1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
2	x
3	VIRGIL D. "GUS" REICHLE, JR., :
4	ET AL., :
5	Petitioners : No. 11-262
6	v. :
7	STEVEN HOWARDS. :
8	x
9	Washington, D.C.
10	Wednesday, March 21, 2012
11	
12	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
13	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
14	at 11:31 a.m.
15	APPEARANCES:
16	SEAN R. GALLAGHER, ESQ., Denver, Colorado; for
17	Petitioners.
18	SRI SRINIVASAN, ESQ., Principal Deputy Solicitor
19	General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.;
20	for the United States, as amicus curiae, supporting
21	Petitioners.
22	DAVID A. LANE, ESQ., Denver, Colorado; for
23	Respondent.
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1	CONTENTS	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	PAGE
3	SEAN R. GALLAGHER, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioners	3
5	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	
6	SRI SRINIVASAN, ESQ.	
7	On behalf of the United States,	
8	as amicus curiae, supporting Petitioners	16
9	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	
10	DAVID A. LANE, ESQ.	
11	On behalf of the Respondent	32
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:31 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next in Case 11-262, Reichle v. Howards.
5	Mr. Gallagher.
6	ORAL ARGUMENT OF SEAN R. GALLAGHER
7	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
8	MR. GALLAGHER: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
9	it please the Court:
_0	The issue before the Court today is whether
.1	Secret Service agents who are prepared to take a bullet
_2	for the Vice President must also be prepared to take a
_3	retaliatory arrest lawsuit, even when they have probable
.4	cause to make an arrest. Respondent in this case seeks
.5	personal money damages against two U.S. Secret Service
. 6	agents who arrested him, allegedly with a retaliatory
_7	motive, after he lied to them about whether he touched
8_	Vice President Cheney.
_9	JUSTICE KENNEDY: There's just a little bit
20	of noise in the courtroom, and I'm I have a little
21	bit of difficulty hearing your very opening statement.
22	MR. GALLAGHER: Sure.
23	The Respondent in this case seeks personal
24	money damages against three against two
5	JUSTICE KENNEDV: Veg Veg

- 1 MR. GALLAGHER: -- U.S. Secret Service 2 agents who arrested him, allegedly with a retaliatory motive, after he lied to them about whether he touched 3 4 Vice President Cheney. There are three reasons why 5 these agents should not be held personally liable. First, the absence of probable cause should 6 7 be a required element of a retaliatory arrest claim. Thus, this Court is called upon to answer the question 8 9 that it left open in Hartman v. Moore. 10 Second, U.S. Secret Service agents acting in 11 their protective capacity should be entitled to a qualified immunity when they make an arrest with 12 probable cause. Indeed, to view it any other way would 13 14 be to subject Secret Service agents to the potential of retaliatory arrest claims based upon a mere allegation 15 16 of retaliatory animus, something this Court has 17 steadfastly refused to do, and for good reason: 18 retaliatory animus is easy to allege and hard to 19 disprove. 20 And, third, regardless of whether this Court decides to extend the Hartman rule, the law in 2006, at 21 22 the time of the arrest was not clearly established, thus 23 entitling the agents to qualified immunity.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: What was the probable -
 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I don't

- 1 understand --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: What was the probable
- 3 cause? What was the probable cause for the arrest?
- 4 MR. GALLAGHER: Justice Ginsburg, the Tenth
- 5 Circuit found that the probable cause that -- that
- 6 underlies its opinion was a 10001 -- a 1001 violation,
- 7 lying to a Federal agent.
- 8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Explain that to me.
- 9 That's a false statement to a government officer, but
- 10 that's not the reason -- 1001 wasn't the reason that
- 11 these officers had to arrest. They -- there was a
- 12 question of assaulting the Vice President, and I think
- 13 that the charge that eventually was made in the State
- 14 court was harassment. So, there's no indication that
- 15 these officers had 1001 anywhere in their minds.
- 16 MR. GALLAGHER: Well, two points, Justice
- 17 Ginsburg: First of all, under Devenpeck, officers are
- 18 not required to give all of the reasons behind an
- 19 arrest. But, second, and I think perhaps more
- 20 importantly in this case, when Agent Reichle contacted
- 21 Mr. Howards and made the arrest, Mr. Howards had lied to
- 22 him. That was relevant to a Secret Service agent's
- 23 assessment of the risk of the situation.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Do they have to give -- at
- least when you stop a car, the test is whether there was

- 1 probable cause, not whether that was the reason that the
- 2 officer stopped the car.
- 3 MR. GALLAGHER: That's correct,
- 4 Justice Scalia.
- 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: There was a broken
- 6 taillight. There existed probable cause, whether that
- 7 was the basis on which he acted or not. Now -- is it
- 8 any different when --
- 9 MR. GALLAGHER: I don't think it's any
- 10 different --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: With respect to an arrest?
- MR. GALLAGHER: Yes, with respect to an
- 13 arrest. This is -
- 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: So long as they have good
- 15 reason for an arrest, it doesn't matter.
- 16 MR. GALLAGHER: Absolutely. That's an
- 17 objective --
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: That -- we've never held
- 19 that in respect to a claim that the real reason the
- 20 police arrested was retaliation against, for example, a
- 21 picket sign having an unpopular point of view or a
- 22 statement having an unpopular point of view. That is,
- 23 this Court has never held that it overcomes an arrest
- 24 where there's a claim of retaliatory First Amendment
- 25 action; is that right?

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1 MR. GALLAGHER: That's right, and --
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- JUSTICE BREYER: All right. And what you're
- 3 saying is your first reason is that we should say that.
- 4 And the -- the question I wanted to ask you there is,
- 5 you make a very strong case where the President and Vice
- 6 President are involved, the need to protect them, but
- 7 the rule that you there adopt is a rule that will apply
- 8 to every police officer, anyone who arrests anyone
- 9 anywhere in the country, and no matter how clear it is
- 10 that the motive was retaliation against a point of view,
- 11 that individual will be protected from a Bivens action.
- 12 So, it sounds as if your first claim -- the
- 13 remedy sweeps well beyond the need that you sketch. And
- 14 so, I'd like your response to that.
- 15 MR. GALLAGHER: Justice Breyer, I think it
- 16 has to do with the determination in the Tenth Circuit
- 17 and the fact that the -- the Tenth Circuit's decision to
- 18 extend Devenpeck to these facts was not the subject of a
- 19 cross-appeal. So, the issue that you -- you posit is
- 20 not an issue that's before the Court. It was --
- JUSTICE BREYER: I understand that. I'm
- 22 just saying if I agree with you on your first that if
- 23 there is a probable cause for an arrest, then wouldn't I
- 24 have to say there is no retaliatory First Amendment
- 25 claim when a border officer chases into Arizona a person

- 1 with whom he politically disagrees, and there are 14
- 2 bishops who will say he cared about nothing but his
- 3 political disagreement? And there's nothing to the
- 4 contrary, and he says: Oh, I happened to notice -- at
- 5 trial -- that when he left he reached out and snatched a
- 6 \$5 bill that was in the till. And so, I had probable
- 7 cause to arrest him.
- 8 End of case. Now, that sounds very
- 9 far-reaching, and I don't know that I'm prepared to do
- 10 that. So, therefore, is there another way you might win
- 11 your case, or should I do that?
- MR. GALLAGHER: Well, let me answer both of
- 13 those questions. What you've outlined is essentially
- 14 footnote 10 from the Hartman case. That's the footnote
- 15 that says what do you do if the -- if the person that
- 16 initiated the prosecution says, I did it for a -- a
- 17 retaliatory reason? And the Court side-stepped that
- 18 issue.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes.
- MR. GALLAGHER: Yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: And, of course, Hartman
- 22 dealt with prosecutions. But people all the time don't
- 23 arrest others. Policemen frequently don't arrest people
- 24 for everything they might arrest them for. I mean
- 25 jaywalking, to take an example. Or all kinds of

- 1 things where they just normally don't arrest somebody.
- 2 You might -- or I'm sure you didn't, but I might
- 3 sometimes have driven 60 miles an hour in a 55-mile
- 4 zone. And I shouldn't even admit this. I hope I get
- 5 away with it.
- 6 (Laughter.)
- JUSTICE BREYER: But -- but you see, it's
- 8 different arrests and prosecutions.
- 9 MR. GALLAGHER: Well, I it certainly,
- 10 it's different, but the Devenpeck standard --
- 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Is it different? You --
- 12 you acknowledge that prosecutors always prosecute, that
- 13 they never exercise discretion and say, oh, what the
- 14 heck, you know?
- 15 MR. GALLAGHER: Certainly, Your Honor.
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: All the time. All the
- 17 time. I don't know that it's any less frequent than --
- 18 than an officer deciding not to arrest.
- MR. GALLAGHER: And Justice --
- 20 Justice Breyer, I think that the difficulty with your
- 21 hypothetical is, especially with regard to Secret
- 22 Service agents, who perform -- when they're engaging in
- 23 their protective functions, they're essentially --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, that --
- 25 MR. GALLAGHER: -- in the public eye.

- 1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's exactly what
- 2 Justice Breyer is saying. Okay? Which is, as I
- 3 understand it -- and there's some literature that talks
- 4 about should we be treating misdemeanor arrests
- 5 different than felony arrests, because there's less
- 6 discretion that an officer would have with respect to
- 7 arresting someone for a felony than for misdemeanors or
- 8 criminal fines, because like jaywalking, policemen don't
- 9 arrest you for jaywalking unless they're either on a
- 10 ticket binge or because there's something about you that
- 11 they don't like.
- MR. GALLAGHER: Sure.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, if that something
- 14 about you they don't like is that you're wearing an
- 15 antiwar armband, are we going to let that plaintiff not
- 16 recover, because somehow we need to protect police
- 17 officers so much, in the discretionary use of this vast
- 18 power they have to arrest that we're going to permit
- 19 them to trample the First Amendment, essentially?
- 20 Or are we going to say, in the normal
- 21 situation there is a First Amendment claim, even with
- 22 probable cause, if you can prove that it's the
- 23 motivating factor for the arrest; but we treat Secret
- 24 Service differently?
- 25 And I think that was the point

- 1 Justice Breyer's getting to, and the one I'm most
- 2 interested in.
- 3 MR. GALLAGHER: Okay.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If we don't extend.
- 5 Hartman, how do we in a principled way deal with the
- 6 unique needs of the Secret Service?
- 7 MR. GALLAGHER: Let me -- let me briefly
- 8 address the first half of the question, and then I'll
- 9 address the second half. The first half, when --
- 10 Justice Sotomayor, when you suggest that police officers
- 11 could trample on the First Amendment, it's important to
- 12 remember we still have probable cause as the -- as the
- 13 principal picture here.
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If you're jaywalking,
- 15 there's probable cause.
- 16 MR. GALLAGHER: But probable cause is the
- 17 Fourth Amendment standard specified by the Framers of
- 18 the Constitution.
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But -- but what does it
- 20 have to do with violating the First Amendment? Meaning,
- 21 if police officers have discretion and they would not
- 22 otherwise arrest you except for their dislike of your
- 23 speech, that's a violation of your right to free speech,
- 24 isn't it?
- MR. GALLAGHER: Well, I'm not sure that that

- 1 is exactly the case. Again it gets back to this
- 2 footnote 10 in Hartman, which -- which, there -- Hartman
- 3 can be read two different ways. It can be read as
- 4 saying that the elements of the constitutional tort
- 5 itself require the absence of probable cause, or it can
- 6 be read as saying the elements of the cause of action.
- 7 But let me -- let me address the second question.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: We can go to that
- 9 question later.
- 10 MR. GALLAGHER: Yes. And the second
- 11 question has to do with Secret Service agents, because
- 12 Secret Service agents, unlike police officers performing
- 13 law enforcement functions, when Secret Service agents are
- 14 acting in a protective capacity, they are protecting our
- 15 Nation's leaders and they are doing so in a very public
- 16 way, and they are also doing so in a way that is
- 17 essentially a free speech zone.
- 18 Virtually everyone that a Secret Service
- 19 agent encounters when he's protecting the President or
- 20 the Vice President can allege that they're engaged in
- 21 free speech. So, for Secret Service agents in
- 22 particular, they -- they can legitimately evaluate what
- 23 someone is saying in order to determine a particular
- 24 threat level. And because of that, Secret Service
- 25 agents have a similar sort of complexity of causation to

- 1 the -- the situation addressed in the Hartman case.
- Now, in Hartman, clearly it was a one -- it
- 3 was a two-individual causation situation, but with
- 4 regard to Secret Service agents, the causation is
- 5 similarly complex because Secret Service agents can
- 6 legitimately take into account what someone is saying in
- 7 order to determine a threat level.
- 8 Regardless of whether the Court decides to
- 9 extend the Hartman case, it's absolutely clear that the
- 10 law in 2006, in June of 2006 when the agents made this
- 11 arrest, was not clearly established. The Hartman case
- 12 was handed down in early 2006. It had only been on the
- 13 books about 3 months when the arrest was made. For that
- 14 reason, Secret Service agents should be entitled to a
- 15 qualified immunity in this case because the law was not
- 16 clearly established.
- 17 With regard to the -- the formulation of
- 18 qualified immunity that we are asking for, we believe
- 19 that it is important for Secret Service agents acting in
- 20 this protective capacity to have the requisite breathing
- 21 room in order to make decisions in life-or-death or
- 22 imminent-threat situations. In fact, the qualified
- 23 immunity that we're advocating is particularly important
- 24 at the margins, particularly important in situations
- 25 where it's not clear what a Secret Service agent can do

- 1 or should do, where a Secret Service agent has to make a
- 2 snap decision in order to determine whether someone's a
- 3 threat and then act appropriately.
- 4 The Court in the Atwater case noted that the
- 5 object of -- of the Court's cases has been to draw
- 6 standards sufficiently clear and simple to be applied
- 7 with a fair prospect of surviving judicial
- 8 second-guessing, months and even years after the -- the
- 9 arrests are made.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: You're not suggesting
- 11 absolute immunity?
- MR. GALLAGHER: No, we are suggesting a
- 13 qualified immunity that's --
- 14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But it's a different kind
- 15 of qualified immunity?
- 16 MR. GALLAGHER: It's certainly different
- 17 from the Harlow type of qualified immunity. It is an
- 18 immunity that is contingent upon having -- contingent
- 19 upon the Secret Service agent being -- acting in a
- 20 protective capacity and having probable cause to make
- 21 the arrest. But, certainly, once the immunity attaches,
- 22 it would be -- it would be full immunity from a claim.
- 23 The Court noted earlier this term, in
- 24 Ryburn v. Huff case, that judges should be cautious
- 25 about second-guessing a police officer's assessment made

- 1 on the scene of the danger presented by a particular
- 2 situation. We think that this case aptly demonstrates a
- 3 situation in which Secret Service agents made very --
- 4 very difficult decisions on the spot, and they should
- 5 not be second-guessed by the Court.
- 6 Finally, with regard to the -- whether
- 7 qualified immunity is -- was clearly established in June
- 8 of 2006, the Ninth Circuit -- the primary case relied
- 9 upon by the Tenth Circuit was the Skoog case. The Skoog
- 10 case was the case that the Tenth Circuit relied upon in
- 11 holding that Hartman should not be extended.
- 12 It's important, though, when you review the
- 13 Skoog case to -- to read the entire case, because the
- 14 Skoog court, after concluding that -- that Hartman
- 15 should not be extended, still proceeded with the
- 16 qualified immunity analysis to determine whether the law
- 17 was clearly established at the time of the incident.
- 18 And what the Skoog case concluded was -- it looked at --
- 19 it looked at the nature of the right.
- 20 And, you know, we know from the
- 21 Anderson v. Creighton case that this Court has said it's
- 22 important when focusing on constitutional rights not to
- 23 look at the 30,000-foot level, not to look at the high
- level, but to look at the contours of the right. And
- 25 that's what the Skoog case did.

- 1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- MR. GALLAGHER: All right. Thank you.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Srinivasan.
- 4 ORAL ARGUMENT OF SRI SRINIVASAN
- 5 ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,
- 6 AS AMICUS CURIAE, SUPPORTING PETITIONERS
- 7 MR. SRINIVASAN: Thank you,
- 8 Mr. Chief Justice, and may it please the Court:
- 9 I'd like to start off addressing the Secret
- 10 Service in particular because that's the principal
- 11 focus, although I take the point that there are
- 12 questions about applying the rule in a broader context.
- 13 But I think understanding why the rule makes sense in
- 14 the context of Secret Service agents and law enforcement
- 15 officers who are performing similar protective functions
- 16 would help inform why it makes sense to broaden the rule
- 17 as well. What the Secret Service --
- I'll pick up on the point that Petitioners'
- 19 counsel was making, which is that it's legitimate in
- 20 this context for Secret Service agents to take into
- 21 account expressive activity in determining whether the
- 22 circumstances warrant a discretionary exercise of the
- 23 power to arrest.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I assume you would
- 25 include U.S. marshals?

- 1 MR. SRINIVASAN: Yes.
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: F.B.I. agents? So,
- 3 you're talking about protective details.
- 4 MR. SRINIVASAN: That's correct. And that's
- 5 why I wouldn't limit it to the Secret Service in
- 6 particular. I think what happens in a lot of these
- 7 contexts is that it's natural for these individuals to
- 8 encounter First Amendment activity by the public, and
- 9 it's legitimate for them to react to First Amendment
- 10 activity in deciding whether the circumstances warrant
- 11 an arrest.
- 12 And the problem arises because it's very
- 13 difficult to distinguish between, on one hand, a
- 14 legitimate consideration of expressive activity as
- 15 evidencing the sort of threat that warrants a response
- 16 from an illegitimate consideration of expressive
- 17 activity borne of a motive to suppress a viewpoint.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Does your rule apply
- 19 regardless of the degree of animus that the agent is
- 20 alleged to have had as to the particular view being
- 21 expressed?
- MR. SRINIVASAN: I think it would,
- 23 Justice Kennedy, because we would have an
- 24 across-the-board, no-probable-cause requirement of the
- 25 kind that the Court applied in the retaliatory

- 1 prosecution context in Hartman.
- Now, I think your -- the question of the
- 3 degree of animus asserted by the agent on the scene is
- 4 exactly why these are complicated factual questions.
- 5 Those kinds of allegations can be made, and then you're
- 6 going to have a trial where the agent is on the stand,
- 7 and the jury is going to have a very difficult time, and
- 8 the agent is going to have a difficult time explaining
- 9 why it is that he acted legitimately based on expressive
- 10 activity because he felt that there was a threat to the
- 11 person he was trying to protect, as opposed to
- 12 explaining that he didn't act in order to suppress the
- 13 viewpoint that was being asserted.
- 14 These kinds of allegations can often be
- 15 made. And, in fact, they can even be manufactured at
- 16 the scene by an intelligent person who's going to be the
- 17 subject of an arrest. And I think that complicated
- 18 question of causation is exactly why it makes sense to
- 19 apply in this context the same objective screening in
- the form of a no-probable-cause requirement in Hartman
- 21 to this context of retaliatory arrest.
- 22 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why is there any difference
- 23 if -- when ordinary policemen are policing an authorized
- 24 demonstration --
- MR. SRINIVASAN: Yes.

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- in front of this Court
- 2 or anywhere for that matter? The people making the
- 3 demonstration have -- have the same motivation and can
- 4 make the same assertion of, oh, the only reason you
- 5 arrested me was because you didn't like what I was --
- 6 what I was talking about. So, why should that situation
- 7 be different?
- 8 MR. SRINIVASAN: That's correct,
- 9 Justice Scalia, and that was going to be my next point.
- 10 Once we understand why it is that it makes sense to
- 11 apply this rule in the context of officers who engage in
- 12 this sort of critical public protective functions of the
- 13 Secret Service, I think we understand why it also makes
- 14 sense to apply it in other situations, because law
- 15 enforcement can legitimately take into account
- 16 expressive activity when they're engaged in functions
- 17 such as crowd control.
- And in those contexts as well, it's going to
- 19 be difficult to disaggregate the legitimate
- 20 consideration of expressive activity as evidencing a
- 21 threat --
- 22 JUSTICE BREYER: Illegitimate? You just --
- 23 MR. SRINIVASAN: -- from an illegitimate
- 24 desire to suppress a viewpoint. Sorry.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Look, you just used the

- 1 word "crowd control." And I take it, in saying the word
- 2 "crowd control," you are making a distinction.
- 3 MR. SRINIVASAN: I'm making a --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: Do you want -- do you want
- 5 the same rule of automatic, you know, immunity -- it's
- 6 sort of automatic immunity -- when crowd control isn't
- 7 at issue, where there's a history of persecution of an
- 8 individual by a particular officer, da, da, da? I mean,
- 9 you know, we can make up cases.
- 10 MR. SRINIVASAN: I think --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: Did you want it absolutely
- 12 across the board, or are you going to start making
- 13 distinctions?
- 14 MR. SRINIVASAN: I -- I would not draw a
- 15 distinction, Justice Breyer. Of course, there's going
- 16 to be factual situations --
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: I mean, I agree with you
- 18 about the crowd control.
- 19 MR. SRINIVASAN: Yes.
- 20 JUSTICE BREYER: I see that. I see that
- 21 problem. I see the problem of protecting people in
- 22 public life; I see the problem in protecting the
- 23 President.
- MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, I think --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Now, how far -- now, given

- 1 that that's a particular problem where views are likely
- 2 to be evidentiary -- unpopular views actually are,
- 3 unfortunately, but how far do you extend it? You say
- 4 extend it to everything. To jaywalking, to
- 5 persecutions, to, you know -- that's what's making me a
- 6 little nervous.
- 7 MR. SRINIVASAN: Right, and I can understand
- 8 the basis for the nervousness. I guess the question for
- 9 the Court is whether the benefits of having an
- 10 administrable across-the-board rule outweigh the costs
- 11 of trying to forge some sort exceptions to deal with
- 12 extreme hypotheticals. And --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Do you have a sense of
- 14 how many of these First Amendment retaliatory claims in
- 15 those jurisdictions that permit them -- I know they're
- 16 more limited -- how many of these cases arise?
- 17 MR. SRINIVASAN: We do. We've done --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And with what frequency?
- MR. SRINIVASAN: We've done an unscientific
- 20 search, but to use the same time frame of reference that
- 21 the Court used in Hartman, which is looking back
- 22 25 years, if you do a sort of standard Westlaw search,
- 23 what you'll see is there's roughly a hundred court of
- 24 appeals cases and 450 or so district court cases
- 25 where --

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1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And how many arrests are
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- 2 there a year?
- 3 MR. SRINIVASAN: I don't know.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's -- a non-felony.
- 5 I'm sure it's in the millions.
- 6 MR. SRINIVASAN: It's -- the -- I'm sure
- 7 there are scores and scores of arrests. That's correct.
- 8 And, of course, all we're talking about is the cases
- 9 that get to the point where you have an opinion that can
- 10 be -- that can be found. And there's the obvious point
- 11 that, depending on what the Court does here, you may see
- 12 a proliferation of -- of those claims. And we certainly
- 13 hope that wouldn't be the case.
- 14 But I think on -- in -- on the question of
- 15 whether it makes sense to have an across-the-board rule,
- 16 I guess I would echo what Petitioners' counsel was
- 17 suggesting, which is you can have the same set of
- 18 considerations in the retaliatory prosecution context
- 19 because prosecutors do act with -- by hypothesis, with
- 20 illicit motives in some situations.
- 21 And the Court considered whether the
- 22 benefits of having an across-the-board rule outweigh the
- 23 costs of forging an exception to deal with extreme
- 24 circumstances. And what the Court said was: We want to
- 25 have a rule that's designed to deal with the mine run of

- 1 cases; we don't want to have a rule that has an
- 2 exceptional-circumstances exception because in that --
- 3 at that point, there will be a great deal of litigation
- 4 concerning what cases fit within of the exception and
- 5 what cases don't.
- And what the Court said was that's rather
- 7 like designing a retirement plan to deal with the
- 8 possibility that someone might win the lottery. That's
- 9 in footnote 10 of Hartman. And I think similar
- 10 considerations would weigh -- counsel in favor of
- 11 applying an across-the-board objective,
- 12 no-probable-cause screen in this context as well. And I
- 13 think it's important to understand that --
- 14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Even though this -- I
- 15 think in Hartman, Justice Souter gave two specific
- 16 reasons, neither of which apply in this context. I
- 17 mean, this is -- it's the prosecutor who institutes the
- 18 charges, but the suit is not against the prosecutor, who
- 19 would be absolutely immune. So, that is not in this
- 20 picture. Here we have one officer.
- So, it would certainly be an extension of
- 22 Hartman because the reason that Hartman gave for the
- 23 rule was tied to -- very much tied to prosecution rather
- 24 than arrest.
- 25 MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, I -- with respect,

- 1 Justice Ginsburg, I think this case is of a piece with
- 2 Hartman in two relevant respects. Your Honor is quite
- 3 correct that Justice Souter's opinion focused on the
- 4 fact that you have two individuals in play. You can
- 5 have that situation here, but we don't base it on that.
- 6 What the opinion was getting to was that
- 7 that creates complex issues of causation in the
- 8 prosecution context. And I think it was the complex
- 9 causation that really drove the need to have an
- 10 objective across-the-board rule.
- 11 You have the same kind of complex causation
- 12 problem here, for the reasons that I've explained, which
- is that it's extremely difficult to disentangle a
- 14 legitimate desire to act -- to suppress danger, of which
- 15 speech is evidence, from an illegitimate desire to
- 16 suppress a viewpoint.
- 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: You might apply the same
- 18 immunity for selective enforcement based on race?
- MR. SRINIVASAN: The same immunity?
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Yes.
- MR. SRINIVASAN: No. The -- they -- I think
- the Court's decision in Whren, for example, supposes
- 23 that even though you have probable cause, you can have
- 24 an equal protection claim if the proof could be made --
- 25 and this is very important. In the equal protection

- 1 context, including for race, there is a different
- 2 objective screen in place, and it's a stringent
- 3 objective screen that this Court announced in Armstrong,
- 4 which is that --
- 5 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, I'm aware of the
- 6 reservation in Whren. Why should there be a difference
- 7 in the Fourteenth Amendment equal protection and First
- 8 Amendment speech?
- 9 MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, I think part -- part
- 10 of the reason is this, that in -- with the First
- 11 Amendment, expressive activity can legitimately be taken
- 12 into account precisely because it can manifest a danger,
- 13 whereas with race in the ordinary case, I think the
- 14 reason why we have these principles in the race context
- is it's ordinarily not a relevant consideration.
- 16 And the Armstrong rule is designed to
- 17 distinguish between circumstances in -- in which race
- 18 was the motivation and in which race wasn't the
- 19 motivation. And it serves that purpose well. But it
- 20 doesn't work so well in this context, because here First
- 21 Amendment activity can legitimately be taken into
- 22 account; when, as in this case, a Secret Service agent
- 23 overhears an individual say that he's going to ask the
- 24 Vice President how many babies he's killed, it makes all
- 25 the sense in the world for the Secret Service to focus

- 1 their attention on that person.
- 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: What -- what about for
- 3 crowd control? You want to extend it to crowd control
- 4 as well. What difference does the First Amendment make
- 5 there?
- 6 MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, I think it's -- the
- 7 nature, intensity, and vehemence with which the First
- 8 Amendment activity is being engaged in can inform an
- 9 officer on whether the circumstances present the kind of
- 10 danger that warrants a law enforcement response.
- 11 So, I -- and when a law enforcement officer
- does that, he's going to be subject to potential
- 13 liability if an individual says: Look, you weren't
- 14 reacting against me because of the way I was expressing
- 15 my views; you were acting -- reacting against me because
- 16 you disagree with my views and you wanted to suppress
- 17 them.
- 18 And that's a very hard thing to disentangle.
- 19 And it not only has that problem at the back end, but it
- 20 results in a problem at the front end as well, because
- 21 what happens at the front end is that officers at the
- 22 very outer margins might have in the back of their mind
- 23 a concern that if they acted based on their best
- 24 intuitions about what kind of law enforcement response
- 25 is warranted, they might later be subject to suit based

- 1 on a mistaken assumption and potentially an ability to
- 2 convince a jury that they were acting based on an
- 3 illegitimate desire to suppress a viewpoint rather than
- 4 on a legitimate desire --
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: How many cases -- you might
- 6 know this; you might have information on how many cases
- 7 over 5 years or whatever period there actually have been
- 8 against Federal protective officials of retaliatory
- 9 First Amendment activity.
- 10 MR. SRINIVASAN: I -- I don't know --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: It would be in the
- 12 Department, wouldn't it? Do they keep track?
- MR. SRINIVASAN: It's potentially there, but
- 14 I just -- I don't have the answer at my disposal,
- 15 Justice Breyer.
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: Do we know that this is not
- 17 unique, the one before us?
- MR. SRINIVASAN: Well, these -- certainly,
- 19 we know that these kinds of interactions arise with some
- 20 frequency. I think there was some publicity surrounding
- 21 the --
- 22 JUSTICE BREYER: But when you looked up your
- 23 research for this, did you find any other case in which
- 24 anyone had ever asserted a First Amendment claim of
- 25 retaliation for an arrest?

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1 MR. SRINIVASAN: In --
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- JUSTICE BREYER: Yes, against a Federal --
- 3 MR. SRINIVASAN: In this --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: Against a Federal
- 5 protective official.
- 6 MR. SRINIVASAN: No, I -- candidly, I didn't
- 7 -- we didn't conduct a search with that object in mind.
- 8 So, I can't give you an answer one way -- one way or the
- 9 other.
- I did want to make one additional point,
- 11 Justice Ginsburg, in response to the question you posed
- 12 about the applicability of Hartman, which is that at one
- 13 level it applies, the rule should apply, because the
- 14 same concern with complex causation is at issue here at
- 15 well -- as well.
- 16 But the other way to think about the
- 17 applicability of Hartman is to -- is to put these cases
- 18 on a spectrum. On one end, you have what the Court in
- 19 Hartman identified as a standard retaliation case, of
- 20 which the Court identified public employment as the
- 21 archetypal example. And on the other end, you have
- 22 retaliatory prosecution, where the Court thought that
- 23 there were sufficient concerns about complicated
- 24 causation that it made sense to have an across-the-board
- 25 objective rule.

- 1 Now, the question could be where does
- 2 retaliatory arrest fit within that spectrum? Is it on
- 3 the retaliatory prosecution side or is it on the public
- 4 employment side? And for a couple of reasons, I think
- 5 it fits decidedly within the retaliatory prosecution
- 6 side.
- 7 One is the one I've given, which is that
- 8 speech can legitimately be taken into account. And so,
- 9 it creates complex causation. But the other one is in
- 10 some sense the flip side of that, which is that in the
- 11 -- in public employment context, the standard fact
- 12 pattern is going to involve a long-term relationship
- 13 between an employer and an employee, during which time
- 14 there's been no adverse action; the employee then
- 15 engages in some sort of expressive activity, in the
- 16 aftermath of which the employer undertakes some adverse
- 17 action such as a termination.
- Now, in that context it makes sense to infer
- 19 that there may well be an illegitimate speech --
- 20 speech-suppressive motivation at work, because you have
- 21 in some sense a control period in the interactions
- 22 between the employer and the employee that pre-dated the
- 23 expressive activity.
- 24 That's not the case when you're dealing with
- 25 law enforcement. In the law enforcement context in the

- 1 main, this is a one-time interaction between an officer
- 2 and a suspect, the arrestee. You don't have the prior
- 3 relationship that acts as a control. And so, you have
- 4 to ask the question whether, based on that one-time
- 5 relationship, is there a basis for inferring that a
- 6 speech-suppressive motivation was at work?
- 7 And here, because it can be legitimate for
- 8 an officer to take into account speech in deciding
- 9 whether this situation is the kind of one in which a law
- 10 enforcement response is warranted, it makes sense,
- 11 unlike in the public employment context, to apply the
- 12 same objective across-the-board screen in the form of a
- 13 no-probable-cause requirement that you have in
- 14 prosecutions.
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: May I go back to the
- 16 probable cause, the question I asked before? It's not
- 17 like the taillight. 1001 came up in court. I -- this
- 18 situation may well have warranted probable cause for
- 19 assault, probable cause for harassment. But where did
- 20 -- but the 1001 was not the -- was in no one's mind. It
- 21 does seem quite strange.
- 22 MR. SRINIVASAN: It was not, Your Honor. Of
- 23 course, that's exactly what happens in the Fourth
- 24 Amendment context. That's -- that was the issue before
- 25 the Court in Devenpeck, and the Court explained in

- 1 Devenpeck why it makes sense to have an objective
- 2 probable cause inquiry rather than a subjective one.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: But doesn't it matter
- 4 that it's something that comes up only in court; it's
- 5 not something that -- I mean, why wasn't the natural --
- 6 well, one would expect probable cause to arrest because
- 7 it was an assault or harassment -- the actual charges
- 8 that were made?
- 9 MR. SRINIVASAN: I don't know the reason
- 10 that a -- I don't know the precise contours of the
- 11 harassment charges in State court that were made. I
- 12 think that they mapped on in some measure to the
- 13 assault, the assault that was suspected by the -- by
- 14 Officer Reichle, who effected the arrest.
- 15 Now, I think the concern with importing some
- 16 sort of subjective probable cause dimension into the
- 17 inquiry -- if you asked, you know, what offense did the
- 18 officer in fact have in mind, it's the same concerns
- 19 that drove the Court to apply an objective rule in
- 20 Devenpeck, including, for example, that you would have
- 21 dis-uniformity, in that similarly situated individuals
- 22 would be treated differently based purely on what
- 23 happens to have been in an officer's mind.
- Thank you.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.

1 Mr. Lane. 2 ORAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID A. LANE 3 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT MR. LANE: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice, and 4 5 may it please the Court: I think what we have here is a solution 6 7 being offered by the Government, and now we have to go find the problem. And I think that's what 8 9 Justice Breyer's question was directed at here. 10 I have done, not a scientific search, but I 11 can take credit for a little bit of science involved in 12 determining how many such cases arise. And at page 13 of our brief, we cite in footnote 8 that a search with 13 14 no time limitations whatsoever going back in LEXIS with 15 the words "Bivens" or "1983," "retaliatory arrest," not 16 limited to protective details, shows 15 reported Federal 17 appellate cases, with no time limitations whatsoever. 18 So, we have a solution, but we really don't 19 have a problem. The only Secret Service case that this 20 Court has ever heard that I'm aware of involving anything remotely like this is Hunter v. Bryant. 21 this is not a significant problem. 22 23 This also factually is probably not the best case for them to be making their argument that we need 24

some sort of special rules that apply to the Secret

- 1 Service, given the facts of this case, where Mr. Howards
- 2 by all accounts walked over to the Vice President,
- 3 looked at him and said: "I just want you to know I
- 4 think your policies in Iraq are disgusting."
- 5 There is a dispute at that point whether he
- 6 gently patted him on the arm -- not a crime -- or tapped
- 7 him on the shoulder -- again, not a crime -- or --
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: There's no --
- 10 it?
- 11 MR. LANE: I'm sorry.
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: All it takes for an assault
- is an unwanted touching.
- MR. LANE: Well, incidental contact is not
- 15 an assault, and everyone on the Mall --
- 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: It's not incidental if you
- 17 reach out and touch somebody on the shoulder or the arm.
- 18 MR. LANE: Well, the problem is that the
- 19 Vice President was on the Mall having contact with
- 20 numerous people, shaking their hands, letting them pat
- 21 him on the back, telling him what a great job he's
- 22 doing.
- 23 JUSTICE SCALIA: That's fine, and he didn't
- 24 -- he doubtless didn't consider those contacts hostile.
- 25 But when somebody tells you "I think your policies are

- 1 disgusting" --
- 2 MR. LANE: And then --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean, just don't tell me
- 4 that it's -- it's not a crime. It is an assault if it's
- 5 an unwanted touching.
- 6 MR. LANE: Well, under Colorado law, he was
- 7 charged with harassment, and --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, what you've
- 9 described is not when the person was arrested, right?
- 10 MR. LANE: That's correct.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The person was
- 12 arrested later, when approached by the Secret Service
- 13 agent, lied about whether he touched the Vice President;
- 14 at that time, in a non-protected area, was carrying a
- 15 baq, right?
- MR. LANE: Correct.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And wandering
- 18 around. Turns out that he was looking for his son. But
- 19 if you're the Secret Service agent, you see somebody who
- 20 said your policies are disgusting, that person touches
- 21 the Vice President, he -- he lies to you. He
- 22 comes back, he's carrying a bag and he's wondering --
- 23 wandering around, do you think it's reasonable at
- 24 that -- well, I guess you don't --
- 25 (Laughter.)

- 1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: To arrest the
- 2 person?
- 3 MR. LANE: That's a multifaceted question.
- 4 I'll try my best to cut right to it.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The reason it's
- 6 multifaceted is because I'm trying to capture what might
- 7 have been going through the Secret Service agent's mind
- 8 at the time.
- 9 MR. LANE: Well, that's -- that is part of
- 10 the point I have to make here, all right? In this
- 11 Court's jurisprudence on Fourth Amendment issues, what
- 12 is going on in the agent's mind is irrelevant. The
- 13 issue is --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, what would be
- 15 going in a reasonable Secret Service's agent's mind at
- 16 the time.
- 17 MR. LANE: Right. First level of inquiry,
- 18 was there a Fourth Amendment violation? No, according
- 19 to the Tenth Circuit. We then have got to shift gears
- 20 if we're going to do a First Amendment analysis. And is
- 21 this a retaliatory arrest or not?
- 22 We have got to look into the subjective mind
- 23 of the agent. That's where Justice Ginsburg's questions
- 24 I think take on great import for this discussion,
- 25 because, as she correctly pointed out, the agents on

- 1 scene never said in deposition, they have never claimed
- 2 anywhere, that they arrested Mr. Howards on a 1001
- 3 violation.
- 4 The agents on scene in deposition said we
- 5 arrested him because of the way he approached the Vice
- 6 President -- not a crime -- and his demeanor. We
- 7 thought it might be an assault. That later morphed into
- 8 a State charge of harassment. Nobody ever said 1001
- 9 formed any basis whatsoever.
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes, but they did say --
- and also you've left out that one of the agents
- 12 overheard him say he was going to ask the Vice President
- 13 how many babies he killed that day.
- MR. LANE: Right.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. So, their job is to
- 16 protect the Vice President.
- 17 MR. LANE: Absolutely.
- JUSTICE BREYER: That's their job.
- 19 MR. LANE: Correct.
- 20 JUSTICE BREYER: And it's a very emotional
- 21 subject.
- MR. LANE: Absolutely.
- JUSTICE BREYER: And if something happens to
- 24 the President, nobody's going to say, oh, you know, what
- 25 were you doing? And the whole country is in mourning.

- 1 MR. LANE: Correct.
- JUSTICE BREYER: We understand that. And,
- 3 therefore, it's a matter of concern that the -- if you
- 4 have a rule of law that says to the agents, when you
- 5 hear someone who says how many babies are you going to
- 6 kill that day, I'm going to ask the Vice President, I'm
- 7 going to touch him, I am going to then tell them a lie
- 8 when they ask me if I touched him -- that's cause for
- 9 concern.
- MR. LANE: Absolutely.
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. Now, if there's a
- 12 lawsuit, the agency will say we just can't do it. We
- 13 can't do it. We can't use that as a basis for stopping
- 14 that individual.
- MR. LANE: Well, that --
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: All that poses a problem.
- 17 Now, you're -- and I -- I think -- I recognize it as
- 18 a problem. I'm not saying I have the solution.
- 19 MR. LANE: Well, I think you hit on the
- 20 solution as part of the problem you just expressed, and
- 21 that is, can they stop this individual? And the answer
- 22 is "absolutely yes." They have every arrow in their
- 23 quiver, under Terry v. Ohio. They can stop him if they
- 24 perceive a threat. They can force him to open up his
- 25 opaque bag. They can force him to show them what's in

- 1 the box inside the opaque bag. They can pat him down.
- 2 They can wand him with a metal-detecting wand. They can
- 3 assure themselves --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: And it wouldn't be a
- 5 violation of the First Amendment if they only did that
- 6 because they didn't like the ideas he was expressing?
- 7 MR. LANE: They are allowed --
- 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Wouldn't that be a
- 9 violation of the First Amendment?
- 10 MR. LANE: They are allowed to take
- 11 reasonable steps under Terry, under every conceivable
- 12 case that this Court's ever decided.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Even though they're doing
- 14 it for -- they do it for a racial reason, would that be
- 15 okay?
- 16 MR. LANE: No. Wo. What I'm saying --
- 17 JUSTICE SCALIA: Of course not. I don't see
- 18 how your -- your First Amendment exception doesn't apply
- 19 to those things as well as to --
- MR. LANE: It would.
- 21 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- to the arrest.
- 22 MR. LANE: It would. If he could prove that
- 23 they did a Terry stop on him in retaliation for his free
- 24 speech and it was motivated -- and I know this -- Your
- 25 Honor's feelings about intent -- intent-motivated

- 1 constitutional torts.
- 2 But if he could prove that the Terry stop
- 3 was motivated by -- in an effort to punish him for his
- 4 free speech, yes, that would be a cause of action as
- 5 well.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, what you have,
- 7 under your theory, a person should put on his car a
- 8 bumper sticker that says "I hate the police" and then
- 9 every time they're pulled over, they will have --
- 10 certainly a plausible case is you violated my First
- 11 Amendment rights. It's not because I was going 60 miles
- 12 an hour; it's because of my bumper sticker.
- MR. LANE: Well --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And the police
- 15 officer -- at that point, he says, you know, I can't
- 16 give a ticket to this guy without being hauled into
- 17 court on personal liability because he's got a credible
- 18 case that it was for First Amendment grounds.
- 19 MR. LANE: Well, I think we can look at
- 20 the -- as I've said, the arrows in the quiver of the
- 21 Court to weed out those kinds of cases.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, no. You've
- 23 already got the officer in court. I mean, you get a
- 24 speeding ticket, and most times they don't show up
- 25 because they have got other things to do. Now he's got

- 1 to show up in district court, in State court, to defend
- 2 against this.
- 3 MR. LANE: Well, I mean, litigious
- 4 plaintiffs are a consistent problem across the board
- 5 under many contexts. And there's really -- you know,
- 6 there's almost nothing that can be done. This Court has
- 7 taken steps to cut back prison litigation that's
- 8 frivolous, things of that nature.
- 9 But, yes, if -- the heightened pleading
- 10 standard this Court enunciated in Iqbal: You can't just
- 11 come up with conclusory allegations.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Right. Well,
- 13 this --
- 14 MR. LANE: You have to have facts in support
- 15 that that's why they stopped me, because of my bumper
- 16 sticker.
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Is that -- is that a
- 18 case that you could state?
- MR. LANE: That would be --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: He pulled me over,
- 21 he gave me a speeding ticket, but the only reason he
- 22 picked me out is because I had a bumper sticker saying
- 23 "I hate the police."
- MR. LANE: Well --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Does that go to

- 1 trial?
- MR. LANE: No, that doesn't necessarily go
- 3 to trial. That's a conclusion, first of all --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why doesn't it go to
- 5 trial? And -- well, does it go -- I mean, do you get
- 6 depose the police officer? You know, why did you stop
- 7 him? Did you stop anybody else for going 65 miles an
- 8 hour that day?
- 9 MR. LANE: Well, I mean, these evidentiary
- 10 questions have to be first of all supported in a
- 11 pleading with heightened scrutiny under Igbal.
- 12 Conclusions are not simply enough. You have --
- 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: It's not a conclusion. I
- 14 mean, if -- if he didn't have the bumper sticker and you
- 15 asserted in the pleading he stopped me because he knows
- 16 I hate the police, that's a conclusion. But if you have
- 17 the bumper sticker, he says, you know, I had the bumper
- 18 sticker, and that's why he stopped me.
- MR. LANE: Well, let me give the flip side
- 20 of that and say if the police officer did stop him
- 21 because of the bumper sticker, he should go to trial.
- 22 He should be held accountable for that.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, the only way you
- 24 can find out is you put in the evidence -- here's the
- 25 bumper sticker -- and you put the police officer on the

- 1 stand --
- 2 MR. LANE: Well --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- and you say, why
- 4 did you do it?
- 5 MR. LANE: Under --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And then all of a
- 7 sudden -- I don't know why everybody doesn't have a
- 8 bumper sticker.
- 9 MR. LANE: Theoretically, every single
- 10 person who has ever been arrested for any crime could
- 11 raise a first amendment retaliation lawsuit. Every
- 12 convicted murderer doing time throughout this country
- 13 could do that. They don't, however. There is -- there
- 14 is not a rush to the courthouse of retaliatory arrest
- 15 claims because the pleading requirements are heightened.
- 16 Qualified immunity for over a hundred years has
- 17 protected the Secret Service. They've been protecting
- 18 the executive branch --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, say, though, that in
- 20 the case of the President, what you're hearing is, as
- 21 you well know, that the combination of disparate
- 22 political views and risk is unlike other situations.
- 23 And I don't know if they can prove it or you could prove
- 24 the contrary, but that's -- that's a claim. And I can't
- 25 say there's nothing to it.

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1 So, let me suggest to you another arrow
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- 2 which I'll ask you what you think of this arrow, and
- 3 the answer's going to be not much, but I'm interested
- 4 in hearing --
- 5 MR. LANE: Go ahead.
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: -- your reason.
- 7 MR. LANE: I'm ready.
- JUSTICE BREYER: In -- in Hartman, Justice
- 9 Ginsburg and I dissent.
- 10 MR. LANE: Yes.
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: And we referred to a D.C.
- 12 Circuit case. And in the D.C. Circuit, it said -- it
- 13 talked about rare cases "where strong motive evidence
- 14 combines with weak probable cause to support a finding
- 15 that the prosecution would not have occurred but for
- 16 the ... animus." Now, so far, you think "fine."
- 17 But suppose you were to say because of the
- 18 factors that have just been mentioned where the
- 19 President's at stake, the courts -- where his life is at
- 20 stake, the President's -- the courts will not infer once
- 21 probable cause exists that it's weak. And the courts
- 22 will not infer from the simple presence of political
- 23 disagreement that the motive of retaliation is strong,
- 24 which in fact would produce a very limited extension of
- 25 Hartman to the case of protecting the President of the

- 1 United States.
- 2 And now, I know you're not going to agree
- 3 with that, and I'm trying it out and I'm not saying I
- 4 agree with it, but I want to see what you -- how you
- 5 react.
- 6 MR. LANE: Well, let's take a look at the
- 7 facts of this case. The Tenth Circuit found there was
- 8 probable cause for a 1001 violation. But was there
- 9 probable cause -- is there a great body of
- 10 circumstantial evidence surrounding this case that would
- 11 point to probable cause which should be considered in
- 12 deciding how this case proceeds? We have the agent in
- 13 charge of the protective detail, Agent Lee, standing 8
- 14 inches away from Vice President Cheney when this entire
- 15 encounter occurs. Agent Lee testified he saw no crime
- 16 committed. We had numerous agents --
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Excuse me.
- MR. LANE: Yes, Your Honor.
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Let's go past that for a
- 20 second. What was it that the arresting agent said or
- 21 did that showed the animus? Meaning, because that
- 22 another officer actually saw it and understood himself
- 23 what he thought doesn't mean that this agent who was
- 24 told that there had been a touching had that
- 25 information.

- 1 MR. LANE: The evidence --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, I know collective
- 3 knowledge is a theory in a lot of cases, but let's deal
- 4 with the facts of this case. What's the animus?
- 5 MR. LANE: Well, there were discrete First
- 6 Amendment episodes that occurred in the context of this
- 7 case. One was testified to by Mr. Howards in his
- 8 deposition, that when he first of all was approached by
- 9 Agent Reichle, Agent Reichle said, "I want to talk to
- 10 you, " and flashed his badge, and Mr. Howards declined
- 11 the invitation to talk to Agent Reichle. That,
- 12 according to Mr. Howards, angered Agent Reichle. That
- is a First Amendment significant event in and of itself.
- 14 Steve Howards testified that he then was
- 15 asked by Agent Reichle: We want to talk to you about
- 16 assaulting the Vice President. And his response was: I
- 17 didn't assault the Vice President; I merely criticized
- 18 his policies in Iraq, and if you don't want him
- 19 criticized publicly he should stay in his undisclosed
- 20 location. Or words to that effect.
- 21 Again, Mr. Howards testified that angered
- 22 Agent Reichle. At that point, the cuffs went on. And I
- 23 think that is circumstantial evidence in support of the
- 24 animus for what -- what was going on. Agent Reichle was
- 25 on notice as to what Howards had said to the Vice

- 1 President --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How does all of that
- 3 prove your point of animus in light of the undisputed
- 4 fact that he lied about touching the Vice President?
- 5 MR. LANE: Well, again --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And that's the --
- 7 MR. LANE: -- lying to the Vice President is
- 8 what we look at on a Fourth Amendment analysis, because
- 9 what's in Reichle's actual mind under Devenpeck is
- 10 irrelevant. So, yes, there was probable cause, but was
- 11 Reichle himself directing his animus at Mr. Howards and
- 12 arrested him? We have to look into what was actually in
- 13 his mind, and that was not in his mind. A 1001
- 14 violation was not in his mind. We looked -- what was in
- 15 his mind? And we've already said what was in his mind
- 16 is he approached the Vice President, he criticized him
- 17 publicly --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You do understand that
- 19 this case is inviting the questions the Chief Justice
- 20 asked, which -- and which -- as Justice Breyer and some
- 21 of us are concerned about, which is what your adversary
- 22 has described as First Amendment voicing is going to be
- 23 a part of many, many arrests.
- MR. LANE: Absolutely.
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How do we draw a line

- 1 outside of the one that you proposed by your
- 2 adversaries, that probable cause is the line?
- 3 MR. LANE: Well, that line --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That doesn't enmesh the
- 5 police in a constant barrage of claims that just because
- 6 they angered a police officer, that's why they were
- 7 arrested.
- 8 MR. LANE: Well, first of all, there has not
- 9 been this constant barrage. Hartman has only applied
- 10 until -- I mean, this Court decided Hartman in 2006 for
- 11 retaliatory prosecutions. There has not been a run on
- 12 the courthouse on retaliatory arrests --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Would you --
- 14 MR. LANE: -- either before Hartman or
- 15 after.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Would you acknowledge that
- 17 the Secret Service faces a different situation from
- 18 ordinary police officers in conducting their daily
- 19 activities, in that Secret Service agents may
- 20 legitimately take into account First Amendment activity
- 21 by someone who is in the vicinity of the President or
- 22 the Vice President in assessing the degree of danger the
- 23 person presents?
- MR. LANE: This may not help my case, but
- 25 I'll go further than that and I'll say any police

- 1 officer has an absolute right to listen to what any
- 2 protester is saying and consider what is being said in
- 3 terms of assessing the level of threat that that
- 4 protester poses.
- 5 But as I said in this case, they had every
- 6 right to stop Mr. Howards, to do a Terry stop on him,
- 7 because they were concerned about him. And reasonable
- 8 cause for concern under Terry is the standard. You
- 9 don't need probable cause to pat someone down under
- 10 Terry. It's simply if a reasonable officer would be
- 11 concerned.
- 12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Again, I don't understand
- 13 why you -- why you say that they're immune from the
- 14 charge of First Amendment retaliation for that but not
- 15 immune from the charge of First Amendment -- I mean --
- MR. LANE: I'm not --
- 17 JUSTICE SCALIA: If you say they're doing it
- 18 on First Amendment grounds for the one, they're doing it
- 19 on the First Amendment grounds for the other. Why is
- 20 either one okay?
- 21 MR. LANE: I'm not saying that they're
- 22 immune on a Terry pat down if it's done in retaliation
- 23 for free speech. I'm simply saying that would make it a
- 24 much more difficult case for any protester to go to a --
- 25 to go to court and say the only reason he patted me down

- 1 is in retaliation for my free speech.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. So, then putting it
- 3 in their point of view, I just what he actually said.
- 4 He was very angry, your client. I mean, judging what he
- 5 said -- there were a lot of swear words and so forth --
- 6 he was pretty angry at this whole situation.
- So, you're a Secret Service agent, and you
- 8 hear him say -- speak like this -- he has every right to
- 9 speak like that. I mean people do. I understand that.
- 10 But now he's also thinking that -- I'm nervous about
- 11 this. The President is here, the Vice President,
- 12 whatever --
- MR. LANE: Sure.
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: -- same thing -- and I've
- 15 got to do my job. So -- and nobody's going to say, ho,
- 16 ho, First -- whatever if is -- if somebody is hurt.
- 17 MR. LANE: I agree with that.
- 18 JUSTICE BREYER: Now, he has also lied about
- 19 whether he touched the President.
- MR. LANE: So --
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: And he has also been
- 22 talking about the President killing people.
- 23 MR. LANE: First order of business --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Killing babies and so forth
- 25 and --

- 1 MR. LANE: Let's see if he's a threat.
- JUSTICE BREYER: All right. So, what is he
- 3 supposed to do in your view?
- 4 MR. LANE: He's supposed to -- if he -- if
- 5 he has reasonable cause to believe Steve Howards is a
- 6 threat --
- 7 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, it is in this
- 8 situation --
- 9 MR. LANE: Okay.
- JUSTICE BREYER: But this situation, I've --
- 11 I'm pretty --
- MR. LANE: Right. Then he pats him down.
- 13 He opens the bag --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Nothing there.
- MR. LANE: Nothing there.
- JUSTICE BREYER: He says, okay --
- 17 MR. LANE: Then they monitor him, and they
- 18 watch him, and -- and that's all.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: A lot of people in
- 20 that place.
- 21 MR. LANE: There is no probable cause to
- 22 believe he has committed a crime at that point.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, he lied. He --
- MR. LANE: But they didn't know that. That
- 25 was not in their minds. That's -- we're doing a First

- 1 Amendment analysis and not the Fourth Amendment analysis
- 2 at this point. First Amendment analysis --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But they didn't
- 4 arrest him -- they didn't arrest until after he lied,
- 5 right?
- 6 MR. LANE: But it was never in their minds.
- 7 They testified. That didn't have anything to do -- that
- 8 is the Tenth Circuit's post hoc rationale under
- 9 Devenbeck, which -- Devenpeck -- which says you -- if
- 10 there's any objective probable cause that the Tenth
- 11 Circuit or this Court or any other court can concoct,
- 12 post hoc, even though it wasn't in the officer's mind,
- 13 that's good enough to arrest somebody. That's -- that
- 14 probable cause. All right?
- 15 But in First Amendment analysis, it can't be
- 16 an objective standard. There -- objective standards are
- 17 clean, they are nice, they -- they create bright lines.
- 18 But when we are looking at a First Amendment violation,
- 19 we have to got to be able to get into subjective intent
- 20 of the officer at -- on the scene.
- JUSTICE ALITO: And when you say that, that
- 22 means that almost all of these cases have to go to
- 23 trial --
- MR. LANE: No, they don't.
- 25 JUSTICE ALITO: -- before a jury.

- 1 Well, how are -- how can they be stopped before they go
- 2 to trial?
- 3 MR. LANE: Because if -- first of all, as
- 4 I've said, Iqbal requires heightened pleading, not just
- 5 conclusions. We have the summary judgment standard.
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: I engaged in First Amendment
- 7 -- I engaged in First Amendment activity.
- 8 MR. LANE: We have a summary judgment
- 9 standard, where -- and, in fact, in Butz, this Court
- 10 held that a firm application of rules of civil procedure
- 11 will always prevent frivolous claims and meritless
- 12 litigation from occurring in situations exactly like
- 13 this. And that's true. A firm application of the rules
- 14 of civil procedure, a summary judgment standard, which
- 15 is --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, summary
- 17 judgment, that's -- you've already been in court for a
- 18 long time when you're talking about summary judgment.
- 19 MR. LANE: There's no easy way out of this,
- 20 unfortunately. Frequently, when you're talking about --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, there is an
- 22 easy way out of it. We could agree with the --
- 23 (Laughter.)
- MR. LANE: Well, that, unfortunately, is an
- 25 easy way out of the First Amendment as well. I mean,

- 1 this Court has decided some incredibly difficulty cases.
- 2 Snyder v. Phelps, authored by Your Honor, very difficult
- 3 case. Could it be side-stepped, by -- you know,
- 4 somebody steps off a curb and is thereby jaywalking?
- 5 Are we limiting --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: One thing about your
- 7 analysis that concerns me is that you seem to have a
- 8 very black-and-white view of what's going on in the
- 9 officer's mind: Did you stop -- did you arrest him
- 10 because of retaliation or was it because of legitimate
- 11 security?
- 12 And I suspect that the people engaged in
- 13 this type of thing have intuition. I mean, they don't
- 14 sit there and say, well, let's see; is it because he
- 15 says he didn't like the war in Iraq, or is because he's
- 16 wandering around, looks like he's looking for something,
- 17 with a -- with a bag? I mean, I assume they sort have
- 18 experience and they calculate all this in and say I've
- 19 got to do something. And how do you parse those
- 20 different motivations?
- MR. LANE: Well, what I say about that
- 22 is that -- and, again, I know this is not an answer that
- 23 you're probably going to like, because this means a
- 24 trial is involved, but this is what juries do on a daily
- 25 basis throughout this country, in every criminal case.

- 1 What is the subjective intent of the defendant? In
- 2 every civil case, is this an intentional act, a knowing
- 3 act, a reckless act, a negligent act? That's what
- 4 juries do.
- 5 And if there's enough evidence to get this
- 6 case to trial -- and I would posit it that in this case,
- 7 where you have agent after agent after agent who saw the
- 8 encounter up close and personal with the Vice President
- 9 and Mr. Howards, none of whom saw any evidence of any
- 10 criminal activity by Mr. Howards, all of whom let Mr.
- 11 Howards walk away from the scene, that's good evidence
- 12 that --
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: One reason that I,
- 14 in fact, don't like the answer is because what the agent
- 15 is now going to have to factor -- in addition to the
- 16 hostility of the views, the touching of the Vice
- 17 President, the lying about it, the wandering around with
- 18 the bag -- is in the back of his mind, you know, if I'm
- 19 wrong, I may be held personally liable in damages for
- 20 taking some action that some jury somewhere is going to
- 21 say was based on retaliation rather than my obligation
- 22 to protect the Vice President.
- 23 MR. LANE: Well, I mean, theoretically yes,
- 24 that could be a problem. And I am quite certain that
- 25 certain civil litigants -- just as in criminal cases,

- 1 people are wrongly accused of things that they didn't
- 2 do, they end up in a trial, and sometimes juries get the
- 3 wrong results and an injustice occurs.
- 4 We can't fix all those problems when it's
- 5 not really a significant problem. There are no run on
- 6 the courtrooms around the land of these kinds of cases
- 7 arising. We don't need to have any rules that
- 8 specifically pertain to the Secret Service when, to my
- 9 knowledge, this Court has had one Secret Service case in
- 10 its entire history, and there are 15 appellate reported
- 11 Federal decisions regarding retaliatory arrests,
- 12 period --
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: Which -- is there a record
- 14 of retaliatory arrests by Secret Service agents against
- 15 people who say things that are critical of the President
- 16 and the Vice President?
- 17 MR. LANE: The only way I know to look for
- 18 that is on Westlaw or LEXIS. And Mr. Srinivasan
- 19 indicated that they found 100 or 400 cases. We did a
- 20 search like that. We came up with the same number. We
- 21 dug down into those cases. And in terms of actual
- 22 litigated retaliatory arrest cases, we found 15 total.
- 23 That's not scientific, but that's the best I've got for
- 24 you at this point.
- 25 And I don't know if there is a repository of

- 1 where we can find that or not. But this -- and I
- 2 started this argument by saying this is a solution in
- 3 search of a problem. The Secret Service has adequately
- 4 done their jobs beautifully over -- for over a century.
- 5 And there is no reason to put some different rule down
- 6 on the Secret Service.
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, we lost a couple of
- 8 Presidents, didn't we?
- 9 (Laughter.)
- MR. LANE: Well, they're doing the best they
- 11 can. I mean, that's -- I understand that. But it is --
- 12 it is a serious, serious issue to curtail the First
- 13 Amendment.
- 14 Consider the situation where you actually
- 15 do -- and I believe this is that case -- you have Secret
- 16 Service agents who deserve to be taken to a trial
- 17 because they have gone out of their way to punish
- 18 someone for their free speech.
- 19 What do you do about those guys?
- 20 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But it's ambivalent. I
- 21 mean, suppose it turns out you have this trial. We know
- 22 what words were spoken. Get to the trial; it turns out
- 23 Reichle is a strong opponent of the war in Vietnam.
- 24 Then, end of trial, right?
- MR. LANE: You know, that would be a fact to

- 1 be considered by the jury. I could lose this trial when
- 2 we go back, if we get a trial. That's what -- that's
- 3 what jury trials are all about, Justice Ginsburg.
- 4 And I'm not saying that I have to show
- 5 evidence to this Court that I'm going to win the trial
- 6 before I win this case. The issue simply is, can we
- 7 sacrifice the First Amendment? You know, does a
- 8 litterbug lose their right to have First Amendment free
- 9 speech, does a jaywalker lose their right to have First
- 10 Amendment free speech because probable cause exists to
- 11 believe they've committed some offense? And you'll have
- 12 officers ostensibly enforcing litter laws and jaywalking
- 13 laws and blocking-the-sidewalk laws, and First Amendment
- 14 is essentially evaded.
- 15 A hundred years of jurisprudence, courageous
- 16 jurisprudence, many times by this Court, goes by the
- 17 boards because somebody is a litterbug. I just don't
- 18 see that as the solution to this problem, and I also
- 19 don't see that the Secret Service needs some enhanced
- 20 protection from this Court when this has never been and
- 21 is not now any kind of a serious problem.
- 22 The status quo is Mount Healthy. It has
- 23 worked for decades, and it should continue to work. And
- 24 if these agents get tagged in this case, maybe they
- 25 deserved to get tagged in this case, because the First

- 1 Amendment is extremely important. And I don't denigrate
- 2 the job of law enforcement or these agents in any way.
- 3
 I'm simply saying that when the First
- 4 Amendment is at stake, I think -- and the law has been
- 5 working just fine throughout decades, to extend the no
- 6 probable cause in Hartman to on-street encounters where
- 7 there is no complex causation chain, where the main
- 8 actor in Hartman was immune completely from lawsuit --
- 9 the prosecutor in Hartman could not be sued under any
- 10 circumstances, nor could the prosecutor in Hartman be
- 11 questioned in deposition under our traditions. We don't
- 12 question prosecutors in depositions about why they made
- 13 decisions to go ahead and prosecute. So, this Court
- 14 stepped back in Hartman and said that's a different
- 15 story.
- 16 But on-street encounters -- if you extend
- 17 the no-probable-cause requirement to on-street
- 18 encounters, any roque police officer, or Secret Service
- 19 agent, who wants to can ostensibly enforce any number of
- 20 legal violations -- 1 mile an hour over the speed limit,
- 21 you're going to jail allegedly for going 1 mile an hour
- 22 over the speed limit; or under Atwater, for not wearing
- 23 a seat belt -- when the real reason is your bumper
- 24 sticker.
- 25 If you can prove that, they should go to

1	trial.
2	Absent any further questions, I'll sit down
3	Thank you very much.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
5	The case is submitted.
6	(Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the case in the
7	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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20	
21	
22	
23	
24	
25	

	Ī	l	I	I
	54:10	agent's 5:22	angered 45:12	16:4 32:2,24
ability 27:1	actor 58:8	35:7,12,15	45:21 47:6	56:2
able 51:19	acts 30:3	agree 7:22 20:17	angry 49:4,6	arises 17:12
above-entitled	actual 31:7 46:9	44:2,4 49:17	animus 4:16,18	arising 55:7
1:12 59:7	55:21	52:22	17:19 18:3	Arizona 7:25
absence 4:6 12:5	addition 54:15	ahead 43:5	43:16 44:21	arm 33:6,17
Absent 59:2	additional 28:10	58:13	45:4,24 46:3	armband 10:15
absolute 14:11	address 11:8,9	AL 1:4	46:11	Armstrong 25:3
48:1	12:7	ALITO 47:13	announced 25:3	25:16
absolutely 6:16	addressed 13:1	47:16 51:21,25	answer 4:8 8:12	arrest 3:13,14
13:9 20:11	addressing 16:9	52:6 55:13	27:14 28:8	4:7,12,15,22
23:19 36:17,22	adequately 56:3	allegation 4:15	37:21 53:22	5:3,11,19,21
37:10,22 46:24	administrable	allegations 18:5	54:14	6:11,13,15,23
account 13:6	21:10	18:14 40:11	answer's 43:3	7:23 8:7,23,23
16:21 19:15	admit 9:4	allege 4:18	antiwar 10:15	8:24 9:1,18
25:12,22 29:8	adopt 7:7	12:20	anybody 41:7	10:9,18,23
30:8 47:20	adversaries 47:2	alleged 17:20	appeals 21:24	11:22 13:11,13
accountable	adversary 46:21	allegedly 3:16	APPEARAN	14:21 16:23
41:22	adverse 29:14	4:2 58:21	1:15	17:11 18:17,21
accounts 33:2	29:16	allowed 38:7,10	appellate 32:17	23:24 27:25
accused 55:1	advocating	ambivalent	55:10	29:2 31:6,14
acknowledge	13:23	56:20	applicability	32:15 35:1,21
9:12 47:16	aftermath 29:16	amendment	28:12,17	38:21 42:14
across-the-bo	agency 37:12	6:24 7:24	application	51:4,4,13 53:9
17:24 21:10	agent 5:7,20	10:19,21 11:11	52:10,13	55:22
22:15,22 23:11	12:19 13:25	11:17,20 17:8	applied 14:6	arrested 3:16
24:10 28:24	14:1,19 17:19	17:9 21:14	17:25 47:9	4:2 6:20 19:5
30:12	18:3,6,8 25:22	25:7,8,11,21	applies 28:13	34:9,12 36:2,5
act 14:3 18:12	34:13,19 35:23	26:4,8 27:9,24	apply 7:7 17:18	42:10 46:12
22:19 24:14	44:12,13,15,20	30:24 35:11,18	18:19 19:11,14	47:7
54:2,3,3,3	44:23 45:9,9	35:20 38:5,9	23:16 24:17	arrestee 30:2
acted 6:7 18:9	45:11,12,15,22	38:18 39:11,18	28:13 30:11	arresting 10:7
26:23	45:24 49:7	42:11 45:6,13	31:19 32:25	44:20
acting 4:10	54:7,7,7,14	46:8,22 47:20	38:18	arrests 7:8 9:8
12:14 13:19	58:19	48:14,15,18,19	applying 16:12	10:4,5 14:9
14:19 26:15	agents 3:11,16	51:1,1,2,15,18	23:11	22:1,7 46:23
27:2	4:2,5,10,14,23	52:6,7,25	approached	47:12 55:11,14
action 6:25 7:11	9:22 12:11,12	56:13 57:7,8	34:12 36:5	arrow 37:22
12:6 29:14,17	12:13,21,25	57:10,13 58:1	45:8 46:16	43:1,2
39:4 54:20	13:4,5,10,14	58:4	appropriately	arrows 39:20
activities 47:19	13:19 15:3	amicus 1:20 2:8	14:3	asked 30:16
activity 16:21	16:14,20 17:2	16:6	aptly 15:2	31:17 45:15
17:8,10,14,17	35:25 36:4,11	analysis 15:16	archetypal	46:20
18:10 19:16,20	37:4 44:16	35:20 46:8	28:21	asking 13:18
25:11,21 26:8	47:19 55:14	51:1,1,2,15	area 34:14	assault 30:19
27:9 29:15,23	56:16 57:24	53:7	argument 1:13	31:7,13,13
47:20 52:7	58:2	Anderson 15:21	2:2,5,9 3:3,6	33:9,12,15

34:4 36:7	27:2 30:4	36:10,15,18,20	25:13,22 27:23	39:10
45:17	31:22 54:21	36:23 37:2,11	28:19 29:24	chain 58:7
assaulting 5:12	basis 6:7 21:8	37:16 42:19	32:19,24 33:1	charge 5:13 36:8
45:16	30:5 36:9	43:6,8,11	38:12 39:10,18	44:13 48:14,15
asserted 18:3,13	37:13 53:25	46:20 49:2,14	40:18 42:20	charged 34:7
27:24 41:15	beautifully 56:4	49:18,21,24	43:12,25 44:7	charges 23:18
assertion 19:4	behalf 2:4,7,11	50:2,7,10,14	44:10,12 45:4	31:7,11
assessing 47:22	3:7 16:5 32:3	50:16,19,23	45:7 46:19	chases 7:25
48:3	believe 13:18	Breyer's 11:1	47:24 48:5,24	Cheney 3:18 4:4
assessment 5:23	50:5,22 56:15	32:9	53:3,25 54:2,6	44:14
14:25	57:11	brief 32:13	54:6 55:9	Chief 3:3,8 4:25
assume 16:24	belt 58:23	briefly 11:7	56:15 57:6,24	16:1,3,8,24
53:17	benefits 21:9	bright 51:17	57:25 59:5,6	17:2 31:25
assumption 27:1	22:22	broaden 16:16	cases 14:5 20:9	32:4 34:8,11
assure 38:3	best 26:23 32:23	broader 16:12	21:16,24,24	34:17 35:1,5
attaches 14:21	35:4 55:23	broken 6:5	22:8 23:1,4,5	35:14 39:6,14
attention 26:1	56:10	Bryant 32:21	27:5,6 28:17	39:22 40:12,17
Atwater 14:4	beyond 7:13	bullet 3:11	32:12,17 39:21	40:20,25 41:4
58:22	bill 8:6	bumper 39:8,12	43:13 45:3	41:23 42:3,6
authored 53:2	binge 10:10	40:15,22 41:14	51:22 53:1	46:19 51:3
authorized	bishops 8:2	41:17,17,21,25	54:25 55:6,19	52:16,21 53:6
18:23	bit 3:19,21	42:8 58:23	55:21,22	54:13 59:4
automatic 20:5	32:11	business 49:23	causation 12:25	Circuit 5:5 7:16
20:6	Bivens 7:11	Butz 52:9	13:3,4 18:18	15:8,9,10
aware 25:5	32:15		24:7,9,11	35:19 43:12,12
32:20	black-and-wh	C	28:14,24 29:9	44:7 51:11
a.m 1:14 3:2	53:8	C 2:1 3:1	58:7	Circuit's 7:17
	blocking-the-s	calculate 53:18	cause 3:14 4:6	51:8
B	57:13	called 4:8	4:13 5:3,3,5	circumstances
babies 25:24	board 20:12	candidly 28:6	6:1,6 7:23 8:7	16:22 17:10
36:13 37:5	40:4	capacity 4:11	10:22 11:12,15	22:24 25:17
49:24	boards 57:17	12:14 13:20	11:16 12:5,6	26:9 58:10
back 12:1 21:21	body 44:9	14:20	14:20 24:23	circumstantial
26:19,22 30:15	books 13:13	capture 35:6	30:16,18,19	44:10 45:23
32:14 33:21	border 7:25	car 5:25 6:2	31:2,6,16 37:8	cite 32:13
34:22 40:7	borne 17:17	39:7	39:4 43:14,21	civil 52:10,14
54:18 57:2	box 38:1	cared 8:2	44:8,9,11	54:2,25
58:14	branch 42:18	carrying 34:14	46:10 47:2	claim 4:7 6:19
badge 45:10	breathing 13:20	34:22	48:8,9 50:5,21	6:24 7:12,25
bag 34:15,22	Breyer 6:18 7:2	case 3:4,14,23	51:10,14 57:10	10:21 14:22
37:25 38:1	7:15,21 8:19	5:20 7:5 8:8,11	58:6	24:24 27:24
50:13 53:17	8:21 9:7,20	8:14 12:1 13:1	cautious 14:24	42:24
54:18	10:2 19:22,25	13:9,11,15	century 56:4	claimed 36:1
barrage 47:5,9	20:4,11,15,17	14:4,24 15:2,8	certain 54:24,25	claims 4:15
base 24:5	20:20,25 27:5	15:9,10,10,13	certainly 9:9,15	21:14 22:12
based 4:15 18:9	27:11,15,16,22	15:13,18,21,25	14:16,21 22:12	42:15 47:5
24:18 26:23,25	28:2,4 33:8	22:13 24:1	23:21 27:18	52:11

clean 51:17 40:11 convince 27:2 courts 43:19,20 deal 11:5 21: 22:23,25 23 14:6 conduct 28:7 19:8 22:7 24:3 Court's 14:5 23:7 45:3 clearly 4:22 13:2 conducting 34:10,16 36:19 24:22 35:11 deal 11:5 21: 22:23,25 23 13:11,16 15:7 47:18 37:1 38:12 dealt 8:22 client 49:4 48:2 56:14 costs 21:10 create 51:17 58:5 close 54:8 consider ation 22:23 29:9 decided 38:1	3:3 4 3 2
14:6 conduct 28:7 19:8 22:7 24:3 Court's 14:5 23:7 45:3 clearly 4:22 13:2 34:10,16 36:19 24:22 35:11 dealing 29:24 13:11,16 15:7 47:18 37:1 38:12 dealt 8:22 client 49:4 48:2 56:14 costs 21:10 create 51:17 creates 24:7 58:5	4 3 2
clearly 4:22 13:2 conducting 34:10,16 36:19 24:22 35:11 dealing 29:24 13:11,16 15:7 47:18 37:1 38:12 dealt 8:22 15:17 consider 33:24 correctly 35:25 create 51:17 decades 57:2 client 49:4 48:2 56:14 costs 21:10 creates 24:7 58:5	3 2
13:11,16 15:7 47:18 37:1 38:12 dealt 8:22 15:17 consider 33:24 correctly 35:25 create 51:17 decades 57:2 client 49:4 48:2 56:14 costs 21:10 creates 24:7 58:5	3 2
15:17 consider 33:24 correctly 35:25 create 51:17 decades 57:2 client 49:4 48:2 56:14 costs 21:10 creates 24:7 58:5	2
client 49:4 48:2 56:14 costs 21:10 creates 24:7 58:5	2
close 54.8 consideration 22.23 29.9 decided 38.1	
2000 2 1.0 Complete action 22.25 27.7 action 30.1	_
collective 45:2 17:14,16 19:20 counsel 9:24 credible 39:17 47:10 53:1	_
Colorado 1:16 25:15 16:1,19 22:16 credit 32:11 decidedly 29	:5
1:22 34:6 considerations 23:10 31:25 Creighton 15:21 decides 4:21	
combination 22:18 23:10 59:4 crime 33:6,7 13:8	
42:21 considered country 7:9 34:4 36:6 deciding 9:18	3
combines 43:14 22:21 44:11 36:25 42:12 42:10 44:15 17:10 30:8	
come 40:11 57:1 53:25 50:22 44:12	
comes 31:4 consistent 40:4 couple 29:4 56:7 criminal 10:8 decision 7:17	,
34:22 constant 47:5,9 courageous 53:25 54:10,25 14:2 24:22	
committed Constitution 57:15 critical 19:12 decisions 13:	21
44:16 50:22 11:18 course 8:21 55:15 15:4 55:11	
57:11 constitutional 20:15 22:8 criticized 45:17 58:13	
completely 58:8 12:4 15:22 30:23 38:17 45:19 46:16 declined 45:3	0
complex 13:5 39:1 court 1:1,13 3:9 cross-appeal defend 40:1	
24:7,8,11 contact 33:14,19 3:10 4:8,16,20 7:19 defendant 54	
28:14 29:9 contacted 5:20 5:14 6:23 7:20 crowd 19:17 degree 17:19	
58:7 contacts 33:24 8:17 13:8 14:4 20:1,2,6,18 18:3 47:22	
complexity context 16:12,14 14:23 15:5,14 26:3,3 demeanor 36	
12:25 16:20 18:1,19 15:21 16:8 cuffs 45:22 demonstrate	S
complicated 18:21 19:11 17:25 19:1 curb 53:4 15:2	
18:4,17 28:23 22:18 23:12,16 21:9,21,23,24 curiae 1:20 2:8 demonstrati	on
conceivable 24:8 25:1,14 22:11,21,24 16:6 18:24 19:3	
38:11 25:20 29:11,18 23:6 25:3 curtail 56:12 denigrate 58	
concern 26:23 29:25 30:11,24 28:18,20,22 cut 35:4 40:7 Denver 1:16,	
28:14 31:15	
37.3,9 48.8 Contexts 17.7 31.4,11,19	
concerned 46:21 19:18 40:5 32:5,20 39:17 D 1:3 3:1 depending	
48:7,11 contingent 39:21,23 40:1 da 20:8,8,8 22:11	
concerning 23:4 14:18,18 40:1,6,10 daily 47:18 depose 41:6	
concerns 28:23 continue 57:23 47:10 48:25 53:24 deposition 30	5:1
31:18 53:7 contours 15:24 51:11,11 52:9 damages 3:15 36:4 45:8	
concluded 15:18 31:10 52:17 53:1 3:24 54:19 58:11	
concluding contrary 8:4 55:9 57:5,16 danger 15:1 depositions	
15:14 42:24 57:20 58:13 24:14 25:12 58:12 58:12	
conclusion 41:3 control 19:17 courthouse 26:10 47:22 Deputy 1:18	
41:13,16 20:1,2,6,18 42:14 47:12 DAVID 1:22 described 34	:9
conclusions 26:3,3 29:21 courtroom 3:20 2:10 32:2 46:22	_
41:12 52:5 30:3 courtrooms day 36:13 37:6 deserve 56:1	
conclusory convicted 42:12 55:6 41:8 deserved 57:	25

1 1 100 05		86 447 20	FGO 1 1 6 10 22	100
designed 22:25	discretion 9:13	effect 45:20	ESQ 1:16,18,22	explaining 18:8
25:16	10:6 11:21	effected 31:14	2:3,6,10	18:12
designing 23:7	discretionary	effort 39:3	essentially 8:13	expressed 17:21
desire 19:24	10:17 16:22	either 10:9	9:23 10:19	37:20
24:14,15 27:3	discussion 35:24	47:14 48:20	12:17 57:14	expressing
27:4	disentangle	element 4:7	established 4:22	26:14 38:6
detail 44:13	24:13 26:18	elements 12:4,6	13:11,16 15:7	expressive 16:21
details 17:3	disgusting 33:4	emotional 36:20	15:17	17:14,16 18:9
32:16	34:1,20	employee 29:13	ET 1:4	19:16,20 25:11
determination	dislike 11:22	29:14,22	evaded 57:14	29:15,23
7:16	disparate 42:21	employer 29:13	evaluate 12:22	extend 4:21 7:18
determine 12:23	disposal 27:14	29:16,22	event 45:13	11:4 13:9 21:3
13:7 14:2	disprove 4:19	employment	eventually 5:13	21:4 26:3 58:5
15:16	dispute 33:5	28:20 29:4,11	everybody 42:7	58:16
determining	dissent 43:9	30:11	evidence 24:15	extended 15:11
16:21 32:12	distinction 20:2	encounter 17:8	41:24 43:13	15:15
Devenbeck 51:9	20:15	44:15 54:8	44:10 45:1,23	extension 23:21
Devenpeck 5:17	distinctions	encounters	54:5,9,11 57:5	43:24
7:18 9:10	20:13	12:19 58:6,16	evidencing	extreme 21:12
30:25 31:1,20	distinguish	58:18	17:15 19:20	22:23
46:9 51:9	17:13 25:17	enforce 58:19	evidentiary 21:2	extremely 24:13
difference 18:22	district 21:24	enforcement	41:9	58:1
25:6 26:4	40:1	12:13 16:14	exactly 10:1	eye 9:25
different 6:8,10	dis-uniformity	19:15 24:18	12:1 18:4,18	F
9:8,10,11 10:5	31:21	26:10,11,24	30:23 52:12	
12:3 14:14,16	doing 12:15,16	29:25,25 30:10	example 6:20	faces 47:17
19:7 25:1	33:22 36:25	58:2	8:25 24:22	fact 7:17 13:22
47:17 53:20	38:13 42:12	enforcing 57:12	28:21 31:20	18:15 24:4
56:5 58:14	48:17,18 50:25	engage 19:11	exception 22:23	29:11 31:18
differently	56:10	engaged 12:20	23:2,4 38:18	43:24 46:4
10:24 31:22	doubtless 33:24	19:16 26:8	exceptional-ci	52:9 54:14
difficult 15:4	draw 14:5 20:14	52:6,7 53:12	23:2	56:25
17:13 18:7,8	46:25	engages 29:15	exceptions	factor 10:23
19:19 24:13	driven 9:3	engaging 9:22	21:11	54:15
48:24 53:2	drove 24:9	enhanced 57:19	Excuse 44:17	factors 43:18
difficulty 3:21	31:19	enmesh 47:4	executive 42:18	facts 7:18 33:1
9:20 53:1	dug 55:21	entire 15:13	exercise 9:13	40:14 44:7
dimension 31:16	D.C 1:9,19	44:14 55:10	16:22	45:4
directed 32:9	43:11,12	entitled 4:11	existed 6:6	factual 18:4
directing 46:11	$oxed{\mathbf{E}}$	13:14	exists 43:21	20:16
disaggregate		entitling 4:23	57:10	factually 32:23
19:19	E 2:1 3:1,1	enunciated	expect 31:6	fair 14:7
disagree 26:16	earlier 14:23	40:10	experience	false 5:9
disagreement	early 13:12	episodes 45:6	53:18	far 20:25 21:3
8:3 43:23	easy 4:18 52:19	equal 24:24,25	Explain 5:8	43:16
disagrees 8:1	52:22,25	25:7	explained 24:12	far-reaching 8:9
discrete 45:5	echo 22:16	especially 9:21	30:25	favor 23:10
-				

Federal 5:7 27:8	forging 22:23	14:12,16 16:2	35:24 44:9	held 4:5 6:18,23
28:2,4 32:16	form 18:20	gears 35:19	grounds 39:18	41:22 52:10
55:11	30:12	General 1:19	48:18,19	54:19
feelings 38:25	formed 36:9	gently 33:6	guess 21:8 22:16	help 16:16 47:24
felony 10:5,7	formulation	getting 11:1	34:24	high 15:23
felt 18:10	13:17	24:6	GUS 1:3	history 20:7
Finally 15:6	forth 49:5,24	Ginsburg 4:24	guy 39:16	55:10
find 27:23 32:8	found 5:5 22:10	5:2,4,8,17	guys 56:19	hit 37:19
41:24 56:1	44:7 55:19,22	14:10,14 23:14	guys 30.19	ho 49:15,16
finding 43:14	Fourteenth 25:7	24:1 28:11	<u> </u>	hoc 51:8,12
fine 33:23 43:16	Fourth 11:17	30:15 31:3	half 11:8,9,9	holding 15:11
58:5	30:23 35:11,18	43:9 56:20	hand 17:13	Honor 9:15 24:2
fines 10:8	46:8 51:1	57:3	handed 13:12	30:22 44:18
firm 52:10,13	frame 21:20	Ginsburg's	hands 33:20	53:2
first 4:6 5:17	Framers 11:17	35:23	happened 8:4	Honor's 38:25
6:24 7:3,12,22	free 11:23 12:17	give 5:18,24	happens 17:6	hope 9:4 22:13
7:24 10:19,21	12:21 38:23	28:8 39:16	26:21 30:23	hostile 33:24
11:8,9,11,20	39:4 48:23	41:19	31:23 36:23	hostility 54:16
17:8,9 21:14	49:1 56:18	given 20:25 29:7	harassment	hour 9:3 39:12
25:7,10,20	57:8,10	33:1	5:14 30:19	41:8 58:20,21
26:4,7 27:9,24	frequency 21:18	go 12:8 30:15	31:7,11 34:7	Howards 1:7 3:4
35:17,20 38:5	27:20	32:7 40:25	36:8	5:21,21 33:1
38:9,18 39:10	frequent 9:17	41:2,4,5,21	hard 4:18 26:18	36:2 45:7,10
39:18 41:3,10	frequently 8:23	43:5 44:19	Harlow 14:17	45:12,14,21,25
42:11 45:5,8	52:20	47:25 48:24,25	Hartman 4:9,21	46:11 48:6
45:13 46:22	frivolous 40:8	51:22 52:1	8:14,21 11:5	50:5 54:9,10
47:8,20 48:14	52:11	57:2 58:13,25	12:2,2 13:1,2,9	54:11
48:15,18,19	front 19:1 26:20	goes 57:16	13:11 15:11,14	Huff 14:24
49:16,23 50:25	26:21	going 10:15,18	18:1,20 21:21	hundred 21:23
51:2,15,18	full 14:22	10:20 18:6,7,8	23:9,15,22,22	42:16 57:15
52:3,6,7,25	functions 9:23	18:16 19:9,18	24:2 28:12,17	Hunter 32:21
56:12 57:7,8,9	12:13 16:15	20:12,15 25:23	28:19 43:8,25	hurt 49:16
57:13,25 58:3	19:12,16	26:12 29:12	47:9,10,14	hypothesis
fit 23:4 29:2	further 47:25	32:14 35:7,12	58:6,8,9,10,14	22:19
fits 29:5	59:2	35:15,20 36:12	hate 39:8 40:23	hypothetical
fix 55:4	F.B.I 17:2	36:24 37:5,6,7	41:16	9:21
flashed 45:10		37:7 39:11	hauled 39:16	hypotheticals
flip 29:10 41:19	G	41:7 43:3 44:2	Healthy 57:22	21:12
focus 16:11	G 3:1	45:24 46:22	hear 3:3 37:5	
25:25	Gallagher 1:16	49:15 53:8,23	49:8	<u> </u>
focused 24:3	2:3 3:5,6,8,22	54:15,20 57:5	heard 32:20	ideas 38:6
focusing 15:22	4:1 5:4,16 6:3	58:21,21	hearing 3:21	identified 28:19
footnote 8:14,14	6:9,12,16 7:1	good 4:17 6:14	42:20 43:4	28:20
12:2 23:9	7:15 8:12,20	51:13 54:11	heck 9:14	illegitimate
32:13	9:9,15,19,25	government 5:9	heightened 40:9	17:16 19:22,23
force 37:24,25	10:12 11:3,7	32:7	41:11 42:15	24:15 27:3
forge 21:11	11:16,25 12:10	great 23:3 33:21	52:4	29:19

	I	I		I
illicit 22:20	inside 38:1	jobs 56:4	37:16 38:4,8	45:2 50:24
imminent-thr	institutes 23:17	JR 1:3	38:13,17,21	53:3,22 54:18
13:22	intelligent 18:16	judges 14:24	39:6,14,22	55:17,25 56:21
immune 23:19	intensity 26:7	judging 49:4	40:12,17,20,25	56:25 57:7
48:13,15,22	intent 38:25	judgment 52:5,8	41:4,13,23	knowing 54:2
58:8	51:19 54:1	52:14,17,18	42:3,6,19 43:6	knowledge 45:3
immunity 4:12	intentional 54:2	judicial 14:7	43:8,8,11	55:9
4:23 13:15,18	intent-motivat	June 13:10 15:7	44:17,19 45:2	knows 41:15
13:23 14:11,13	38:25	juries 53:24	46:2,6,18,19	
14:15,17,18,21	interaction 30:1	54:4 55:2	46:20,25 47:4	L
14:22 15:7,16	interactions	jurisdictions	47:13,16 48:12	land 55:6
20:5,6 24:18	27:19 29:21	21:15	48:17 49:2,14	Lane 1:22 2:10
24:19 42:16	interested 11:2	jurisprudence	49:18,21,24	32:1,2,4 33:11
import 35:24	43:3	35:11 57:15,16	50:2,7,10,14	33:14,18 34:2
important 11:11	intuition 53:13	jury 18:7 27:2	50:16,19,23	34:6,10,16
13:19,23,24	intuitions 26:24	51:25 54:20	51:3,21,25	35:3,9,17
15:12,22 23:13	invitation 45:11	57:1,3	52:6,16,21	36:14,17,19,22
24:25 58:1	inviting 46:19	Justice 1:19 3:3	53:6 54:13	37:1,10,15,19
importantly	involve 29:12	3:8,19,25 4:24	55:13 56:7,20	38:7,10,16,20
5:20	involved 7:6	4:25 5:2,4,8,16	57:3 59:4	38:22 39:13,19
importing 31:15	32:11 53:24	5:24 6:4,5,11		40:3,14,19,24
inches 44:14	involving 32:20	6:14,18 7:2,15	<u>K</u>	41:2,9,19 42:2
incident 15:17	Iqbal 40:10	7:21 8:19,21	keep 27:12	42:5,9 43:5,7
incidental 33:14	41:11 52:4	9:7,11,16,19	Kennedy 3:19	43:10 44:6,18
33:16	Iraq 33:4 45:18	9:20,24 10:1,2	3:25 17:18,23	45:1,5 46:5,7
include 16:25	53:15	10:13 11:1,4	24:17,20 25:5	46:24 47:3,8
including 25:1	irrelevant 35:12	11:10,14,19	kill 37:6	47:14,24 48:16
31:20	46:10	12:8 14:10,14	killed 25:24	48:21 49:13,17
incredibly 53:1	issue 3:10 7:19	16:1,3,8,24	36:13	49:20,23 50:1
indicated 55:19	7:20 8:18 20:7	17:2,18,23	killing 49:22,24	50:4,9,12,15
indication 5:14	28:14 30:24	18:22 19:1,9	kind 14:14	50:17,21,24
individual 7:11	35:13 56:12	19:22,25 20:4	17:25 24:11	51:6,24 52:3,8
20:8 25:23	57:6	20:11,15,17,20	26:9,24 30:9	52:19,24 53:21
26:13 37:14,21	issues 24:7	20:25 21:13,18	57:21	54:23 55:17
individuals 17:7	35:11	22:1,4 23:14	kinds 8:25 18:5	56:10,25
24:4 31:21	I'll 43:2	23:15 24:1,3	18:14 27:19	Laughter 9:6
infer 29:18		24:17,20 25:5	39:21 55:6	34:25 52:23
43:20,22	J	26:2 27:5,11	know 8:9 9:14	56:9
inferring 30:5	jail 58:21	27:15,16,22	9:17 15:20,20	law 4:21 12:13
inform 16:16	jaywalker 57:9	28:2,4,11	20:5,9 21:5,15	13:10,15 15:16
26:8	jaywalking 8:25	30:15 31:3,25	22:3 27:6,10	16:14 19:14
information	10:8,9 11:14	32:4,9 33:8,9	27:16,19 31:9	26:10,11,24
27:6 44:25	21:4 53:4	33:12,16,23	31:10,17 33:3	29:25,25 30:9
initiated 8:16	57:12	34:3,8,11,17	36:24 38:24	34:6 37:4 58:2
injustice 55:3	job 33:21 36:15	35:1,5,14,23	39:15 40:5	58:4
inquiry 31:2,17	36:18 49:15	36:10,15,18,20	41:6,17 42:7	laws 57:12,13,13
35:17	58:2	36:23 37:2,11	42:21,23 44:2	lawsuit 3:13

				0.0
37:12 42:11	listen 48:1	26:22	14:8	49:15
58:8	literature 10:3	marshals 16:25	Moore 4:9	noise 3:20
leaders 12:15	litigants 54:25	matter 1:12 6:15	morphed 36:7	non-felony 22:4
Lee 44:13,15	litigated 55:22	7:9 19:2 31:3	motivated 38:24	non-protected
left 4:9 8:5	litigation 23:3	37:3 59:7	39:3	34:14
36:11	40:7 52:12	mean 8:24 20:8	motivating	normal 10:20
legal 58:20	litigious 40:3	20:17 23:17	10:23	normally 9:1
legitimate 16:19	litter 57:12	31:5 34:3	motivation 19:3	noted 14:4,23
17:9,14 19:19	litterbug 57:8	39:23 40:3	25:18,19 29:20	notice 8:4 45:25
24:14 27:4	57:17	41:5,9,14	30:6	no-probable-c
30:7 53:10	little 3:19,20	44:23 47:10	motivations	17:24 18:20
legitimately	21:6 32:11	48:15 49:4,9	53:20	23:12 30:13
12:22 13:6	location 45:20	52:25 53:13,17	motive 3:17 4:3	58:17
18:9 19:15	long 6:14 52:18	54:23 56:11,21	7:10 17:17	number 55:20
25:11,21 29:8	long-term 29:12	Meaning 11:20	43:13,23	58:19
47:20	look 15:23,23,24	44:21	motives 22:20	numerous 33:20
letting 33:20	19:25 26:13	means 51:22	Mount 57:22	44:16
let's 44:6,19	35:22 39:19	53:23	mourning 36:25	
45:3 50:1	44:6 46:8,12	measure 31:12	multifaceted	0
53:14	55:17	mentioned	35:3,6	O 2:1 3:1
level 12:24 13:7	looked 15:18,19	43:18	murderer 42:12	object 14:5 28:7
15:23,24 28:13	27:22 33:3	mere 4:15		objective 6:17
35:17 48:3	46:14	merely 45:17	N	18:19 23:11
LEXIS 32:14	looking 21:21	meritless 52:11	N 2:1,1 3:1	24:10 25:2,3
55:18	34:18 51:18	metal-detecting	Nation's 12:15	28:25 30:12
liability 26:13	53:16	38:2	natural 17:7	31:1,19 51:10
39:17	looks 53:16	mile 58:20,21	31:5	51:16,16
liable 4:5 54:19	lose 57:1,8,9	miles 9:3 39:11	nature 15:19	obligation 54:21
lie 37:7	lost 56:7	41:7	26:7 40:8	obvious 22:10
lied 3:17 4:3	lot 17:6 45:3	millions 22:5	necessarily 41:2	occurred 43:15
5:21 34:13	49:5 50:19	mind 26:22 28:7	need 7:6,13	45:6
46:4 49:18	lottery 23:8	30:20 31:18,23	10:16 24:9	occurring 52:12
50:23 51:4	lying 5:7 46:7	35:7,12,15,22	32:24 48:9	occurs 44:15
lies 34:21	54:17	46:9,13,13,14	55:7	55:3
life 20:22 43:19		46:15,15 51:12	needs 11:6 57:19	offense 31:17
life-or-death	<u>M</u>	53:9 54:18	negligent 54:3	57:11
13:21	main 30:1 58:7	minds 5:15	neither 23:16	offered 32:7
light 46:3	making 16:19	50:25 51:6	nervous 21:6	officer 5:9 6:2
limit 17:5 58:20	19:2 20:2,3,12	mine 22:25	49:10	7:8,25 9:18
58:22	21:5 32:24	misdemeanor	nervousness	10:6 20:8
limitations	Mall 33:15,19	10:4	21:8	23:20 26:9,11
32:14,17	manifest 25:12	misdemeanors	never 6:18,23	30:1,8 31:14
limited 21:16	manufactured	10:7	9:13 36:1,1	31:18 39:15,23
32:16 43:24	18:15	mistaken 27:1	51:6 57:20	41:6,20,25
limiting 53:5	mapped 31:12	money 3:15,24	nice 51:17	44:22 47:6
line 46:25 47:2,3	March 1:10	monitor 50:17	Ninth 15:8	48:1,10 51:20
lines 51:17	margins 13:24	months 13:13	nobody's 36:24	58:18
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

	•	•	·	·
officers 5:11,15	22:22	personally 4:5	34:20 45:18	11:13 16:10
5:17 10:17	overcomes 6:23	54:19	policing 18:23	principled 11:5
11:10,21 12:12	overheard 36:12	pertain 55:8	political 8:3	principles 25:14
16:15 19:11	overhears 25:23	Petitioners 1:5	42:22 43:22	prior 30:2
26:21 47:18		1:17,21 2:4,8	politically 8:1	prison 40:7
57:12	P	3:7 16:6,18	posed 28:11	probable 3:13
officer's 14:25	P 3:1	22:16	poses 37:16 48:4	4:6,13,24 5:2,3
31:23 51:12	page 2:2 32:12	Phelps 53:2	posit 7:19 54:6	5:5 6:1,6 7:23
53:9	parse 53:19	pick 16:18	possibility 23:8	8:6 10:22
official 28:5	part 25:9,9 35:9	picked 40:22	post 51:8,12	11:12,15,16
officials 27:8	37:20 46:23	picket 6:21	potential 4:14	12:5 14:20
oh 8:4 9:13 19:4	particular 12:22	picture 11:13	26:12	24:23 30:16,18
36:24	12:23 15:1	23:20	potentially 27:1	30:19 31:2,6
Ohio 37:23	16:10 17:6,20	piece 24:1	27:13	31:16 43:14,21
okay 10:2 11:3	20:8 21:1	place 25:2 50:20	power 10:18	44:8,9,11
36:15 37:11	particularly	plaintiff 10:15	16:23	46:10 47:2
38:15 48:20	13:23,24	plaintiffs 40:4	precise 31:10	48:9 50:21
49:2 50:9,16	pat 33:20 38:1	plan 23:7	precisely 25:12	51:10,14 57:10
once 14:21	48:9,22	plausible 39:10	prepared 3:11	58:6
19:10 43:20	pats 50:12	play 24:4	3:12 8:9	probably 32:23
one's 30:20	patted 33:6	pleading 40:9	presence 43:22	53:23
one-time 30:1,4	48:25	41:11,15 42:15	present 26:9	problem 17:12
on-street 58:6	pattern 29:12	52:4	presented 15:1	20:21,21,22
58:16,17	people 8:22,23	please 3:9 16:8	presents 47:23	21:1 24:12
opaque 37:25	19:2 20:21	32:5	President 3:12	26:19,20 32:8
38:1	33:20 49:9,22	point 6:21,22	3:18 4:4 5:12	32:19,22 33:18
open 4:9 37:24	50:19 53:12	7:10 10:25	7:5,6 12:19,20	37:16,18,20
opening 3:21	55:1,15	16:11,18 19:9	20:23 25:24	40:4 54:24
opens 50:13	perceive 37:24	22:9,10 23:3	33:2,19 34:13	55:5 56:3
opinion 5:6 22:9	perform 9:22	28:10 33:5	34:21 36:6,12	57:18,21
24:3,6	performing	35:10 39:15	36:16,24 37:6	problems 55:4
opponent 56:23	12:12 16:15	44:11 45:22	42:20 43:25	procedure 52:10
opposed 18:11	period 27:7	46:3 49:3	44:14 45:16,17	52:14
oral 1:12 2:2,5,9	29:21 55:12	50:22 51:2	46:1,4,7,16	proceeded 15:15
3:6 16:4 32:2	permit 10:18	55:24	47:21,22 49:11	proceeds 44:12
order 12:23 13:7	21:15	pointed 35:25	49:11,19,22	produce 43:24
13:21 14:2	persecution	points 5:16	54:8,17,22	proliferation
18:12 49:23	20:7	police 6:20 7:8	55:15,16	22:12
ordinarily 25:15	persecutions	10:16 11:10,21	Presidents 56:8	proof 24:24
ordinary 18:23	21:5	12:12 14:25	President's	proposed 47:1
25:13 47:18	person 7:25 8:15	39:8,14 40:23	43:19,20	prosecute 9:12
ostensibly 57:12	18:11,16 26:1	41:6,16,20,25	pretty 49:6	58:13
58:19	34:9,11,20	47:5,6,18,25	50:11	prosecution
outer 26:22	35:2 39:7	58:18	prevent 52:11	8:16 18:1
outlined 8:13	42:10 47:23	policemen 8:23	pre-dated 29:22	22:18 23:23
outside 47:1	personal 3:15,23	10:8 18:23	primary 15:8	24:8 28:22
outweigh 21:10	39:17 54:8	policies 33:4,25	principal 1:18	29:3,5 43:15
1				

nnogogytic	numers 25:10	moody 42.7	nomotol-: 22.21	noview 15.10
prosecutions	purpose 25:19	ready 43:7	remotely 32:21	review 15:12
8:22 9:8 30:14	put 28:17 39:7	real 6:19 58:23	reported 32:16	right 6:25 7:1,2
47:11	41:24,25 56:5	really 24:9	55:10	11:23 15:19,24
prosecutor	putting 49:2	32:18 40:5	repository 55:25	16:2 21:7 34:9
23:17,18 58:9	p.m 59:6	55:5	require 12:5	34:15 35:4,10
58:10	Q	reason 4:17 5:10	required 4:7	35:17 36:14
prosecutors	qualified 4:12	5:10 6:1,15,19	5:18	40:12 48:1,6
9:12 22:19	4:23 13:15,18	7:3 8:17 13:14	requirement	49:8 50:2,12
58:12	13:22 14:13,15	19:4 23:22	17:24 18:20	51:5,14 56:24
prospect 14:7	14:17 15:7,16	25:10,14 31:9	30:13 58:17	57:8,9
protect 7:6	42:16	35:5 38:14	requirements	rights 15:22
10:16 18:11		40:21 43:6	42:15	39:11
36:16 54:22	question 4:8 5:12 7:4 11:8	48:25 54:13	requires 52:4	risk 5:23 42:22
protected 7:11	12:7,9,11 18:2	56:5 58:23	requisite 13:20	ROBERTS 3:3
42:17	18:18 21:8	reasonable	research 27:23	4:25 16:1,3,24
protecting 12:14	22:14 28:11	34:23 35:15	reservation 25:6	17:2 31:25
12:19 20:21,22		38:11 48:7,10	respect 6:11,12	34:8,11,17
42:17 43:25	29:1 30:4,16	50:5	6:19 10:6	35:1,5,14 39:6
protection 24:24	32:9 35:3 58:12	reasons 4:4 5:18	23:25	39:14,22 40:12
24:25 25:7		23:16 24:12	respects 24:2	40:17,20,25
57:20	questioned 58:11	29:4	Respondent	41:4,23 42:3,6
protective 4:11		reckless 54:3	1:23 2:11 3:14	51:3 52:16,21
9:23 12:14	questions 8:13 16:12 18:4	recognize 37:17	3:23 32:3	53:6 54:13
13:20 14:20	35:23 41:10	record 55:13	response 7:14	59:4
16:15 17:3		recover 10:16	17:15 26:10,24	rogue 58:18
19:12 27:8	46:19 59:2	reference 21:20	28:11 30:10	room 13:21
28:5 32:16	quite 24:2 30:21 54:24	referred 43:11	45:16	roughly 21:23
44:13		refused 4:17	results 26:20	rule 4:21 7:7,7
protester 48:2,4	quiver 37:23	regard 9:21 13:4	55:3	16:12,13,16
48:24	39:20	13:17 15:6	retaliation 6:20	17:18 19:11
prove 10:22	quo 57:22	regarding 55:11	7:10 27:25	20:5 21:10
38:22 39:2	R	regardless 4:20	28:19 38:23	22:15,22,25
42:23,23 46:3	R 1:16 2:3 3:1,6	13:8 17:19	42:11 43:23	23:1,23 24:10
58:25	race 24:18 25:1	Reichle 1:3 3:4	48:14,22 49:1	25:16 28:13,25
public 9:25	25:13,14,17,18	5:20 31:14	53:10 54:21	31:19 37:4
12:15 17:8	racial 38:14	45:9,9,11,12	retaliatory 3:13	56:5
19:12 20:22	raise 42:11	45:15,22,24	3:16 4:2,7,15	rules 32:25
28:20 29:3,11	rare 43:13	46:11 56:23	4:16,18 6:24	52:10,13 55:7
30:11	rationale 51:8	Reichle's 46:9	7:24 8:17	run 22:25 47:11
publicity 27:20	reach 33:17	relationship	17:25 18:21	55:5
publicly 45:19	reached 8:5	29:12 30:3,5	21:14 22:18	rush 42:14
46:17	react 17:9 44:5	relevant 5:22	27:8 28:22	Ryburn 14:24
pulled 39:9	reacting 26:14	24:2 25:15	29:2,3,5 32:15	$\overline{\mathbf{S}}$
40:20	26:15	relied 15:8,10	35:21 42:14	$\frac{S}{S 2:1 3:1}$
punish 39:3	read 12:3,3,6	remedy 7:13	47:11,12 55:11	sacrifice 57:7
56:17	15:13	remember	55:14,22	sacrifice 57:7 saw 44:15,22
purely 31:22	10.10	11:12	retirement 23:7	5aw 44.13,44
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>l</u>	<u> </u>

	•	•	1	•
54:7,9	9:21 10:23	57:19 58:18	Snyder 53:2	40:21
saying 7:3,22	11:6 12:11,12	Service's 35:15	Solicitor 1:18	spoken 56:22
10:2 12:4,6,23	12:13,18,21,24	set 22:17	solution 32:6,18	spot 15:4
13:6 20:1	13:4,5,14,19	shaking 33:20	37:18,20 56:2	SRI 1:18 2:6
37:18 38:16	13:25 14:1,19	shift 35:19	57:18	16:4
40:22 44:3	15:3 16:9,14	shoulder 33:7	somebody 9:1	Srinivasan 1:18
48:2,21,23	16:17,20 17:5	33:17	33:17,25 34:19	2:6 16:3,4,7
56:2 57:4 58:3	19:13 25:22,25	show 37:25	49:16 51:13	17:1,4,22
says 8:4,15,16	32:19,25 34:12	39:24 40:1	53:4 57:17	18:25 19:8,23
26:13 37:4,5	34:19 35:7,15	57:4	someone's 14:2	20:3,10,14,19
39:8,15 41:17	42:17 47:17,19	showed 44:21	son 34:18	20:24 21:7,17
50:16 51:9	49:7 55:8,9,14	shows 32:16	sorry 19:24	21:19 22:3,6
53:15	56:3,6,15	side 29:3,4,6,10	33:11	23:25 24:19,21
Scalia 5:24 6:4,5	57:19 58:18	41:19	sort 12:25 17:15	25:9 26:6
6:11,14 9:11	security 53:11	side-stepped	19:12 20:6	27:10,13,18
9:16 18:22	see 9:7 20:20,20	8:17 53:3	21:11,22 29:15	28:1,3,6 30:22
19:1,9 26:2	20:21,22 21:23	sign 6:21	31:16 32:25	31:9 55:18
33:9,12,16,23	22:11 34:19	significant	53:17	stake 43:19,20
34:3 38:4,8,13	38:17 44:4	32:22 45:13	Sotomayor 9:24	58:4
38:17,21 41:13	50:1 53:14	55:5	10:1,13 11:4	stand 18:6 42:1
48:12,17 56:7	57:18,19	similar 12:25	11:10,14,19	standard 9:10
scene 15:1 18:3	seeks 3:14,23	16:15 23:9	12:8 21:13,18	11:17 21:22
18:16 36:1,4	selective 24:18	similarly 13:5	22:1,4 44:17	28:19 29:11
51:20 54:11	sense 16:13,16	31:21	44:19 45:2	40:10 48:8
science 32:11	18:18 19:10,14	simple 14:6	46:2,6,18,25	51:16 52:5,9
scientific 32:10	21:13 22:15	43:22	47:4	52:14
55:23	25:25 28:24	simply 41:12	sounds 7:12 8:8	standards 14:6
scores 22:7,7	29:10,18,21	48:10,23 57:6	Souter 23:15	51:16
screen 23:12	30:10 31:1	58:3	Souter's 24:3	standing 44:13
25:2,3 30:12	serious 56:12,12	single 42:9	speak 49:8,9	start 16:9 20:12
screening 18:19	57:21	sit 53:14 59:2	special 32:25	started 56:2
scrutiny 41:11	serves 25:19	situated 31:21	specific 23:15	state 5:13 31:11
SEAN 1:16 2:3	Service 3:11,15	situation 5:23	specifically 55:8	36:8 40:1,18
3:6	4:1,10,14 5:22	10:21 13:1,3	specified 11:17	statement 3:21
search 21:20,22	9:22 10:24	15:2,3 19:6	spectrum 28:18	5:9 6:22
28:7 32:10,13	11:6 12:11,12	24:5 30:9,18	29:2	States 1:1,13,20
55:20 56:3	12:13,18,21,24	47:17 49:6	speech 11:23,23	2:7 16:5 44:1
seat 58:23	13:4,5,14,19	50:8,10 56:14	12:17,21 24:15	status 57:22
second 4:10 5:19	13:25 14:1,19	situations 13:22	25:8 29:8,19	stay 45:19
11:9 12:7,10	15:3 16:10,14	13:24 19:14	30:8 38:24	steadfastly 4:17
44:20	16:17,20 17:5	20:16 22:20	39:4 48:23	stepped 58:14
second-guessed	19:13 25:22,25	42:22 52:12	49:1 56:18	steps 38:11 40:7
15:5	32:19 33:1	sketch 7:13	57:9,10	53:4
second-guessing	34:12,19 35:7	Skoog 15:9,9,13	speech-suppre	Steve 45:14 50:5
14:8,25	42:17 47:17,19	15:14,18,25	29:20 30:6	STEVEN 1:7
Secret 3:11,15	49:7 55:8,9,14	snap 14:2	speed 58:20,22	sticker 39:8,12
4:1,10,14 5:22	56:3,6,16	snatched 8:5	speeding 39:24	40:16,22 41:14
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

	I		I	I
41:17,18,21,25	Supreme 1:1,13	55:21	tied 23:23,23	12:3 23:15
42:8 58:24	sure 3:22 9:2	Terry 37:23	till 8:6	24:2,4
stop 5:25 37:21	10:12 11:25	38:11,23 39:2	time 4:22 8:22	two-individual
37:23 38:23	22:5,6 49:13	48:6,8,10,22	9:16,17 15:17	13:3
39:2 41:6,7,20	surrounding	test 5:25	18:7,8 21:20	type 14:17 53:13
48:6,6 53:9	27:20 44:10	testified 44:15	29:13 32:14,17	
stopped 6:2	surviving 14:7	45:7,14,21	34:14 35:8,16	U
40:15 41:15,18	suspect 30:2	51:7	39:9 42:12	underlies 5:6
52:1	53:12	Thank 16:1,2,7	52:18	understand 5:1
stopping 37:13	suspected 31:13	31:24,25 32:4	times 39:24	7:21 10:3
story 58:15	swear 49:5	59:3,4	57:16	19:10,13 21:7
strange 30:21	sweeps 7:13	theoretically	today 3:10	23:13 37:2
stringent 25:2		42:9 54:23	told 44:24	46:18 48:12
strong 7:5 43:13	<u>T</u>	theory 39:7 45:3	tort 12:4	49:9 56:11
43:23 56:23	T 2:1,1	thing 26:18	torts 39:1	understanding
subject 4:14	tagged 57:24,25	49:14 53:6,13	total 55:22	16:13
7:18 18:17	taillight 6:6	things 9:1 38:19	touch 33:17 37:7	understood
26:12,25 36:21	30:17	39:25 40:8	touched 3:17 4:3	44:22
subjective 31:2	take 3:11,12	55:1,15	34:13 37:8	undertakes
31:16 35:22	8:25 13:6	think 5:12,19	49:19	29:16
51:19 54:1	16:11,20 19:15	6:9 7:15 9:20	touches 34:20	undisclosed
submitted 59:5	20:1 30:8	10:25 15:2	touching 33:13	45:19
59:7	32:11 35:24	16:13 17:6,22	34:5 44:24	undisputed 46:3
sudden 42:7	38:10 44:6	18:2,17 19:13	46:4 54:16	unfortunately
sued 58:9	47:20	20:10,24 22:14	track 27:12	21:3 52:20,24
sufficient 28:23	taken 25:11,21	23:9,13,15	traditions 58:11	unique 11:6
sufficiently 14:6	29:8 40:7	24:1,8,21 25:9	trample 10:19	27:17
suggest 11:10	56:16	25:13 26:6	11:11	United 1:1,13,20
43:1	takes 33:12	27:20 28:16	treat 10:23	2:7 16:5 44:1
suggesting	talk 45:9,11,15	29:4 31:12,15	treated 31:22	unpopular 6:21
14:10,12 22:17	talked 43:13	32:6,8 33:4,25	treating 10:4	6:22 21:2
suit 23:18 26:25	talking 17:3	34:23 35:24	trial 8:5 18:6	unscientific
summary 52:5,8	19:6 22:8	37:17,19 39:19	41:1,3,5,21	21:19
52:14,16,18	49:22 52:18,20	43:2,16 45:23	51:23 52:2	unwanted 33:13
support 40:14	talks 10:3	58:4	53:24 54:6	34:5
43:14 45:23	tapped 33:6	thinking 49:10	55:2 56:16,21	use 10:17 21:20
supported 41:10	tell 34:3 37:7	third 4:20	56:22,24 57:1	37:13
supporting 1:20	telling 33:21	thought 28:22	57:2,5 59:1	U.S 3:15 4:1,10
2:8 16:6	tells 33:25	36:7 44:23	trials 57:3	16:25
suppose 43:17	Tenth 5:4 7:16	threat 12:24	true 52:13	-
56:21	7:17 15:9,10	13:7 14:3	try 35:4	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
supposed 50:3,4	35:19 44:7	17:15 18:10	trying 18:11	v 1:6 3:4 4:9
supposes 24:22	51:8,10	19:21 37:24	21:11 35:6	14:24 15:21
suppress 17:17	term 14:23	48:3 50:1,6	44:3	32:21 37:23
18:12 19:24	termination	three 3:24 4:4	turns 34:18	53:2
24:14,16 26:16	29:17	ticket 10:10	56:21,22	vast 10:17
27:3	terms 48:3	39:16,24 40:21	two 3:15,24 5:16	vehemence 26:7

	_	_		
Vice 3:12,18 4:4	26:16	34:22	15 32:16 55:10	
5:12 7:5 12:20	wants 58:19	word 20:1,1	55:22	
25:24 33:2,19	war 53:15 56:23	words 32:15	16 2:8	
34:13,21 36:5	warrant 16:22	45:20 49:5	1983 32:15	
36:12,16 37:6	17:10	56:22		
44:14 45:16,17	warranted	work 25:20	2	
45:25 46:4,7	26:25 30:10,18	29:20 30:6	2006 4:21 13:10	
46:16 47:22	warrants 17:15	57:23	13:10,12 15:8	
49:11 54:8,16	26:10	worked 57:23	47:10	
54:22 55:16	Washington 1:9	working 58:5	2012 1:10	
vicinity 47:21	1:19	world 25:25	21 1:10	
Vietnam 56:23	wasn't 5:10	wouldn't 7:23	25 21:22	
view 4:13 6:21	25:18 31:5	17:5 22:13		
6:22 7:10	51:12	27:12 38:4,8	3	
17:20 49:3	watch 50:18	wrong 54:19	3 2:4 13:13	
50:3 53:8	way 4:13 8:10	55:3	30,000-foot	
viewpoint 17:17	11:5 12:16,16	wrongly 55:1	15:23	
18:13 19:24	26:14 28:8,8		32 2:11	
24:16 27:3	28:16 36:5	X		
views 21:1,2	41:23 52:19,22	x 1:2,8	4	
26:15,16 42:22	52:25 55:17		400 55:19	
54:16	56:17 58:2	Y	450 21:24	
violated 39:10	ways 12:3	year 22:2	5	
violating 11:20	weak 43:14,21	years 14:8 21:22	5 27:7	
violation 5:6	wearing 10:14	27:7 42:16		
11:23 35:18	58:22	57:15	55-mile 9:3	
36:3 38:5,9	Wednesday	7	6	
44:8 46:14	1:10	Z	60 9:3 39:11	
51:18	weed 39:21	zone 9:4 12:17	65 41:7	
violations 58:20	weigh 23:10	\$		
VIRGIL 1:3	went 45:22	\$5 8:6	8	
Virtually 12:18	weren't 26:13	\$5 0.U	8 32:13 44:13	
voicing 46:22	Westlaw 21:22	1		
	55:18	1 58:20,21		
W	We'll 3:3	10 8:14 12:2		
walk 54:11	we're 10:18	23:9		
walked 33:2	13:23 22:8	100 55:19		
wand 38:2,2	35:20 50:25	100 53.17 10001 5:6		
wandering	we've 6:18 21:17	10001 5:6,10,15		
34:17,23 53:16	21:19 46:15	30:17,20 36:2		
54:17	whatsoever	36:8 44:8		
want 20:4,4,11	32:14,17 36:9	46:13		
22:24 23:1	Whren 24:22	11-262 1:5 3:4		
26:3 28:10	25:6	11:31 1:14 3:2		
33:3 44:4 45:9	win 8:10 23:8	12:30 59:6		
45:15,18	57:5,6	13 32:12		
wanted 7:4	wondering	14 8:1		
	_			