SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE	SUPREME CO	OK.I. OF.	THE U	INT.I.ED	STATES
WILLIAM DALE	WOODEN,)		
	Petitioner	,)		
V	·.)	No. 2	0-5279
UNITED STATES	5,)		
	Respondent)		

Pages: 1 through 78

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: October 4, 2021

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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
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3	WILLIAM DALE WOODEN,)
4	Petitioner,)
5	v.) No. 20-5279
6	UNITED STATES,)
7	Respondent.)
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10	Washington, D.C	
11	Monday, October 4,	2021
12		
13	The above-entitled matt	er came on for oral
14	argument before the Supreme Co	ourt of the United
15	States at 11:15 a.m.	
16		
17	APPEARANCES:	
18	ALLON KEDEM, ESQUIRE, Washingt	on, D.C.; on behalf of
19	the Petitioner.	
20	ERICA L. ROSS, Assistant to th	e Solicitor General,
21	Department of Justice, Was	hington, D.C.;
22	on behalf of the Responden	t.
23		
24		
25		

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:15 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument next in Case 20-5279, Wooden versus
5	United States.
6	Mr. Kedem.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ALLON KEDEM
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. KEDEM: Mr. Chief Justice, and mag
10	it please the Court:
11	As its name suggests, the Armed Carees
12	Criminal Act singles out the most intractable
13	offenders for the harshest punishments by
14	requiring three qualifying offenses "committed
15	on occasions different from one another."
16	That phrase does not apply to
17	defendants like Mr. Wooden, who commit their
18	crimes in a single criminal episode.
19	Some courts have treated crimes as
20	distinct occasions whenever they're committed
21	sequentially rather than simultaneously. But
22	the government does not defend that rule.
23	Instead, the government would ask
24	whether the final element of each offense was
25	satisfied at the same instant, creating a

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- 2 robberies in Petty would flunk that test.
- 3 And the government would tack on yet
- 4 another requirement, that crimes must be
- 5 factually congruent or intertwined, as well as
- 6 simultaneous.
- 7 Rather than adopt the government's
- 8 untested hypertechnical approach, this Court
- 9 should read the occasions clause as it would be
- 10 understood in plain English. Mr. Wooden's
- 11 mini-storage break-in was a single occasion
- 12 involving ten burglaries.
- I would welcome the Court's questions.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: You seem to define
- the occasion as a distinct criminal opportunity.
- 16 How would you -- how are we to analyze that?
- 17 MR. KEDEM: Sure. So I think the
- 18 question is whether it's its own criminal
- 19 episode, meaning that in order to show that
- there are different occasions, the government
- 21 would have to establish some sort of
- 22 discontinuity or clean break between them.
- Now, for purposes of this case, it
- 24 suffice -- it suffices to note that an occasion
- is not an instant. The fact that Samuel Petty

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and his associates paused for moments in between
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- 2 grabbing the goods of their six different
- 3 victims did not mean that the robbery in the
- 4 diner was six occasions.
- 5 JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, how much time
- 6 would have to pass or what would have to happen
- 7 in -- in -- to break the occasions up to
- 8 satisfy you?
- 9 MR. KEDEM: Sure. So it's not solely
- 10 a matter of time or even preliminary --
- 11 primarily a matter of timing. Really, it's a
- 12 qualitative assessment where, at a minimum, you
- 13 know that if all you have is a continuous stream
- of criminal activity, as in Petty and as in this
- case, you know that you have the same occasion.
- 16 For instance, there was never a moment
- 17 when Mr. Wooden and his associates were not
- 18 committing burglary once they entered the
- 19 structure until they left it, in the same way
- 20 that there was never a moment that Samuel Petty
- 21 and his associates were not committing robbery
- 22 until --
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, I mean --
- 24 MR. KEDEM: -- they left the diner.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: -- but you're still

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1 not getting to the point. What if they took a
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- 2 smoke break? What if they decided to have
- 3 lunch? What if they said, look, it's time -- we
- 4 -- we've got lots of time; we can go to
- 5 Starbucks, grab a -- a -- a -- a cup of
- 6 coffee or something like that, actually, Dunkin'
- 7 Donut and get a cup of coffee or something? I
- 8 mean -- and they stay for an hour or two. Is
- 9 that enough of a break?
- 10 I'm just trying to figure out what you
- 11 think a break would be to -- to -- to break up
- 12 the continuity.
- MR. KEDEM: Sure. And -- and just to
- 14 be clear, break is perhaps one way that you
- 15 could have an intervening event. It's not the
- only one. I think the question is whether,
- 17 taking into account -- account all the
- 18 circumstances in the context, you have the sort
- 19 of discontinuity where the underlying
- 20 circumstances has changed.
- 21 And if you're talking about an
- 22 activity, for instance, that lasts a matter of
- 23 hours, a few seconds or minutes in between is
- 24 almost never going to be described as a new
- 25 occasion.

1	JUSTICE KAGAN: But, Mr. Kedem, you
2	answered Justice Thomas first by saying it's not
3	only or even primarily a matter of time, and
4	then, within two sentences, you said the
5	question is whether there's a continuous stream
6	of activity, which does seem like it's a matter
7	of time. So isn't it at least primarily a
8	matter of time?
9	MR. KEDEM: No, Justice Kagan. And
LO	and just to be clear, what I'm saying is that if
L1	it is a continuous stream of activity, then you
L2	know there's no discontinuity almost by
L3	definition. That is not to say that the thing
L4	you were looking for is whether it's continuous
L5	solely.
L6	You could, for instance, be looking
L7	for an intervening event of a certain type to
L8	change the circumstances, an arrest, something
L9	like that. So timing does play a role, but it's
20	not necessarily the prime primary role.
21	JUSTICE KAGAN: I think what Justice
22	Thomas might have been responding to is just a
23	feeling that this is a very loosey-goosey test,
24	you know, that it's an all things considered,
25	totality of the girgumstances. We don't even

1 really quite know what we're supposed to look at

- 2 to decide whether something is an occasion or,
- 3 take your synonym, an episode.
- 4 And so, you know, what would your
- 5 response to that be, that it's just -- you know,
- 6 the words you use in your brief, "a juncture of
- 7 circumstances providing conditions that are
- 8 favorable for related activities or events," I
- 9 mean, how are we supposed to know when that
- 10 happens?
- 11 MR. KEDEM: So, admittedly, it is a
- 12 qualitative standard. I do think that the
- 13 statute actually calls for a qualitative
- standard textually, and that's from the phrase
- 15 "different from one another," which is just not
- 16 a phrase you ever use to refer to things that
- 17 are discrete, like times of day.
- 18 For instance, you would never say last
- 19 month I drove into work on 20 days different
- 20 from one another because all days are inherently
- 21 distinct. You would just say on 20 days.
- When you say "different from one
- another, "you're referring to something that may
- 24 or may not overlap in a qualitative sense like
- 25 circumstances.

Т	To your question now do you figure it
2	out, admittedly, it is going to be
3	context-specific, which means that you're not
4	going to be able to necessarily come up with the
5	all-inclusive test that is going to resolve
6	every case.
7	I think it's notable, though, that the
8	courts of appeals that apply a
9	circumstance-based approach have come to
10	relatively consistent results. The government
11	doesn't identify any two cases on similar facts
12	that come to different answers to the question.
13	JUSTICE ALITO: This seems to me to be
14	a nearly impossible question of statutory
15	interpretation because the term "occasion" does
16	not have a very precise meaning. It does seem
17	to refer to events at that occur at different
18	points in time. That, I think, has to be a
19	minimum requirement. If three crimes are
20	committed simultaneously, a bomb goes off and
21	kills three people, that's one occasion, even
22	though there are three murders.
23	But, beyond that, I find it very
24	difficult to determine what additional meaning
25	the term has. And I don't fault you for your

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1 efforts, but they leave me scratching my head.
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- 2 I don't know what they mean. You used the term
- 3 "criminal opportunity." I have no idea what a
- 4 "criminal opportunity" is.
- I mean, let me give you some examples.
- 6 A street light goes out, and a mugger says:
- 7 Aha, this is a criminal opportunity, I can now
- 8 mug people who walk by here at night. And he --
- 9 and that person does that at 10:00 at night,
- 10 11:00 at night, midnight. Is that one criminal
- 11 opportunity or three?
- 12 MR. KEDEM: That sounds to me like the
- 13 same episode and opportunity.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Why? Why is it --
- MR. KEDEM: The mugger is essentially
- 16 --
- JUSTICE ALITO: -- why is it the same
- 18 episode and opportunity?
- 19 MR. KEDEM: So just taking the facts
- as you've stated them, I don't think that the
- 21 government would be able to show, for instance,
- that the mugger wasn't just exploiting the
- opportunity to mug whoever was walking by.
- JUSTICE ALITO: What --
- 25 MR. KEDEM: And --

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1
                JUSTICE ALITO: -- what if the mugger
 2
      did it on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday?
 3
                MR. KEDEM: So -- so that really does
      sound like it's a different episode. You're
 4
      talking about an activity that at last -- at
 5
     most lasts a few minutes, separated by --
 6
 7
                JUSTICE ALITO: What if it's Monday,
      Tuesday, and Wednesday?
 8
                MR. KEDEM: That still sounds like
 9
     different episodes to me, not knowing anything
10
11
     additional about the case.
12
                But, Justice Alito, you know, I think
13
     may I respectfully suggest that because this is
14
      the Court's first attempt to construe the
15
      occasions clause that you don't need to go too
16
     much further than to say in a case that is
     indistinguishable in all relevant respects from
17
18
     Petty, the one thing that we know that Congress
19
     was trying to ensure in such a case, you know
20
      that it's the same episode.
21
                JUSTICE ALITO: Well, Petty -- Petty
2.2
      is the root of the problem -- or Congress's --
      the Solicitor General's confession of error in
23
24
      Petty, and then Congress's response is the --
```

the root of the problem.

- 1 Let me give you another example. A
- 2 person goes for a job interview and is
- 3 interviewed sequentially by three people, and
- 4 later the applicant, after being denied
- 5 employment, sues for disability discrimination
- 6 and is questioned, and -- and the questioning
- 7 goes like this: You were interviewed by three
- 8 people, A, B, and C. On which occasion were you
- 9 asked whether you had a disability?
- 10 Would that be an improper use of -- of
- 11 the English language?
- MR. KEDEM: No, because the way that
- you have phrased it, it's clear that you're just
- 14 asking which of the three.
- Now let's put this in the words that
- 16 the statute uses. So, if you were to say, you
- were interviewed three times, was that on the
- 18 same occasion or on occasions different from one
- 19 another? Assuming that it was the same inquiry,
- you would say that was the same occasion. And
- that's essentially what we're dealing with in
- this case.
- JUSTICE ALITO: I -- I think that
- 24 hits it on the head. So it depends on the
- 25 purpose that the person has in mind in using the

1	term?
2	MR. KEDEM: So I would say that it
3	depends on the precise phrasing that you use,
4	and the phrase "different from one another," I
5	think, hints at something that either may or may
6	not overlap qualitatively.
7	Can I give you just another textual
8	argument as to why I think we're looking for a
9	qualitative standard here? And that's the fact
10	that the same statute that enacted the Armed
11	Career Criminal Act also created the Sentencing
12	Commission and charged it with responsibility to
13	identify guidelines for offenders who deserve
14	higher sentences because they committed more
15	than one crime "on different occasions."
16	And from the very first set of
17	guidelines, the Sentencing Commission has always
18	chosen a qualitative approach relying on things
19	like intervening arrests, and
20	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, qualitative
21	what? What ultimately are we looking for? I
22	think to say we're going to look at the the
23	totality of the circumstances is meaningless
24	unless we know what we are looking for in these

25 totality of the circumstances.

Τ	so what are we looking for?
2	MR. KEDEM: So I think, to look for
3	the same or different episode, you are looking
4	for a discontinuity or clean break, and it's
5	obviously the government's burden to establish
6	that. And the context will tell you a little
7	bit about what considerations are relevant.
8	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, let me just ask
9	one more question and and I'll stop. When
10	you say a "clean break," why is a why is a
11	clean break the the key?
12	MR. KEDEM: I think the phrase
13	"different from one another," it's a peculiar
14	JUSTICE ALITO: And what does it mean?
15	What what is a "clean break"? How long does
16	it have to last?
17	MR. KEDEM: So, again, it's not solely
18	a matter of timing or even necessarily
19	primarily. I think it can depend on the
20	circumstances. Someone who is arrested and then
21	goes back out and commits a crime even 20
22	minutes later, that is a clean break. That
23	person has been incapacitated. There's the
24	formal involvement of law enforcement.
25	But that is very just a world away

- 1 from the vast majority of cases. And take, for
- instance, Mr. Wooden's '97 mini-storage break-in
- 3 and his 2005 burglary. That is the typical way
- 4 that this arise -- arises, where there's
- 5 essentially no argument that there is a
- 6 continuity between the two.
- 7 JUSTICE KAGAN: Is overnight always a
- 8 clean break?
- 9 MR. KEDEM: So the courts of appeals
- 10 -- so, candidly, the courts of appeals that
- apply a circumstance-based approach have said
- 12 essentially that if there's a day's separation
- 13 -- I don't know about overnight -- but a day's
- separation, they have generally treated that as
- 15 enough of a -- of a clean break.
- 16 Now --
- 17 JUSTICE BARRETT: Go ahead.
- 18 MR. KEDEM: I was going to say I -- I
- don't want to necessarily endorse that, but that
- is the way that they've handled it.
- 21 JUSTICE BARRETT: So my question is
- 22 this qualitative assessment is necessarily
- fact-laden, and that provokes a Sixth Amendment
- 24 problem. So how should we think about the Sixth
- 25 Amendment problem in interpreting the occasions

- 1 language?
- 2 MR. KEDEM: So any concerns under the
- 3 Sixth Amendment come from a feature of the case
- 4 that I think is common ground between us and the
- 5 government, which is the fact that we're dealing
- 6 here not with some hypothetical or generalized
- 7 crime but the way that the defendant's crime
- 8 actually unfolded.
- And even on the government's test and
- 10 certainly under the test applied by the courts
- of appeals, you're going to need to know things
- 12 like what day, what time of day, who was
- involved, how did the crime unfold, was it in
- 14 the same place or different places.
- And, you know, our amici, I think, do
- 16 a good job pointing out why this is in serious
- 17 tension at -- at a minimum with the Court's
- 18 Sixth Amendment jurisprudence.
- 19 We don't have a Sixth Amendment claim.
- 20 And because Mr. Wooden's case is so clearly
- 21 outside the scope of the statute, I would
- 22 respectfully suggest that it's not necessary for
- 23 the Court to get into that.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, going
- 25 back to Justice Alito's hypothetical about the

- 1 street light, if I understood your answer right,
- 2 you're saying, if the street light goes out and
- 3 the individual thinks this is a great
- 4 opportunity to mug people and he lies there and
- 5 mugs person after person, you -- you call that
- 6 one occasion, right?
- 7 MR. KEDEM: That's correct.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. What if
- 9 what makes it dark is that it's a moonless
- 10 night? He says, the moon is not out tonight,
- it's dark, I can mug person after person. One
- 12 occasion or multiple occasions?
- MR. KEDEM: I'm sorry, you're saying
- on one evening?
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah, it's one
- 16 evening, and his -- and he has an opportunity
- 17 because the moon is -- is not out.
- 18 MR. KEDEM: That sounds like one
- 19 occasion to me as well.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Uh-huh.
- 21 JUSTICE BARRETT: Counsel, I would --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: The --
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Oh. Go ahead.
- MR. KEDEM: And one -- I'm sorry.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Go ahead.

1	MR. KEDEM: One notable feature of
2	this case which also makes it very like Petty is
3	it's not just that the crimes were continuous.
4	It's that the same activity went to all of the
5	crimes. There was a single entry point into the
6	mini-storage facility here in the same way that
7	there was a single application of force in
8	Petty, and I think that's another case where
9	it's very clear that what you're dealing with is
LO	a single occasion.
L1	JUSTICE BARRETT: I want to
L2	JUSTICE KAGAN: So suppose
L3	JUSTICE BARRETT: I want to resist the
L4	proposition that "occasion" is used to mean
L5	opportunity here. When "occasion" means
L6	opportunity, it's I had no occasion to consider
L7	that question. I think "occasion" in this
L8	statute gets closer to something else you've
L9	said, which is more like event, like a wedding
20	was an occasion, that was a lovely occasion.
21	But I think it's difficult let's
22	say it is a jury question to figure out how
23	the jury instructions are worded to let the jury
24	know when one when this event begins and when
25	it ends because, if I talk about a wedding, if I

- 1 talk about an anniversary dinner, I mean, it --
- 2 it's -- it's obvious because it's united by a
- 3 particular purpose.
- In the context of criminal activity,
- 5 it's not so clear.
- 6 MR. KEDEM: So, admittedly, it's not
- 7 always clear, but let me read to you an analogy
- 8 in the RICO context because it's actually not
- 9 that unusual to have this sort of relatedness
- 10 standard in the criminal law.
- 11 So, under RICO, you need to point to a
- 12 pattern of related criminal activity. And this
- 13 Court has pointed among other things to
- 14 "criminal acts that have the same or similar
- 15 purposes, results, participants, victims, or
- 16 methods of commission or otherwise are
- interrelated by distinguishing characteristics
- 18 and are not isolated events."
- Now, admittedly, that's not identical
- 20 necessarily to what you would be talking about
- in the ACCA context, but it's qualitative and
- 22 multifaceted in the same way.
- Other states actually also have
- 24 recidivist statutes where they charge juries
- 25 with determining whether crimes were committed

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on the same occasion, and they use pretty
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- 2 similar language. Arizona, for instance, has
- 3 one of those.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: Suppose that there was
- 5 a -- a -- a -- a crime boss and he was a
- 6 good multitasking crime boss, and he had a few
- 7 phones in front of him, he's sitting in his
- 8 office one day, and on one phone he's arranging
- 9 a sale of illegal drugs and on another phone
- 10 he's ordering the killing of a -- a competing
- 11 crime boss and on another phone he's involved in
- 12 an illegal gambling operation, and they're all
- going on very close in time to each other.
- 14 Single occasion or three occasions?
- MR. KEDEM: So I would say that that's
- 16 a single occasion, but I can understand how if
- 17 you decided that the thing that was important
- 18 was that the crimes had essentially no
- 19 relationship whatsoever to one another?
- 20 JUSTICE KAGAN: Yes. I mean, that's
- 21 the -- supposed to be --
- MR. KEDEM: Sure. Yeah.
- 23 -- JUSTICE KAGAN: -- the crimes have
- 24 no relationship to each other.
- 25 MR. KEDEM: So -- so -- so I -- I

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1 would grant you that a lot of people, I think,
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- 2 would look at that and say those are three
- 3 different occasions. And that actually gets to
- 4 a feature of the government's test that is a
- 5 little bit underdescribed but I think
- 6 problematic along the same dimension.
- 7 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, before you do
- 8 that --
- 9 MR. KEDEM: Sure.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- I mean, isn't that
- 11 to say then, I mean, your -- it -- it -- that
- 12 what you are really saying, your test, is that
- there is this very important timing aspect,
- 14 which is that a substantial break in time
- between offenses is pretty nearly dispositive,
- but when the offenses are close in time, then
- 17 you have this more qualitative inquiry where
- 18 you're looking at the nature of the crimes and
- 19 who the victims are and, you know, things like
- 20 that?
- 21 MR. KEDEM: So I think you could
- 22 describe the test that way. I suppose I
- 23 wouldn't put such emphasis on timing. I do
- think that in most cases, because offenses will
- be separated by years, like Mr. Wooden's 2005

- 1 burglary, that will probably be sufficient for
- 2 the vast majority of cases.
- I think, for this case, it suffices to
- 4 say that the phrase "occasion" doesn't solely
- 5 refer to things that overlap temporally and
- 6 certainly doesn't refer solely to the instant at
- 7 which the final offense element is satisfied,
- 8 and that's really all you need to know in order
- 9 to decide this case.
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: What -- what would the
- 11 -- the result be -- what would the result be in
- 12 this case if the following happened? They --
- 13 they -- Mr. Wooden breaks into the first unit
- and steals goods inside, breaks into the second
- unit and not only steals goods but then sets the
- unit on fire, and then, while breaking into the
- 17 third unit, the owner shows up and Mr. Wooden
- 18 kills him. Are -- are those -- is that one
- 19 episode, one criminal opportunity, one occasion?
- 20 MR. KEDEM: That -- that would be one
- 21 very serious criminal episode. And I think it's
- 22 important to emphasize that the occasions
- 23 question is not a question about how serious the
- offenses are. By hypothesis, all of these are
- 25 violent felonies or serious drug offenses. And

- 1 you could have the most horrific crime that
- 2 because it all happened at once, like a bombing,
- 3 it is only a single occasion. But -- but --
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: No, I understand that,
- 5 but I think you were saying a few minutes ago
- 6 that it matters whether the offenses -- the
- 7 example of the crime boss, it matters whether
- 8 the offenses are different -- whether they are
- 9 separate -- different offenses or whether it's
- 10 three offenses of the same kind.
- 11 MR. KEDEM: So I think that's correct,
- but, as I understood your hypothetical, you were
- 13 talking about a situation where someone was
- 14 essentially just going from room to room and
- committing additional crimes as they appeared to
- 16 the person based on the fact that this was
- 17 flowing from one to another. In other words,
- 18 each crime was essentially facilitating the
- 19 others, which is another feature both of this
- 20 case and the Petty case.
- 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, Justice
- 22 Alito pointed to this earlier because, even in
- his example of simultaneous, I'm not even sure
- 24 what that means because, if you have someone who
- 25 throws a bomb and kills three people, you could

- 1 say that's simultaneous. But how about if
- 2 they're in the room, throw a small bomb, kills
- 3 three people, and then robs them?
- 4 MR. KEDEM: Right.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right?
- 6 MR. KEDEM: And --
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So I have a
- 8 question. Have you given -- and no one's
- 9 actually addressed this at all or alluded to it.
- 10 Is this so vague and so incapable of rational
- 11 application? Because even the government's
- 12 proposed test suffers from its own set of
- vagueness, what happens when things overlap,
- okay, and how do you determine when the last
- 15 element was committed because a kidnapping lasts
- 16 until someone flees. So does that mean if you
- 17 kidnap someone and rape them and do all these
- other things, is that one episode or not? I
- 19 think they would say not, but I'm not sure why.
- 20 MR. KEDEM: Yeah.
- 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But having said
- 22 that, is there any answer to my vagueness point?
- MR. KEDEM: So I don't think the
- 24 Court, certainly, at this juncture, having
- 25 confronted this issue for the first time, should

- 1 be prepared to decide that it's vague. We
- 2 haven't made an argument -- the government
- 3 doesn't even make a constitutional avoidance
- 4 argument.
- 5 I think what led the Court to decide
- 6 that the residual clause of the ACCA was vague
- 7 was largely the fact that you were trying to
- 8 hypothesize a sort of generic version of a crime
- 9 that just didn't exist. Here, we're dealing
- 10 with a specific defendant's conduct.
- Just to return to Petty for a moment,
- 12 I think it's key for a couple reasons, one of
- 13 which is the fact -- and not to put too fine a
- point on it, but the one thing we all agree that
- 15 Congress was trying to do by enacting the
- 16 occasions clause was to make sure that Samuel
- 17 Petty and people like him would not be career
- 18 criminals. And under the government's test,
- 19 Samuel Petty would be a career criminal.
- 20 But I think the Solicitor General's
- 21 confession of error contained an argument there
- 22 that was inconsistent not just with the
- 23 government's simultaneity test on steroids but
- even with the sort of more overlapping sense
- 25 that the courts of appeals have been applying,

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1 because the Solicitor General in that case
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- 2 pointed to state cases that rejected
- 3 enhancements in situations no different from
- 4 this one, including the Tavares case, which
- 5 involved two burglaries on the same day.
- 6 There is no way that the Solicitor
- 7 General would have pointed to those cases as a
- 8 proper application of retrib- -- a proper
- 9 application of enhancement statutes if the
- 10 Solicitor General believed that the only thing
- 11 that mattered was whether they overlapped.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Did you get anywhere
- 13 with episodes?
- 14 MR. KEDEM: Pardon?
- JUSTICE BREYER: Did you get anywhere
- 16 with episodes? I mean, suppose we tried to work
- 17 with that.
- 18 MR. KEDEM: I think "episode" is a
- 19 really intuitive way to put it. It's in our
- 20 question presented. We use the phrase dozens of
- 21 times in our briefs. I think, put in that
- 22 terms, it's even clearer that the mini-storage
- 23 break-in was a single episode for the same
- reason that the diner robbery was.
- JUSTICE BREYER: So, in -- in your

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1 view, are we better off, assuming you win this
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- 2 case, just saying, look, they were the same
- 3 episodes, it was one episode, it's like Jesse
- 4 James robbing a single train, okay, and using
- 5 words like that or "same occasion" --
- 6 MR. KEDEM: Yeah, I think --
- 7 JUSTICE BREYER: -- and not try to go
- 8 further, or would it be better to try to go
- 9 further and talk about the time and the
- 10 simultaneous event and so forth?
- 11 MR. KEDEM: So I think it would be
- certainly appropriate to say what you're looking
- for is a single episode, and you're not focusing
- on whether crimes are simultaneous or
- overlapping and certainly not whether the final
- offense element is satisfied at the same moment.
- 17 And I don't think you need to go any
- 18 further and just apply that to the obvious facts
- on this case and say this was a continuous
- 20 stream of criminal activity, the same acts were
- 21 making up various offenses, it's just like
- 22 Petty, it's the same episode.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I want to go
- 24 back to the dark night. You -- the -- the moon
- is not out and anything the guy does that night

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1 is one episode?
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- 2 MR. KEDEM: So I don't think
- 3 necessarily. I think you could --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, anything
- 5 he does outside, I quess.
- 6 MR. KEDEM: So knowing nothing else
- 7 other than what you've said, I -- I don't think
- 8 the government would have sustained its burden
- 9 if all it can say is there were various
- 10 activities outside at night on a moonless night.
- 11 I think the government would have to point to
- 12 some other discontinuity in addition to that.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So that
- qualifies the fact, I guess, how many -- what do
- you have, two moonless nights a month or what?
- 16 That would be a juncture of circumstances giving
- 17 rise to an opportunity?
- 18 MR. KEDEM: You know, it really
- 19 depends on whether the crime was, in fact,
- 20 facilitated by that moonless night or at least,
- 21 you know --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's -- it's
- 23 -- it's --
- MR. KEDEM: -- that is an element of
- 25 the crime.

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1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- it's dark.
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- 2 Everything is outside. And he --
- 3 MR. KEDEM: Right.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- you know,
- 5 mugs somebody, you know, robs somebody else,
- 6 right? Everything that's easier to get away
- 7 with --
- 8 MR. KEDEM: Yeah.
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- in a dark
- 10 night than during the day.
- MR. KEDEM: So, to me, that seems like
- 12 a single episode and a single juncture of
- 13 circumstances. You don't have to agree with me
- 14 --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What are the
- 16 circumstances?
- 17 MR. KEDEM: Sure. So, I mean, it
- 18 sounds like you are positing crimes that are
- 19 facilitated by -- both by being outside and
- 20 being outside on a moonless night. And --
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So those are
- 22 two -- the two, outside, moonless night?
- MR. KEDEM: And -- and from what I
- took from your hypothetical, again, just going
- on what you've given me, is that the criminal is

- lying in wait for whoever walks by. But, you
- 2 know, again, you might posit additional facts
- 3 that might change the circumstances.
- 4 This case, though, is the molten core
- of a single episode, and we would urge the Court
- 6 to decide at least that much.
- 7 JUSTICE ALITO: What is the definition
- 8 of an "episode"?
- 9 MR. KEDEM: So "episode" is related
- 10 activities or events that are separated from
- others by a discontinuity or clean break.
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: What's the molten core
- of an episode?
- 14 (Laughter.)
- MR. KEDEM: So the molten core of an
- 16 episode, Justice Kagan, involves continuous
- 17 criminal activity where literally the same acts
- 18 are being used in furtherance of multiple
- 19 crimes.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 21 Thomas?
- 22 JUSTICE THOMAS: You criticize the
- government's test as being incompatible with the
- 24 categorical test. How does -- how is yours
- 25 compatible? And how would you use it?

- 1 MR. KEDEM: So I don't think the
- 2 categorical approach applies to the occasions
- 3 clause because you have to look not at some
- 4 generic version of a crime but the way that the
- 5 defendant actually committed their offense.
- 6 What we were -- if I can just add one
- 7 more point?
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Yeah.
- 9 MR. KEDEM: What we were arguing is
- 10 that the government's test cannot be applied
- 11 based solely on elements as far as we can tell
- 12 to any crime. That's what we were arguing.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: How would that work
- in one of these cases practically? Would they
- 15 have to -- would -- would we have to have a
- 16 separate hearing?
- MR. KEDEM: So my understanding, if
- 18 you're asking about the way things currently
- 19 work --
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Yes.
- 21 MR. KEDEM: -- is that sentencing
- judges do this -- sometimes there might be a
- hearing, but, in general, they do it as they do
- 24 regular ACCA sentencing.
- 25 JUSTICE THOMAS: So you risk -- do you

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1 risk running into a Sixth Amendment problem?
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- 2 MR. KEDEM: As I understand this
- 3 Court's Sixth Amendment jurisprudence, I think
- 4 there is a concern, but it's not at -- directly
- 5 at issue in this case.
- 6 JUSTICE THOMAS: That'll be your next
- 7 case?
- 8 MR. KEDEM: I hope so.
- 9 (Laughter.)
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 11 Breyer?
- 12 Justice Alito? No?
- 13 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, I do have,
- 14 actually. I mean, the thing that's puzzled me
- in this is, see, it sort of works backwards in
- 16 some instances. Imagine the drug lord that
- 17 Justice Kagan was talking about or the
- 18 equivalent, and he gets a plan that every third
- day he will sell drugs, and it's a unified plan
- 20 of great complexity involving delivery and where
- 21 you go and the car and all that kind of stuff,
- and he writes it all down on a single piece of
- 23 paper. Now there we have what seems like a
- 24 single plan.
- 25 But the assistant, all he gets are, on

- 1 Tuesday, go here and pick up the drugs, and on
- 2 Thursday, you go here and pick up some others
- 3 and so forth. So it looks like he's done a
- 4 bunch of things.
- 5 So the worse guy gets the better
- 6 sentencing treatment, and the better guy, a
- 7 little better, gets the worse sentencing
- 8 treatment. Hmm. But maybe that's what you say
- 9 because you say this part of the sentencing law
- 10 isn't concerned with that kind of worse or
- 11 better?
- 12 MR. KEDEM: I --
- JUSTICE BREYER: I'm just saying
- 14 what's going around in my mind.
- 15 MR. KEDEM: Sure. I -- I -- I think
- 16 you could say that, or you could say that each
- 17 criminal associate is responsible for the
- 18 behavior of the others. And so it doesn't
- 19 really draw a distinction along those lines.
- JUSTICE BREYER: No. All right.
- 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 22 Gorsuch?
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: I do have a couple
- 24 questions. Thanks, Chief.
- 25 So the dark and moonless night

- 1 hypotheticals are hard.
- 2 MR. KEDEM: They are.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: And you've -- you've
- 4 done your best with your totality of
- 5 circumstances, but -- but often I -- I think, if
- 6 we're candid, we probably would all admit that
- 7 it's going to run out at some point and -- and
- 8 there's going to be some close cases beyond the
- 9 molten core.
- 10 What role does lenity have to play in
- 11 those circumstances in your view? Why should
- the tie go to one side or the other?
- 13 MR. KEDEM: So I -- I candidly
- 14 acknowledge that members of this Court have
- 15 different attitudes towards the role that
- 16 lenity -- lenity should play. I think, at a
- 17 minimum, it should incline you to choose a plain
- 18 meaning over a hypertechnical meaning and
- 19 especially so in a case involving mandatory
- 20 minimums of 15 years to life.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: That's my -- that --
- 22 that's my second -- so we have a lenity as a
- 23 tie-breaking rule. Does it have particular
- 24 purchase in a case, for example, here, where
- 25 mandatory minimums are sometimes invoked by the

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1 government, in this case, it wasn't initially
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- 2 and then --
- 3 MR. KEDEM: I -- I -- I --
- 4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- and then later
- 5 are or can be as a matter of policy? Does that
- 6 raise, you know, fair notice, separation of
- 7 powers concerns --
- 8 MR. KEDEM: I -- I agree --
- 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- in your mind?
- 10 MR. KEDEM: I agree with all of that.
- 11 And, you know, Justice Breyer has written and we
- 12 quote from an opinion of his pointing out that
- when you're dealing with a mandatory minimum,
- 14 you're dealing with a situation where, no matter
- what, the judge just has no ability to account
- 16 for the circumstances.
- 17 And I think a lenity should incline
- 18 you against that sort of punishment, whereas
- 19 there's a sort of asymmetry for a zero to ten,
- 20 you know, an up-to-ten maximum sentence where
- 21 the judge can take those things into account.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Now does that have
- 23 some relationship in your mind to the Major
- 24 Questions Doctrine?
- 25 MR. KEDEM: I feel like this is a

- 1 law -- law school exam. You know, I think -- I
- 2 think it -- we should be extraordinarily
- 3 reluctant to think that Congress has decided to
- 4 make so much time of -- of a person's life turn
- 5 on something that is so hypertechnical or such
- 6 small distinctions like small moments in time
- 7 and -- and the distinctions between offenses.
- 8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you.
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 10 Kavanaugh?
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: No further
- 12 questions.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 14 Barrett?
- 15 JUSTICE BARRETT: No.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 17 counsel.
- 18 Ms. Ross?
- 19 ORAL ARGUMENT OF ERICA L. ROSS
- 20 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- MS. ROSS: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
- 22 it please the Court:
- 23 Contrary to Petitioner's suggestion,
- the government's rule is faithful to the text
- and it does not depend on synchronicity between

- 1 the final elements of different crimes.
- 2 Rather, two crimes are committed on
- 3 occasions different from one another when their
- 4 essential conduct elements are satisfied by
- 5 different acts. That reflects the statute's
- 6 text.
- 7 If the same act satisfies an element
- 8 of two different crimes, then the commission of
- 9 each offense is not a different occasion, that
- is, a different event, occurrence, or happening.
- The government's test also furthers
- 12 the statute's purpose because it separates
- defendants who have been held criminally
- 14 responsible for multiple discrete acts from
- 15 those who have been held responsible for a
- single act that resulted in several statutory
- 17 violations.
- Now I agree with my friend that in the
- 19 vast majority of cases we can apply -- we can
- 20 decide this question pretty easily. On our
- 21 test, they can be resolved by a simple rule of
- 22 thumb. If one offense is over before the next
- 23 begins, then the two are committed on different
- 24 occasions because their essential elements are
- 25 necessarily accomplished through different acts.

1	Two	examples	illustrate	the	point.
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- 2 First, if a defendant burglarizes ten houses on
- 3 the same street, those are necessarily ten
- 4 different occasions. He could not have
- 5 unlawfully entered each home through one act,
- 6 and he had the choice not to commit another
- 7 crime between each one.
- 8 Second, if a defendant robs ten people
- 9 in one place with the same stick-up, as in
- 10 Petty, that one act marks only one occasion.
- 11 As I think has become clear this
- morning, Petitioner's freewheeling approach
- 13 would be much more difficult to apply. He would
- 14 require courts to seek to identify the juncture
- of circumstances that gave rise to the relevant
- 16 criminal opportunity.
- 17 But none of that language is in the
- 18 text, and Petitioner's rule would require courts
- 19 to examine granular facts that state court
- 20 records often will not include.
- 21 Petitioner's approach also would yield
- 22 inconsistent results. Different judges will
- 23 have different intuitions about what -- when one
- occasion ends and another begins.
- This Court should reject Petitioner's

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1 invitation to uncertainty and inconsistency and
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- 2 affirm.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Ms. Ross, is there
- 4 any way using either your test or Petitioner's
- 5 test to avoid fact-finding that seems to run the
- 6 risk of involving us with the Sixth Amendment?
- 7 MS. ROSS: Yes, Your Honor. I think
- 8 that our test does avoid that, and I would
- 9 appreciate the opportunity to explain why.
- In this case, all you need to know is
- 11 the elements of Petitioner's offense. There
- were ten burglaries. Burglary necessarily
- 13 requires an unlawful entry or remaining in of a
- 14 structure. If Petitioner had said, in fact,
- these were all one burglary, the Court would be
- 16 able to look at the indictment and say, you
- 17 know, yes or no based on are they different
- 18 structures or, if it's one structure, are they
- 19 different times?
- 20 So it's the same types of facts that
- 21 we think, first of all, are inherent in this
- 22 crime in the elements of burglary but also that
- 23 courts could look at in a double jeopardy
- 24 context, and I think no one thinks that that
- 25 raises a Sixth Amendment issue.

1	I think, you know, burglary is perhaps
2	the easy case because you do need this unlawful
3	entry of separate structures, but I think the
4	vast majority of these cases come up in the
5	robbery or the burglary context. And if you
6	look at robbery, for example, again, you might
7	have a case like Petty where there are six
8	victims in one place and you don't know from the
9	face of the indictment or or the other
10	Shepard documents whether the the act
11	was actually two two separate robberies
12	where, you know, the gun was pointed at one
13	person, then the gun was pointed at the other.
14	If that's the case, we're just going
15	to lose that case on the face of the Shepard
16	documents. So I don't think you're getting into
17	the facts.
18	I think, by contrast, if the
19	indictment says, you know, there were two
20	robberies on June 20, we have Jones and we have
21	Smith, but it also says Jones was at, you know,
22	1030 Northern Boulevard and Smith was at 1050
23	Northern Boulevard, we're going to know that
24	those were two separate occasions. And, again,
25	that's the kind of fact that I think judges can

- 1 rely on without contravening the Sixth
- 2 Amendment. It's the kind of fact, for example,
- 3 that if it had changed between the indictment
- 4 and the -- the jury trial or the conviction, you
- 5 would think there would be a constructive
- 6 amendment problem, for example. So I think
- 7 these are sort of the types of facts on our view
- 8 that you can look at.
- 9 Now, of course, if Petitioner were to
- 10 prevail in this case, the government is not
- 11 saying that there would necessarily be a Sixth
- 12 Amendment problem, but I think, to the extent
- 13 that you have Sixth Amendment concerns, our view
- 14 mitigates those, whereas Petitioner's does, as
- various questions have revealed this morning,
- 16 exacerbate those concerns.
- 17 JUSTICE THOMAS: Thank you.
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So what we
- 19 would do is look back, I'm not quite sure how
- 20 far back, and just -- it's very simple, right --
- 21 compare the elements of the two different crimes
- that are alleged to have occurred on the same
- occasion or a different one, and, apparently,
- 24 each of the 50 states have different views of
- 25 what constitutes an element of some particular

- 1 time or at least they're not uniform?
- And, of course, we would have to look
- 3 at each one to see if it's a different occasion.
- 4 And I guess, at some point, we'd have to figure
- 5 out what documents we look at in determining
- 6 whether a particular element was -- was present,
- 7 and that, you say, will avoid inconsistent
- 8 results across the country.
- 9 Are you really sure that might be what
- 10 happens?
- MS. ROSS: So, Your Honor, a couple of
- 12 points.
- I think, first off, of course, these
- 14 have to be sort of generic burglaries or generic
- 15 -- or -- or have an element of the use of force
- or, you know, they have to fall within the ACCA
- 17 to begin with.
- 18 So I don't think you're actually
- 19 looking at the burglary elements per se because
- 20 we know for generic burglary law that you need
- 21 the unlawful entry or remaining in, and we know
- from a double jeopardy perspective that if you
- have, you know, one time, one structure, that's
- 24 going to be one offense. So I think it's maybe
- 25 not quite as complicated as you suggested.

1	I think, in terms of how consistent
2	this will be, you know, I do think it's the
3	government's burden and I think where the
4	documents, in particular, we think most of these
5	cases, again, because they tend to arise in
6	these sequential robberies, sequential burglary
7	contexts are going to be easily resolved on the
8	indictment, I think, at a maximum, you would be
9	looking at the other Shepherd documents, and so
LO	I don't think that the Court needs to recreate
L1	the wheel here.
L2	I do think, again, that, you know, our
L3	approach has those benefits of administrability
L4	where I as I do think Petitioner's approach,
L5	you know, even if you get past what I think are
L6	the textual problems with it and the contextual
L7	problems with it, meaning that the ACCA is
L8	obviously a statute in which Congress did not
L9	want judges sort of sifting through a voluminous
20	state court trial record trying to figure out
21	exactly how a crime happened, much less the
22	surrounding circumstances
23	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, we're
24	talking about an extra 15 years based on, for
25	example, conduct in this case, where they're in

- 1 the storage facility and they're just kicking
- down the walls to go from one to another.
- I think it might require a more
- 4 careful examination of the different elements
- 5 than you suggest.
- 6 MS. ROSS: So, Mr. Chief Justice, you
- 7 know, I respectfully disagree. I think the fact
- 8 that state law treats these as separate
- 9 locations, separate structures for purpose of --
- 10 purposes of burglary, you know, Petitioner could
- 11 have an argument that that's wrong as a -- as a
- 12 generic burglary question.
- 13 This Court is certainly familiar with
- 14 cases construing, you know, what is and isn't a
- 15 structure for purposes of burglary. But that's
- 16 not his argument. So his argument is that, yes,
- 17 these are separate burglaries under state law
- and I just want them to be one occasion because
- 19 these happen to be attached to each other.
- I think judges' intuitions are going
- 21 to differ on that, and if you imagine, you know,
- 22 this hypothetical -- this case is not so
- 23 different from, you know, the apartments that
- are next door to each other and are burglarized,
- 25 the row homes that are next door to each other

- 1 and share an adjoining wall and they break
- 2 through the wall. You know, then you have to
- 3 distinguish the houses that are on the same
- 4 street. You know, is it enough if you go to the
- 5 next town? Where do you draw the line?
- 6 And I think what Congress would not
- 7 have wanted in this area where, as you correctly
- 8 note, there is a significant mandatory minimum
- 9 sentence is it being entirely dependent on a
- judge's intuition about how far is enough or how
- 11 long is enough.
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Ms. Ross, could I make
- 13 sure I understand your argument? Because --
- MS. ROSS: Sure.
- 15 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- you know, to be
- 16 frank, I read your brief in the way that
- 17 Mr. Kedem read your brief, that the question is,
- 18 when was the -- when did the commission of the
- 19 crime take place? That is, when was the last
- 20 element satisfied?
- Now you're saying that that's not your
- 22 test and that your test is some more -- some
- looser understanding of what sequential activity
- is. Is that -- is that right?
- MS. ROSS: No, Justice Kagan. So we

- 1 are saying -- so, partially, yes, we are saying
- 2 that it is not the final element. When we said
- 3 the elements are completed, what we meant was
- 4 you're looking at the period of time during
- 5 which people are committing the elements of the
- 6 offense, that that is how you know sort of what
- 7 an occasion is. It is bounded in a time sense.
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: So, in Petty, when
- 9 they go from person to person to
- 10 person and they take each person's goods, you
- 11 say that still counts as one occasion?
- 12 MS. ROSS: That's correct, Your Honor,
- and the reason -- --
- 14 JUSTICE KAGAN: And then the question
- is, when you don't go from person to person to
- person, but instead you go from storage to unit
- 17 to storage to unit to storage to unit in a
- 18 single facility, why isn't the same true?
- MS. ROSS: Sure, Your Honor. So I --
- I want to clarify our position with respect to
- 21 Petty. I think the thing that makes Petty one
- 22 event and one act is that there is an
- overlapping -- as I think I heard my friend say
- this morning, there's an overarching use of
- 25 force there. When you go in as a robber and you

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1 say -- you know, you put up your gun and you say
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- give me all your money, they then subsequently
- 3 maybe have to go person to person, but they are
- 4 sort of already in. They've already committed
- 5 part of the act of burglary --
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well --
- 7 MS. ROSS: -- or, excuse me, robbery,
- 8 one of the essential elements.
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- didn't Mr. Wooden,
- 10 basically, already commit to -- to going into
- 11 the storage facility and then he goes to this
- box and this box and this box?
- MS. ROSS: So -- so I don't think so,
- 14 Your Honor, I think both as a matter of law but
- also as a matter of fact. So, as a matter of
- law, obviously, as we've talked about this
- morning, the state simply treats those as
- 18 separate burglaries. That is a separate entry.
- 19 As a matter of fact, I think that
- 20 makes significant sense. Every time Mr. Wooden
- 21 and his confederates chose to break down another
- 22 wall is another decision to break the law. It
- is another moment where they said, you know,
- that was fun, let's do this again, all the way
- 25 up to ten. And I think that is very different

- 1 from the simultaneous robbery situation where a
- 2 defendant raises his gun once and he's committed
- 3 -- at least attempted --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, how do you know
- 5 this? How do you know this? I mean, what we
- 6 have is a piece of paper 15 years old or 10
- 7 years old, and it says on it pled guilty,
- 8 charge, robbery. Okay? And -- and I have no
- 9 idea what went on, nor the judge. And judges
- 10 all the time have to decide things like this
- 11 under the guidelines.
- 12 And -- and so what you're saying is
- 13 that Jesse James, who -- I know what he did
- 14 because I've seen movies, all right? So Jesse
- James gets on the train and he goes to one
- 16 person and then the next person and then the
- 17 next person and takes their stuff. You know, he
- 18 takes --
- 19 JUSTICE KAGAN: And the next car and
- 20 the next car and the next car.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah, correct.
- 22 Correct.
- MS. ROSS: Sure.
- JUSTICE BREYER: And, moreover, you're
- 25 going to put him in jail for 15 years, where

1 maybe he deserves it, but his cousin Harry James

- only robbed one car in one train once, but there
- 3 were four people on it, and then he gave up his
- 4 life of crime. And you're saying not just Harry
- 5 but also -- not just Jesse but Harry too will
- 6 spend 15 years in jail extra?
- Now, if you can convince me Congress
- 8 intended that at the same time that they passed
- 9 this -- the sentencing guidelines, I -- I'd like
- 10 to hear it.
- MS. ROSS: Sure. So -- so two
- 12 responses, Your Honor.
- The first, to those particular
- 14 hypotheticals, I think this points up a problem
- in -- any time you're looking at past
- 16 convictions, and so I think what is going to
- 17 happen is, if all you have is Your Honor's
- 18 example of the indictment that says robbery X
- date, we're just going to lose that case. We're
- 20 going to say --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Why?
- MS. ROSS: Because --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Why are you going to
- 24 lose it?
- 25 MS. ROSS: Because we don't think that

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1 you go beyond basically the basic facts, the
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- 2 core elements of the offense.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Oh, you say it just
- 4 says one.
- 5 MS. ROSS: And so you're just --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: But this actually
- 7 says, you know, you see the indictment and maybe
- 8 you see that, maybe it says there were ten
- 9 people. It says five people. It lists the
- things stolen, Joe Smith's watch, et cetera, et
- 11 cetera.
- MS. ROSS: Right. So, again, we're
- 13 not going to know whether it was a Petty
- 14 situation where they just had -- held up their
- gun all at once or whether they went person by
- person, and so we're going to lose that case.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Why?
- MS. ROSS: The second point -- because
- 19 --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Why?
- MS. ROSS: -- because --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Most robberies where
- you go through the train, you would assume -- it
- 24 says train robbery. You would assume that the
- 25 guy in Car 2 didn't see a gun in Car 1. He just

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1 saw a guy with a mask.
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- 2 MS. ROSS: So I'm not quite sure if
- 3 I'm following --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. Forget
- 5 it.
- 6 MS. ROSS: -- why that would be
- 7 different.
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: Forget it. I'm going
- 9 off too far.
- 10 MS. ROSS: But --
- 11 JUSTICE BREYER: Go ahead.
- MS. ROSS: -- but, in terms of what
- 13 Congress intended here, you know, I think that
- 14 Congress very reasonably determined that the
- 15 person who commits what state law has considered
- to be a full offense, a complete offense, and
- 17 what Congress has in turn considered to be its
- 18 own violent felony and turns and does that
- 19 multiple occasions without -- you know, whether
- 20 they take a smoke break or not in between is a
- 21 more dangerous person --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel --
- MS. ROSS: -- than the person --
- 24 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, that was the law
- 25 before it was amended, and it -- it was harsh,

- 1 but it was clear. So you commit three
- 2 robberies, it's three strikes, okay? But then
- 3 it was amended. They add the -- the term
- 4 "occasions." I have no idea what an occasion is
- 5 or what a criminal opportunity is or what a
- 6 criminal episode is.
- 7 But you have a real problem, I think,
- 8 with Petty. So let's say that there are three
- 9 people in a car driving on a dark night out in
- 10 the middle of nowhere and they see a hitchhiker.
- 11 They're kindhearted people. They stop to pick
- 12 up the hitchhiker. The hitchhiker pulls a qun,
- points the gun at the first person in the car
- and says give me your money. The person gives
- them the money. And then he says walk off. And
- 16 so he's done with that person. Then he robs the
- 17 second one, same thing, walk off. Robs the
- 18 third one, walk off.
- 19 Is that one occasion or two occasions?
- 20 Is that Petty, or is it this case?
- MS. ROSS: So I think that that is
- 22 this case, but I think it is very likely that
- 23 you are not going to know from the record
- 24 documents and that we would -- as I keep saying
- 25 perhaps oddly, we are going to lose that case.

1	Now, if I could go back to what
2	Congress had in mind with Petty, I think it's
3	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, just let me
4	just say that the difference between that
5	situation and Petty seems to me utterly
6	inconsequential. It can't how can it
7	possibly be that you have different results in
8	those two instances?
9	MS. ROSS: So I think because Congress
10	decided that somebody who, again, commits a full
11	violent felony and then goes and does another
12	one, no matter how close together they are, that
13	that that is a different type of person.
14	And, you know, when Congress amended
15	the statute in light of Petty, it responded
16	specifically to Petty. It did not respond to
17	other cases. I would direct this Court to the
18	Ninth Circuit's decision in Wicks, which was
19	multiple burglaries on one night under the prior
20	statute, held to be different convictions.
21	Congress didn't respond to that. Congress
22	didn't seem to think there was a problem with
23	that. Congress instead tailored its response to
24	the Petty situation.
25	And I think this brings up an

- 1 important issue, which is even on Petitioner's
- 2 side of the purported split, I think courts are
- drawing these distinctions very similarly to how
- 4 we would do it here. So the Second Circuit's
- 5 decision in Bordeaux, those were three robberies
- 6 that occurred at 10, 10:15, and 10:55 p.m. The
- 7 court held that those were separate occasions
- 8 for purposes of the ACCA.
- 9 So I think, to the extent that the --
- 10 the intuition is, you know, if it happens close
- in time, it just can't make a career criminal, I
- think because Congress didn't adopt language
- that required an intervening arrest or a certain
- amount of passage of time, no one's test really
- gets to that point. And the question is, you
- 16 know, how can we do this in a clear and
- 17 administrable way that distinguishes between the
- 18 people who commit one violent felony and the
- 19 people who commit one and then just keep going
- 20 all the way up --
- 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel --
- MS. ROSS: -- in this case, to ten?
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- if all there
- was was Justice Breyer's hypothetical, but I'll
- 25 adapt it to this case, if the only criminal

- 1 activity by this defendant his entire life had
- 2 been the burglary of this warehouse, the
- 3 burglaries of this warehouse, and some time
- 4 later, 20 years later, and I don't remember how
- 5 many years separated these two crimes, he
- 6 commits another criminal activity, do you think
- 7 the layperson would believe that that was a
- 8 career -- that this person was a career
- 9 criminal?
- 10 MS. ROSS: So --
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Under what
- 12 understanding of "episode" or "occasion" would a
- 13 common person walk away and say, nope, those
- were different occasions, and so, yes, even
- though that person has only had one episode, one
- 16 evening of burglary, he's now a career offender?
- MS. ROSS: So, Justice Sotomayor --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's the only
- 19 background.
- 20 MS. ROSS: -- Justice Sotomayor, I
- 21 think there are sort of two questions in there,
- 22 and if I could tease them out. I think the
- 23 first is, you know, would you call this person a
- 24 career offender? And I think we know that
- 25 Congress, for all of the reasons I was just

- 1 saying, thought of career in a different sense
- 2 than a lifelong pursuit because, in response to
- 3 Petty -- first of all, it was focused on Petty,
- 4 and, second, in response to Petty, it didn't
- 5 require intervening arrests, it didn't require
- 6 intervening convictions, despite the fact that
- 7 other statutes do have that type of language.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, that's true,
- 9 but intervening arrest or conviction can let
- somebody live a crime-free life for years, and
- 11 still -- they're still a career offender because
- 12 they can commit a crime a month or a crime --
- even under your theory, a crime a year and they
- 14 would be a career offender. They don't
- 15 necessarily have to be arrested.
- 16 MS. ROSS: That's correct, Your Honor,
- 17 but Congress also did not include, you know,
- 18 three years between convictions, five years
- 19 between convictions, anything of that nature.
- 20 And so I think we know that Congress meant
- 21 career criminal in a different way and in the
- 22 way that is, in fact, explained in the text with
- 23 respect to the different occasions clause.
- I think the only clear way to
- 25 understand the different occasions language --

- and this goes to the second part of Your Honor's
- 2 question -- is that an occasion is an event, a
- 3 happening, or an occurrence. And if two events
- 4 share one essential act, they are really one
- 5 event. That is our position.
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But why -- why
- 7 aren't --
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, but think about
- 9 this -- this factual context, right? Let's say
- 10 you're a newspaper reporter and you're trying to
- 11 write a story about what happened here.
- I mean, would you ever say something
- 13 like the facility's storage units were
- 14 burglarized on ten occasions?
- MS. ROSS: So, Your Honor, you know, I
- 16 think you could say -- you might well say they
- 17 broke through drywall on ten occasions. I think
- 18 it just -- you know, there are ways to think
- 19 about this.
- 20 JUSTICE KAGAN: But -- but that's --
- 21 breaking through drywall is not the relevant
- 22 act. The relevant act is a crime.
- MS. ROSS: So -- so, actually,
- 24 respectfully, Your Honor, I think breaking
- 25 through drywall is the relevant act because you

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1 need under state law to have an unlawful entry
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- 2 into each of these separate facility -- or,
- 3 excuse me, units --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, then, to use Mr.
- 5 Kedem's words --
- 6 MS. ROSS: -- and that's how you do
- 7 it.
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- it's just becoming
- 9 very hypertechnical. In a normal sense, if you
- 10 look at what this guy did, you would say he, you
- 11 know, broke into the storage units on one
- occasion, whereas maybe if there had been ten
- 13 separate -- separate meaning, you know, it
- 14 happened on Monday and then it happened on
- 15 Wednesday and then it happened on Friday -- then
- 16 you would say the storage units were burglarized
- or -- on ten occasions?
- MS. ROSS: So -- so I disagree, Your
- 19 Honor. I mean, I think even taking my friend's
- 20 definition of "occasion" as a different juncture
- 21 of circumstances giving rise to a different
- 22 criminal opportunity, you know, every time Mr.
- Wooden decided to go into a different unit to
- 24 steal different items from different victims, I
- 25 would think of those as a different occasion.

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1
                But, you know, if the point is
 2
      ultimately --
 3
                JUSTICE KAGAN: On one occasion,
      Wooden burglarized one storage unit, and on a
 4
      second occasion, he burglarized another storage
 5
      unit, and on a third occasion, he burglarized
 6
 7
      another storage unit.
                I mean, that's just not how anybody
 8
      would talk about what happened here, is it?
 9
10
                MS. ROSS: So -- so I think it -- it
11
      might well be, but if I could give you another
12
      example, Your Honor. I mean, I think if I said,
13
      you know, during my friend's argument he was
14
      asked difficult questions about line-drawing,
15
      you know, on several different occasions or on
16
      several occasions different from one another,
17
      even though those happened very close in time,
18
      that would be a perfectly natural use of
19
      language.
                By -- you know, at the same time, if
20
      Mr. Kedem stood up here during his rebuttal and
21
2.2
      said, you know, during her argument, Ms. Ross
23
      made -- committed errors on several different
24
      occasions, I would disagree but not because it's
25
      not a natural use of language. I think you can
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1 use "occasion" in different ways, and what we're
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- 2 wondering about here or asking about here is how
- 3 it is best used in the context of the ACCA.
- 4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So --
- 5 MS. ROSS: And I think, in a statute,
- 6 it -- I'm sorry.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Sorry, Ms. Ross, I
- 8 didn't mean to interrupt. Are -- are you
- 9 finished with your answer to Justice Kagan?
- 10 MS. ROSS: I -- I -- I had one more
- 11 sentence.
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Go for it, please.
- 13 MS. ROSS: All right. I was just
- 14 going to say, in the context of the ACCA, where
- we know that Congress did not want as this Court
- 16 said in Taylor, you know, if we thought that --
- 17 that sentencing judges were supposed to be
- 18 looking through facts and circumstances, we
- 19 would see some indication of that, I don't think
- 20 that this reading of "occasion" that my friend
- 21 is offering is a natural fit in this context.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Just I wanted to
- 23 follow up on what Justice Kagan was pursuing,
- 24 and Petty is still one occasion in the
- 25 government's view today?

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1 MS. ROSS: Yes.
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- 2 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. What if
- 3 instead of in Petty, instead of robberies, we
- 4 had murders, and a guy breaks in and shoots
- 5 three people in a row? Is that three separate
- 6 occasions on the government's view?
- 7 MS. ROSS: Yes, each of those offenses
- 8 requires a different use of force.
- 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So the --
- 10 MS. ROSS: Different --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- exact same --
- 12 so -- so a normal person wouldn't say that
- happened on one occasion, even though the three
- 14 people were in the same room, but because they
- were murdered sequentially, that's not one
- 16 occasion, that's three occasions?
- 17 MS. ROSS: I think, in the context of
- 18 this statute, that is one -- those are three
- 19 occasions.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But, if they commit
- 21 robbery one after the other in the same room,
- that is one occasion?
- MS. ROSS: No, Your Honor, because the
- 24 robberies -- so it might be true -- and I think
- 25 this is --

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JUSTICE GORSUCH: Because the robbery
1
 2
      starts as soon as he shows his weapon to
 3
      everybody in the room and, therefore, it's one
 4
      occasion when it's robbery --
 5
               MS. ROSS: Yes.
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- right, but three
 6
7
      occasions when it's murder?
               MS. ROSS: I think that is simply a
8
9
      consequence of the elements of robbery.
10
               JUSTICE GORSUCH: Who thinks that, Ms.
11
     Ross, in the real world?
12
                MS. ROSS: So, Your Honor, again, I
      think that there are multiple ways in which one
13
14
      could look at the way that we apply the ACCA --
15
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: Ah. And if there
16
     are multiple ways --
17
               MS. ROSS: -- and say --
18
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- to look at it,
19
     why doesn't lenity play an important role here
20
21
               MS. ROSS: So --
2.2
                JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- in determining
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whether the government should win or lose these

If an ordinary person can't tell, if

23

24

25

cases?

- 1 there are multiple ways to read the statute, if
- 2 an occasion might mean one thing if it's murder
- and another thing if it's robbery, why doesn't
- 4 the tie go to the presumptively free individual
- 5 rather than the prosecutor, especially when
- 6 we're dealing with mandatory minimums that take
- 7 a 21-month sentence, which was what the
- 8 government initially sought in this case, to a
- 9 15-year mandatory minimum when the government
- 10 changed its mind?
- MS. ROSS: So there's a lot packed in
- there and I want to get to all of it.
- 13 JUSTICE GORSUCH: There sure is. Go
- 14 for it.
- MS. ROSS: So -- so I disagree that --
- I was not trying to say that, you know,
- 17 "occasion" might mean one thing in robbery and
- 18 might in burglary -- a different thing in
- 19 murder. What I was trying to say --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But you -- but they
- 21 are in -- in the hypothetical.
- MS. ROSS: No, Your Honor. There --
- 23 there --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, hold on. I
- 25 thought it was three -- three occasions with the

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1 murder and one with a robbery in the
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- 2 hypothetical I posed to you.
- 3 MS. ROSS: Yes.
- 4 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
- 5 MS. ROSS: But, in either case, the
- 6 reason why is because of the elements of the
- 7 offense. And so I think it is entirely
- 8 consistent to say that when you have -- just as
- 9 if you had the murders of three people by a
- 10 bomb, that would be one occasion.
- 11 What -- to -- to get to the lenity
- 12 question, you know, I think that Congress was
- 13 clear here, especially in the context that I was
- explaining, and I think, as you note, when we
- are applying a mandatory minimum, I think it's
- 16 very important to have consistent results.
- 17 And as the questions this morning
- 18 suggest, I don't think that Petitioner's test is
- 19 going to get you consistent results. Again, I
- 20 don't know if Petitioner agrees with the cases
- on his side of the split, but I'm not sure if
- 22 having --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But, if we don't
- think yours leads to consistent results either,
- for example, because of the hypothetical I gave

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1 you, then what?
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- MS. ROSS: So, Justice Gorsuch, to be
- 3 clear, I think in the -- so there's sort of the
- 4 -- the theoretical and then there's the how is
- 5 this going to play out in practice, and --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: No, no. No, no, no.
- 7 If we think that there's ambiguity either way,
- 8 okay, if we think that there's going to be
- 9 confusion either way, then what?
- 10 MS. ROSS: So I don't think there is
- 11 going to be confusion on our view.
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I understand that,
- 13 counsel. I -- I -- I've been there. I -- I --
- 14 I -- I've fought many a hypothetical too. But
- just suppose we think that. Then what?
- MS. ROSS: So I think, if you thought
- 17 there was going to be ambiguity either way, you
- would still need to look for the best reading of
- 19 this statute. We think we've given that to you
- 20 in context.
- I think, if you got to the point where
- 22 all of your tools of statutory construction ran
- out and you found grievous ambiguity, then, yes,
- there might be a lenity issue.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, has

- 1 any of the lower courts adopted your
- 2 elements-based approach?
- MS. ROSS: So, Your Honor, I don't
- 4 think they've talked about it in terms of the
- 5 elements. But our results are consistent across
- 6 the board, I think, with the vast --
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, if their
- 8 test was, in fact, based on the elements,
- 9 presumably, they would have talked about
- 10 elements, right?
- MS. ROSS: So I think the -- so, you
- 12 know, I take the point. I don't want to fight
- 13 that. You know, I do think that the difference
- is that these cases generally come up in these
- 15 sequential robberies, sequential burglary
- 16 contexts, and there it is enough to say one was
- 17 over before the next began in the same way that
- 18 I started this morning.
- 19 Without having to really go into, you
- 20 know, what that tells you is that the elements
- 21 were committed at different times and what that
- 22 tells you is that they were all different acts
- 23 that satisfied those elements.
- 24 So I think we have sort of provided
- 25 more theory as to why that common-sense

- 1 intuition as to one is over before the next
- began makes sense, but, no, I mean, they haven't
- 3 exactly mapped it on to the elements in the same
- 4 way that we would.
- 5 You know, there are -- there are a
- 6 couple of other things that I think it's
- 7 important to get to here. You know, as -- as I
- 8 think we've talked about a bunch this morning,
- 9 we think Petitioner's test is not going to be
- 10 very administrable in practice. Even if you get
- 11 past the textual problems that we see with it
- 12 and the contextual problems with we -- that we
- see with it, you're going to have three
- 14 problems.
- 15 First, you're going to have judges
- 16 looking for facts that are not often going to be
- in state court records not just about how a
- 18 crime was committed but about all of the
- 19 surrounding facts and circumstances.
- 20 Second, even if you had perfect
- information, you're going to then have to look
- 22 at it at this granular level that, again, in the
- 23 ACCA context, for many of the reasons various
- justices have raised this morning, we don't
- 25 permit.

- 1 And third, even then, I do think
- 2 you're going to have these very difficult
- 3 line-drawing questions between, you know, the
- 4 smoke break or the 10, 10:15, 10:55 robberies as
- 5 opposed to what Mr. Wooden was convicted of
- 6 doing here.
- 7 I think what the law ultimately is
- 8 asking about in the ACCA is were you held
- 9 criminally responsible for discrete acts, and
- 10 that is the case here. It was not the case in
- 11 Petty, and so I think that our test is far more
- 12 administrable in practice.
- 13 You know, I think there were a couple
- of other small things. You know, I think the
- crime boss hypothetical that Justice Kagan gave,
- 16 I think, explains why we think that, you know,
- 17 disparate timing is sufficient but not
- 18 necessary. I do think that intertwined
- 19 simultaneous offenses may be separate occasions.
- 20 I think I took my friend to agree with that.
- Or, excuse me, non-intertwined simultaneous
- 22 offenses may be separate occasions. I think I
- 23 took my friend to agree with that.
- We also think that, you know, there
- was some suggestion, I think, in some of the

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1 questioning about accomplice liability. We --
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- again, because we would just focus on the
- 3 elements of the offense, we would not look to
- 4 that, that further complication.
- 5 So I -- I'm happy to answer other
- 6 questions.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 8 Thomas?
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Ms. Ross, I have
- 10 one question. If we conclude that someone who
- 11 goes down the street and burglarizes different
- 12 houses and different cars going down the street,
- 13 that that's all one occasion, if that's our
- 14 common-sense intuition to borrow your phrase,
- 15 you would disagree with that, correct?
- MS. ROSS: Yes, I would.
- 17 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Okay. Suppose
- 18 that's what we think, though. Do you have a
- 19 backup position on how you would articulate the
- 20 test?
- MS. ROSS: So, Justice Kavanaugh, you
- 22 know, I think, once you go beyond, you know,
- 23 the -- the timing of -- or -- or the acts that
- 24 are required for particular elements to be
- 25 completed, I think it gets very difficult to

- 1 articulate a clear test, as I think this morning
- 2 has -- has sort of revealed.
- 3 You know, I think, obviously, larger
- 4 periods of time are clear, but I don't know that
- 5 you can really get that from the text. So, you
- 6 know, I apologize. I -- I think we've given you
- 7 the best and the most administrable reading of
- 8 the test, and I do think, once you get to the --
- 9 you know, if -- if you would sort of think that
- 10 the guy down the street is a different occasion,
- I think it's very hard to understand why this
- 12 would not also be a different occasion.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 15 Thomas?
- Justice Breyer?
- 17 Justice Sotomayor? No?
- 18 Yes?
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Quick question, Ms.
- 20 Ross. So if we do disagree with you and -- and
- 21 -- and you indicated you thought it got pretty
- 22 complicated pretty quickly, do we run into
- vaqueness issues?
- MS. ROSS: Sure, Your Honor. So, you
- 25 know, we don't think that the statute ultimately

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1 would be vague. We hope that what would happen
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- 2 is that the courts of appeals would continue to
- 3 apply the types of factors that they have
- 4 applied. We think we win under those factors,
- 5 but I think, you know, if it were just a
- 6 question of sort of tinkering with those
- 7 factors, I don't think that there would be a
- 8 constitutional vagueness problem.
- 9 I do think, to the extent that you
- 10 have vagueness concerns, again, our approach,
- 11 much as in the Sixth Amendment context,
- 12 mitigates those concerns --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah, right.
- 14 MS. ROSS: -- whereas I think
- 15 Petitioner's --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Right.
- MS. ROSS: -- you know, as -- as I
- 18 think my friend --
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I -- I --
- 20 MS. ROSS: -- sort of sets up the next
- 21 --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- understand.
- 23 Counsel, I understand that point, but I have one
- 24 more quick question. I don't want to monopolize
- 25 the time here.

1	On on the confrontation clause
2	question, again, if we do disagree with you and
3	we think that that "occasion" is is
4	broader than you suggest, does that raise Sixth
5	Amendment concerns?
6	MS. ROSS: Justice Gorsuch, you know,
7	I think it would again depend on exactly what
8	the Court said. You know, we think that we
9	we could apply this in a way that is consistent
LO	with the Sixth Amendment. Again, I think it
L1	would just require sort of looking at a narrower
L2	set of facts and documents.
L3	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you.
L4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
L5	Kavanaugh?
L6	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: No further
L7	questions, Chief.
L8	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
L9	Barrett?
20	JUSTICE BARRETT: No.
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Rebuttal?
22	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF ALLON KEDEM
23	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
24	MR. KEDEM: With the greatest respect
25	to my friends from the government, the essential

- 1 elements test that you just heard Ms. Ross
- 2 articulate strikes me as dramatically different
- 3 both from what the courts of appeals are doing
- 4 right now but also the way that the government
- 5 described its own test in its brief.
- 6 First of all, Justice Kagan, I think
- 7 the reason that you and I both read the
- 8 government's brief as saying the question is
- 9 whether the final element was satisfied at the
- 10 same moment comes from sentences like this on
- 11 page 15 of the government's brief: "In common
- 12 legal parlance, an offense is generally
- 13 committed when all elements of the offense are
- 14 established, regardless of whether the defendant
- 15 continues to engage in criminal conduct."
- 16 There were a number of such sentences,
- 17 all of which seemed to point to the final
- 18 element.
- 19 The question -- a -- a test described
- 20 as an essential elements test raises for me a
- 21 number of questions. First of all, are there
- 22 elements of an offense which are not essential?
- For instance, mens rea?
- 24 Mr. Wooden and his associates may have
- formed the plan to break into the mini-storage

- 1 facility and to steal what was -- what was ever
- there, and it was a single intention that they
- 3 formed with respect to all of the different
- 4 units. Does that count as the same, or is that
- 5 different?
- What about inchoate crimes? Attempts
- 7 are named by statute in the Armed Career
- 8 Criminal Act. They are -- they are called out
- 9 by name. But you never complete the crime. You
- 10 need a substantial step. Are -- are all of the
- 11 acts that go toward the substantial step part of
- 12 it? What about crimes where you are simply
- facilitating crimes by other people? These are
- 14 all questions that are entirely unanswered.
- Now, with respect to the court of
- 16 appeals' approach, my friend, Ms. Ross, said
- 17 that she thinks that this is essentially what
- 18 the courts of appeals are doing. That is not
- 19 correct.
- 20 Under the courts of appeals' test,
- 21 what needs to happen is the beginning and end of
- 22 one crime have to be separate from the beginning
- and end of the next crime, regardless of whether
- 24 the same acts go into multiple crimes.
- 25 And let me give you three examples

- 1 that come from our brief. There was the case
- 2 Barbour about the robbery outside the mini-mart,
- and then some members of that robbery went
- 4 inside to continue -- to -- to do a new robbery
- 5 within the mini-mart. So there are two separate
- 6 robberies.
- 7 But what the court of appeals said is,
- 8 because the robbery outside continues --
- 9 continued while the one inside the mini-mart was
- 10 going on, they overlapped and, therefore, it was
- the same occasion. But, under the government's
- 12 essential elements test, it would have come out
- 13 differently.
- So too for the case of Tucker, where
- there were two people who burgled two separate
- 16 storage units. But, since the court didn't know
- whether they both walked into their storage
- units simultaneously or went from one together
- into the other, they didn't know whether the
- 20 crimes overlapped, and, therefore, there were
- 21 two different -- it was one occasion.
- 22 And, similarly, the Murphy case,
- involving a duplex, where some number of people
- stayed at the first unit while the others went
- 25 to the second unit. That would have come out a

different way under the government's test.

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- 2 The government's test would also mean that acts that are truly simultaneous can also 3 sometimes be different occasions. For instance, 4 if you and an associate decide that you will 5 6 both walk into separate storage units at the same time, I think, under the government's test, 7 that is two different occasions, whereas the 8 9 courts of appeals would treat those as the same. 10 Now my friend also raised the 11 possibility that their test would be more
- the government agrees that you are always
 responsible for the conduct of accomplices,

consistent with the Sixth Amendment because it

is just a focus on elements. But assuming that

17 involved in any crime, it is never elemental as

since we don't know how many accomplices are

- 18 far as we're aware, and the government doesn't
- 19 suggest otherwise, you will never know just
- 20 based on the elements alone whether or not the
- 21 crimes were committed at the same time.
- The one textual point that my friend
- from the government made, at least as far as I
- 24 recall, is that if you were to break through ten
- 25 different units, the drywall connecting them,

- 1 you might describe that as ten different
- 2 burglaries or you might say that you broke
- 3 through the drywall on ten different occasions.
- 4 But, again, she's loading the dice by phrasing
- 5 it a different way than the statute.
- 6 What the statute says is we know there
- 7 were multiple offenses. Now we ask the
- 8 question, on how many occasions did that occur?
- 9 Was it the same occasion or different occasions?
- 10 So to put her example in the phrase of
- 11 the statute, what you would say is you broke
- through the drywall ten times. Did that happen
- on the same occasion or on occasions different
- 14 from one another? And our simple submission is
- 15 you would never describe that as ten occasions
- 16 different from one another.
- 17 And, finally, let's talk about
- 18 Congress's goals. It is unclear what the
- 19 government's essential elements test has to do
- 20 with any goal that Congress might have cared
- 21 about. And one would think that if this was the
- 22 test all along, someone at some point would have
- 23 mentioned it. But, obviously, Congress -- no
- one in Congress said so, no court has ever
- 25 articulated it this way, and the government

1	didn't even articulate it this way, at least as
2	far as we're concerned, until oral argument.
3	If there are no further questions.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
5	counsel. The case is submitted.
6	(Whereupon, at 12:20 p.m., the case
7	was submitted.)
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