: Yes, Justice Scalia. And --
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's what the adversary
- 9 system consists of.
- 10 MR. MORAN: Yes. And in Sanabria, this
- 11 Court noted that point exactly, that all acquittals,
- 12 whether they're by the judge or by the jury -- or I
- 13 should say almost all acquittals, some are sua sponte --
- 14 almost all acquittals, whether by judge or by jury, are
- 15 upon invitation of defense counsel.
- 16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What -- could a state
- 17 provide a procedure where, if a judge makes a critical
- 18 ruling mid-trial, that at the request of the opposing
- 19 counsel, jury proceedings are suspended for 48 hours,
- 20 and the aggrieved party can run to the court of appeals
- 21 to get a mandate?
- MR. MORAN: I don't think the state could do
- 23 that, Justice Kennedy, because of Smalis.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Because of?
- 25 MR. MORAN: Because of Smalis. So that was

- 1 essentially the situation in Smalis. You had a bench
- 2 trial. The judge grants a demurrer. He says the
- 3 evidence is insufficient. And then the prosecution
- 4 attempted to run to the Pennsylvania appellate court.
- 5 And this Court said it couldn't do that because that was
- 6 a final determination. I think --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, in my hypothetical,
- 8 the state said -- and this isn't a final determination;
- 9 the ruling doesn't become final until you have 48 hours
- 10 and go to the court of appeals.
- MR. MORAN: Well, I think a state could
- 12 make -- could -- investing acquittal power in judges
- 13 could put limitations on that acquittal power.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How would they do that?
- 15 I'd like to go back to Justice Kennedy's question. It's
- 16 easy when you have a jury because what happens is a
- 17 judge can decide whether, at the end of the
- 18 prosecution's case, he's going to dismiss for
- 19 insufficiency, or he can give it to the jury, and if the
- 20 jury renders a verdict, set it aside.
- 21 Jeopardy attaches only if the judge
- 22 dismisses the case after the prosecution's judgment, but
- 23 not if he sets aside the verdict, correct?
- MR. MORAN: Well, jeopardy attaches both
- 25 ways, but a retry -- a reversal is possible in the -- in

- 1 the latter.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In the latter.
- 3 MR. MORAN: Yes.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So what can a state
- 5 do -- some have done something -- to ensure that, even
- 6 if jeopardy has attached, that there can be a valid
- 7 reversal; if the judge is wrong on a legal theory.
- 8 MR. MORAN: Well, the easy --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So give us an example of
- 10 what, in a judge trial, a state could do to ensure that
- 11 a legally wrong judgment is still reversible.
- 12 MR. MORAN: In a bench trial, Your Honor?
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In a bench trial. What
- 14 could it do?
- 15 MR. MORAN: I think if -- if in a bench
- 16 trial, if the judge has the power to acquit or convict
- 17 and the judge acquits, I believe the Double Jeopardy
- 18 Clause would preclude the state from coming up with a
- 19 clever mechanism allowing -- for allowing appellate
- 20 review. The Court, of course -- I mean, the state
- 21 could, of course --
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I thought there were, in
- 23 your briefs, some examples -- in someone's brief, there
- 24 were some examples --
- MR. MORAN: In a jury trial with a judge --

- 1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, forget about a jury
- 2 trial. Let's go to the bench trial.
- 3 MR. MORAN: I don't know what --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You're not helping your
- 5 argument by saying there's nothing a state could ever
- 6 do.
- 7 MR. MORAN: Well, they could withdraw the
- 8 power of judges to grant acquittals or convictions in
- 9 the first place. In other words, they could abolish
- 10 bench trials, which, as the Court noted --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Do you know something,
- 12 Counselor? You're sinking your hole deeper. You're not
- 13 helping yourself in this argument because how does that
- 14 help the system?
- 15 MR. MORAN: Well, with all respect, Your
- 16 Honor, the Double Jeopardy Clause here transcends the
- 17 state's --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I don't disagree. You
- 19 mean no state could ever say to a judge, given --
- 20 given -- render a verdict on the prosecution's theory,
- 21 and then set it aside? If you think the theory is not
- 22 legally --
- MR. MORAN: After Smith, it's clear that
- 24 immediate reconsideration is a possibility. And if a
- 25 state set up a system, as in Lydon v. Municipal Court,

- 1 where you have essentially a magistrate making a
- 2 preliminary determination, and then it goes to a higher
- 3 judge who goes trial de novo, that, of course, is
- 4 permissible.
- 5 But if the judge is the final arbiter -- in
- 6 other words, if the judge sits in the place of the jury,
- 7 this Court has said, over and over again, that a judge
- 8 verdict is equivalent to a jury verdict, for purposes of
- 9 Double Jeopardy.
- 10 So, yes, courts -- a state could set up
- 11 systems, in which judges have less power than a jury
- 12 does. I'm not aware of any state that's done that. I
- 13 am aware of what Nevada has done, which has said that
- 14 judges can't grant mid-trial directed verdicts. And
- 15 that's the way in a jury trial.
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You keep saying,
- 17 "mid-trial."
- 18 MR. MORAN: Yes.
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What -- what is not
- 20 mid-trial? Some states require a judge to wait.
- MR. MORAN: Yes. Yes. Nevada.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, what happens in
- 23 those states?
- MR. MORAN: Well, in that case, then there
- is no problem because, if the judge makes a

- 1 determination after the jury verdict, then the -- then
- 2 that can be appealed under Wilson.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I keep talking, not
- 4 about jury verdicts, but about bench trials. I want to
- 5 focus on the bench trial process.
- 6 MR. MORAN: If -- but if the judge at the
- 7 end of a trial renders a solemn, formal, final verdict,
- 8 "I find the defendant not guilty," in a bench trial, I
- 9 don't see a mechanism for -- for the state to appeal
- 10 that determination, consistent with the Double Jeopardy
- 11 guarantee, unless the state has set up a system as in
- 12 Lydon -- as Massachusetts did in Lydon. But short of
- 13 that, a judge's determination is entitled to the same
- 14 respect.
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: If, in the middle of a
- 16 trial, a judge grants a mistrial and says -- I'm sorry,
- 17 grants an acquittal and says, I think that prompt
- 18 prosecution is an element of the offense, and there
- 19 wasn't prompt prosecution here. Now, could there be a
- 20 re-prosecution in that situation?
- MR. MORAN: Yes, Your Honor.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Even though the judge says
- 23 he thinks that that's an element of the offense?
- MR. MORAN: Because no part of my argument
- 25 depends upon the judge's labeling. What the judge has

- 1 done in that case is -- is a mid-trial dismissal that he
- 2 called an acquittal, but it was actually a dismissal for
- 3 another purpose. That's exactly what Scott was talking
- 4 about. And that is like Scott, where the judge may have
- 5 characterized what he had done as acquitting the
- 6 defendant, but he --
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, he saw a phantom
- 8 element, and -- and that's what happened here, too,
- 9 isn't it?
- MR. MORAN: Well, pretrial delay is not an
- 11 element of the offense. Pretrial delay is another part
- 12 of criminal procedure in this state.
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: And this -- and the fact
- 14 that this was not a dwelling wasn't an element of the
- 15 offense, either.
- 16 MR. MORAN: But it is clearly related to the
- 17 offense. And then Scott clarified what Martin Linen
- 18 meant. Martin Linen was an attempt to distinguish
- 19 between cases in which the judge makes a ruling relating
- 20 to guilt or innocence and a ruling designed to serve
- 21 some other purpose.
- The problem with the line the Michigan
- 23 Supreme Court drew here is that it is completely
- 24 impossible to administer. And if I can give a couple of
- 25 examples, the Lynch case, from the Second Circuit, was

- 1 an effort by one circuit to attempt to administer -- to
- 2 follow the Maker line, and you get questions that are
- 3 completely unanswerable in that case.
- 4 Is bad intent simply a gloss on the
- 5 willfulness element? In which case, all you've done is
- 6 misconstrue an existing element. Or is it, as the
- 7 dissent claimed in Lynch, a -- a new element? And these
- 8 are questions like how many angels can dance on the head
- 9 of a pin. They're simply semantics. It's all labeling.
- 10 There is no -- there is no substance there.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, there -- that's a
- 12 problem. But you're -- to come back to my earlier
- 13 question, your -- what is your answer? Your answer is
- 14 that, if the judge grants an acquittal based on the
- 15 failure to prove anything that the judge thinks the
- 16 prosecution has to prove, that's an acquittal. Is that
- 17 fair?
- 18 MR. MORAN: Yes. And -- and I fall back to
- 19 this Court's footnote in Scott, that courts are
- 20 perfectly capable of distinguishing between rulings
- 21 relating to guilt and innocence and rulings designed to
- 22 serve other purposes. So if you have a devious judge
- 23 who's determined to package a prosecutorial misconduct
- 24 ruling as an acquittal, I have no doubt that an
- 25 appellate court would be able to -- to smoke that out.

- 1 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, to come back to the
- 2 argument we just heard, so suppose the judge grants a
- 3 mistrial for failure to prove an action within the
- 4 statute of limitations, even though no statute of
- 5 limitations defense was raised. Would that be -- would
- 6 that be an acquittal?
- 7 MR. MORAN: Only -- I think my answer to
- 8 that would depend on how you rule in the prior case,
- 9 depending on whether the statute of limitations is -- is
- 10 something the prosecution has to prove in order to
- 11 establish guilt.
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: All right. Assuming, for
- 13 the sake of argument, that it's not an element -- it's
- 14 not really an element, but the judge thinks it's an
- 15 element.
- 16 MR. MORAN: Well, if it -- if it's something
- 17 that could result in an acquittal, if it is -- if the
- 18 defendant raising the statute of limitations is
- 19 something that could result in an acquittal -- because I
- 20 come to Burks, where Burks says an affirmative insanity
- 21 defense, the prosecution fails to disprove that, that is
- 22 an acquittal -- when the appellate court concluded that
- 23 there was failure to disprove the affirmative insanity
- 24 defense.
- That shows that that language in Martin

- 1 Linen can't be taken as if it was construing the terms
- 2 of an easement. You have to look at what was Martin
- 3 Linen getting at. And Martin Linen is trying to
- 4 identify those rulings relating to guilt or innocence,
- 5 which include affirmative defenses or --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: I'm not sure I understand
- 7 the rationale for your answer to your own hypothetical.
- 8 The judge characterizes a prosecutorial -- or a
- 9 misconduct incident as a grounds for acquittal; it
- 10 really isn't. Then you said the court of appeals could
- 11 straighten that out?
- MR. MORAN: Yes. That's Scott.
- 13 JUSTICE KENNEDY: On what rationale -- so
- 14 what's the general principle that allows the court of
- 15 appeals to do this sometimes and not others?
- 16 MR. MORAN: If the judge has made a ruling
- 17 going to the defendant's guilt or innocence and finding
- 18 that, as in Martin, examining the government's evidence
- 19 and finding that they have failed to prove the
- 20 defendant's guilt, final. There can be no appeal. But
- 21 if the judge has made a ruling that is designed to serve
- 22 some other purpose, so if the judge, in my hypothetical,
- 23 were to say --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Oh, I thought -- I thought
- 25 it was the judge just subjectively does this, but he

- 1 doesn't say any -- he just characterizes it as an
- 2 acquittal?
- MR. MORAN: That's -- that's a case,
- 4 actually, quite a bit like some of the cases, and it
- 5 demonstrates the problem of -- of the Michigan Supreme
- 6 Court's line. So example, in Martin Linen, all the
- 7 judge said is, this is one of the weakest cases I've
- 8 ever seen.
- 9 Presumably, if the Respondent were to win,
- 10 they would be entitled to appeal a determination like
- 11 that to at least try to convince the appellate court
- 12 that the reason the case seems so weak to the trial
- 13 judge was that the trial judge had added an extra
- 14 element.
- 15 Same thing in Smalis, where the judge simply
- 16 said -- he granted a demurrer by looking at the
- 17 prosecution's case and saying that, I find the evidence
- 18 insufficient. And, in fact, in Smalis, the --
- 19 Pennsylvania tried to argue that the judge had actually
- 20 heightened the burden for mens rea for third-degree
- 21 murder.
- 22 And -- and so -- you know, they would be
- 23 entitled to make these arguments. And so then we get
- 24 into questions of, in granting acquittals, would judges
- 25 have to explain all of the elements --

- 1 JUSTICE BREYER: I see the problem, but I am
- 2 still back to where Justice Kennedy was -- and that is
- 3 my own failing here. I didn't quite understand. I
- 4 thought, when you grant a dismissal and you dismiss the
- 5 case in the middle of the trial because the prosecution
- 6 was brought too late, all you're doing is, in the middle
- 7 of the trial, granting something you should have granted
- 8 in the first place before you impaneled the jury.
- 9 But I thought that, in Fong Foo, Judge
- 10 Wyzanski had dismissed the case after empanelment
- 11 because he wrongly thought that the U.S. attorney had
- 12 been talking to a witness or a juror or something at
- 13 lunch time and that he had -- and that's an acquittal.
- 14 And I thought Justice Harlan, for the Court, wrote
- 15 Double Jeopardy, Jeopardy attached, you can't try him
- 16 again. And I didn't think the Court ever overruled
- 17 that. That -- what -- in where?
- 18 MR. MORAN: Fong -- Fong Foo has not been
- 19 explicitly overruled, but I think it has been limited by
- 20 Scott.
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: So Scott says that even in
- 22 judge-wise -- Scott says Fong Foo was wrong, that that
- 23 -- because the reason that Charlie Wyzanski dismissed it
- 24 is he has this idea of a -- the AUSA doing something
- 25 improper at lunch. And -- and that's -- that's -- now,

- 1 on your theory -- on the theory you just enunciated,
- 2 there would -- there would -- Double Jeopardy wouldn't
- 3 protect against the second indictment, right?
- 4 MR. MORAN: Well, Justice Breyer, Fong Foo
- 5 actually listed two reasons why the trial judge granted
- 6 the directed verdict. One was prosecutorial misconduct.
- 7 The judge apparently thought that the prosecutor had
- 8 been speaking with a witness.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yes.
- 10 MR. MORAN: But the second one was the total
- 11 lack of credibility of the prosecution's witnesses.
- 12 And -- and when the case came --
- 13 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes. Yes. That's --
- MR. MORAN: When the case came to this
- 15 Court, the concurring Justice said, the second one is
- 16 good for Double Jeopardy purposes, but I would make
- 17 clear that the prosecutorial misconduct rationale is
- 18 not.
- 19 That part -- I think that concurring opinion
- 20 has been effectively adopted in Scott, so that a finding
- 21 of prosecutorial misconduct on dumping this case
- 22 mid-trial, yes, the prosecution gets another bite at the
- 23 apple, assuming that it's done on -- on the defendant's
- 24 motion.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: One -- one of the

- 1 reasons we've said that underlies Double Jeopardy clause
- 2 is to prevent overbearing conduct by the government.
- 3 That's not an issue here, is it? You said the
- 4 government gets one fair shot at conviction. And if
- 5 there has been a legal error below, they haven't had a
- 6 fair shot.
- 7 MR. MORAN: Mr. Chief Justice, I would
- 8 respectfully disagree. Mr. Evans was hauled into court
- 9 by the state. He was acquitted, in our view, by the
- 10 judge who is representative of the state, who was
- 11 relying on the standard jury instructions --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, this business
- 13 about the judge being a representative of the state, I'm
- 14 not sure how far that gets you. The government is one
- 15 of the adversaries appearing before the judge, and the
- 16 judge is not supposed to take the government's side. So
- 17 he is not really a part of the government. And it does
- 18 seem to me that, if they had been thrown out of court
- 19 because of a legal error, that's not a fair shot.
- MR. MORAN: Well, I understand that view,
- 21 Mr. Chief Justice, but it's contrary to a lot of this
- 22 Court's cases. I think this Court would have to review
- 23 a lot of its cases, most recently, Smith and Smalis and
- 24 Martin Linen, all of which said that a legal error
- 25 affects the quality of a judgment -- and Scott also

- 1 specifically said this, a legal error affects the
- 2 quality of the judgment, but not it's finality for
- 3 Double Jeopardy purposes.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, I suppose the
- 5 question --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, I know that --
- 7 I'm just saying that that particular rationale for the
- 8 Double Jeopardy Clause is not applicable in this case.
- 9 MR. MORAN: Well, I think it is because a
- 10 citizen has been brought into court, expects to go
- 11 through one trial, and they are told, sir, I am finding
- 12 you not guilty. And then to find out later -- for the
- 13 state to come back later --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's looking at it
- 15 from the defendant's perspective. We have said that the
- 16 government should have one fair shot at conviction. And
- 17 it seems to me that, if they lose because of an error,
- 18 that's not a fair shot.
- 19 MR. MORAN: Your Honor, I come back to the
- 20 language in Martin Linen, which talks about what the
- 21 purpose of the Double Jeopardy Clause is, is to protect
- 22 defendants against continuing government oppression.
- 23 And that oppression arises from the anxiety of having to
- 24 go through it again and again.
- 25 JUSTICE KAGAN: But isn't it -- isn't it

- 1 hard to argue with a notion that your client has gotten
- 2 a windfall here? I mean, this is not continuing
- 3 government oppression and -- and -- you know, that's --
- 4 that -- that suggests a real harm on the part of your
- 5 client. I mean, here because of a legal error, your
- 6 client walks away the winner when he shouldn't have.
- 7 MR. MORAN: Well, Your Honor, without the
- 8 error, the trial would have -- would have continued.
- 9 But I think that argument, respectfully, proves too much
- 10 because there are lots of these cases in which legal
- 11 error was made. And so -- in Rumsey, you could say
- 12 exactly the same thing about Mr. Rumsey.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Yes, I think that's right.
- 14 This is -- this is an argument against this whole line
- 15 of cases, that this whole line of cases essentially has
- 16 set up a system where the real purposes of the Double
- 17 Jeopardy Clause do not apply and where defendants walk
- 18 away with windfalls. And I guess what's your best
- 19 argument against that proposition?
- MR. MORAN: Well, once you accept the
- 21 equivalency of a judicial acquittal to a jury acquittal,
- 22 you have to accept that both actors are capable of
- 23 error. Both actors are human. Juries are incapable --
- 24 are capable of making legal errors, as well as factual
- 25 errors. They are capable of misunderstanding the

- 1 instructions. In fact, they are capable of being
- 2 misinstructed.
- 3 Had the judge not granted the directed
- 4 verdict here, she presumably would have instructed the
- 5 jury the same way, and the jury would have also
- 6 acquitted Mr. Evans for the same reason.
- 7 And so to try and tease out legal and
- 8 factual errors, especially when -- and often, there are
- 9 mixed questions of fact or law that are at stake here --
- 10 I think, is a losing proposition. I think it -- I think
- 11 the Court has decided to draw a firm line, recognizing
- 12 that an acquittal is special. An acquittal is the most
- 13 fundamental thing that can happen.
- 14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Could a system say, if
- 15 you have Double Jeopardy looming in -- in -- in the
- 16 case, then arguments like the one that the defendant
- 17 made and the judge bought have to be made pretrial, and
- 18 if they are not made pretrial, they are waived. I mean,
- 19 here, the -- the -- the case was ongoing when the
- 20 defendant made this suggestion, as opposed the system
- 21 had built into it a requirement that defendants that are
- 22 going to make this kind of plea do it pretrial.
- MR. MORAN: Justice Ginsburg, I don't think
- 24 it would have been right for Mr. Evans to make this
- 25 argument pretrial because it was only with the

- 1 prosecution's proof that it became clear that what the
- 2 prosecution was proving was that the building burned
- 3 was, in fact, a dwelling house and, therefore, seemed to
- 4 be excluded by the statutory language and especially the
- 5 commentary to the jury instructions from the definition
- 6 of the offense.
- 7 Michigan is an information state. Michigan
- 8 does not require an indictment that lists every -- every
- 9 little bit of the crime and all of the details. All
- 10 Michigan requires is a very simple statement of the
- 11 crime and the statutory citation and, of course, who the
- 12 defendant is and the date and venue of the alleged
- 13 crime.
- And so here, Mr. Evans would have had no way
- 15 of knowing in advance what the prosecution was going to
- 16 prove. That's why this case is unlike Lee. This is --
- 17 Lee is an effective indictment. Nobody claims that Mr.
- 18 Lee was innocent and that the prosecution couldn't prove
- 19 the elements of the crime against Mr. Lee. The problem
- 20 was just that the indictment failed to allege a specific
- 21 fact. And that --
- 22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry. I'm a little
- 23 confused. It was charged with the crime of burning down
- 24 a dwelling, correct?
- 25 MR. MORAN: Mr. Evans, no. He was charged

- 1 with burning other real property.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Of?
- 3 MR. MORAN: Burning other real property.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And no specific statute
- 5 was cited?
- 6 MR. MORAN: Yes.
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Which one?
- 8 MR. MORAN: The -- that -- that statute, I
- 9 have --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The dwelling statute,
- 11 not the -- not the exception to the dwelling.
- 12 MR. MORAN: It's the exception to the
- 13 dwelling statute. It's -- it's 750.73, which is on page
- 14 2 of the top side brief.
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's what he was
- 16 charged with?
- MR. MORAN: Yes.
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So why did the court
- 19 dismiss, if he was charged with burning down a house? I
- 20 thought he was charged with burning down a dwelling, and
- 21 the argument was he should have been --
- MR. MORAN: No.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- charged with burning
- down a house.
- MR. MORAN: No, he was charged with the

- 1 crime in 750.7 -- 750.73, which reads, in relevant part,
- 2 that, "a person who willfully or maliciously burns any
- 3 building or other real property, or the contents
- 4 thereof, other than those specified in the next
- 5 proceeding subsection" -- "subsection of this chapter."
- 6 And the next proceeding section of the chapter is about
- 7 burning down dwelling houses.
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: My only quibble is you
- 9 have no doubt -- the defense attorney had no doubt that
- 10 he burnt down a house -- that someone burnt down a
- 11 house, correct?
- 12 MR. MORAN: It was -- it was allegedly a
- 13 vacant house. And apparently, that's why the
- 14 prosecution charged it this way.
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Got it.
- 16 MR. MORAN: So they charged it. They're the
- ones who made the choice of which statute to apply.
- 18 They, apparently, thought that they couldn't prove that
- 19 it was a dwelling house, so they proved the other crime.
- 20 And the thinking -- the thinking of the defense attorney
- 21 and the thinking of the judge was that these two crimes
- 22 were complementary to each other; in other words, that
- 23 they did not overlap.
- 24 It was either a dwelling house or not a
- 25 dwelling house, and then one statute or the other

- 1 applies.
- 2 As a result of the ruling of the Michigan
- 3 Court of Appeals in this case, which is now not
- 4 contested, in fact, the burning -- the -- the statute
- 5 under which Mr. Evans was charged totally encompasses
- 6 the greater crime because any building is covered in the
- 7 crime with which Mr. Evans is charged, while only
- 8 specific buildings, dwelling houses, are charged in the
- 9 arson --
- 10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's a sentencing
- 11 enhancement, is really what the argument is -- the
- 12 decision was.
- MR. MORAN: Well, there --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That every -- you can be
- 15 charged with burning down a dwelling and you can only
- 16 get the enhancement if they prove it's a house.
- 17 MR. MORAN: You can only get the greater
- 18 offense.
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Exactly.
- 20 MR. MORAN: Yes. But the -- a jury would
- 21 have to make that determination -- or the judge in a
- 22 bench trial would have to make that determination beyond
- 23 a reasonable doubt.
- If there are no further questions, I will
- 25 reserve the balance of my time.

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
2	Mr. Baughman.
3	ORAL ARGUMENT OF TIMOTHY A. BAUGHMAN
4	ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
5	MR. BAUGHMAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
6	please the Court:
7	This trial here was ended before verdict
8	from a jury on the motion of the defendant, opposed
9	vigorously by the prosecution, alleging, essentially,
10	that the crime charged contained an uncharged element on
11	which insufficient proof had been presented for a
12	rational factfinder to find guilt beyond a reasonable
13	doubt; that uncharged element being that the offense be,
14	for want of a better term, of a excuse me the
15	structure be, for want of a better term, a non-dwelling.
16	We had that had not been alleged. But it
17	has been conceded throughout the appellate history of
18	this case, from the Michigan Court of Appeals on, that
19	there is no such element in in the in the crime.
20	The statute that Mr. Moran mentioned, that
21	refers to the next preceding section, over three decades
22	ago, was held to be words of limitation; in other words,
23	you don't have to prove it's a dwelling, to prove that
24	other real property a building or other real property
25	has been burned.

1	So	in	the	1970s	i+	พลร	held	the	difference
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- 2 between the two statutes is the greater requires proof
- 3 of a dwelling or a habitation; the lesser does not. The
- 4 judge held that you have to prove the negative of the
- 5 element that enhances the offense, in order to prove the
- 6 lesser offense; you have to prove it's a non-dwelling.
- 7 And, again, that's been conceded to be error throughout
- 8 the entire appellate history here.
- 9 And so the proofs were adequate -- were
- 10 appropriate here, and the charging document was
- 11 appropriate here. And the question becomes, on these
- 12 facts, does termination of the trial by the judge
- 13 constitute an acquittal, so that jeopardy should bar a
- 14 second trial?
- 15 The Jeopardy Clause is aimed at prohibiting
- 16 certain governmental abuses that occurred historically.
- 17 One of them is when the government would terminate a
- 18 trial that was not going well, without the consent of
- 19 the defendant, in order to take another shot at it -- to
- 20 build a better case or perhaps get a better factfinder.
- 21 And the Double Jeopardy Clause prohibits
- 22 that kind of conduct by establishing, through this
- 23 Court's cases, that mistrials without the consent of the
- 24 defendant bar retrial, that abhorrent practice is
- 25 barred, unless a manifest necessity is shown.

1	And	we've	even	extended	that	to	the

- 2 circumstance that, if the judge is intending to help the
- 3 defendant, if he is doing something that he believes is
- 4 in defendant's favor, if defendant has not consented,
- 5 then that valued right to a verdict from the tribunal
- 6 that he is before trumps everything.
- 7 But if there is consent, as there was in
- 8 this case -- the defendant asked the judge to terminate
- 9 the trial without going to this jury, so he gave up his
- 10 valued right to a decision by this tribunal -- if he
- 11 does that, then that -- the other side of that coin is,
- 12 that is ordinarily outcome-determinative the other way.
- 13 A retrial is permissible, unless the
- 14 government has achieved the first harm by the back door;
- 15 that is, by goading the defendant into the mistrial.
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: So if -- if the judge did
- 17 this on her own, that would have been okay? And there
- 18 would be Double Jeopardy attaching?
- 19 MR. BAUGHMAN: That's correct.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: So we have to decide in
- 21 each case whether the defendant was the initiating
- 22 source of the error?
- MR. BAUGHMAN: In terms of the -- whether or
- 24 not a judgment of acquittal was granted, yes, both the
- 25 Federal rule and the Michigan rule provide that, on the

- 1 defendant's motion or on the court's own motion, the
- 2 court may grant a directed verdict.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: What -- what if the
- 4 defendant just agrees with the judge? The judge says --
- 5 you know, I think this indictment is bad because you --
- 6 you have to show that it wasn't a dwelling place, and
- 7 the counsel for the Defendant says, yes, that seems like
- 8 a good -- a good idea. Is -- is that enough to --
- 9 MR. BAUGHMAN: I think that would be enough.
- 10 I think agreement with the judge's course of action
- 11 would be the judge -- would be, as in the mistrial
- 12 situation, would be the defendant's --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, my goodness,
- 14 disagreement would be malpractice, wouldn't it?
- 15 (Laughter.)
- MR. BAUGHMAN: Well, it -- it depends on
- 17 whether you really wish to get a verdict from this jury
- 18 or whether you risk having a -- risk -- risk wanting to
- 19 have a retrial before a different factfinder. You may
- 20 be very happy with --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: A bird in the hand,
- 22 counsel. I -- I --
- MR. BAUGHMAN: Sometimes, that bird in the
- 24 hand can come back and bite you, when you have a second
- 25 trial.

- 1 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Baughman, what would
- 2 happen if the defendant asked for improper instructions,
- 3 really saying exactly something like this -- you know,
- 4 that the jury has to find this additional element that,
- 5 in fact, it doesn't have to find? But your theory, I
- 6 would think, would say that too, the government could
- 7 try the defendant again. After all, the government
- 8 didn't get its one fair shot.
- 9 MR. BAUGHMAN: That -- that's correct. And
- 10 that -- that's the logic of Justice Holmes' position in
- 11 Kepner, and we don't go that far, essentially because
- 12 this isn't a jury case. There is a logic to that
- 13 position, but it is -- there's --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: You don't go that far, in
- other words, just because it doesn't happen to be this
- 16 case.
- 17 MR. BAUGHMAN: That's correct.
- 18 JUSTICE KAGAN: But do you concede that the
- 19 logic of your position would extend to improperly
- 20 instructed juries?
- 21 MR. BAUGHMAN: It would, to a certain
- 22 extent, but it is -- it is cut off by two facts. One is
- 23 simply, as -- as Justice Holmes often said, the -- the
- 24 life -- an ounce of -- I'm -- excuse me -- an ounce of
- 25 logic is often trumped by a pound of history. We have

- 1 historically said that a verdict by the factfinder, by
- 2 the jury, terminates jeopardy, and there is no inquiry
- 3 into --
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, we've historically
- 5 said it in this context, too. I mean, the cases that
- 6 you are asking us to overrule go back 50 years.
- 7 MR. BAUGHMAN: Well, when I say
- 8 historically, I mean back to the time of the founding,
- 9 in terms of when the Double Jeopardy Clause was
- 10 promulgated and adopted into the Constitution.
- 11 Fifty years is not back to when we were determining what
- 12 it is we were protecting against when we adopted the
- 13 clause.
- 14 And as I think most of the commentators have
- 15 noted, there is very little explanation in Fong Foo as
- 16 to how the Court came out where it came out, and there
- 17 has been very little explanation since as to how we got
- 18 from the common law prohibition of a retrial after
- 19 acquittal on the merits by a jury, to a ruling of law by
- 20 the judge that no jury could find guilt beyond a
- 21 reasonable doubt being the same thing, which is where we
- 22 are today.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: You cannot necessarily --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, we didn't have it, at
- 25 the time of the founding, any mechanism for a judge to

- 1 do that. I mean, this -- this is a new procedure, and
- 2 how it fit into the prohibition of Double Jeopardy was
- 3 certainly a -- an open question.
- It's not as though this procedure existed at
- 5 the time of the founding or in English law before then
- 6 and was never adequate to -- to constitute Double
- 7 Jeopardy. It's a new procedure introduced, so the
- 8 question for the Court was, well -- you know, if it's
- 9 the judge rather than the jury that pronounces the
- 10 acquittal, does -- does that constitute Double Jeopardy?
- 11 MR. BAUGHMAN: Well, I think you are exactly
- 12 right. It, of course, is a new procedure. It didn't
- 13 exist at the time of the founding. So our question then
- 14 becomes is this new procedure sufficiently equivalent to
- 15 that procedure that is historically protected, that
- 16 it's -- that the protections that it is designed to
- 17 guard against are served when we bar retrial in these
- 18 circumstances?
- 19 And I think, as Justice Kagan has indicated,
- 20 there are many circumstances where what -- what we are
- 21 doing is giving the defendant a windfall while serving
- 22 no interest that was protected by the Jeopardy Clause.
- 23 So if it's to be an analog, then we need to see does it
- 24 really closely approximate a retrial after acquittal on
- 25 the merits by a jury --

- 1 JUSTICE KAGAN: But the point I was making
- 2 was that the same windfall is received by the defendant
- 3 that gets an acquittal from an improperly instructed
- 4 jury.
- 5 MR. BAUGHMAN: But -- that is true, except
- 6 we -- we could speculate that's -- that's true, but we
- 7 don't know why the jury came back the way it did. The
- 8 jury may have acquitted for an entirely different
- 9 reason. We don't know. We don't have special verdicts,
- 10 and we don't have any mechanism for inquiring, so we
- 11 treat -- you have to have a line somewhere. Jeopardy
- 12 terminates with the jury verdict, which may have been
- 13 misinstructed, but we don't know why they came out the
- 14 way they did.
- 15 If they --
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: Now -- now, I take it
- 17 you -- you -- you agree that sometimes the
- 18 prosecution -- I'm not saying anyone would -- but
- 19 they -- the defendant's acquitted by the jury so --
- 20 because he doesn't find -- they don't find enough
- 21 evidence, and so the prosecutor thinks, I think I'd like
- 22 to try him again, and then he's acquitted again. I'd
- 23 like to try him again, and he's acquitted again.
- Now, substitute judge for jury, the same
- 25 thing could happen. I mean, I don't see why not. And

- 1 there's no answer to that, is there? And if there's no
- 2 answer to that, the same bad thing could happen. Well,
- 3 then you're going to have to start distinguishing among
- 4 which judge or jury acquittals do or do not invoke the
- 5 problem of the Double Jeopardy Clause.
- And where I'm driving is that -- that there
- 7 is a principle, and the principle was -- it seems the
- 8 simplest way to put it, is where in fact the acquittal
- 9 rests upon a judgment that there isn't enough evidence,
- 10 that's it. That's what we're after. And where it's
- 11 some procedural thing or not, maybe we aren't. Okay.
- Now, the virtue of that is it's simple, it's
- 13 consistent with the cases, it's been clear. And you're
- 14 advocating, let's go into that and change it or at least
- 15 interpret the cases that's consistent with it. And
- 16 we're saying there wasn't enough evidence, is because
- 17 the judge had in mind a legal point that he was wrong
- 18 about, then Double Jeopardy Clause doesn't work. But if
- 19 the judge was right, it does work. Well, except for the
- 20 matter of substantive evidence. Now, that way, as your
- 21 opponent, lies a mess.
- I just went through that long thing because
- 23 I don't want you to get -- sit down without addressing
- 24 what I see as a central problem, namely, if we don't
- 25 accept his view, it's going to be a terrible mess.

- 1 MR. BAUGHMAN: Well, let me say two things.
- 2 One is we don't -- we don't have the circumstance that
- 3 existed at the common law that the Jeopardy Clause was
- 4 designed to protect against of the executive simply
- 5 saying, after an acquittal by the factfinder, let's try
- 6 him again, let's try him again, let's try him again.
- 7 Something has to happen in-between there,
- 8 and that is that a court has to determine -- neutral and
- 9 detached arbiters have to determine that what happened
- 10 when the judge granted the directed verdict of
- 11 acquittal, as it's known in Michigan, was not that at
- 12 all.
- 13 The judge actually did something different.
- 14 And if the court doesn't interpose on the prosecution's
- 15 request, there will be no retrial. So it's not the
- 16 harassment and abusive practice of simply starting a new
- 17 prosecution, we're trying to get what happened in
- 18 that --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Now, you're beginning to
- 20 make distinctions.
- MR. BAUGHMAN: Yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: And once you make those
- 23 distinctions, I go back to the question I asked, which
- 24 was there is a distinction. The distinction is whether
- 25 it's a procedural ground or -- and Justice Harlan's --

- 1 it's whether there was -- "Just talk to the U.S.
- 2 attorney, I didn't like it, " or "Talk to the witness,"
- 3 or "The prosecution brought too late."
- The other side of it, where the clause
- 5 attaches, is where it was done on a substantive basis,
- 6 not enough evidence. I said -- I don't want to repeat
- 7 myself, but I'm saying what he's coming up with is a
- 8 simple, clear rule, basically consistent with the cases,
- 9 and why shouldn't we follow it?
- 10 MR. BAUGHMAN: Well, I think -- I think
- 11 consistent with the cases, and also clear, is to apply
- 12 Martin Linen Supply by the very terms that it uses; that
- is, the resolution that we're talking about the judge
- 14 making is moored to something. It's moored to the
- 15 elements of the crime. We're talking about somebody
- 16 being twice tried for the same offense. How do we
- 17 define offense in the law?
- 18 In other Double Jeopardy cases, this Court
- 19 has taken an elements approach. Two -- two offenses
- 20 are -- are different if one requires proof of an
- 21 element, the other does not. We look to the elements.
- 22 And to direct a jury trial, this Court has been very
- 23 active very recently in determining how is it that we
- 24 determine when somebody has a right to a jury trial on
- 25 some fact before punishment can be imposed? We look to

- 1 what are the elements that have to be proven beyond a
- 2 reasonable doubt.
- If a fact is necessary to -- to -- in order
- 4 for punishment to be imposed, if that has to be proven,
- 5 then it is a matter for jury trial and it has to be
- 6 proven beyond a reasonable doubt. So when this Court
- 7 said one or more of the factual elements of the offense
- 8 in Martin Linen Supply, I took it to mean -- and I have
- 9 always taken it to mean -- one or more of the factual
- 10 elements. And we can identify what those are. We have
- 11 to identify them in every case.
- 12 This is not a -- a strange process you have
- 13 to instruct on them, determine what they are and use
- 14 those --
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: If the judge -- if the judge
- 16 simply misinterprets one of the elements, but doesn't
- 17 add a new element, you say that there would be Double
- 18 Jeopardy there, right?
- MR. BAUGHMAN: Yes.
- 20 JUSTICE ALITO: Isn't that going to be a
- 21 very difficult line to draw?
- 22 MR. BAUGHMAN: It can be a very difficult
- 23 line to draw, but all tests can sometimes involve
- 24 difficult lines to draw. We used to have a no evidence
- 25 test for whether evidence was sufficient and we -- that

- 1 was changed in Jackson v. Virginia, to whether a
- 2 reasonable juror could find guilt beyond a reasonable
- 3 doubt.
- 4 And you will find a great many dissents in
- 5 cases between appellate judges on whether or not this
- 6 case itself involved sufficient proof for a jury to find
- 7 quilt beyond a reasonable doubt. The test is not always
- 8 easily -- easily applicable. And neither was the no
- 9 evidence test. So there might be some --
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: Let me give you an example.
- 11 Suppose the -- a statute makes it a crime to burn down a
- 12 dwelling, and the judge interprets dwelling to mean a
- 13 building that is currently lived in and, therefore, not
- 14 including a vacation home. And let's assume that's an
- 15 incorrect interpretation.
- 16 Now, is that an incorrect interpretation?
- 17 Or is that the addition of a new element to the statute,
- 18 namely, that it is a building in which people -- that's
- one element, and the other is people are currently
- 20 living there?
- 21 MR. BAUGHMAN: I -- I would define -- I
- 22 would draw the line at any time the court requires the
- 23 prosecution to prove a fact that, under the law passed
- 24 by the legislature, the prosecution never has to prove
- in order to make out the case.

1	JUSTICE	SCALIA:	Well.	that's	everv

- 2 misinterpretation. I mean, I don't know why this case
- 3 doesn't involve simply a misinterpretation of what the
- 4 elements of the crime are. I mean, any
- 5 misinterpretation, you can -- which goes beyond the
- 6 minimum that the -- that the statute requires, can be
- 7 recharacterized as adding an additional element.
- 8 MR. BAUGHMAN: Well, it does involve a -- a
- 9 mischaracterization of what the elements were, but not
- 10 of an element. The judge didn't here say, you can't
- 11 prove that this is a building, unless it was a dwelling,
- 12 you can't prove it was real property unless it was a
- 13 dwelling.
- 14 The judge said, you have -- you can prove
- 15 those things, and it's not enough, you also have to
- 16 prove that it was a non-dwelling in this case.
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: But in several of our cases,
- 18 what the court has done wrong is to make the prosecution
- 19 prove additional facts in order to prove an element. So
- 20 the distinction that you're drawing is one between
- 21 incorrectly making the prosecution prove additional
- 22 facts and incorrectly saying that the prosecution has to
- 23 show an additional element. And I guess I just don't
- 24 understand that distinction.
- MR. BAUGHMAN: Well, I would suggest that

- 1 this is an opportunity for this Court to draw the line
- 2 at does -- does the judge require -- has the judge
- 3 required the prosecution to prove something the statute
- 4 doesn't require to be proven, it's not one of the
- 5 factual elements of the offense.
- 6 Or has the judge -- the error the judge can
- 7 make under Martin Linen Supply -- has the judge simply
- 8 misassessed the evidence? The judge has looked at it
- 9 and said -- you know, I -- I understand all your proofs,
- 10 I'm looking at them, and they're just not enough for a
- 11 reasonable juror to find guilt --
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, if I understand your
- 13 test correctly, under your test, Rumsey, Smalis, and
- 14 Smith would all have come out differently.
- 15 MR. BAUGHMAN: No, I don't think so. Rumsey
- 16 is -- is a difficult case, but Rumsey is a verdict case.
- 17 Rumsey is not a directed verdict case. The judge in
- 18 Rumsey was the factfinder. Rumsey is your bench trial.
- 19 It's -- it's -- it's complicated because it was a
- 20 sentencing case -- a death penalty sentencing case that
- 21 this Court treats the hearing the same as the trial for
- 22 Double Jeopardy purposes.
- But the judge was the factfinder, and it was
- 24 more like a misinstructed jury. The judge himself --
- 25 JUSTICE SCALIA: So you're saying that

- 1 your -- your approach doesn't solve the bench trial
- 2 problem any more than your friend's approach, right?
- 3 MR. BAUGHMAN: A verdict is a verdict, I
- 4 agree with Mr. Moran. When the judge on the merits
- 5 returns a verdict, what the judge does or the jury does
- 6 in returning a verdict on the merits is very different
- 7 when what the judge does on a judgment of acquittal.
- 8 The jury weighs credibility and assesses the
- 9 weight of evidence, and the judge is prohibited from
- 10 doing those things -- is supposed to be by the law, in
- 11 making his decision. His is the ruling of law as
- 12 gatekeeper, that -- that we won't even reach this
- 13 decision.
- 14 The jury is expressing its opinion based on
- 15 the evidence. And although it can be proven that
- 16 they've reached a result contrary to reality, they can't
- 17 be right or wrong. Legally, their opinion is their
- 18 opinion of those 12 collective people after doing
- 19 something the judge isn't allowed to do.
- 20 So the directed verdict isn't, I don't
- 21 think, a perfect analog to the jury trial. But the
- 22 bench trial issue gets very complicated because it is
- 23 possible to do something with a bench trial that we
- 24 don't do with jury trials, and that is have specific
- 25 factfinding as to the elements. Many jurisdictions do.

1	There	is,	in	fact,	а	case	 the	Lynch	case

- 2 that Mr. Moran cited, where, on rehearing en banc, the
- 3 court split evenly as to whether or not the judge's
- 4 verdict, where the judge had actually specifically found
- 5 all of the elements -- the crime is elements A, B, and
- 6 C, I find them; I don't find element B, so I acquit --
- 7 the court split five to five on rehearing en banc and
- 8 whether or not that judge had really announced two
- 9 verdicts and it could be reformed -- be reformed to a
- 10 conviction.
- 11 And Justice Sotomayor was one of the members
- 12 of the five who would have addressed the question of, is
- 13 that not different? The form of the language doesn't
- 14 control. Has not the judge actually entered a guilty
- 15 verdict in that circumstance?
- 16 That's a very -- you know, kind of
- 17 off-the-beaten-track kind of a situation. In a jury
- 18 trial, where a judge simply takes the case from the jury
- 19 on the motion of the defendant and resolves the fact
- 20 that the legislature has not said that one needs to be
- 21 proven, that is not one of the constituent parts of the
- 22 crime, that is not something that need be proven to
- 23 impose punishment under the law, then he's done
- 24 something very different than what the jury has done.
- 25 And to reverse that and allow the

- 1 prosecution to have one full and fair opportunity, we
- 2 believe imposes no cruelty or oppression upon the
- 3 defendant.
- 4 Thank you very much.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 6 Mr. Gannon.
- 7 ORAL ARGUMENT OF CURTIS F. GANNON,
- FOR UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
- 9 SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENT
- 10 MR. GANNON: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 11 please the Court:
- 12 We believe the Court can resolve this case
- 13 by distinguishing between the misconstruction of an
- 14 element and the erroneous addition of an element to the
- 15 case. But if the Court's unwilling to draw that
- 16 particular distinction, it could also resolve the case
- 17 by allowing the government to appeal in both of those
- 18 instances. This goes to the question that Justice Kagan
- 19 was asking near the end of my friend's argument.
- We don't think that that would require
- 21 overruling any of the Court's cases. We think it would
- 22 require narrowing Smalis and Rumsey to their facts,
- 23 and -- and -- but Smith would not be a problem in that
- 24 context.
- 25 Rumsey is distinct for the reason that my

- 1 friend suggested. It was actually a case involving
- 2 factfindings by the judge. The Court characterized it
- 3 as a special verdict made by the sole decisionmaker
- 4 there. It was not an instance like this, where the
- 5 judge had taken the case away, as a matter of law, from
- 6 the jury because there wouldn't be any sufficient
- 7 evidence. It has been cited later on in this cases, in
- 8 particular, in Smalis, as being about something like a
- 9 sufficiency decision, but on its facts, that's not what
- 10 it was.
- 11 Smith is about a completely separate
- 12 question because there is no dispute there about the
- 13 appropriate construction of the element. The firearms
- 14 offense there, the element in question was whether the
- 15 barrel length was less than 13 inches. There was a
- 16 question about whether certain evidence that the firearm
- in question was a pistol was sufficient to satisfy that
- 18 burden, but there was no doubt about what the -- what
- 19 the element was. It was 13 inches or less. And so it
- 20 wasn't about misconstruing the element.
- 21 Smalis is probably the hardest case in this
- 22 context, but if you look at what actually happened in
- 23 Smalis and what was at issue in the demurrer there, the
- 24 decision that the Court was reviewing was one that was
- 25 principally about whether there was sufficient evidence

- of causation, which was an undisputed element of each of
- 2 the counts at issue there, and only in footnote 7 of the
- 3 Court's opinion did it address potential misconstruction
- 4 of the element.
- 5 And it was a different element. This was
- 6 what my -- my friend Mr. Moran mentioned --
- 7 JUSTICE BREYER: Let's go through this. My
- 8 basic question: Normally, a judge will wait till the
- 9 jury comes in and then decide, if the jury convicts him,
- 10 whether to set it aside. So there's no problem. So
- 11 now, we have the judge -- for some reason or other, this
- 12 judge has decided to grant the motion of acquittal in
- 13 the middle of the case.
- Now, this is unusual, I think -- I hope.
- 15 And if so, though, the judge might not think of writing
- 16 down his reasons. So he might just say there isn't
- 17 enough evidence. And now, it happens that, just before
- 18 he did that, the defense lawyer argued to him an
- 19 erroneous theory. All right. An added element or
- 20 something or other, some kind of misconstruction of
- 21 this. What happens then?
- 22 MR. GANNON: Well, I think that we -- we
- 23 normally expect judges to give reasons for their
- 24 decisions.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yes. But this a judge,

- 1 after all, who for some reason -- we don't know what --
- 2 decided, instead of waiting, as they normally would do,
- 3 grant it in the middle of the case.
- 4 MR. GANNON: Well, in the -- in the State of
- 5 Michigan, the rule does not permit the judge to reserve
- 6 the ruling on this motion.
- 7 JUSTICE BREYER: Oh, I see. So there are a
- 8 lot more places --
- 9 MS. GANNON: So -- and actually, in the vast
- 10 majority of states --
- JUSTICE BREYER: They do. They --
- 12 MR. GANNON: -- that's the rule. The
- 13 Federal rule was only changed in 1994, to allow this
- 14 type of --
- JUSTICE BREYER: And then this is a --
- 16 MS. GANNON: -- decision to be reserved
- 17 after trial.
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: This has arisen a lot more
- 19 than -- than I think.
- 20 All right. Fine. Thank you.
- 21 MS. GANNON: And in fact, in the Federal
- 22 context --
- JUSTICE BREYER: And in that case, do they
- 24 have to write it down?
- MR. GANNON: Well, I -- I think that the

- 1 rule in Michigan, and in the Federal Rule 29, does
- 2 require the judge to make a determination of -- to
- 3 satisfy that -- that there's an acquittal, which would
- 4 mean that there is no -- no sufficient evidence to -- to
- 5 support a guilty --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But many states have a
- 7 different rule.
- 8 MR. GANNON: Many -- many states --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And many states permit
- 10 the judge to reserve it till after the jury verdict.
- MR. GANNON: My -- my understanding is that
- 12 most states do not permit that. The Federal government
- only started permitting that in 1994, and even the last
- 14 time the Justice Department studied this, about ten
- 15 years ago, it concluded that, notwithstanding the 1994
- 16 rule amendment in the Federal rules, which came with
- 17 advisory committee notes, strongly encouraging judges to
- 18 reserve these sorts of decisions precisely to preserve
- 19 the public's interest. So notwithstanding --
- JUSTICE BREYER: So then, in other words,
- 21 when an acquittal --
- 22 JUSTICE SCALIA: Finish the sentence.
- 23 Notwithstanding that, what?
- MR. GANNON: Notwithstanding that, in
- 25 approximately 70 percent of the cases in which there are

- 1 Rule 29 verdicts, they are done mid-trial, even in the
- 2 Federal system, at least in the early 2000s, is the only
- 3 data collection that I'm aware of.
- 4 And so this -- this still is a problem. I
- 5 think that if -- if it looks like the decision is based
- 6 on classic insufficiency of the evidence and there is no
- 7 argument about whether it was -- it's based on a
- 8 misconstruction or an erroneous addition of the
- 9 elements, then we -- we would have to be -- we would
- 10 lose, unless the Court's willing to overturn the broader
- 11 line of cases in Martin Linens, Sanabria, Scott, and the
- 12 other cases that were --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Can you add to that -- your
- 14 -- just your idea of what the empirical situation is in
- 15 the last 30 or 40 years? Have most U.S. prosecutors or
- 16 prosecutors in these states thought that they could
- 17 appeal an acquittal on the -- in the middle of the trial
- 18 on the ground that the judge made a mistake of law?
- 19 MR. GANNON: I don't think that they -- they
- 20 have mostly thought that, but the Federal government
- 21 certainly has maintained that that -- that that is
- 22 appropriate. In -- we think that in the Maker decision
- 23 in the Third Circuit in 1984 recognized this.
- We do think that there is -- my -- my friend
- 25 Mr. Moran asks the Court to conclude that any decision

- 1 like this, that is predicated upon a supposed erroneous
- 2 addition of an element, could easily be recharacterized
- 3 as a misconstruction of another element.
- 4 And I think that -- that while, at some
- 5 formal level, that -- that that might be theoretically
- 6 true, in an egregious case like this, there is a
- 7 distinction, which is that if -- if this were an element
- 8 of the offense that needed to be charged in the
- 9 indictment -- at least in the Federal system, then the
- 10 failure to have alleged that the structure here was a
- 11 non-dwelling would have made the indictment invalid.
- 12 And the Defendant would have been able to
- 13 make exactly the same legal argument he made to the
- 14 judge here, which is to say that the prosecution has
- 15 failed to prove -- has failed even to allege one of the
- 16 necessary elements of the offense, which is that this
- 17 structure is not a dwelling. We know that that
- 18 particular --
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Gannon, if we -- if
- 20 we adopt your rule, it -- it can't be for this case
- 21 only. And I -- I think this characterization,
- 22 nonexistent element -- or a court's misconstruction of
- 23 an element, I think, in many cases, you could do -- call
- 24 it one or call it the other, so that -- that's a
- 25 difficult line to -- to adopt.

- 1 MR. GANNON: Well, I don't think it's
- 2 difficult, in the sense that most -- most of the cases
- 3 that we are talking about don't involve this type of
- 4 error. The cases that this Court has decided, Rumsey,
- 5 Smalis, and Smith, even the Petitioner doesn't
- 6 characterize this case as involving additional elements.
- 7 And this Court has recognized, in Lee, that
- 8 when the error is one that kept the indictment from
- 9 being valid because it failed to charge a relevant
- 10 element and the judge did not rule on that until after
- 11 jeopardy attached, the government was still entitled to
- 12 appeal that decision, and if it were erroneous -- the
- 13 government's only going to get a chance at retrial if
- 14 the judge's decision was legally erroneous, then,
- 15 therefore, it demonstrates that there was no so-called
- 16 acquittal on the -- on the offense charged --
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, you gave us
- 18 earlier the statistics of how many judges grant Rule 29
- 19 motions in trial. I think you said 76 percent. What's
- 20 the gross number, relative to the number of actual
- 21 verdict decisions by juries or the judge himself?
- 22 MR. GANNON: The only data that I have seen
- 23 about this is data that the Justice Department collected
- 24 about ten years ago. It was from the early 2000s.
- 25 And -- and the conclusion there was that there were

- 1 approximately 73 pretrial Rule 29 dismissals per year --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Out of what number?
- 3 MS. GANNON: -- which actually is a larger
- 4 number than you -- than you might at first think,
- 5 because that represents about ten percent of the number
- of cases that were actually resolved by jury verdicts.
- 7 And so it -- it is not uncommon.
- I mean, this particular type of error that
- 9 we have in this case, we think, is the most egregious
- 10 kind, the non-existent element error, which -- which the
- 11 government had also pointed out in its amicus brief in
- 12 Smalis, we think is the most egregious kind of error.
- 13 It's one that demonstrates that the court is engaging
- 14 in -- it's usurping the province of the legislature in
- 15 redefining the scope of the offense.
- 16 And we think, under the terms of the Double
- 17 Jeopardy Clause itself, which talks about whether
- 18 there's been -- somebody's been subject to being twice
- 19 in jeopardy for the same offense -- then it -- it
- 20 matters what the offense was.
- 21 And when the judge has redefined the -- the
- 22 crime so extensively that the indictment literally would
- 23 have been invalid and could have been dismissed as not
- 24 adequately alleging the elements of the offense, and we
- 25 know that that is something that the government would

- 1 have been able to appeal.
- We also know that the government would be
- 3 able to appeal if the judge had reserved decision until
- 4 after the jury had returned a jury -- a guilty verdict.
- We acknowledge, as the state does, that jury
- 6 verdicts are different. If a jury is misinstructed and
- 7 a jury returns an acquittal, that we are not quarrelling
- 8 with that in any way. We don't think there's any
- 9 purchase in the Court's case law to do that. And I
- 10 think one of the reasons is because the jury verdict
- 11 might be attributable, not just to mistake or error, but
- 12 also to lenity or compromise.
- 13 There -- there are lots of reasons why we
- 14 don't exactly know why a jury did what it did, and why
- 15 juries generally enter general verdicts. And that makes
- 16 it different from what we have here. We have here an
- instance where the court, as a matter of law, at the
- 18 defendant's behest, took the case away from the jury.
- 19 We think the fact that the defendants chose --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Is that important, "at
- 21 defendant's behest"?
- MR. GANNON: We do think that that's
- 23 important by analogy to the Court's mistrial cases in
- 24 the Double Jeopardy Clause context.
- 25 JUSTICE SCALIA: So you -- you're arguing

- 1 that this should only -- only be -- this rule should
- 2 only be applied when the defendant asks for it?
- 3 MR. GANNON: Or if the defendant consents to
- 4 it, as is the case in the mistrial cases in the Double
- 5 Jeopardy context.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 7 Mr. Moran, you have five minutes.
- 8 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID A. MORAN
- 9 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- 10 MR. MORAN: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 11 Responding to Mr. Gannon's argument first, I
- 12 do characterize Rumsey as an additional element case.
- 13 And I also characterize it as a misconstrued element
- 14 case. It's a perfect example of how these cases can be
- 15 construed either way.
- 16 The judge required a contract. You can call
- 17 that an additional element to the aggravating
- 18 circumstance, or you can call it as a misconstruction of
- 19 what pecuniary gain means in the first place.
- The same here, the error here can be
- 21 construed as a misconstruction of the element that the
- 22 property burned has to be a building, and the judge
- 23 says, looking at the statute, I construe that to mean a
- 24 particular type of building. Or it can be, as the
- 25 prosecution construed it, as the addition of an element.

- 1 There is no difference between the two
- 2 characterizations.
- 3 Turning to the -- the broader question about
- 4 this whole line of cases and should this Court go back
- 5 and revisit this whole line of cases, is there really a
- 6 problem here? We have no amicus briefs from any states
- 7 indicating that there's a problem. We have only the
- 8 amicus from the United States saying that there's a
- 9 problem.
- 10 Is there a problem here that justifies going
- 11 back and revisiting 50 years -- or possibly 108 years,
- 12 all the way back to Kepner -- all of this case law? We
- 13 submit not, especially since, as this Court noted just
- 14 six years ago in Smith, there is an easy solution if
- 15 there really is a problem.
- 16 If there really is a problem with judges
- 17 going wild and granting directed verdicts mid-trial for
- 18 no apparent reason, all that has to be done is the
- 19 states can fall into that, as we can say, judges can't
- 20 do that, or judges as an intermediate -- states as an
- 21 intermediate step could at least give judges the power
- 22 to reserve that decision --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Have any states done that?
- 24 I -- I'm somewhat concerned about telling a judge that,
- 25 if the judge's best judgment says there's insufficient

- 1 evidence, that then it has to proceed with a trial.
- 2 MR. MORAN: I would be, too,
- 3 Justice Kennedy. I think it would be a mistake.
- 4 I'm not aware of any state, since this
- 5 decision -- since this Court's decision in Smith -- that
- 6 have followed Nevada's lead. There are good reasons to
- 7 give judges this acquittal power, namely, preserve the
- 8 state's resources, preserve the jury's time, and
- 9 present -- and prevent the defendant from having to go
- 10 through a trial that is going nowhere.
- 11 And so there are good reasons why states
- 12 don't do this. States have apparently made the
- decision, even after being alerted in Smith, that
- 14 there's something they can do about it, that the good of
- 15 giving judges this mid-trial directed verdict acquittal
- 16 power outweighs the bad.
- 17 Finally, I'd just like to respond to
- 18 Mr. Baughman's point, and it was also raised by
- 19 Mr. Gannon, about how jury verdicts are different.
- 20 There's something special about jury verdicts because we
- 21 don't always know why they granted the verdict.
- 22 But we have the same problem with judicial
- 23 directed verdicts. And we have Martin Linen, where the
- 24 judge just says, this is the weakest case I -- I have
- 25 ever seen. We have Smalis, where he just says, it's

1	legally insufficient.
2	If the Court adopts the line that the
3	prosecution and and the Solicitor General would have
4	you adopt, you're going to have to require judges to
5	give very specific findings as to what the elements of
6	the offense are and which ones that they they don't
7	find. And that, itself, would require a radical
8	reworking of this Court's jurisprudence.
9	If there are no further questions?
_0	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
.1	MR. MORAN: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
_2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The case is
_3	submitted.
.4	(Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., the case in the
.5	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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