

1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

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3 KERRI L. KALEY, ET VIR., :

4 Petitioner : No. 12-464

5 v. :

6 UNITED STATES :

7 - - - - - x

8 Washington, D.C.

9 Wednesday, October 16, 2013

10

11 The above-entitled matter came on for oral

12 argument before the Supreme Court of the United States

13 at 11:05 a.m.

14 APPEARANCES:

15 HOWARD SREBNICK, ESQ., Miami, Florida; on behalf of

16 Petitioner.

17 MICHAEL R. DREEBEN, ESQ., Deputy Solicitor General,

18 Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on behalf of

19 Respondent.

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1	C O N T E N T S	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	PAGE
3	HOWARD SREBNICK, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioner	3
5	ORAL ARGUMENT OF	
6	MICHAEL R. DREEBEN, ESQ.	
7	On behalf of the Respondent	24
8	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF	
9	HOWARD SREBNICK, ESQ.	
10	On behalf of the Petitioner	52
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (11:05 a.m.)

3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4 next this morning in Case 12-464, Kaley v. United
5 States.

6 Mr. Srebnick.

7 ORAL ARGUMENT OF HOWARD SREBNICK

8 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

9 MR. SREBNICK: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
10 and may it please the Court:

11 When the government restrains private
12 property, the owner of that property has the right to be
13 heard at a meaningful time and in a meaningful manner.
14 For a criminal defendant who's facing a criminal trial,
15 whose property has been restrained, that time is now,
16 before the criminal trial, so that he or she can use
17 those assets, that property, to retain and exercise
18 counsel of choice.

19 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, I -- you know, I -- I
20 Find it hard to think that -- that the right of property
21 is any more sacrosanct than the -- the right to freedom
22 of the person, and we allow a grand jury indictment
23 without -- without a separate mini-trial to justify the
24 arrest and -- and holding of -- of the individual. And
25 if he -- if he doesn't have bail, he's permanently in

1 jail until the trial is over. And we allow all of that
2 just on the basis of a grand jury indictment. And
3 you're telling us it's okay for that -- maybe you think
4 it's not okay for that.

5 But I think you're saying it's okay for
6 that, but it's not okay for distraining his property.
7 I -- I find it hard to -- to think that it's okay for
8 the one and not okay for the other.

9 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Scalia, it's not okay
10 for either.

11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Ah, okay. This is a bigger
12 case than I thought.

13 (Laughter.)

14 MR. SREBNICK: The right to be released on
15 bail, that is, the right not to be detained all the way
16 until trial, under this Court's precedent in United
17 States v. Salerno, the Court provided procedural
18 safeguards to ensure that, before someone is held all
19 the way until trial, they would have a hearing, a
20 hearing which would include a right to challenge the
21 weight of the evidence and other factors.

22 We ask for something no different. Indeed,
23 the indictment itself can justify the detention of the
24 body and the detention of the asset until such time --

25 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, that's -- I'm sorry.

1 That's pretrial detention without bail. I thought
2 Justice Scalia's question had to do with detaining
3 someone who was indicted, but couldn't make bail.

4 MR. SREBNICK: Every person is limited by
5 their own financial wherewithal, and so long as bail is
6 set not as an excessive bail, he or she must rely on the
7 assets that he or she owns.

8 JUSTICE ALITO: But why, in that situation,
9 would the defendant not have the constitutional right to
10 have a determination by a judge as to whether there was
11 probable cause?

12 MR. SREBNICK: In the context of a bail
13 hearing, a judge does make that determination.

14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Does it? There are
15 several factors that are taken into account. One of
16 them is weight of the evidence. Are you equating those
17 two things, probable cause to believe that the defendant
18 committed the offense and weight of the evidence as one
19 of several factors, to take account over the bail
20 determination?

21 MR. SREBNICK: Yes, we are, Justice
22 Ginsburg. In the United States v. Salerno, this Court
23 upheld pretrial detention because there were procedural
24 safeguards, a right to be heard, shortly after the
25 arrest. In the context of the restraint of assets, as

1 it stands now in the Eleventh Circuit, there is no right
2 to be heard at any time until --

3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Right to be heard --

4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I thought your
5 answer might have been that, yes, in fact, the property
6 is entitled to greater protection because it's going to
7 be used to hire counsel that will keep the person out of
8 jail long term, even if he can be put in jail pending
9 the trial.

10 MR. SREBNICK: Mr. Chief Justice, we've
11 certainly made that argument in our brief. Some might
12 find it more important to have those assets to retain
13 counsel of choice than having their liberty deprived
14 temporarily. In either case, the right to be heard
15 should include the right to be heard by a judge, a judge
16 who would have the authority to provide relief.

17 JUSTICE SCALIA: Is this only in the case
18 where the person has no other assets, where all of his
19 assets are seized, so that he can't -- he can't hire
20 counsel? Suppose only half of his assets are determined
21 to -- or asserted by the government to have been the
22 product of criminal activity, and he has a lot of other
23 money with which he can hire an attorney. Is that a
24 different case? And we're not -- that's not before us
25 here.

1 MR. SREBNICK: That's not this case. So
2 long as --

3 JUSTICE SCALIA: So you have a hearing on
4 whether he has other money, right?

5 MR. SREBNICK: Such -- such a hearing took
6 place in this case, indeed. But nevertheless, the
7 Petitioners, the Kaleys, did not have sufficient other
8 funds to retain counsel of choice.

9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: If your -- if your
10 position prevails, there would be nothing to stop the
11 defendant from using those assets for something other
12 than paying an attorney. If the assets are unfrozen,
13 freely available to the defendant, the defendant might
14 say, I will settle for a legal aid lawyer, I want to use
15 this money for something that I care more about. It --
16 there would be no control on that, would there?

17 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Ginsburg, I believe
18 there could be and should be. Indeed, if the court were
19 to modify the restraining order to allow funds to be
20 paid to counsel, the court would supervise the release
21 of those funds to ensure that, indeed, the funds were be
22 using -- were being used for the exercise of the right
23 to counsel of choice.

24 We are not asking for a vacation of the
25 restraining order, so that the monies can be used for

1 other purposes.

2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I-I see the government's
3 strongest argument as being that um the grand jury finding
4 of probable cause is sacrosanct, and a hearing like the
5 one that you are proposing would call the validity of
6 that finding into question.

7 Why don't you address that because we-we -- you
8 were talking about, in bail, the validity of the charges
9 are not at issue, just one factor in the court's
10 determination of whether to restrain him or her is the
11 strength of the government's case. Are you trying to
12 draw a similar analogy here?

13 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Sotomayor, what we
14 are proposing -- and indeed it's been a hearing that's
15 taken place in several of the circuits for some 25 years
16 now --

17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: There is at least five
18 who are ruling similarly to yours.

19 MR. SREBNICK: So for 25 years, the courts
20 in those circuits have been holding these hearings. And
21 what these hearings look like are similar to a pretrial
22 detention hearing, they are similar to suppression
23 hearings, they are similar, indeed, to what Rule 5.1
24 preliminary hearings might look like. And all these
25 hearings require is a presentation by both sides.

1 Each side makes its presentation. Of
2 course, the grand jury is a one-sided presentation. Of
3 course, the grand jury does not give the defendant an
4 opportunity to be heard. Indeed, the grand jury doesn't
5 give the defendant an opportunity to have his adversary
6 present exculpatory evidence to the grand jury based on
7 this --

8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And how do you get at --

9 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, that's terrible. We
10 shouldn't allow that. We shouldn't even hold the
11 fellow. We've been doing it for a thousand years,
12 though, and -and it's hard to say that it violates what -- what our
13 concept of fundamental fairness is.

14 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Scalia, we are not
15 quarrelling with the power of the grand jury to initiate
16 the charge. We are simply saying the grand jury doesn't
17 have the power to initiate and hold for the period
18 between indictment and trial, the --

19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But then there -- then
20 there is the anomaly that the grand jury has said there
21 is probable cause, this defendant can be prosecuted, and
22 then you would have the judge make a determination that
23 there isn't probable cause to believe. So you are asking a
24 judge who has determined there is no probable cause to
25 preside at a trial because the grand jury has found that

1 there is probable cause.

2 And how -- how could a judge allow a trial
3 to go on? If the judge concludes there is no probable
4 cause to arrest this defendant for this crime, how could
5 the judge then conduct a trial? The judge would be
6 overriding the grand jury's determination, right?

7 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Ginsburg, I don't
8 believe so. What's at issue at the hearing is what the
9 government presents at that hearing as compared to what
10 the defense presents at that hearing, no different, I
11 submit, than in civil cases, under Rule 65, where a
12 judge holds an interim hearing on the entry or nonentry
13 of an injunction, that doesn't define the outcome of the
14 case.

15 JUSTICE KENNEDY: In your view, what weight
16 does the court -- the trial court in this hearing, give
17 to the fact of the indictment?

18 MR. SREBNICK: I believe the indictment
19 authorizes the initiation of the restraint and not more.
20 The government --

21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So no weight. We've now
22 had a hearing, I ignore the indictment, and let's have a
23 trial. That's your position?

24 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Kennedy, if the
25 defendant makes a presentation at the hearing --

1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: No. I would think the
2 government has the burden of proof.

3 MR. SREBNICK: If the defendant is entitled
4 to the hearing because the defendant needs assets to
5 retain counsel of choice, and the government rests on
6 the indictment and the defense presents nothing more, I
7 submit the government would prevail at that hearing if
8 nothing is --

9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What about -- what about a
10 detention hearing? Same rule?

11 MR. SREBNICK: Under the statute --

12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: It would be the government
13 under a detention hearing -- pardon me. The trial court
14 under the detention hearing ignores the fact of the
15 indictment?

16 MR. SREBNICK: Under the Bail Reform Act,
17 there is a rebuttable presumption in certain offenses
18 where an indictment has been returned that the person is
19 a flight risk, but it is a rebuttal presumption. We are
20 asking for the same opportunity to rebut the entry of
21 the restraint. So we, in no way, are submitting that
22 the prosecution is prevented from proceeding to trial.

23 JUSTICE SCALIA: But a grand jury indictment
24 doesn't -- doesn't establish that there is probable
25 cause to believe that the person is a flight risk. That

1 doesn't contradict what the grand jury found. You're
2 asking the judge here to contradict what the grand jury
3 found.

4 MR. SREBNICK: We are asking the judge to
5 make an independent finding based on what's presented to
6 that judge at the hearing, the very hearings that have
7 been occurring for 25 years.

8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Wouldn't the next step be
9 that the judge would then dismiss the indictment? The
10 judge has found there is no probable cause to charge
11 this man with this offense. And yet, you're going to
12 ask that same judge to try the case that -- it would
13 seem to me that the logic of your position is, if there
14 is to be this hearing on probable cause and the judge
15 finds that there is no probable cause, then the judge
16 dismisses the indictment.

17 How could you ask a judge who thinks there
18 is no probable cause to then conduct a trial.

19 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Ginsburg, what the
20 judge might conclude is, at that hearing, at that moment
21 in time, the government didn't satisfy its burden, on
22 that one day in time. It doesn't mean that the judge
23 has gone back to look at what occurred before the grand
24 jury.

25 JUSTICE ALITO: At these hearings, when they

1 have been conducted, what do they look like? The rules
2 of evidence would not apply, I assume, so the government
3 could call, let's say, a case agent who would provide a
4 summary of the --- some of the evidence -- enough of the
5 evidence that was submitted to the grand jury to
6 establish probable cause in the opinion of the
7 prosecution, and then what would happen?

8 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Alito --

9 JUSTICE ALITO: You could call witnesses.
10 Could you subpoena witnesses? Could you require the
11 disclosure of the names of government witnesses?

12 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Alito, what we are
13 proposing and what, indeed, happened in this case -- in
14 the case of the Kaleys, the defense presented
15 transcripts of testimony. All we asked the judge to do
16 is to consider it. Indeed, the judge had presided over
17 a trial of a co-defendant, who was acquitted.

18 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, this was an unusual --
19 that's a somewhat unusual situation where you had
20 been -- there had already been a trial of someone else
21 who was allegedly involved in the scheme. But what if
22 that was not the case? In the more ordinary situation,
23 what would happen?

24 MR. SREBNICK: In the more ordinary
25 situation, the defense -- if it chose to offer evidence,

1 it would be subject to the rules of the standard for
2 issuing subpoenas under Nixon, only if there were
3 material exculpatory evidence that needed to be
4 presented. This would not be a discovery exercise.

5 This would not be an effort to simply learn
6 identity of witnesses. Indeed, the government could and
7 does rely upon hearsay witnesses, case agents, to
8 summarize the case.

9 But where the defense, as here, offers the
10 judge evidence of innocence, where the judge himself has
11 presided over the trial of a co-defendant and sees the
12 defect in the indictment, sees the defect in the theory
13 of prosecution, we believe due process does not allow
14 the judge to close his eyes to that --

15 JUSTICE SCALIA: And in the next case we
16 have, if we agree with you, will be somebody saying due
17 process does not allow you to proceed with a trial when
18 it has been found by an impartial judge that there is no
19 probable cause. That will be our next case, right? And
20 you may well argue it.

21 To tell you the truth, I would prefer -- to
22 save your client, I would prefer a rule that says you
23 cannot, even with a grand jury indictment, prevent the
24 defendant from using funds that are in his possession to
25 hire counsel, don't need a hearing, just -- just it's

1 unconstitutional for the rule to be any broader than
2 withholding money that the defendant does not need to
3 defend himself.

4 Would you like that? I-I really prefer it to
5 yours. I think yours leads us into really strange
6 territory.

7 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Scalia, I believe
8 that was the issue in Monsanto and Caplin & Drysdale,
9 where this Court held a 5-to-4 decision that assets that
10 are demonstrably tainted can be restrained over the
11 objection of the defendant who needs those assets to
12 retain counsel of choice. Today, I'm asking the Court
13 not to allow the restraint of those assets that are
14 demonstrably not tainted.

15 JUSTICE KAGAN: Can I ask what the prospects
16 of success at a hearing like this are? You know,
17 there's an amicus brief which lists 25 cases in the
18 Second Circuit, in which this kind of hearing was held.
19 My clerk went back and found that, in 24 of those cases,
20 the motion was denied, and in the 25th, the motion was
21 granted, but then reversed on appeal.

22 So, then -- you know, it's not surprising
23 really. I mean, probable cause, it's a pretty low bar.
24 So what are we going through all this rigamarole for,
25 for the prospect of -- you know, coming out the same way

1 in the end?

2 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Kagan --

3 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Just as a footnote, one
4 in a million, which might be your case. I think that's
5 the point.

6 MR. SREBNICK: Actually, I believe that the
7 brief of the New York Council of Defense Lawyers that
8 Justice Kagan refers to points out that there are many
9 other cases where, at the courthouse steps, the parties
10 resolve the question of the restraint of those assets.

11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And I suppose, if
12 the government knows it's got to go through a hearing
13 where it has to lay out part of its case, it may well
14 decide at that point it's not worth it, so it's not 24
15 or 25. Who knows how many hundreds of times the
16 government would have sought to seize the assets, but
17 didn't because they knew they would have to justify it
18 at a hearing.

19 MR. SREBNICK: Mr. Chief Justice, that may
20 be so, but it appears that the government does exactly
21 that, every day, in Federal court during pretrial
22 detention hearings, when it proffers its case in order
23 to convince a judge to detain a defendant, and we're
24 asking for something no different.

25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you said something

1 about plainly tainted assets. I thought that the
2 hearing was given on the traceability of the assets to
3 the crime. So on-on that part, the- the defendant isn't allowed
4 to challenge the connection between the assets and the
5 offense, right?

6 MR. SREBNICK: Yes, Justice Ginsburg.

7 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Everybody agrees with
8 that. So there is a possibility to say, you said we
9 have untainted assets, but the defendant in this case
10 said, I concede that these assets are related to the
11 charged offense.

12 MR. SREBNICK: Yes, Justice Ginsburg. We
13 distinguish between tainted and traceable to. The court
14 below granted us a hearing to determine whether the
15 assets restrained were traceable to the conduct in the
16 indictment. What we would like to show at a hearing --
17 indeed, I think we have shown it on the record before
18 district court, is that, even though the assets that are
19 under restraint are traceable to the conduct, the
20 conduct is simply not criminal.

21 And we'd like the court to hold a hearing
22 which would not bind the court at trial. Again, no
23 different than courts hold in civil cases with Rule 65,
24 this interim decision is not a determination of whether
25 the grand jury got it right or wrong. It's a

1 determination of whether the government presented a
2 sufficient case on that day to satisfy its burden.

3 JUSTICE ALITO: There's been a suggestion
4 that, if the judge were to find that there was a lack of
5 probable cause, the prosecutor would be under an ethical
6 obligation to dismiss the charges. Do you agree with
7 that?

8 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Alito, not
9 necessarily. It would depend on why there was no
10 so-called probable cause. If it was based on a --
11 something known to the prosecutor that would constrain
12 him or her ethically, perhaps.

13 But if it was simply because the prosecutor,
14 on the day of the hearing, only presented one witness
15 instead of all five, that would not constrain the
16 prosecutor ethically in any way.

17 The prosecutor retains the discretion to
18 decide how strong a presentation to make at this
19 hearing, no different than the prosecutor would have to
20 make that same decision at a preliminary hearing, at a
21 pretrial detention hearing or plaintiffs have to make at
22 a Rule 65 hearing.

23 JUSTICE ALITO: And what if it's the same
24 evidence -- the same evidence is introduced before the
25 grand jury? Let's say it's a credibility determination.

1 The grand jury finds the prosecution witness credible,
2 the judge finds the prosecution witness not credible.
3 Is there, then, an ethical obligation to dismiss the
4 charges?

5 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Alito, again, not
6 necessarily. People can differ about credibility.
7 We're not talking here about knowingly presenting
8 perjured testimony or anything of that sort, that might
9 raise ethical constraints.

10 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: We would, presumably,
11 if -- like here -- if there's a legal dispute and the
12 government thinks the judge is wrong, they would try the
13 case and go up on appeal and say to the appellate court
14 the judge below was wrong initially.

15 MR. SREBNICK: I believe, yes, Justice --

16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You would have lost the
17 money in that case, but --

18 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Sotomayor, forgive
19 me. Justice Sotomayor, I believe the government could
20 have -- and I haven't studied whether they would have a
21 right to an interlocutory appeal from that unfreezing of
22 the assets. I -- I suppose they would just like we did.

23 JUSTICE SCALIA: Does this hearing include
24 an assessment of the reasonableness of attorneys' fees?
25 I mean, if you're only withholding the amount of money

1 necessary for the defense, what if this fellow wants to
2 hire Clarence Darrow? Does -- does that give him all
3 the money? How -- how do you decide that issue?

4 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Scalia, I think it's
5 decided the same way courts every day decide the
6 reasonableness of fees and the legitimacy of fees. So
7 long as the money is being used for bona fide legal
8 fees --

9 JUSTICE SCALIA: But does he know his
10 lawyer -- is his lawyer there saying -- you know, this
11 is the lawyer I'm going to hire and here's the fee I'm
12 going to charge?

13 MR. SREBNICK: In this case, yes, because
14 counsel of choice had been retained two years before the
15 indictment, had been working on the case for two years,
16 when the indictment was returned and the restraining
17 order was entered. So counsel of choice had already
18 estimated fees, disclosed them to the Court, all a
19 matter of record.

20 There was never a dispute about the
21 reasonableness of the fees, the bona fides of the fees,
22 the legitimacy of the fees.

23 JUSTICE SCALIA: But you -- you acknowledge
24 that that could be -- that could be an issue in the
25 hearing in other cases.

1 MR. SREBNICK: Yes, Justice Scalia. If the
2 fees were a sham, if the fees were unreasonable, if they
3 were not consistent with the locality, of course,
4 that could be --

5 JUSTICE SCALIA: I-I don't know what the fees
6 are. I don't even know who the lawyer's going to be.
7 This defendant just comes in and says, I want to hire a
8 lawyer. And the court says -- you know, any particular
9 lawyer? No, I just want a lawyer. The court's going to
10 have to make up a fee, I assume, right?

11 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Scalia, we're talking
12 now about the right to counsel of choice. The lawyer
13 would have been chosen by the defendant. The lawyer's
14 fees would be disclosed to the court, and the court
15 would then have information upon which to make a
16 decision about whether the fees are reasonable and bona
17 fide.

18 JUSTICE SCALIA: Okay. He has to choose a
19 lawyer before this hearing, right?

20 MR. SREBNICK: If the defendant is seeking a
21 particular amount to be unfrozen at the time of the
22 transfer of funds, of course, the court would need to
23 know who the lawyer was and how much the fee was. And
24 so there's no problem with the court administering those
25 issues.

1 Indeed, the courts, on a daily basis,
2 supervise the payment of appointed lawyers. And so all
3 that the defense here is asking for is an opportunity to
4 be heard in a meaningful manner, not simply about
5 whether the asset restrained is traceable to the
6 conduct. This Court's precedence has never limited due
7 process to a tracing inquiry as suggested by the courts
8 below.

9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Did you say that, in this
10 case, because counsel had been retained two years
11 earlier, that the court was presented with how much the
12 lawyer was going to charge to represent the defendants
13 at trial?

14 MR. SREBNICK: Yes.

15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The -- the dollar amount
16 was known, so that the court could then say, well, we'll
17 unfreeze assets to that extent but no more.

18 MR. SREBNICK: Yes, Justice Ginsburg.

19 So there is no mystery in this case. Who
20 counsel is, what the estimate of fees are, that's not
21 the issue in this case. The issue in this case is
22 whether the Petitioners have an opportunity to be heard,
23 so as to challenge this restraining order that purports
24 to remain in effect -- indeed, has remained in effect
25 for six years.

1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What was -- what was the
2 figure? Counsel was identified.

3 MR. SREBNICK: Yes.

4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What was -- what was the
5 amount of money that the defendants wanted spared from
6 the seizure order?

7 MR. SREBNICK: The estimate was a fee of up
8 to \$500,000 for two lawyers and the entire investigation
9 costs, consultants, experts, et cetera. That was the
10 budget. There was no actual dollar figure set in stone.
11 It was a budget in order to allow the defense to have
12 their counsel of choice.

13 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And it was a case with
14 very substantial documents, et cetera?

15 MR. SREBNICK: Yes, Justice Kennedy. And
16 there was never a question by the district court or,
17 indeed, by the government as to the reasonableness of
18 that budget, if the case were to go all the way through
19 trial.

20 JUSTICE SCALIA: Tell me something because I
21 don't know the answer. Can -- can the government track
22 tainted funds that -- that have been given to other
23 people, including lawyers?

24 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Scalia, I believe
25 they can.

1 JUSTICE SCALIA: I think they can, too. So
2 what happens if this lawyer gets his \$500,000 and you've
3 had the traceability hearings, so these are tainted
4 funds? If he is convicted, he gives the money back?

5 MR. SREBNICK: Justice Scalia, in this case,
6 if the hearing would go forward, the only way the
7 lawyers would be paid is if there would be a finding by
8 the court that the conduct at issue will not give rise
9 to forfeiture.

10 And so the lawyers would, of course, try to
11 rely upon that judicial decision to establish the bona
12 fides of their accepting that fee in the event that the
13 defendants were convicted and the government sought
14 forfeiture. The defense lawyers might be at risk.

15 JUSTICE SCALIA: The -- the --

16 MR. SREBNICK: Mr. Chief Justice, I'd like
17 to reserve the balance of my time.

18 Thank you.

19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.

20 Mr. Dreeben.

21 ORAL ARGUMENT OF MICHAEL R. DREEBEN

22 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT

23 MR. DREEBEN: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
24 and may it please the Court:

25 For over 200 years, the rule in this Court

1 and in all lower courts have been that the grand jury's
2 determination of probable cause is conclusive for
3 purposes of the criminal case, and that rule has been
4 extended, not only to bringing the defendant to trial,
5 but also depriving the defendant of liberty, imposing
6 occupational restrictions on the defendant, imposing
7 firearms restrictions on the defendant.

8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But none of that
9 goes to his ability to hire his counsel of choice. I
10 mean, that seems to me to make this case quite
11 different. It's not that property is more valuable than
12 liberty or anything like that. It's that the property
13 can be used to hire a lawyer who can keep him out of
14 jail for the next 30 years, so the parallels don't
15 strike me as useful.

16 MR. DREEBEN: Well, the parallels, I think,
17 Mr. Chief Justice, illustrate that the process for
18 determining probable cause by a grand jury has been
19 deemed sufficiently reliable, so that further judicial
20 inquiry is not warranted. And that is borne out by two
21 features of the grand jury: One, the way it operates;
22 and, the second, the empirical realities of what it has
23 produced.

24 The grand jury is set up as an independent
25 body to protect the defendant from unfounded

1 prosecutions. It is structurally independent from the
2 prosecution and the courts. And it's composed of --

3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I understand the
4 theory. In reality, it's not terribly -- it's not great
5 insulation from the overweening power of the government.

6 MR. DREEBEN: Well, it is a protection in
7 the following sense, Mr. Chief Justice: If the court is
8 seriously considering departing from the universal rule
9 up till now in its cases and in other English-speaking
10 courts and allowing a review of whether there is
11 probable cause after the grand jury has found it, it
12 ought at least to have a good reason for doing so,
13 namely some reason to think that defendants will prevail
14 in a --

15 JUSTICE BREYER: They do that, fine, done.
16 What we interpret the statute as saying, under
17 constitutional compulsion, it uses the word "may," and
18 if the magistrate concludes that there is -- after all,
19 the basic principle of hearings is you don't need a
20 hearing where there's nothing to have a hearing about.

21 So unless the defendant demonstrates that
22 there is a sound reason to believe that the grand jury
23 was wrong, they only heard one side of the story, and
24 that there is no probable cause, you don't have to give
25 him a hearing.

1 But the word is "may." And so, like five
2 circuits, Mr. Magistrate, if you think that there is a
3 good chance -- phrase that as you want -- that they can
4 show that the grand jury was wrong and they want the
5 money to pay a lawyer -- by the way, without a good
6 lawyer, they're never going to make their case -- and
7 then, under those circumstances, the magistrate may.

8 Now, that's a narrow exception. It
9 preserves the lawyer. It's consistent with the words of
10 the statute. It respects the grand jury, at least to
11 the same extent that bail hearings -- and when you
12 have -- oh, yes, and probably, I could think of a few
13 others or something. But the -- it's not undercutting
14 the grand jury.

15 What's wrong with it?

16 MR. DREEBEN: Justice Breyer, just to start
17 with the last thing that you said, it is inconsistent
18 with the way this Court has analyzed the
19 constitutional --

20 JUSTICE BREYER: No, it leaves open -- it
21 leaves open the question in Monsanto explicitly, and the
22 only change that I've made with that explicit leaving
23 open the due process question in the footnote in
24 Monsanto is, instead of turning it on the Constitution,
25 I turned it on the principle of constitutional

1 avoidance.

2 MR. DREEBEN: I wasn't referring to
3 Monsanto, Justice Breyer. I was referring --

4 JUSTICE BREYER: You say "never" is
5 consistently, and I think it is consistent with the
6 footnote.

7 MR. DREEBEN: Justice Breyer, I wasn't
8 referring to Monsanto court's reservation of this issue.
9 I agree with you, Monsanto did not decide whether there
10 is a hearing.

11 But in the bail context, this Court has
12 determined that a grand jury indictment is sufficient to
13 hold the defendant. There is no further judicial review
14 of whether the defendant's liberty may be restrained.
15 And so that's --

16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Is that how they interpret
17 weight of the evidence at this -- the Bail Reform Act
18 says that the trial judge must determine weight of the
19 evidence. And in practice, and perhaps in reported
20 decisions in the circuit, do the courts say we don't
21 need to talk about weight of the evidence once there's a
22 grand jury indictment --

23 MR. DREEBEN: No, Justice Kennedy --

24 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- end of inquiry?

25 MR. DREEBEN: But Salerno was different

1 because Salerno was a specific statute in which Congress
2 enumerated the factors that the judge is going to
3 consider. There's never a reconsideration of whether
4 there was probable cause for the indictment, as my
5 brethren --

6 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I'm asking, perhaps not
7 too clearly, I'm asking what function, what weight, what
8 relevance do courts give in day-to-day hearings on
9 detention to the Bail Reform Act requirement that judges
10 must determine, as part of the bail determination, the
11 weight of the evidence?

12 MR. DREEBEN: In a certain class of cases,
13 Justice Kennedy, the indictment itself creates a
14 presumption that no conditions will assure the safety of
15 the community and the appearance of the defendant.

16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But -- but that's two
17 different things. Is the only thing the judge considers
18 the risk of flight?

19 MR. DREEBEN: No. There's -- under
20 Salerno --

21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So then don't talk about
22 risk of flight. What weight does the judge give in
23 determining whether or not the charges have merit to the
24 Bail Reform Act's direction that he must determine the
25 weight of the evidence?

1 MR. DREEBEN: Justice Kennedy, when the
2 government seeks to detain the defendant, the court has
3 to make a determination under the Bail Reform Act, not
4 because of the Constitution, but under the Bail Reform
5 Act --

6 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I understand that.

7 MR. DREEBEN: -- that either the defendant
8 poses a danger to the community or a risk of flight. In
9 considering those issues, the court will consider a
10 proffer from the government on the nature of the
11 evidence of guilt. It's not a full-blown adversarial
12 hearing in which new transcripts are being presented,
13 new witnesses are being called, the government has a
14 burden to justify its entire case.

15 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But the court must
16 determine that under the Bail Reform Act.

17 MR. DREEBEN: The court will look at the
18 weight of the evidence under the Bail Reform Act. It's
19 not revisiting the question of probable cause. That's
20 what's at issue in this case.

21 JUSTICE KENNEDY: No --

22 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why? Why do we have
23 to decide it that way? I mean, I don't like casting
24 into doubt the judgment of the grand jury, but why
25 couldn't we say that, when you're taking away funds that

1 are needed for hiring a lawyer for your defense, you
2 need something more than probable cause? Couldn't we
3 make that up?

4 MR. DREEBEN: That would --

5 JUSTICE SCALIA: And then say due process
6 requires something more than probable cause?

7 MR. DREEBEN: That's squarely contrary to
8 what this Court held in United States v. Monsanto.
9 Monsanto, considered against the backdrop of Caplin &
10 Drysdale, which said forfeiture of funds that were
11 desired to be used for attorney's fees is constitutional,
12 then turned to the question of can those funds be
13 restrained, so they will be available for forfeiture at
14 the end of the day.

15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I don't see what
16 this case, frankly, has to do with the grand jury at
17 all -- or review of the grand jury determination. You
18 don't have to put forward, in this hearing, what you put
19 forward before the grand jury at all. You could put
20 forth different stuff. You could put forth less of it.

21 Maybe you don't want to show your -- your
22 whole hand. Maybe the party, on the other side, they
23 don't want to show their whole hand, too, so they don't
24 want to show all this other evidence that's going to
25 prove -- prove their innocence.

1 It- It's an entirely separate proceeding. Now,
2 maybe the fact of the grand jury indictment should be
3 given some weight or not, but it's not reviewing a
4 particular determination. It's the judge making a
5 determination on what he or she has before him at that
6 particular hearing.

7 MR. DREEBEN: It's seeking to contradict the
8 determination of probable cause --

9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No. It's not, in
10 the sense that, before the grand jury, you say, okay,
11 here, we showed the grand jury these six things, and
12 they said yes. You look at those six things; that's there's
13 the probable cause.

14 At this other hearing, you say, I've got --
15 I'm going to show you these two things, and the other
16 side has these three things. And the judge, at that
17 point, says, well, you don't have enough to restrain the
18 property.

19 It's not reviewing the other determination.
20 It's an entirely separate proceeding.

21 MR. DREEBEN: But it is seeking to
22 contradict the other determination because it's asking
23 the judge to find that there is no probable cause when
24 the grand jury has found that there is probable cause.
25 And the grand jury's determination not only allows the

1 government to bring the defendant to trial, which would
2 be very odd if the court had found that there is really
3 no probable cause for these charges, they are legally
4 invalid.

5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Do you have to go
6 that -- I mean, your adversary just said that there was
7 a judicial finding of no probable cause. I- I don't know
8 why that judicial finding has any legal effect, other
9 than to release the money at issue. The judge is
10 basically saying, like he does in a bail hearing, this
11 evidence is not the strongest I've seen.

12 In balancing the government's desire for
13 restraint and the fundamental right to hire a lawyer of
14 choice, it's not strong enough in this situation with
15 what I've been presented to continue restraining the
16 money.

17 I don't see it, as a legal determination, of no
18 probable cause. I see it as defining the word "may" in
19 the statute. If the judge has discretion, that
20 discretion has to be informed by something.

21 MR. DREEBEN: I think United States v.
22 Monsanto essentially rejected the argument that there is
23 any discretion not to restrain the funds.

24 JUSTICE BREYER: It didn't actually. What
25 it says is, we reject the discretion in the context of

1 Judge Widener having said that, even where there is
2 probable cause, we are going to balance a lot of
3 factors, and what it says then at the -- wait, I had it a
4 second ago. I'll find it again.

5 It says, at the top of the next page, it
6 says that the "may" thing refers to that. I'll get it
7 for you later.

8 MR. DREEBEN: I understand that, Justice
9 Breyer. There was analysis of the statute --

10 JUSTICE BREYER: Here it is. It says,
11 "Thus, it's plainly aimed at implementing the commands
12 at 853(a) and cannot sensibly be construed to give the
13 district court discretion to permit the dissipation of
14 the very property that 853(a) requires to be forfeited
15 upon conviction." Okay?

16 MR. DREEBEN: Exactly.

17 JUSTICE BREYER: Exactly. That's what it
18 says. So the claim here is this is property that
19 850(a)(3)(A) does not require the defendant to-to forfeit
20 upon conviction, for there can be no conviction because
21 there is no evidence, and, therefore, I don't find that
22 that sentence in Monsanto destroys the use of the word
23 which Congress put in, "may."

24 MR. DREEBEN: I-I don't think that there is
25 any serious question that Monsanto meant to preclude

1 free floating discretion. What it did was focus on the
2 question of probable cause, and the Court squarely held
3 that assets in the defendant's possession may be
4 restrained in the way that they were here, based on a
5 finding of probable cause to believe that the assets
6 were forfeitable.

7 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. So far, this is very
8 conceptual, which is absolutely fine. I just want to
9 leave that plain for a moment, and if I leave the
10 conceptual plain, what I find is that they have a pretty
11 complicated case.

12 They are saying that this -- the defendant
13 took some medical devices with permission from hospitals
14 that were old and used, and he didn't return them to the
15 manufacturer, who didn't want them. And what he did is
16 he figured out this way of selling them and making
17 money.

18 Now, they are saying that's not that, and
19 you're saying it is that, and so to make the arguments
20 is complicated. You can't do it without a good lawyer.
21 He has some money here to hire a lawyer, and you say,
22 oh, but it will undercut the grand jury. You say, this
23 has been the law in five circuits, and the government
24 has not come to the end of its prosecutions, it hasn't
25 injured prosecutions.

1 So as a purely practical matter, First
2 Amendment, no real harm to the government that I can
3 see. And so let's impose some kind of statutory
4 limitation on use of this, but where there is a good
5 claim for it, let it be used.

6 MR. DREEBEN: Let- let me start with the fact
7 that I think that there is harm, and there is very
8 little benefit, and I want to turn to both sides of that
9 empirical equation. Before the Court concludes that,
10 for the first time, a grand jury indictment can be
11 contradicted by a judicial finding that there is no
12 probable cause, albeit on different evidence, the Court
13 should have a good reason to think that grand juries go
14 awry in a sufficient number of cases, so that this
15 hearing which will have costs, as I'll describe, is
16 worth doing.

17 There is no evidence to that effect in the
18 20 years since Monsanto. Petitioners can point to not a
19 single instance in which a court has concluded there is
20 no probable cause, even though the grand jury found that
21 there is probable cause.

22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's because they
23 didn't have the good lawyers they wanted to hire.

24 (Laughter.)

25 MR. DREEBEN: They do this, Mr. Chief

1 Justice, usually with the lawyers who want to get the
2 funds, so they- they can be hired. And they try to get
3 hearings, and as Justice Kagan pointed out, we have 25
4 reported cases. I would amend Justice Kagan's statement
5 about those cases in only one respect. In 24 of them,
6 the defendants lost outright. In the 25th one, they
7 won, and they were reversed on appeal. That is
8 accurate.

9 But the district court did not actually find
10 that a grand jury had erred in finding probable cause
11 because that case involved a civil complaint, not a
12 grand jury indictment. What we have is thousands of
13 indictments -- hundreds of thousands of indictments over
14 the 10-year period that Respondents have canvassed in
15 talking about Hyde amendment fee awards where courts
16 have found no probable cause for a prosecution.

17 He has pointed to four cases. There have
18 been 660,000 indictments during that time period. The
19 ratio between the cases in which the system didn't work
20 and the grand jury malfunctioned and the cases where it
21 did and where the defendant gets the opportunity for
22 discovery, fishing expeditions --

23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'm sorry. Are you
24 talking about cases in like the Second Circuit and the
25 D.C. Circuit, where you do have these hearings?

1 MR. DREEBEN: I'm talking about two things,
2 Mr. Chief Justice. First of all, in the D.C. Circuit,
3 Second Circuit, Seventh Circuit, and elsewhere in the
4 country, where the law is not established, defendants
5 can seek these hearings. In the 20 years that they have
6 been available to be sought, not one has produced a
7 finding of no probable cause.

8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I- I raised this point
9 earlier. It may be because the government, particularly
10 when it may have tenuous probable cause basis, decides
11 it's not worth it to go through this hearing to seize
12 and retain the assets.

13 And it just seems that the statistics are
14 phony, in the sense that, where the impact of this is
15 going to be is not in reported cases; it's going to be
16 when the U.S. attorney says it's not worth it, it would
17 jeopardize the trial on the merits, and so they don't
18 even go through the process of restraining the assets.

19 MR. DREEBEN: Well, Mr. Chief Justice, I
20 agree with you that those cases exist. Anecdotally,
21 they exist, where the government determines that the
22 cost of exposing its witnesses, the dangers to
23 witnesses, the potential undermining of the integrity of
24 the trial, makes it too high a price to go through this
25 hearing or --

1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: More that the facts,
2 since the funds are traceable, anyway and they'll have
3 an opportunity to get them at the end, even if they
4 don't get their restraining order, makes it not worth
5 it.

6 MR. DREEBEN: No. That doesn't always work,
7 Mr. Chief Justice. Let's keep in mind that this statute
8 operates, in its core, in drug trafficking cases, in
9 serious organized criminal cases, where the exposure of
10 the identities of the government's witnesses can lead to
11 serious problems of obstruction of justice. This is the
12 real cost of these kinds of hearings.

13 JUSTICE BREYER: Has that happened in the
14 circuits that have permitted this?

15 MR. DREEBEN: The government is unlikely to
16 jeopardize the safety of its witnesses --

17 JUSTICE BREYER: You know, I think, in the
18 circuit, you've now given us some statistics. So in how
19 many cases in the circuits that have permitted what they
20 want or my version of it, the circuits that have
21 permitted some form of allowing the magistrate to look
22 behind the grand jury indictment in appropriate cases
23 and find that if it's there, there is no probable cause, so
24 you can use this to hire a lawyer.

25 There are a bunch of circuits that have had

1 rules like that. In how many cases in those circuits
2 has the government faced the serious risks that you're
3 talking about?

4 MR. DREEBEN: We do face them. I cannot
5 quantify them --

6 JUSTICE BREYER: Can you give me a guess?
7 You are -- I mean, you make a huge point of how this
8 will put the government at a disadvantage, so someone in
9 your office, probably you, asked people in the Justice
10 Department, do you have any examples? Or how many cases
11 have there been where these serious problems arose?

12 And you probably got some kind of answer, so
13 you probably have some kind of idea.

14 MR. DREEBEN: You're correct, I did ask, and
15 I received anecdotal responses.

16 JUSTICE BREYER: How many anecdotes?

17 (Laughter.)

18 MR. DREEBEN: I received several specific
19 anecdotes of instances in which the government elected
20 not to proceed with a hearing.

21 JUSTICE BREYER: In a number of cases,
22 several specific. Is that more like four? Or is it
23 more like 24?

24 MR. DREEBEN: There are group numbers, in
25 which offices reported, we have encountered this a

1 number of times.

2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You're making it
3 sound like you would lose the whole case. This, to some
4 extent, is a little bit of a side show. You want to
5 send the Kaleys to jail, and you want the assets that
6 you think are traceable to it, and that's all well and
7 good. But it's not like the whole case falls apart
8 depending on whether or not you can restrain the assets
9 or not.

10 MR. DREEBEN: No, it's- it's not just that,
11 Mr. Chief Justice. These assets are generally used to
12 pay restitution to victims of crime.

13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes, but they're --

14 MR. DREEBEN: And if the assets are paid out
15 to attorneys, although in theory, as Justice Scalia
16 explained, it is possible, under the relation back
17 principle, to go into the attorneys' files and into
18 their assets and recover them, in practice, it is not so
19 easy to do because --

20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Sure. But now,
21 you've touched on something that I think is very
22 pertinent. They are used to pay restitution to the
23 victims. I mean, the whole point here -- and
24 presumably, it's something that your friends on the
25 other side would raise in one of these hearings, is

1 there are no victims, right? That's the theory.

2 And maybe it will fall apart, and the judge
3 will say, of course, there are victims, but as I
4 understand it, the hospitals -- you know, gave them to
5 the people; the companies didn't want them back because
6 they would have to give a credit.

7 You know, I'm sure the government has a
8 different view of the facts, but that's a good example.
9 Okay, this is going to be used to pay restitution to the
10 victims. They come in and say, well, just give me five
11 minutes, Your Honor, you'll see there are no victims.

12 What's wrong with that.

13 MR. DREEBEN: What's wrong with it is that
14 it basically compels the government to try the entire
15 case in a preliminary hearing before the case has even
16 resulted in a --

17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How often has that
18 happened in the five circuits?

19 MR. DREEBEN: The frequency of these
20 hearings is limited, in part, because it's rare that
21 defendants are able to show that they have no other
22 assets --

23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And that's the whole
24 point, which is you talk about compulsion on the
25 government, but the compulsion of the defendant not to

1 have a hearing because they are required to say
2 something that could put them at greater risk, whether
3 it's because of the enhancements for obstruction of
4 justice or merely from losing the advantage of their
5 defense at trial, that's why these hearings are so rare.

6 I think it's less about the government not
7 wanting to disclose its case and more about the
8 inducements against the defense wanting to preview its
9 case.

10 MR. DREEBEN: And also, the stark
11 unlikelihood that the defense will prevail, unless the
12 government is forced not to go through with the hearing
13 because of concerns about which --

14 JUSTICE BREYER: Can I ask you a related
15 question, since it came up? I was curious as to how
16 much of this forfeiture money gets to victims. So the
17 best we could do is looking up three years, and on the
18 basis of the figures that I got out of the DOJ on that,
19 about 25 -- 20 to 25 percent goes to a category called
20 third-party interest.

21 Now, the third-party interest includes
22 mortgagees, it includes other creditors, it includes
23 States, who want taxes, et cetera. And if you subtract
24 all those, a rough guess would be 5 or 10 percent goes
25 to victims. Now, do you have a better estimate?

1 MR. DREEBEN: I- I don't, Justice Breyer. I do
2 know that one of the main purposes in seeking funds for
3 forfeiture, particularly in white collar cases like
4 this, is to pay restitution.

5 JUSTICE BREYER: That is what the -- if you
6 look at the actual amount in general, but the interests
7 at issue here are, one, this money goes to pay for a
8 lawyer, so the person can prove that there is not even a
9 claim against him; and it risks, of course, sometimes
10 of depriving the recipients of the forfeiture monies,
11 and those would normally be, almost entirely, the DOJ
12 for the expenses of going to the forfeiture expense of
13 the trial.

14 It would -- various criminal justice
15 organizations on the prosecution side, States, and who want
16 taxes, very little is being deprived of victims. Is
17 that a fair comment?

18 MR. DREEBEN: No, I'm not sure that it is a
19 fair comment. In this case, for example, the government
20 does believe that the medical providers from which these
21 medical supplies were obtained and then sold into the
22 black market by agents of a company are victims of the
23 crime. They received restitution in the prosecution of
24 one of the co-conspirators in this case, and that is the
25 way the government is planning to proceed.

1 If the defense is able to come up and, based
2 on case law that really has very little to do with any
3 situation like this, has to do with the idea that public
4 officials who receive bribes haven't deprived the State
5 of its entitlement to that bribe money -- that's the
6 lead case that the defendants argue.

7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Do you concede that there
8 must be a traceability hearing?

9 MR. DREEBEN: If the defendant seeks one,
10 yes. And there was the opportunity in this case for a
11 hearing and the defendants --

12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I mean, in the general run
13 case, so you agree that due process does require a
14 traceability hearing?

15 MR. DREEBEN: Yes. The defendants are
16 entitled to show that the assets that are restrained are
17 not actually the proceeds of the charged criminal
18 offense or another way --

19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And the defendants have
20 the burden of proof in that hearing?

21 MR. DREEBEN: That would be up to this
22 Court's decision.

23 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What- what is your view as to
24 what the Constitution requires in that respect?

25 MR. DREEBEN: I'd be happy to have the

1 defendants bear the burden of proof, but I think the
2 courts, typically, have placed the burden of proof on
3 the government to show traceability, and the government,
4 therefore, presents limited evidence, but it's all
5 against the background of the crime not being called
6 into question.

7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Mr. Dreeben, one other
8 question. It's the question I asked before. I still
9 don't understand. Under the Bail Reform Act, the issue
10 is pretrial detention. The defendant says, Your Honor,
11 under the Bail Reform Act, you must determine the weight
12 of the evidence, and this is a skimpy case. The judge
13 says, the grand jury is all I need as probable cause.
14 Can and do judges say that? Does that
15 suffice to comply with the statute?

16 MR. DREEBEN: I think typically, Justice
17 Kennedy, the government makes a proffer of the evidence
18 that it intends to use. The proffer is very limited,
19 it's hearsay, it's a description of the crime, rather
20 than a detailed evidentiary presentation of the kind
21 that Petitioners want here.

22 JUSTICE ALITO: Well that's what -- I'm sorry.

23 MR. DREEBEN: I do not think that --
24 typically resting on the indictment alone will satisfy
25 the weight of the evidence factor. But the hearing that

1 is provided for in Salerno is not a hearing that this
2 Court has said, you must do as a matter of due process.
3 It is what Congress has established as a requirement in
4 the Bail Reform Act. When it comes to due process --

5 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, if it's required
6 anyway, then certainly the due process argument that you
7 make is much less weighty. If we have to go through
8 this anyway for detention, why not do it for distraint
9 of property?

10 MR. DREEBEN: It's not the same inquiry.
11 The Bail Act hearings are usually very summary. They
12 don't involve calling witnesses. They do not involve
13 sworn testimony.

14 JUSTICE ALITO: But that's what it seems to
15 me this case is all about. All the talk about
16 whether -- about defendants being exonerated, that the
17 judge is going to find a lack of probable cause,
18 that's -- you know, that's fantasy land for the most
19 part.

20 But what it's really about is about
21 discovery. Prosecutors hate preliminary examinations.
22 When do they ever occur in Federal felony cases? They
23 are always -- almost always eliminated by indictment.
24 The defense bar hates grand jury proceedings. They
25 would like to have a preliminary hearing, where they get

1 some discovery of the government's trial case, and
2 that's what this is all about.

3 So it seems to me that what's important is
4 the nature. If there is going to be any kind of a
5 hearing, what is going to take place at this hearing?
6 And what typically happens beyond what I-I mentioned
7 before, a case agent taking the stand and providing some
8 summary of the -- of the evidence that was provided to
9 the grand jury?

10 How much further do they go? Is the defense
11 entitled to any discovery? Do they subpoena witnesses?

12 MR. DREEBEN: They can do both of those
13 things. This is largely within the discretion of
14 district courts. The Second Circuit, which probably has
15 the most experience with these hearings under Monsanto,
16 has held that hearsay evidence is sufficient to meet the
17 government's burden of probable cause.

18 What happens, then, are frequently
19 excruciating fishing expedition, cross-examinations of
20 the government agent in the defense efforts to attempt
21 to find out more about the government's case, to ask for
22 additional documents, to make later claims that Brady
23 evidence wasn't produced in connection with the Monsanto
24 hearing and various sanctions should fall on the
25 government.

1 And the hearings do generally take the form
2 of efforts by defense to obtain some strategic
3 advantage. They have never resulted in the finding of
4 no probable cause. And the- the court's question, I think,
5 here is, really, is there anything on the defendant's
6 side of the scale, other than the abstract desire to use
7 money that the government says is forfeitable to pay for
8 attorneys?

9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: On that point,
10 Mr. Dreeben, would you clarify what happens at the end
11 of the road, if the defendant is convicted? I think you
12 said, in theory, you could go after the lawyers to
13 recoup the fee, but that would be difficult.

14 Can you explain what is the difficulty? We
15 know how much the fee was.

16 MR. DREEBEN: The difficulty is that we have
17 to actually trace the specific assets into the
18 defendant's own accounts , and if the defendant's lawyer
19 has spent that money and has used -- you know, paid it
20 out in salary, paid it out in expenses, it's gone, the
21 government can't make that tracing argument.

22 It can't forfeit substitute assets from the
23 attorney, so it has to go under some State law theory
24 and then sue the lawyers and then argue that the funds
25 were held in constructive trust for the government.

1 State law varies widely on this. It's a big, messy,
2 uncertain project, and as a result, it doesn't happen
3 very often.

4 Typically, if the funds are released to the
5 attorneys, they will be gone. And if the defendant is,
6 at the end of the day, convicted of a serious financial
7 crime and the government wants those assets available to
8 compensate investors, to compensate victims of Food and
9 Drug violations, the funds are not there. They have
10 been spent on an attorney.

11 And under this Court's decision in *Caplin &*
12 *Drysdale*, those funds were never the defendant's funds
13 at all. What happens is that they may have been
14 released because the government chose, at a hearing, not
15 to contest probable cause because it would suffer the
16 kinds of ill effects that Justice Alito referred to, and
17 that kind of -- "blackmail" may be too strong of a word,
18 but it does put the government in a very --

19 JUSTICE BREYER: We could deal with that,
20 couldn't we, by imposing conditions surrounding the use
21 of the word "may" with conditions that would reject --
22 you would say they rejected it. The magistrate thought
23 this was just a fishing expedition for evidence. That's
24 not a ground. He has to believe it's not a fishing
25 expedition for evidence and that there is good cause to

1 think that the defendant will succeed.

2 MR. DREEBEN: Well, that would be --

3 JUSTICE BREYER: Under those
4 circumstances -- under -- which is pretty limiting , under
5 those circumstances, then he has discretionary authority
6 to grant a hearing at which the defendant will be able
7 to show -- you know, that there is not probable cause to
8 believe a crime was committed by his client.

9 MR. DREEBEN: Those high bars would be
10 helpful. But once the defendant clears them, the
11 government faces the same pressures. And at the end of
12 the day, the same consequence is going to occur, that if
13 the judge does find in that one in a million case, which
14 has not yet been encountered, that there was no probable
15 cause for the indictment, you will have the defendant
16 proceeding on to trial in a judicial system that is
17 honoring the finding of the grand jury after the judge
18 has concluded to the contrary.

19 And --

20 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, it's about a
21 different subject. It's not we work through osmosis
22 here. It's about the subject of quashing a warrant, or
23 it's about the subject of injunction. Now, grant you, a
24 grand jury thinks it's there, but it's also there, when
25 you're talking about certain bail hearings.

1 MR. DREEBEN: It's different in the bail
2 context because the -- the judge at the bail hearing is
3 never questioning probable cause. He's only questioning
4 whether the evidence is sufficient to justify
5 restraining the defendant.

6 Thank you.

7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
8 Mr. Dreeben.

9 Mr. Srebnick, you have three minutes
10 remaining.

11 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF HOWARD SREBNICK
12 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

13 MR. SREBNICK: The government is asking for
14 an extraordinary remedy. We're asking for limited
15 relief.

16 Justice Alito, we're asking for the kind of
17 hearing that Federal courts do every day. This is not a
18 fishing expedition. This is not a discovery exercise.

19 JUSTICE ALITO: What do you mean this is the
20 kind of hearing that's held every day? I thought
21 these -- in some circuits, it is. But it's held
22 occasionally.

23 MR. SREBNICK: The hearing looks very
24 similar to a pretrial detention hearing. And in 2008,
25 in front of the D.C. Circuit, the government was asked

1 the question that this Court asks today, what would be
2 the prejudice to the government -- or what has been the
3 prejudice to the government in holding these hearings?

4 And I quote from the D.C. Circuit, "The
5 government could not identify any harm to its law
6 enforcement efforts in the Second Circuit that has
7 resulted from the Monsanto standard." 521 Fed 3d at
8 419, footnote 1.

9 Today, we hear fears of lawyers abusing the
10 process. We have a record. All we ask is the judge to
11 read the trial record that he presided over and come to
12 a conclusion that will not bind the court at trial. It
13 will not bind the government at trial.

14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, I think
15 your quotation from the D.C. Circuit was -- was not
16 quite on point. My understanding is the court was
17 asking for empirical evidence that this has caused a
18 particular problem, not whether they could point to any
19 concerns. I think we've seen the concerns laid out
20 today.

21 MR. SREBNICK: I understand the hypothetical
22 concerns that the prosecution raises. I understood the
23 D.C. Circuit to say, is there any empirical evidence?
24 In Matthews, the case that we cite and that we believe
25 controls, this Court said, "Bare statistics rarely

1 provide a satisfactory measure of fairness of a
2 decision-making process."

3 And so, rather than rely on statistics, we
4 rely on the Due Process Clause, guarantee that you have
5 an opportunity to be heard when the government wants to
6 freeze the equity in my client's home and say to her and
7 say to her husband they can't use the equity in their
8 home to retain counsel of choice, when they've shown the
9 court that they can prevail.

10 The government says the judge must close his
11 eyes. The judge can't consider the trial that he
12 presided over. Instead, he must be constrained by a
13 one-sided proceeding that the judge never observed, the
14 grand jury. We say the grand jury is enough to make my
15 client go to trial. We'll be there, if we have to be
16 there. But we say she and he should have the right to
17 use their assets to retain their counsel of choice.

18 After all, this Court has held that the
19 right to counsel of choice is a structural right. It is
20 per se reversible to deny someone their counsel of
21 choice. I ask that this Court not rule that the
22 government can beggar a defendant into submission. I
23 ask this Court not to rule that the government -- that
24 the government can impoverish someone without giving
25 them a chance to be heard through their counsel of

1 choice.

2 If there are no further questions, I would
3 submit the case.

4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.

5 The case is submitted.

6 (Whereupon, at 12:04 p.m., the case in the
7 above-entitled matter was submitted.)

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<p>A</p> <p>ability 25:9</p> <p>able 42:21 45:1 51:6</p> <p>aboveentitled 1:11 55:7</p> <p>absolutely 35:8</p> <p>abstract 49:6</p> <p>abusing 53:9</p> <p>accepting 24:12</p> <p>account 5:15,19</p> <p>accounts 49:18</p> <p>accurate 37:8</p> <p>acknowledge 20:23</p> <p>acquitted 13:17</p> <p>act 11:16 28:17 29:9 30:3,5,16,18 46:9,11 47:4,11</p> <p>activity 6:22</p> <p>acts 29:24</p> <p>actual 23:10 44:6</p> <p>additional 48:22</p> <p>address 8:7</p> <p>administering 21:24</p> <p>advantage 43:4 49:3</p> <p>adversarial 30:11</p> <p>adversary 9:5 33:6</p> <p>agent 13:3 48:7,20</p> <p>agents 14:7 44:22</p> <p>ago 34:4</p> <p>agree 14:16 18:6 28:9 38:20 45:13</p> <p>agrees 17:7</p> <p>ah 4:11</p> <p>aid 7:14</p> <p>aimed 34:11</p> <p>albeit 36:12</p> <p>alito 4:25 5:8 12:25 13:8,9,12,18 18:3 18:8,23 19:5 46:22 47:14 50:16 52:16,19</p> <p>allegedly 13:21</p> <p>allow 3:22 4:1 7:19</p>	<p>9:10 10:2 14:13 14:17 15:13 23:11</p> <p>allowed 17:3</p> <p>allowing 26:10 39:21</p> <p>allows 32:25</p> <p>amend 37:4</p> <p>amendment 36:2 37:15</p> <p>amicus 15:17</p> <p>amount 19:25 21:21 22:15 23:5 44:6</p> <p>analogy 8:12</p> <p>analysis 34:9</p> <p>analyzed 27:18</p> <p>anecdotal 40:15</p> <p>anecdotally 38:20</p> <p>anecdotes 40:16,19</p> <p>anomaly 9:20</p> <p>answer 6:5 23:21 40:12</p> <p>anyway 39:2 47:6,8</p> <p>apart 41:7 42:2</p> <p>appeal 15:21 19:13 19:21 37:7</p> <p>appearance 29:15</p> <p>appearances 1:14</p> <p>appears 16:20</p> <p>appellate 19:13</p> <p>apply 13:2</p> <p>appointed 22:2</p> <p>appropriate 39:22</p> <p>argue 14:20 45:6 49:24</p> <p>argument 1:12 2:2 2:5,8 3:3,7 6:11 8:3 24:21 33:22 47:6 49:21 52:11</p> <p>arguments 35:19</p> <p>arose 40:11</p> <p>arrest 3:24 5:25 10:4</p> <p>asked 13:15 40:9 46:8 52:25</p> <p>asking 7:24 9:23</p>	<p>11:20 12:2,4 15:12 16:24 22:3 29:6,7 32:22 52:13,14,16 53:17</p> <p>asks 53:1</p> <p>asserted 6:21</p> <p>assessment 19:24</p> <p>asset 4:24 22:5</p> <p>assets 3:17 5:7,25 6:12,18,19,20 7:11,12 11:4 15:9 15:11,13 16:10,16 17:1,2,4,9,10,15 17:18 19:22 22:17 35:3,5 38:12,18 41:5,8,11,14,18 42:22 45:16 49:17 49:22 50:7 54:17</p> <p>assume 13:2 21:10</p> <p>assure 29:14</p> <p>attempt 48:20</p> <p>attorney 6:23 7:12 31:11 38:16 49:23 50:10</p> <p>attorneys 19:24 41:15,17 49:8 50:5</p> <p>authority 6:16 51:5</p> <p>authorizes 10:19</p> <p>available 7:13 31:13 38:6 50:7</p> <p>avoidance 28:1</p> <p>awards 37:15</p> <p>awry 36:14</p> <p>B</p> <p>back 12:23 15:19 24:4 41:16 42:5</p> <p>backdrop 31:9</p> <p>background 46:5</p> <p>bail 3:25 4:15 5:1,3 5:5,6,12,19 8:8 11:16 27:11 28:11 28:17 29:9,10,24 30:3,4,16,18 33:10 46:9,11</p>	<p>47:4,11 51:25 52:1,2</p> <p>balance 24:17 34:2</p> <p>balancing 33:12</p> <p>bar 15:23 47:24</p> <p>bare 53:25</p> <p>bars 51:9</p> <p>based 9:6 12:5 18:10 35:4 45:1</p> <p>basic 26:19</p> <p>basically 33:10 42:14</p> <p>basis 4:2 22:1 38:10 43:18</p> <p>bear 46:1</p> <p>beggar 54:22</p> <p>behalf 1:15,18 2:4 2:7,10 3:8 24:22 52:12</p> <p>believe 5:17 7:17 9:23 10:8,18 11:25 14:13 15:7 16:6 19:15,19 23:24 26:22 35:5 44:20 50:24 51:8 53:24</p> <p>benefit 36:8</p> <p>best 43:17</p> <p>better 43:25</p> <p>beyond 48:6</p> <p>big 50:1</p> <p>bigger 4:11</p> <p>bind 17:22 53:12 53:13</p> <p>bit 41:4</p> <p>black 44:22</p> <p>blackmail 50:17</p> <p>body 4:24 25:25</p> <p>bona 20:7,21 21:16 24:11</p> <p>borne 25:20</p> <p>brady 48:22</p> <p>brethren 29:5</p> <p>breyer 26:15 27:16 27:20 28:3,4,7 33:24 34:9,10,17</p>	<p>35:7 39:13,17 40:6,16,21 43:14 44:1,5 50:19 51:3 51:20</p> <p>bribe 45:5</p> <p>bribes 45:4</p> <p>brief 6:11 15:17 16:7</p> <p>bring 33:1</p> <p>bringing 25:4</p> <p>broader 15:1</p> <p>budget 23:10,11,18</p> <p>bunch 39:25</p> <p>burden 11:2 12:21 18:2 30:14 45:20 46:1,2 48:17</p> <p>C</p> <p>c 1:8,18 2:1 3:1 37:25 38:2 52:25 53:4,15,23</p> <p>call 8:5 13:3,9</p> <p>called 30:13 43:19 46:5</p> <p>calling 47:12</p> <p>cant 6:19,19 35:20 49:21,22 54:7,11</p> <p>canvassed 37:14</p> <p>caplin 15:8 31:9 50:11</p> <p>care 7:15</p> <p>case 3:4 4:12 6:14 6:17,24 7:1,6 8:11 10:14 12:12 13:3 13:13,14,22 14:7 14:8,15,19 16:4 16:13,22 17:9 18:2 19:13,17 20:13,15 22:10,19 22:21,21 23:13,18 24:5 25:3,10 27:6 30:14,20 31:16 35:11 37:11 41:3 41:7 42:15,15 43:7,9 44:19,24 45:2,6,10,13</p>
---	---	---	--	--

<p>46:12 47:15 48:1 48:7,21 51:13 53:24 55:3,5,6 cases 10:11 15:17 15:19 16:9 17:23 20:25 26:9 29:12 36:14 37:4,5,17 37:19,20,24 38:15 38:20 39:8,9,19 39:22 40:1,10,21 44:3 47:22 casting 30:23 category 43:19 cause 5:11,17 8:4 9:21,23,24 10:1,4 11:25 12:10,14,15 12:18 13:6 14:19 15:23 18:5,10 25:2,18 26:11,24 29:4 30:19 31:2,6 32:8,13,23,24 33:3,7,18 34:2 35:2,5 36:12,20 36:21 37:10,16 38:7,10 39:23 46:13 47:17 48:17 49:4 50:15,25 51:7,15 52:3 caused 53:17 certain 11:17 29:12 51:25 certainly 6:11 47:6 cetera 23:9,14 43:23 challenge 4:20 17:4 22:23 chance 27:3 54:25 change 27:22 charge 9:16 12:10 20:12 22:12 charged 17:11 45:17 charges 8:8 18:6 19:4 29:23 33:3 chief 3:3,9 6:4,10 16:11,19 24:16,19</p>	<p>24:23 25:8,17 26:3,7 31:15 32:9 36:22,25 37:23 38:2,8,19 39:1,7 41:2,11,13,20 52:7 53:14 55:4 choice 3:18 6:13 7:8,23 11:5 15:12 20:14,17 21:12 23:12 25:9 33:14 54:8,17,19,21 55:1 choose 21:18 chose 13:25 50:14 chosen 21:13 circuit 6:1 15:18 28:20 37:24,25 38:2,3,3 39:18 48:14 52:25 53:4 53:6,15,23 circuits 8:15,20 27:2 35:23 39:14 39:19,20,25 40:1 42:18 52:21 circumstances 27:7 51:4,5 cite 53:24 civil 10:11 17:23 37:11 claim 34:18 36:5 44:9 claims 48:22 clarence 20:2 clarify 49:10 class 29:12 clause 54:4 clearly 29:7 clears 51:10 clerk 15:19 client 14:22 51:8 54:15 clients 54:6 close 14:14 54:10 coconspirators 44:24 codefendant 13:17</p>	<p>14:11 collar 44:3 come 35:24 42:10 45:1 53:11 comes 21:7 47:4 coming 15:25 commands 34:11 comment 44:17,19 committed 5:18 51:8 community 29:15 30:8 companies 42:5 company 44:22 compared 10:9 compels 42:14 compensate 50:8,8 complaint 37:11 complicated 35:11 35:20 comply 46:15 composed 26:2 compulsion 26:17 42:24,25 concede 17:10 45:7 concept 9:13 conceptual 35:8,10 concerns 43:13 53:19,19,22 conclude 12:20 concluded 36:19 51:18 concludes 10:3 26:18 36:9 conclusion 53:12 conclusive 25:2 conditions 29:14 50:20,21 conduct 10:5 12:18 17:15,19,20 22:6 24:8 conducted 13:1 congress 29:1 34:23 47:3 connection 17:4 48:23</p>	<p>consequence 51:12 consider 13:16 29:3 30:9 54:11 considered 31:9 considering 26:8 30:9 considers 29:17 consistent 21:3 27:9 28:5 consistently 28:5 constitution 27:24 30:4 45:24 constitutional 5:9 26:17 27:19,25 31:11 constrain 18:11,15 constrained 54:12 constraints 19:9 constructive 49:25 construed 34:12 consultants 23:9 contest 50:15 context 5:12,25 28:11 33:25 52:2 continue 33:15 contradict 12:1,2 32:7,22 contradicted 36:11 contrary 31:7 51:18 control 7:16 controls 53:25 convicted 24:4,13 49:11 50:6 conviction 34:15,20 34:20 convince 16:23 core 39:8 correct 40:14 cost 38:22 39:12 costs 23:9 36:15 couldnt 5:3 30:25 31:2 50:20 council 16:7 counsel 3:18 6:7,13 6:20 7:8,20,23</p>	<p>11:5 14:25 15:12 20:14,17 21:12 22:10,20 23:2,12 24:19 25:9 53:14 54:8,17,19,20,25 55:4 country 38:4 course 9:2,3 21:3 21:22 24:10 42:3 44:9 court 1:1,12 3:10 4:17 5:22 7:18,20 10:16,16 11:13 15:9,12 16:21 17:13,18,21,22 19:13 20:18 21:8 21:14,14,22,24 22:11,16 23:16 24:8,24,25 26:7 27:18 28:11 30:2 30:9,15,17 31:8 33:2 34:13 35:2 36:9,12,19 37:9 47:2 53:1,12,16 53:25 54:9,18,21 54:23 courthouse 16:9 courts 4:16 8:9,19 17:23 20:5 21:9 22:1,6,7 25:1 26:2 26:10 28:8,20 29:8 37:15 45:22 46:2 48:14 49:4 50:11 52:17 creates 29:13 credibility 18:25 19:6 credible 19:1,2 credit 42:6 creditors 43:22 crime 10:4 17:3 41:12 44:23 46:5 46:19 50:7 51:8 criminal 3:14,14,16 6:22 17:20 25:3 39:9 44:14 45:17</p>
--	--	---	--	--

crossexaminations 48:19	28:14 35:3 37:6 38:4 42:21 45:6 45:11,15,19 46:1 47:16 49:5,18,18 50:12	10:6 17:24 18:1 18:25 25:2 29:10 30:3 31:17 32:4,5 32:8,19,22,25 33:17	distrain 47:8 district 17:18 23:16 34:13 37:9 48:14 documents 23:14 48:22 doesnt 3:25 9:4,16 10:13 11:24,24 12:1,22 39:6 50:2 doing 9:11 26:12 36:16 doj 43:18 44:11 dollar 22:15 23:10 don 47:12 dont 8:7 10:7 14:25 21:5,6 23:21 25:14 26:19,24 28:20 29:21 30:23 31:15,18,21,23,23 32:17 33:7,17 34:21,24 38:17 39:4 44:1 46:9 doubt 30:24 draw 8:12 dreeben 1:17 2:6 24:20,21,23 25:16 26:6 27:16 28:2,7 28:23,25 29:12,19 30:1,7,17 31:4,7 32:7,21 33:21 34:8,16,24 36:6 36:25 38:1,19 39:6,15 40:4,14 40:18,24 41:10,14 42:13,19 43:10 44:1,18 45:9,15 45:21,25 46:7,16 46:23 47:10 48:12 49:10,16 51:2,9 52:1,8 drug 39:8 50:9 drysdale 15:8 31:10 50:12 due 14:13,16 22:6 27:23 31:5 45:13 47:2,4,6 54:4	E e 2:1 3:1,1 earlier 22:11 38:9 easy 41:19 effect 22:24,24 33:8 36:17 effects 50:16 effort 14:5 efforts 48:20 49:2 53:6 either 4:10 6:14 30:7 elected 40:19 eleventh 6:1 eliminated 47:23 empirical 25:22 36:9 53:17,23 encountered 40:25 51:14 enforcement 53:6 englishspeaking 26:9 enhancements 43:3 ensure 4:18 7:21 entered 20:17 entire 23:8 30:14 42:14 entirely 32:1,20 44:11 entitled 6:6 11:3 45:16 48:11 entitlement 45:5 entry 10:12 11:20 enumerated 29:2 equating 5:16 equation 36:9 equity 54:6,7 erred 37:10 esq 1:15,17 2:3,6,9 essentially 33:22 establish 11:24 13:6 24:11 established 38:4 47:3 estimate 22:20 23:7 43:25
curious 43:15				
D				
d 1:8,18 3:1 37:25 38:2 52:25 53:4 53:15,23 daily 22:1 danger 30:8 dangers 38:22 darrow 20:2 day 12:22 16:21 18:2,14 20:5 31:14 50:6 51:12 52:17,20 daytoday 29:8 deal 50:19 decide 16:14 18:18 20:3,5 28:9 30:23 decided 20:5 decides 38:10 decision 15:9 17:24 18:20 21:16 24:11 45:22 50:11 decisionmaking 54:2 decisions 28:20 deemed 25:19 defect 14:12,12 defend 15:3 defendant 3:14 5:9 5:17 7:11,13,13 9:3,5,21 10:4,25 11:3,4 14:24 15:2 15:11 16:23 17:3 17:9 21:7,13,20 25:4,5,6,7,25 26:21 28:13 29:15 30:2,7 33:1 34:19 35:12 37:21 42:25 45:9 46:10 49:11 50:5 51:1,6,10,15 52:5 54:22 defendants 22:12 23:5 24:13 26:13	defense 10:10 11:6 13:14,25 14:9 16:7 20:1 22:3 23:11 24:14 31:1 43:5,8,11 45:1 47:24 48:10,20 49:2 define 10:13 defining 33:18 demonstrably 15:10,14 demonstrates 26:21 denied 15:20 deny 54:20 departing 26:8 department 1:18 40:10 depend 18:9 depending 41:8 deprived 6:13 44:16 45:4 depriving 25:5 44:10 deputy 1:17 describe 36:15 description 46:19 desire 33:12 49:6 desired 31:11 destroys 34:22 detailed 46:20 detain 16:23 30:2 detained 4:15 detaining 5:2 detention 4:23,24 5:1,23 8:22 11:10 11:13,14 16:22 18:21 29:9 46:10 47:8 52:24 determination 5:10 5:13,20 8:10 9:22	determine 17:14 28:18 29:10,24 30:16 46:11 determined 6:20 9:24 28:12 determines 38:21 determining 25:18 29:23 devices 35:13 didn 12:21 didnt 16:17 33:24 35:14,15 36:23 37:19 42:5 differ 19:6 different 4:22 6:24 10:10 16:24 17:23 18:19 25:11 28:25 29:17 31:20 36:12 42:8 51:21 52:1 difficult 49:13 difficulty 49:14,16 direction 29:24 disadvantage 40:8 disclose 43:7 disclosed 20:18 21:14 disclosure 13:11 discovery 14:4 37:22 47:21 48:1 48:11 52:18 discretion 18:17 33:19,20,23,25 34:13 35:1 48:13 discretionary 51:5 dismiss 12:9 18:6 19:3 dismisses 12:16 dispute 19:11 20:20 dissipation 34:13 distinguish 17:13 distraining 4:6		

estimated 20:18 et 1:3 23:9,14 43:23 ethical 18:5 19:3,9 ethically 18:12,16 event 24:12 everybody 17:7 evidence 4:21 5:16 5:18 9:6 13:2,4,5 13:25 14:3,10 18:24,24 28:17,19 28:21 29:11,25 30:11,18 31:24 33:11 34:21 36:12 36:17 46:4,12,17 46:25 48:8,16,23 50:23,25 52:4 53:17,23 evidentiary 46:20 exactly 16:20 34:16 34:17 examinations 47:21 example 42:8 44:19 examples 40:10 exception 27:8 excessive 5:6 excruciating 48:19 exculpatory 9:6 14:3 exercise 3:17 7:22 14:4 52:18 exist 38:20,21 exonerated 47:16 expedition 48:19 50:23,25 52:18 expeditions 37:22 expense 44:12 expenses 44:12 49:20 experience 48:15 experts 23:9 explain 49:14 explained 41:16 explicit 27:22 explicitly 27:21 exposing 38:22	exposure 39:9 extended 25:4 extent 22:17 27:11 41:4 extraordinary 52:14 eyes 14:14 54:11 <hr/> F <hr/> face 40:4 faced 40:2 faces 51:11 facing 3:14 fact 6:5 10:17 11:14 32:2 36:6 factor 8:9 46:25 factors 4:21 5:15 5:19 29:2 34:3 facts 39:1 42:8 fair 44:17,19 fairness 9:13 54:1 fall 42:2 48:24 falls 41:7 fantasy 47:18 far 35:7 fears 53:9 features 25:21 fed 53:7 federal 16:21 47:22 52:17 fee 20:11 21:10,23 23:7 24:12 37:15 49:13,15 fees 19:24 20:6,6,8 20:18,21,21,22 21:2,2,5,14,16 22:20 31:11 fellow 9:11 20:1 felony 47:22 fide 20:7 21:17 fides 20:21 24:12 figure 23:2,10 figured 35:16 figures 43:18 files 41:17 financial 5:5 50:6	find 3:20 4:7 6:12 18:4 32:23 34:4 34:21 35:10 37:9 39:23 47:17 48:21 51:13 finding 8:3,6 12:5 24:7 33:7,8 35:5 36:11 37:10 38:7 49:3 51:17 finds 12:15 19:1,2 fine 26:15 35:8 firearms 25:7 first 36:1,10 38:2 fishing 37:22 48:19 50:23,24 52:18 five 8:17 18:15 27:1 35:23 42:10,18 flight 11:19,25 29:18,22 30:8 floating 35:1 florida 1:15 focus 35:1 following 26:7 food 50:8 footnote 16:3 27:23 28:6 53:8 forced 43:12 forfeit 34:19 49:22 forfeitable 35:6 49:7 forfeited 34:14 forfeiture 24:9,14 31:10,13 43:16 44:3,10,12 forgive 19:18 form 39:21 49:1 forth 31:20,20 forward 24:6 31:18 31:19 found 9:25 12:1,3 12:10 14:18 15:19 26:11 32:24 33:2 36:20 37:16 four 37:17 40:22 frankly 31:16 free 35:1	freedom 3:21 freely 7:13 freeze 54:6 frequency 42:19 frequently 48:18 friends 41:24 front 52:25 fullblown 30:11 function 29:7 fundamental 9:13 33:13 funds 7:8,19,21,21 14:24 21:22 23:22 24:4 30:25 31:10 31:12 33:23 37:2 39:2 44:2 49:24 50:4,9,12,12 further 25:19 28:13 48:10 55:2 <hr/> G <hr/> g 3:1 general 1:17 44:6 45:12 generally 41:11 49:1 ginsburg 5:14,22 6:3 7:9,17 9:8,19 10:7 12:8,19 16:25 17:6,7,12 22:9,15,18 23:1,4 49:9 give 9:3,5 10:16 20:2 24:8 26:24 29:8,22 34:12 40:6 42:6,10 given 17:2 23:22 32:3 39:18 gives 24:4 giving 54:24 go 10:3 16:12 19:13 23:18 24:6 33:5 36:13 38:11,18,24 41:17 43:12 47:7 48:10 49:12,23 54:15	goes 25:9 43:19,24 44:7 going 6:6 12:11 15:24 20:11,12 21:6,9 22:12 27:6 29:2 31:24 32:15 34:2 38:15,15 42:9 44:12 47:17 48:4,5 51:12 good 26:12 27:3,5 35:20 36:4,13,23 41:7 42:8 50:25 government 3:11 6:21 10:9,20 11:2 11:5,7,12 12:21 13:2,11 14:6 16:12,16,20 18:1 19:12,19 23:17,21 24:13 26:5 30:2 30:10,13 33:1 35:23 36:2 38:9 38:21 39:15 40:2 40:8,19 42:7,14 42:25 43:6,12 44:19,25 46:3,3 46:17 48:20,25 49:7,21,25 50:7 50:14,18 51:11 52:13,25 53:2,3,5 53:13 54:5,10,22 54:23,24 governments 8:2 8:11 33:12 39:10 48:1,17,21 grand 3:22 4:2 8:3 9:2,3,4,6,15,16,20 9:25 10:6 11:23 12:1,2,23 13:5 14:23 17:25 18:25 19:1 25:1,18,21 25:24 26:11,22 27:4,10,14 28:12 28:22 30:24 31:16 31:17,19 32:2,10 32:11,24,25 35:22 36:10,13,20 37:10
---	--	--	---	--

37:12,20 39:22 46:13 47:24 48:9 51:17,24 54:14,14 grant 51:6,23 granted 15:21 17:14 great 26:4 greater 6:6 43:2 ground 50:24 group 40:24 guarantee 54:4 guess 40:6 43:24 guilt 30:11	28:10 30:12 31:18 32:6,14 33:10 36:15 38:11,25 40:20 42:15 43:1 43:12 45:8,11,14 45:20 46:25 47:1 47:25 48:5,5,24 50:14 51:6 52:2 52:17,20,23,24 hearings 8:20,21 8:23,24,25 12:6 12:25 16:22 24:3 26:19 27:11 29:8 37:3,25 38:5 39:12 41:25 42:20 43:5 47:11 48:15 49:1 51:25 53:3 hearsay 14:7 46:19 48:16 held 4:18 15:9,18 31:8 35:2 48:16 49:25 52:20,21 54:18 helpful 51:10 heres 20:11 hes 3:25 52:3 high 38:24 51:9 hire 6:7,19,23 14:25 20:2,11 21:7 25:9,13 33:13 35:21 36:23 39:24 hired 37:2 hiring 31:1 hold 9:10,17 17:21 17:23 28:13 holding 3:24 8:20 53:3 holds 10:12 home 54:6,8 honor 42:11 46:10 honoring 51:17 hospitals 35:13 42:4 howard 1:15 2:3,9 3:7 52:11	huge 40:7 hundreds 16:15 37:13 husband 54:7 hyde 37:15 hypothetical 53:21	10:18,22 11:6,15 11:18,23 12:9,16 14:12,23 17:16 20:15,16 28:12,22 29:4,13 32:2 36:10 37:12 39:22 46:24 47:23 51:15 indictments 37:13 37:13,18 individual 3:24 inducements 43:8 information 21:15 informed 33:20 initially 19:14 initiate 9:15,17 initiation 10:19 injunction 10:13 51:23 injured 35:25 innocence 14:10 31:25 inquiry 22:7 25:20 28:24 47:10 instance 36:19 instances 40:19 insulation 26:5 integrity 38:23 intends 46:18 interest 43:20,21 interests 44:6 interim 10:12 17:24 interlocutory 19:21 interpret 26:16 28:16 introduced 18:24 invalid 33:4 investigation 23:8 investors 50:8 involve 47:12,12 involved 13:21 37:11 isnt 9:23 17:3 issue 8:9 10:8 15:8 20:3,24 22:21,21 24:8 28:8 30:20	33:9 44:7 46:9 issues 21:25 30:9 issuing 14:2 ive 27:22 32:14 33:11,15
H		I		J
half 6:20 hand 31:22,23 happen 13:7,23 50:2 happened 13:13 39:13 42:18 happens 24:2 48:6 48:18 49:10 50:13 happy 45:25 hard 3:20 4:7 9:12 harm 36:2,7 53:5 hasnt 35:24 hate 47:21 hates 47:24 havent 19:20 45:4 hear 3:3 53:9 heard 3:13 5:24 6:2 6:3,14,15 9:4 22:4 22:22 26:23 54:5 54:25 hearing 4:19,20 5:13 7:3,5 8:4,14 8:22 10:8,9,10,12 10:16,22,25 11:4 11:7,10,13,14 12:6,14,20 14:25 15:16,18 16:12,18 17:2,14,16,21 18:14,19,20,21,22 19:23 20:25 21:19 24:6 26:20,20,25		id 24:16 45:25 idea 40:13 45:3 identified 23:2 identify 53:5 identities 39:10 identity 14:6 ignore 10:22 ignores 11:14 ii 15:4 21:5 34:24 48:6 ill 34:4,6 36:15 50:16 illustrate 25:17 im 4:25 15:12 20:11,11 29:6,7 32:15 37:23 38:1 42:7 44:18 46:22 impact 38:14 impartial 14:18 implementing 34:11 important 6:12 48:3 impose 36:3 imposing 25:5,6 50:20 impoverish 54:24 include 4:20 6:15 19:23 includes 43:21,22 43:22 including 23:23 inconsistent 27:17 independent 12:5 25:24 26:1 indicted 5:3 indictment 3:22 4:2 4:23 9:18 10:17		jail 4:1 6:8,8 25:14 41:5 jeopardize 38:17 39:16 judge 5:10,13 6:15 6:15 9:22,24 10:2 10:3,5,5,12 12:2,4 12:6,9,10,12,14 12:15,17,20,22 13:15,16 14:10,10 14:14,18 16:23 18:4 19:2,12,14 28:18 29:2,17,22 32:4,16,23 33:9 33:19 34:1 42:2 46:12 47:17 51:13 51:17 52:2 53:10 54:10,11,13 judges 29:9 46:14 judgment 30:24 judicial 24:11 25:19 28:13 33:7 33:8 36:11 51:16 juries 36:13 jury 3:22 4:2 8:3 9:2,3,4,6,15,16,20 9:25 11:23 12:1,2 12:24 13:5 14:23 17:25 18:25 19:1 25:18,21,24 26:11 26:22 27:4,10,14 28:12,22 30:24 31:16,17,19 32:2 32:10,11,24 35:22 36:10,20 37:10,12 37:20 39:22 46:13 47:24 48:9 51:17 51:24 54:14,14 jurys 10:6 25:1

32:25 justice 1:18 3:3,9 3:19 4:9,11,25 5:2 5:8,14,21 6:3,4,10 6:17 7:3,9,17 8:2 8:13,17 9:8,9,14 9:19 10:7,15,21 10:24 11:1,9,12 11:23 12:8,19,25 13:8,9,12,18 14:15 15:7,15 16:2,3,8,11,19,25 17:6,7,12 18:3,8 18:23 19:5,10,15 19:16,18,19,23 20:4,9,23 21:1,5 21:11,18 22:9,15 22:18 23:1,4,13 23:15,20,24 24:1 24:5,15,16,19,23 25:8,17 26:3,7,15 27:16,20 28:3,4,7 28:16,23,24 29:6 29:13,16,21 30:1 30:6,15,21,22 31:5,15 32:9 33:5 33:24 34:8,10,17 35:7 36:22 37:1,3 37:4,23 38:2,8,19 39:1,7,11,13,17 40:6,9,16,21 41:2 41:11,13,15,20 42:17,23 43:4,14 44:1,5,14 45:7,12 45:19,23 46:7,16 46:22 47:5,14 49:9 50:16,19 51:3,20 52:7,16 52:19 53:14 55:4 justify 3:23 4:23 16:17 30:14 52:4	kaley 1:3 3:4 kaleys 7:7 13:14 41:5 keep 6:7 25:13 39:7 kennedy 10:15,21 10:24 11:1,9,12 23:13,15 28:16,23 28:24 29:6,13,16 29:21 30:1,6,15 30:21 45:7,12,19 45:23 46:7,17 47:5 kerri 1:3 kind 15:18 36:3 40:12,13 46:20 48:4 50:17 52:16 52:20 kinds 39:12 50:16 knew 16:17 know 3:19 15:16,22 15:25 20:9,10 21:5,6,8,23 23:21 33:7 39:17 42:4,7 44:2 47:18 49:15 49:19 51:7 knowingly 19:7 known 18:11 22:16 knows 16:12,15	lawyers 16:7 21:6 21:13 22:2 23:8 23:23 24:7,10,14 36:23 37:1 49:12 49:24 53:9 lay 16:13 lead 39:10 45:6 leads 15:5 learn 14:5 leave 35:9,9 leaves 27:20,21 leaving 27:22 legal 7:14 19:11 20:7 33:8,17 legally 33:3 legitimacy 20:6,22 liberty 6:13 25:5,12 28:14 limitation 36:4 limited 5:4 22:6 42:20 46:4,18 52:14 limiting 51:4 lists 15:17 little 36:8 41:4 44:16 45:2 locality 21:3 logic 12:13 long 5:5 6:8 7:2 20:7 look 8:21,24 12:23 13:1 30:17 32:12 39:21 44:6 looking 43:17 looks 52:23 lose 41:3 losing 43:4 lost 19:16 37:6 lot 6:22 34:2 low 15:23 lower 25:1	50:22 main 44:2 making 32:4 35:16 41:2 malfunctioned 37:20 man 12:11 manner 3:13 22:4 manufacturer 35:15 market 44:22 material 14:3 matter 1:11 20:19 36:1 47:2 55:7 matthews 53:24 mean 12:22 15:23 19:25 25:10 30:23 33:6 40:7 41:23 45:12 52:19 meaningful 3:13,13 22:4 meant 34:25 measure 54:1 medical 35:13 44:20,21 meet 48:16 mentioned 48:6 merely 43:4 merit 29:23 merits 38:17 messy 50:1 miami 1:15 michael 1:17 2:6 24:21 million 16:4 51:13 mind 39:7 minitrial 3:23 minutes 42:11 52:9 modify 7:19 moment 12:20 35:9 money 6:23 7:4,15 15:2 19:17,25 20:3,7 23:5 24:4 27:5 33:9,16 35:17,21 43:16 44:7 45:5 49:7,19	monies 7:25 44:10 monsanto 15:8 27:21,24 28:3,8,9 31:8,9 33:22 34:22,25 36:18 48:15,23 53:7 morning 3:4 mortgagees 43:22 motion 15:20,20 mystery 22:19
N				
n 2:1,1 3:1				
names 13:11				
narrow 27:8				
nature 30:10 48:4				
necessarily 18:9 19:6				
necessary 20:1				
need 14:25 15:2 21:22 26:19 28:21 31:2 46:13				
needed 14:3 31:1				
needs 11:4 15:11				
never 20:20 22:6 23:16 27:6 28:4 29:3 49:3 50:12 52:3 54:13				
nevertheless 7:6				
new 16:7 30:12,13				
nixon 14:2				
nonentry 10:12				
normally 44:11				
number 36:14 40:21 41:1				
numbers 40:24				
O				
o 2:1 3:1				
objection 15:11				
obligation 18:6 19:3				
observed 54:13				
obstruction 39:11 43:3				
obtain 49:2				

<p>obtained 44:21</p> <p>occasionally 52:22</p> <p>occupational 25:6</p> <p>occur 47:22 51:12</p> <p>occurred 12:23</p> <p>occurring 12:7</p> <p>october 1:9</p> <p>odd 33:2</p> <p>offense 5:18 12:11 17:5,11 45:18</p> <p>offenses 11:17</p> <p>offer 13:25</p> <p>offers 14:9</p> <p>office 40:9</p> <p>offices 40:25</p> <p>officials 45:4</p> <p>oh 27:12 35:22</p> <p>okay 4:3,4,5,6,7,8,9 4:11 21:18 32:10 34:15 35:7 42:9</p> <p>old 35:14</p> <p>once 28:21 51:10</p> <p>onesided 9:2 54:13</p> <p>onon 17:3</p> <p>open 27:20,21,23</p> <p>operates 25:21 39:8</p> <p>opinion 13:6</p> <p>opportunity 9:4,5 11:20 22:3,22 37:21 39:3 45:10 54:5</p> <p>oral 1:11 2:2,5 3:7 24:21</p> <p>order 7:19,25 16:22 20:17 22:23 23:6,11 39:4</p> <p>ordinary 13:22,24</p> <p>organizations 44:15</p> <p>organized 39:9</p> <p>osmosis 51:21</p> <p>ought 26:12</p> <p>outcome 10:13</p> <p>outright 37:6</p> <p>overriding 10:6</p> <p>overweaning 26:5</p>	<p>owner 3:12</p> <p>owns 5:7</p> <hr/> <p>P</p> <hr/> <p>p 3:1 55:6</p> <p>page 2:2 34:5</p> <p>paid 7:20 24:7 41:14 49:19,20</p> <p>parallels 25:14,16</p> <p>pardon 11:13</p> <p>part 16:13 17:3 29:10 42:20 47:19</p> <p>particular 21:8,21 32:4,6 53:18</p> <p>particularly 38:9 44:3</p> <p>parties 16:9</p> <p>party 31:22</p> <p>pay 27:5 41:12,22 42:9 44:4,7 49:7</p> <p>paying 7:12</p> <p>payment 22:2</p> <p>pending 6:8</p> <p>people 19:6 23:23 40:9 42:5</p> <p>percent 43:19,24</p> <p>period 9:17 37:14 37:18</p> <p>perjured 19:8</p> <p>permanently 3:25</p> <p>permission 35:13</p> <p>permit 34:13</p> <p>permitted 39:14,19 39:21</p> <p>person 3:22 5:4 6:7 6:18 11:18,25 44:8</p> <p>pertinent 41:22</p> <p>petitioner 1:4,16 2:4,10 3:8 52:12</p> <p>petitioners 7:7 22:22 36:18 46:21</p> <p>phony 38:14</p> <p>phrase 27:3</p> <p>place 7:6 8:15 48:5</p> <p>placed 46:2</p>	<p>plain 35:9,10</p> <p>plainly 17:1 34:11</p> <p>plaintiffs 18:21</p> <p>planning 44:25</p> <p>please 3:10 24:24</p> <p>point 16:5,14 32:17 36:18 38:8 40:7 41:23 42:24 49:9 53:16,18</p> <p>pointed 37:3,17</p> <p>points 16:8</p> <p>poses 30:8</p> <p>position 7:10 10:23 12:13</p> <p>possession 14:24 35:3</p> <p>possibility 17:8</p> <p>possible 41:16</p> <p>potential 38:23</p> <p>power 9:15,17 26:5</p> <p>practical 36:1</p> <p>practice 28:19 41:18</p> <p>precedence 22:6</p> <p>precedent 4:16</p> <p>preclude 34:25</p> <p>prefer 14:21,22 15:4</p> <p>prejudice 53:2,3</p> <p>preliminary 8:24 18:20 42:15 47:21 47:25</p> <p>present 9:6</p> <p>presentation 8:25 9:1,2 10:25 18:18 46:20</p> <p>presented 12:5 13:14 14:4 18:1 18:14 22:11 30:12 33:15</p> <p>presenting 19:7</p> <p>presents 10:9,10 11:6 46:4</p> <p>preserves 27:9</p> <p>preside 9:25</p> <p>presided 13:16</p>	<p>14:11 53:11 54:12</p> <p>pressures 51:11</p> <p>presumably 19:10 41:24</p> <p>presumption 11:17 11:19 29:14</p> <p>pretrial 5:1,23 8:21 16:21 18:21 46:10 52:24</p> <p>pretty 15:23 35:10 51:4</p> <p>prevail 11:7 26:13 43:11 54:9</p> <p>prevails 7:10</p> <p>prevent 14:23</p> <p>prevented 11:22</p> <p>preview 43:8</p> <p>price 38:24</p> <p>principle 26:19 27:25 41:17</p> <p>private 3:11</p> <p>probable 5:11,17 8:4 9:21,23,24 10:1,3 11:24 12:10,14,15,18 13:6 14:19 15:23 18:5,10 25:2,18 26:11,24 29:4 30:19 31:2,6 32:8 32:13,23,24 33:3 33:7,18 34:2 35:2 35:5 36:12,20,21 37:10,16 38:7,10 39:23 46:13 47:17 48:17 49:4 50:15 51:7,14 52:3</p> <p>probably 27:12 40:9,12,13 48:14</p> <p>problem 21:24 53:18</p> <p>problems 39:11 40:11</p> <p>procedural 4:17 5:23</p> <p>proceed 14:17 40:20 44:25</p>	<p>proceeding 11:22 32:1,20 51:16 54:13</p> <p>proceedings 47:24</p> <p>proceeds 45:17</p> <p>process 14:13,17 22:7 25:17 27:23 31:5 38:18 45:13 47:2,4,6 53:10 54:2,4</p> <p>produced 25:23 38:6 48:23</p> <p>product 6:22</p> <p>proffer 30:10 46:17 46:18</p> <p>proffers 16:22</p> <p>project 50:2</p> <p>proof 11:2 45:20 46:1,2</p> <p>property 3:12,12 3:15,17,20 4:6 6:5 25:11,12 32:18 34:14,18 47:9</p> <p>proposing 8:5,14 13:13</p> <p>prosecuted 9:21</p> <p>prosecution 11:22 13:7 14:13 19:1,2 26:2 37:16 44:15 44:23 53:22</p> <p>prosecutions 26:1 35:24,25</p> <p>prosecutor 18:5,11 18:13,16,17,19</p> <p>prosecutors 47:21</p> <p>prospect 15:25</p> <p>prospects 15:15</p> <p>protect 25:25</p> <p>protection 6:6 26:6</p> <p>prove 31:25,25 44:8</p> <p>provide 6:16 13:3 54:1</p> <p>provided 4:17 47:1 48:8</p> <p>providers 44:20</p>
---	---	--	--	---

providing 48:7 public 45:3 purely 36:1 purports 22:23 purposes 8:1 25:3 44:2 put 6:8 31:18,18,19 31:20 34:23 40:8 43:2 50:18 <hr/> Q quantify 40:5 quarrelling 9:15 quashing 51:22 question 5:2 8:6 16:10 23:16 27:21 27:23 30:19 31:12 34:25 35:2 43:15 46:6,8,8 49:4 53:1 questioning 52:3,3 questions 55:2 quite 25:10 53:16 quotation 53:15 quote 53:4 <hr/> R r 1:17 2:6 3:1 24:21 raise 19:9 41:25 raised 38:8 raises 53:22 rare 42:20 43:5 rarely 53:25 ratio 37:19 read 53:11 real 36:2 39:12 realities 25:22 reality 26:4 really 15:4,5,23 33:2 45:2 47:20 49:5 reason 26:12,13,22 36:13 reasonable 21:16 reasonableness 19:24 20:6,21 23:17	rebut 11:20 rebuttable 11:17 rebuttal 2:8 11:19 52:11 receive 45:4 received 40:15,18 44:23 recipients 44:10 reconsideration 29:3 record 17:17 20:19 53:10,11 recoup 49:13 recover 41:18 referred 50:16 referring 28:2,3,8 refers 16:8 34:6 reform 11:16 28:17 29:9,24 30:3,4,16 30:18 46:9,11 47:4 reject 33:25 50:21 rejected 33:22 50:22 related 17:10 43:14 relation 41:16 release 7:20 33:9 released 4:14 50:4 50:14 relevance 29:8 reliable 25:19 relief 6:16 52:15 rely 5:6 14:7 24:11 54:3,4 remain 22:24 remained 22:24 remaining 52:10 remedy 52:14 reported 28:19 37:4 38:15 40:25 represent 22:12 require 8:25 13:10 34:19 45:13 required 43:1 47:5 requirement 29:9 47:3	requires 31:6 34:14 45:24 reservation 28:8 reserve 24:17 resolve 16:10 respect 37:5 45:24 respects 27:10 respondent 1:19 2:7 24:22 respondents 37:14 responses 40:15 resting 46:24 restitution 41:12 41:22 42:9 44:4 44:23 restrain 8:10 32:17 33:23 41:8 restrained 3:15 15:10 17:15 22:5 28:14 31:13 35:4 45:16 restraining 7:19,25 20:16 22:23 33:15 38:18 39:4 52:5 restrains 3:11 restraint 5:25 10:19 11:21 15:13 16:10 17:19 33:13 restrictions 25:6,7 rests 11:5 result 50:2 resulted 42:16 49:3 53:7 retain 3:17 6:12 7:8 11:5 15:12 38:12 54:8,17 retained 20:14 22:10 retains 18:17 return 35:14 returned 11:18 20:16 reversed 15:21 37:7 reversible 54:20 review 26:10 28:13	31:17 reviewing 32:3,19 revisiting 30:19 rigamarole 15:24 right 3:12,20,21 4:14,15,20 5:9,24 6:1,3,14,15 7:4,22 10:6 14:19 17:5 17:25 19:21 21:10 21:12,19 33:13 42:1 54:16,19,19 rise 24:8 risk 11:19,25 24:14 29:18,22 30:8 43:2 risks 40:2 44:9 road 49:11 roberts 3:3 6:4 16:11 24:19 25:8 26:3 31:15 32:9 36:22 37:23 38:8 39:1 41:2,13,20 52:7 53:14 55:4 rough 43:24 rule 8:23 10:11 11:10 14:22 15:1 17:23 18:22 24:25 25:3 26:8 54:21 54:23 rules 13:1 14:1 40:1 ruling 8:18 run 45:12 <hr/> S s 2:1 3:1 31:11 32:12 38:16 41:10 46:22 sacrosanct 3:21 8:4 safeguards 4:18 5:24 safety 29:14 39:16 salary 49:20 salerno 4:17 5:22 28:25 29:1,20 47:1	sanctions 48:24 satisfactory 54:1 satisfy 12:21 18:2 46:24 save 14:22 saying 4:5 9:16 14:16 20:10 26:16 33:10 35:12,18,19 says 14:22 21:7,8 28:18 32:17 33:25 34:3,5,6,10,18 38:16 46:10,13 49:7 54:10 scale 49:6 scalia 3:19 4:9,11 6:17 7:3 9:9,14 11:23 14:15 15:7 19:23 20:4,9,23 21:1,5,11,18 23:20,24 24:1,5 24:15 30:22 31:5 41:15 scalias 5:2 scheme 13:21 se 54:20 second 15:18 25:22 34:4 37:24 38:3 48:14 53:6 see 8:2 31:15 33:17 33:18 36:3 42:11 seek 38:5 seeking 21:20 32:7 32:21 44:2 seeks 30:2 45:9 seen 33:11 53:19 sees 14:11,12 seize 16:16 38:11 seized 6:19 seizure 23:6 selling 35:16 send 41:5 sense 26:7 32:10 38:14 sensibly 34:12 sentence 34:22 separate 3:23 32:1
--	---	---	---	---

32:20 serious 34:25 39:9 39:11 40:2,11 50:6 seriously 26:8 set 5:6 23:10 25:24 settle 7:14 seventh 38:3 sham 21:2 shortly 5:24 shouldnt 9:10,10 show 17:16 27:4 31:21,23,24 32:15 41:4 42:21 45:16 46:3 51:7 showed 32:11 shown 17:17 54:8 side 9:1 26:23 31:22 32:16 41:4 41:25 44:15 49:6 sides 8:25 36:8 similar 8:12,21,22 8:23 52:24 similarly 8:18 simply 9:16 14:5 17:20 18:13 22:4 single 36:19 situation 5:8 13:19 13:22,25 33:14 45:3 six 22:25 32:11,12 skimpy 46:12 socalled 18:10 sold 44:21 solicitor 1:17 somebody 14:16 somewhat 13:19 sorry 4:25 37:23 46:22 sort 19:8 sotomayor 8:2,13 8:17 16:3 19:10 19:16,18,19 33:5 42:17,23 sought 16:16 24:13 38:6	sound 26:22 41:3 spared 23:5 specific 29:1 40:18 40:22 49:17 spent 49:19 50:10 squarely 31:7 35:2 srebnick 1:15 2:3,9 3:6,7,9 4:9,14 5:4 5:12,21 6:10 7:1,5 7:17 8:13,19 9:14 10:7,18,24 11:3 11:11,16 12:4,19 13:8,12,24 15:7 16:2,6,19 17:6,12 18:8 19:5,15,18 20:4,13 21:1,11 21:20 22:14,18 23:3,7,15,24 24:5 24:16 52:9,11,13 52:23 53:21 stand 48:7 standard 14:1 53:7 stands 6:1 stark 43:10 start 27:16 36:6 state 45:4 49:23 50:1 statement 37:4 states 1:1,6,12 3:5 4:17 5:22 31:8 33:21 43:23 44:15 statistics 38:13 39:18 53:25 54:3 statute 11:11 26:16 27:10 29:1 33:19 34:9 39:7 46:15 statutory 36:3 step 12:8 steps 16:9 stone 23:10 stop 7:10 story 26:23 strange 15:5 strategic 49:2 strength 8:11 strike 25:15	strong 18:18 33:14 50:17 strongest 8:3 33:11 structural 54:19 structurally 26:1 studied 19:20 stuff 31:20 subject 14:1 51:21 51:22,23 submission 54:22 submit 10:11 11:7 55:3 submitted 13:5 55:5,7 submitting 11:21 subpoena 13:10 48:11 subpoenas 14:2 substantial 23:14 substitute 49:22 subtract 43:23 succeed 51:1 success 15:16 sue 49:24 suffer 50:15 suffice 46:15 sufficient 7:7 18:2 28:12 36:14 48:16 52:4 sufficiently 25:19 suggested 22:7 suggestion 18:3 summarize 14:8 summary 13:4 47:11 48:8 supervise 7:20 22:2 supplies 44:21 suppose 6:20 16:11 19:22 suppression 8:22 supreme 1:1,12 sure 41:20 42:7 44:18 surprising 15:22 surrounding 50:20 sworn 47:13	system 37:19 51:16 <hr/> T t 2:1,1 12:21 28:7 47:12 tainted 15:10,14 17:1,13 23:22 24:3 take 5:19 48:5 49:1 taken 5:15 8:15 talk 28:21 29:21 42:24 47:15 talking 8:8 19:7 21:11 37:15,24 38:1 40:3 51:25 taxes 43:23 44:16 tell 14:21 23:20 telling 4:3 temporarily 6:14 tenuous 38:10 term 6:8 terrible 9:9 terribly 26:4 territory 15:6 testimony 13:15 19:8 47:13 thank 3:9 24:18,19 24:23 52:6,7 55:4 thats 4:25 5:1 6:24 7:1 8:14 9:9 10:23 13:19 16:4 22:20 27:8 28:15 29:16 30:19 31:7 31:24 34:17 35:18 36:22 41:6 42:1,8 42:23 43:5 45:5 47:14,18,18 48:2 50:23 52:20 theory 14:12 26:4 41:15 42:1 49:12 49:23 theres 15:17 18:3 19:11 21:24 26:20 28:21 29:3,19 32:12 theyll 39:2	theyre 27:6 41:13 theyve 54:8 thing 27:17 29:17 34:6 things 5:17 29:17 32:11,12,15,16 38:1 48:13 think 3:20 4:3,5,7 11:1 15:5 16:4 17:17 20:4 24:1 25:16 26:13 27:2 27:12 28:5 33:21 34:24 36:7,13 39:17 41:6,21 43:6 46:1,16,23 49:4,11 51:1 53:14,19 thinks 12:17 19:12 51:24 thirdparty 43:20 43:21 thought 4:12 5:1 6:4 17:1 50:22 52:20 thousand 9:11 thousands 37:12,13 three 32:16 43:17 52:9 till 26:9 time 3:13,15 4:24 6:2 12:21,22 21:21 24:17 36:10 37:18 times 16:15 41:1 today 15:12 53:1,9 53:20 top 34:5 toto 34:19 touched 41:21 trace 49:17 traceability 17:2 24:3 45:8,14 46:3 traceable 17:13,15 17:19 22:5 39:2 41:6 tracing 22:7 49:21
--	---	--	--	---

track 23:21 trafficking 39:8 transcripts 13:15 30:12 transfer 21:22 trial 3:14,16 4:1,16 4:19 6:9 9:18,25 10:2,5,16,23 11:13,22 12:18 13:17,20 14:11,17 17:22 22:13 23:19 25:4 28:18 33:1 38:17,24 43:5 44:13 48:1 51:16 53:11,12,13 54:11 54:15 trust 49:25 truth 14:21 try 12:12 19:12 24:10 37:2 42:14 trying 8:11 turn 36:8 turned 27:25 31:12 turning 27:24 two 5:17 20:14,15 22:10 23:8 25:20 29:16 32:15 38:1 typically 46:2,16 46:24 48:6 50:4	unfreeze 22:17 unfreezing 19:21 unfrozen 7:12 21:21 united 1:1,6,12 3:4 4:16 5:22 31:8 33:21 universal 26:8 unlikelihood 43:11 unreasonable 21:2 untainted 17:9 unusual 13:18,19 upheld 5:23 use 3:16 7:14 34:22 36:4 39:24 46:18 49:6 50:20 54:7 54:17 useful 25:15 uses 26:17 usually 37:1 47:11	36:8 37:1 39:20 41:4,5 42:5 43:23 44:15 46:21 wanted 23:5 36:23 wanting 43:7,8 wants 20:1 50:7 54:5 warrant 51:22 warranted 25:20 washington 1:8,18 wasn 28:7 wasnt 28:2 48:23 way 4:15,19 11:21 15:25 18:16 20:5 23:18 24:6 25:21 27:5,18 30:23 35:4,16 44:25 45:18 wed 17:21 wednesday 1:9 weight 4:21 5:16,18 10:15,21 28:17,18 28:21 29:7,11,22 29:25 30:18 32:3 46:11,25 weighty 47:7 went 15:19 weve 6:10 9:11 10:21 53:19 wewe 8:7 whats 10:8 12:5 27:15 30:20 42:12 42:13 48:3 wherewithal 5:5 white 44:3 whos 3:14 widely 50:1 widener 34:1 withholding 15:2 19:25 witness 18:14 19:1 19:2 witnesses 13:9,10 13:11 14:6,7 30:13 38:22,23 39:10,16 47:12	48:11 won 37:7 word 26:17 27:1 33:18 34:22 50:17 50:21 words 27:9 work 37:19 39:6 51:21 working 20:15 worth 16:14 36:16 38:11,16 39:4 wouldnt 12:8 wrong 17:25 19:12 19:14 26:23 27:4 27:15 42:12,13	12464 1:4 3:4 16 1:9
				2
				20 36:18 38:5 43:19
				200 24:25
				2008 52:24
				2013 1:9
				24 2:7 15:19 16:14 37:5 40:23
				25 8:15,19 12:7 15:17 16:15 37:3 43:19,19
				25th 15:20 37:6
				3
				3 2:4 34:19
				30 25:14
				3d 53:7
				4
				419 53:8
				5
				5 8:23 43:24
				500 23:8 24:2
				52 2:10
				521 53:7
				5to4 15:9
				6
				65 10:11 17:23 18:22
				660 37:18
				7
				8
				850 34:19
				853 34:12,14
				9
U				
u 38:16 um 8:3 uncertain 50:2 unconstitutional 15:1 undercut 35:22 undercutting 27:13 undermining 38:23 understand 26:3 30:6 34:8 42:4 46:9 53:21 understanding 53:16 understood 53:22 unfounded 25:25	v 1:5 3:4 4:17 5:22 31:8 33:21 vacation 7:24 validity 8:5,8 valuable 25:11 varies 50:1 various 44:14 48:24 version 39:20 victims 41:12,23 42:1,3,10,11 43:16,25 44:16,22 50:8 view 10:15 42:8 45:23 violates 9:12 violations 50:9 vir 1:3	whats 10:8 12:5 27:15 30:20 42:12 42:13 48:3 wherewithal 5:5 white 44:3 whos 3:14 widely 50:1 widener 34:1 withholding 15:2 19:25 witness 18:14 19:1 19:2 witnesses 13:9,10 13:11 14:6,7 30:13 38:22,23 39:10,16 47:12	youve 24:2 39:18 41:21	
				Z
				0
				000 23:8 24:2 37:18
				04 55:6
				05 1:13 3:2
				1
				1 8:23 53:8
				10 43:24
				10year 37:14
				11 1:13 3:2
				12 55:6