

No. _____

In The
Supreme Court of the United States

JURDEN ROGERS.

Petitioner,

v.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Respondent.

On Petition for Writ of Certiorari to the
United States Court of Appeals
for the Eleventh Circuit

Petition for Writ of Certiorari

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QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- I Whether bank robbery (18 U.S.C. § 2113) which may be committed by unintentionally intimidating a victim or by presenting a teller with a demand note, has as an element “the use of physical force against the person or property of another.” under 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(3)(A).

- II. While the Eleventh Circuit (and many other circuits) has held fast to the notion that bank robbery by intimidation qualifies as a “crime of violence” under § 924 (c)’s elements clause, some other circuits have recently determined similar state statutes to not qualify as “violent felonies” under the elements clause of the Armed Career Criminal Act, creating a conflict amongst the Circuit courts.

LIST OF PARTIES

Petitioner, Jurden Rogers, was the Defendant in the district court and the appellant in the court of appeals. Respondent, the United States of America, was the Plaintiff in the district court and the appellee in the court of appeals.

CORPORATE DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Petitioner files this Petition as an individual, and is a non-corporation,

PROCEEDINGS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THIS CASE

Unites States v. Jerad Hanks, is currently pending decision in the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals, bearing Case No: 18-14183.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Question Presented i

List of Parties ii

Corporate Disclosure Statement ii

Proceedings Directly Related to This Case ii

Table of Authorities v

Petition for Writ of Certiorari 1

Opinion of the Court Below 1

Jurisdiction 1

Relevant Statutory Provisions 1

Statement of the Case 3

Reasons for Granting the Writ 5

 I. Bank Robbery, which may be committed by unintentionally intimidating a victim, or by presenting to the teller a demand note does not have as an element “the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another” 6

 II. While the Eleventh Circuit (and many other circuits) has held fast to the notion that bank robbery by intimidation qualifies as a “crime of violence” under § 924 (c)’s elements clause, some other circuits have recently determined similar state statutes to not qualify as “violent felonies” under the elements clause of the Armed Career Criminal Act, creating a conflict amongst the Circuit courts..... 9

Conclusion 14

Appendices

Opinion of Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals United States v. Rogers , Case No: 18-15152 (11 th Cir. 2019)	A
Or. Rev. Stat. § 164.415 Oregon’s First Degree Robbery Statute	B
Or. Rev. Stat. § 164.395 Oregon’s Third Degree Robbery Statute	B
S.C. Code § 16-9-320 (B) (2013) South Carolina’s Opposing or Resisting Law Enforcement Officer Serving Process	C

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

CASES:	PAGE
Johnson v. United States, 559 U.S. 133, 130 S.Ct.1265, 176 L.Ed.2d 1 (2010)	4, 6, 8, 9, 13, 14
Leocal v. Ashcroft, 543 U.S. 1, 125 S.Ct 377, 160 L.Ed.2d 271 (2004).....	7
Mathis v. United States, 579 U.S. ____, 136 S.Ct. 2243 (2016) ...	7
Moncrieffe v. Holder, 569 U.S. 184 (2013).....	7
Richardson v. United States, 526 U.S. 813 (1999)	7
Sessions v. Dimaya, 584 U.S. ____, 138 S.Ct. 1204 (2018)	13, 14
Stokeling v. United States, ____ U.S. ____, 139 S.Ct. 544, 202 L.Ed.2d 512 (2019)	4, 6, 8, 9
United States v. Davis, 588 U.S. ____, (2019)	4, 5, 14
In Re: Sams, 830 F.3d 1234 (11 th Cir. 2016)	10
Ovalles v. United States, 905 F.3d 1300 (11 th Cir. 2018)	5
United States v. Cornillie, 92 F.3d 1108 (11 th Cir. 1996)	8
United States v. Jones, 914 F.3d 893 (4 th Cir. 2019)	4, 11
United States v. Kelly, 412 F.3d 1240 (11 th Cir. 2005)	7
United States v. Palomina Garcia, 606 F.3 1317 (11 th Cir 2010).....	7
United States v. Shelby, ____ F.3d ____, 2019 WL 450831 (9 th Cir. 2019)	4, 10
United States v. Simms, 914 F.3d 229 (4 th Cir. 2019)	4

In Re: McGee, 278 S.C. 506, 299 S.E. 2d 334 (1983)	12
State v. Sutton, 92 S.C. 427, 75 S.E.2d 283, (2000)	12

STATUTES AND OTHER AUTHORITIES:

8 U.S.C. §16	1
8 U.S.C. §16 (b).....	13
18 U.S.C. § 924 (c).....	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14
18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(3)(A).....	4, 6
18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(3)(B).....	4, 14
18 U.S.C. § 924 (e).....	2, 10
18 U.S.C. § 924(e)(2)(B)(ii)	4, 13
18 U.S.C. § 2113(a).....	3, 7, 8, 9
18 U.S.C. § 3231	1
28 U.S.C. § 1254 (1)	1
Or. Rev. Stat. § 164.415	App. B
Or. Rev. Stat. § 164.395	App. B
S.C. Code § 16-9-320 (B)	App. C
Merriam-Webster, https://merriam-webster.com/dictionary	9

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

Jurden Rogers respectfully petitions for a writ of certiorari to review the judgment of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit.

OPINION AND ORDER BELOW

The Eleventh Circuit's opinion, 18-15152 (11th Cir. 2019), is unpublished and is provided in Appendix A.

JURISDICTION

The United States District Court for the Middle District of Florida had original jurisdiction over Mr. Rogers's criminal case under 18 U.S.C. § 3231. On November 7, 2019 the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the district court's judgment and sentence. See Appendix A. The jurisdiction of this court is invoked pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1254(1).

RELEVANT STATUTORY AND GUIDELINES PROVISIONS

8 U.S.C. § 16 provides in relevant part:

The term "crime of violence" means:

- (a) an offense that has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another, or
- (b) any other offense that is a felony and that, by its nature, involves a substantial risk that physical force against the person or property of another may be used in the course of committing

the offense

18 U.S.C. § 924(c) provides in pertinent part:

(1)(A) Except to the extent that a greater minimum sentence is otherwise provided by this subsection or by any other provision of law, any person who, during and in relation to any crime of violence or drug trafficking crime (including a crime of violence or drug trafficking crime which provides for an enhanced punishment if committed by the use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or device) for which the person may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, uses or carries a firearm, or who, in furtherance of any such crime, possesses a firearm, shall, in addition to the punishment provided for such crime of violence or drug trafficking crime--.

(i) be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 5 years;

(ii) if the firearm is brandished, be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 7 years;

(iii) if the firearm is discharged, be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of not less than 10 years.

(3) For purposes of this subsection the term “crime of violence” means an offense that is a felony and—

(A) has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another, or

(B) that by its nature, involves a substantial risk that physical force against the person or property of another may be used in the course of committing the offense.

18 U.S.C. § 924 (e) provides in pertinent part:

(1) In the case of a person who violates section 922(g) of this title and has three previous convictions by any court referred to in section 922(g)(1) of this title for a violent felony or a serious drug offense, or both, committed on occasions different from one another, such person shall be fined under this title and

imprisoned not less than fifteen years, and, notwithstanding any other provision of law, the court shall not suspend the sentence of, or grant a probationary sentence to, such person with respect to the conviction under section 922(g).

(2) As used in this subsection:

(B) the term “violent felony” means any crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year...

(1) has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person of another; or

(2) is burglary, arson, or extortion, involves use of explosives, or otherwise involves conduct that presents a serious potential risk of physical injury to another ,

18 U.S.C. § 2113(a) provides in pertinent part:

(a) Whoever by force and violence, or by intimidation, takes or attempts to take from the person or presence of another, or obtains or attempts to obtain by extortion any property or money or any other thing of value belonging to or in the care, custody, control, management, or possession of any bank, credit union or any savings and loan association...Shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than twenty years, or both.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

A jury found Mr. Rogers guilty of bank robbery, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 2113(a) (count one) and possessing a firearm during and in relation to a “crime of violence” in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) (count two), and on November 30, 2018 he was sentenced to serve 141 months of imprisonment (57 months in count one and 84 months in count two, to run consecutive)

On December 12, 2018 Mr. Rogers appealed to the Eleventh Circuit Court of

Appeals, arguing that Mr. Rogers's conviction under 18 U.S.C. § 924(c) was invalid because the crime of bank robbery does not qualify as a "crime of violence" under either § 924(c)(3)(A) (the elements clause) or § 924(c)(3)(B) (the residual clause).

During the pendency of the appeal, the Supreme Court issued the opinion in *Davis v. United States*, 588 U.S. _____ (2019) determining 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(3)(B) (the residual clause) to be unconstitutionally vague. Mr. Rogers continued to challenge whether bank robbery qualifies as a "crime of violence" under the elements clause, contending that because the offense of bank robbery could be committed by "intimidation", it does not qualify as a "crime of violence" because intimidation does not necessarily involve "physical" force as required by *Johnson v. United States* and as repeated in *Stokeling v. United States*. Mr. Rogers asserted that intimidation does not carry with it the requisite mens rea, and that it merely requires "intellectual or emotional force", which was specifically distinguished from "physical force".

On October 3, 2019, Mr. Rogers filed supplemental authority, listing the cases of *United States v. Shelby*, ___ F.3d ___, 2019 WL 450831 (9th Cir. 2019); *United States v. Jones*, 914 F.3d 893 (4th Cir. 2019) and *United States v. Simms*, 914 F.3d 229 (4th Cir. 2019) to show that the Ninth District Court of Appeals and Fourth District Court of Appeals have determined that various offenses did not qualify as predicate offenses under 18 U.S.C. § 294 (e)(2) (B)(i)(A.C.C.A.) because the offense charged could have been committed without "physical force".

On November 7, 2019 the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed Mr.

Rogers’s conviction and sentence. The court opined that:

We have held that federal bank robbery is a crime of violence under the elements clause of § 924(c)(3)(A). In re: Sams, 830 F. 3d 1234. 1239 (11th Cir. 2016), see Ovalles, 905 F.3d at 1304 (citing Sams, 830 F.3d at 1239)(stating that federal bank robbery “by intimidation” categorically qualifies as a crime of violence under §924(c)(3)(A)(quoting 18 U.S.C. § 2113(a))). We reasoned that federal bank robbery qualifies as a crime of violence because “[a] taking ‘by force and violence’ entails the use of physical force [and] a taking ‘by intimidation’ involves the threat to use such force” Sams, 830 F. 3d at1239 (quoting United States v. McNeal, 818 F.3d141, 153 (4th Cir. 2016)).

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE WRIT

In United States v. Davis, No. 18-431, 2019 WL 2570623, at *13 (U.S. June 24, 2019), the Court determined § 924(c)’s residual clause to be unconstitutionally vague, thereby abrogating the Eleventh Circuit’s contrary precedent in Ovalles. The question on this appeals remains, however, whether Mr. Rogers’s bank robbery conviction is considered a “crime of violence” under § 924(c)’s elements clause. Because it is not, this Court should grant Mr. Rogers’s petition and reverse the Eleventh Circuit’s contrary precedent.

Further, the holdings of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals (that Assault, Beating or Wounding a law enforcement officer under South Carolina law for purposes of the ACCA), and of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals (that First Degree Robbery under Oregon law for purposes of ACCA) do not qualify as “crimes of violence” squarely bring to the forefront a conflict between appellate circuits as to the interpretation and the reasoning of what constitutes a “crime of violence”

under federal law.

- I. Bank Robbery, which may be committed by unintentionally intimidating a victim, or by presenting to the teller a demand note, does not have as an element “the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another”.

For an offense to qualify under § 924(c)’s elements (force) clause, it must have “as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person or property of another.” 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(3)(A). Whether bank robbery qualifies as a “crime of violence” under § 924(c)’s force clause is a question that must be answered categorically– that is, by reference to the elements of the offense, and not by the actual facts of the defendant’s conduct. *Stokeling v. United States*, 586 U.S. ____, 139 S.Ct. 544, 202 L.Ed2d 512 (2019) (upholding the use of the categorical approach in analysis of § 924(c)’s force clause). Pursuant to the categorical approach, in the case at bar, if bank robbery may be committed without “the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force” then that crime may not qualify as a “crime of violence” under § 924(c)’s force clause.

In *Johnson v. United States*, 559 U.S. 133 (2010), the Court defined “physical force” to mean violent force- that is, force capable of causing physical pain or injury to another person” *Johnson*, Id at 140. In *Stokeling v. United States*, the Court further determined that the level of force necessary to overcome a victim’s resistance is inherently violent in the sense contemplated by *Johnson* because robbery that must overpower a victim’s will- even a feeble or weak-willed victim necessarily involves a physical confrontation and struggle. *Stokeling* , 139 S.Ct at

553.

However, to qualify as a “crime of violence” under the “use-of-force” or the “elements” clause, the predicate crime must have a mens rea of at least “knowingly” or “intentionally”. See *Leocal v. Ashcroft*, 543 U.S. 1, 10-11, 125 S.Ct. 377, 382-83, 160 L.Ed.2d 271 (2004); *United States v. Palomina Garcia*, 606 F.3d 1317, 1336 (11th Cir. 2010). Because bank robbery can be committed without the “use” of “physical force”, it does not qualify as a “crime of violence” under §924(c)’s force clause.

Under 18 U.S.C. § 2113(a), bank robbery may be committed “by force and violence, or by intimidation”. Because the statute lists alternative means and not alternative elements, the Court must presume that Mr. Rogers was convicted of the least culpable act- bank robbery by intimidation. *Mathis v. United States*, 136 S.Ct. 2243 (2016); *Richardson v. United States*, 526 U.S. 813, 817 (1999); *Moncrieffe v. Holder*, 133 S.Ct 1678 (2013).

According to the Eleventh Circuit’s pattern jury instruction, a person may be convicted of bank robbery by “intimidation” where an ordinary person in the teller’s position could infer a threat of bodily harm from the defendant’s acts”. 11th Cir. Pattern Jury Instructions 76.1 (citing *United States v. Kelley*, 412 F.3d 1240, 1244 (11th Cir. 2005)). Notably, it does not require proof of a defendant’s state of mind, as required by *Leocal* and *Palomino Garcia*. Indeed, “whether a particular act constitutes intimidation is viewed objectively” *Id.* The defendant need not intend for the act to be intimidating. *Id.* Yet, under *Leocal* and *Palomino Garcia* s

defendant does not “use” force unless some degree of intent is required. See *Leocal* 543 U.S. at 9, (concluding that the “use” of physical force “most naturally suggests a higher degree of intent than negligent or merely accidental conduct”). Because a bank robbery under § 2113 (a) may be committed by unintentionally intimidating a victim, a conviction does not categorically require the “use” of physical force.

Moreover, a person may “intimidate” a victim without the threatened use of violent “physical force”. For instance, the Eleventh Circuit has held that simply presenting a demand letter to a bank teller can support a conviction for bank robbery through intimidation. See *United States v. Cornillie*, 92 F. 3d 1108, 1110 (11th Cir. 1996). Presenting a demand letter does not necessarily require the threatened use of physical force, violent “physical force” or force “capable of causing physical pain or injury to another person” as required by *Johnson*.

Further, in *Johnson v. United States*, 559 U.S. 133 (2010), the Court analyzed the term “physical force” and determined that the term “physical” is a modifier which “plainly refers to force exerted by and through concrete bodies—distinguishing physical force from, for example intellectual force or emotional force” *Johnson*, at 138, 130 S.Ct. 1265,

The Court in *Stokeling* reaffirmed that analysis of the term. *Stokeling* at 139 S.Ct 552.

Merriam-Webster describes “intimidating” as “causing a loss of courage or

self confidence; producing feelings of fear or timidity”¹

Mr. Rogers concedes that in certain instances intimidation may involve the risk of physical violence, but urges that such is not always the case. Intimidation may not necessarily be willful, and if, under the categorical approach, analysis should focus on the least of the acts criminalized, then 18 U.S.C. 924(c) should fall, because intimidation does not necessarily involve “force exerted by and through concrete bodies” as required under the Johnson and Stokeling , but intellectual force or emotional force, which has been specifically distinguished from “physical force” by the court.

Based upon the foregoing, Mr. Rogers respectfully submits that bank robbery does not categorically qualify as a “crime of violence” under § 924(c)’s force clause. Given the important and recurring nature of this issue, Mr. Rogers respectfully seeks this Court’s review.

- II. While the Eleventh Circuit (and many other circuits) has held fast to the notion that bank robbery by intimidation qualifies as a “crime of violence” under § 924 (c)’s elements clause, some other circuits have recently determined similar state statutes to not qualify as “crimes of violence” under the elements clause of the Armed Career Criminal Act.

Mr. Rogers was convicted of bank robbery, in violation of § 2113(a) (count one) and possessing a firearm during and in relation to a “crime of violence” in violation of § 924(c) (count two). In its opinion, the Eleventh Circuit determined

¹ See <https://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intimidating>.

that bank robbery through intimidation categorically qualifies as a “crime of violence”, under the elements clause of the statute § 924 (c). citing *In re: Sams*, 830 F. 3d 1234. 1239 (11th Cir. 2016).

The language of § 924 (c)’s elements clause defines a “crime of violence” as, inter alia, one that “has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person of another”

This language is virtually identical to the language describing a “violent felony” under 18 U.S.C. § 924 (e) (Armed Career Criminal Act) which defines the term “violent felony” as, inter alia, one that “has as an element the use, attempted use, or threatened use of physical force against the person of another”.

While the Eleventh Circuit (and many other circuits) has held fast to the notion that bank robbery by intimidation qualifies as a “crime of violence” under § 924 (c)’s elements clause, some other circuits have recently determined similar state statutes to not qualify as “crimes of violence” under the elements clause of the Armed Career Criminal Act.

In *United States v. Shelby*, ___ F.3d ___, 2019 WL 450831 (9th Cir. 2019), Mr. Shelby appealed the district court’s denial of his 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motion in which challenged prior convictions for first degree robbery under Oregon law², alleging that conviction under such statute did not qualify as a “violent felony” predicate offense under the Armed Career Criminal Act (ACCA). In reversing the

² See Appendix B for full text of Oregon first degree robbery statute, and third degree robbery statute.

district court, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals determined that Mr. Shelby's prior convictions did not qualify as "violent felonies" under the ACCA's "use of force" or "elements" clause because the least chargeable offense under that statute allowed that the offense could be committed if the perpetrator was merely armed with a deadly weapon, regardless of whether he actually used it or made representations about it.

Mr. Rogers argues that the same argument is valid when considering robbery by intimidation, in that neither the Oregon statute nor the federal robbery by intimidation statute allows for consideration of the mens rea of the defendant. The Ninth Circuit has determined that offense not to qualify as a "violent felony" for purposes of the ACCA.

Similarly, in *United States v. Jones*, 914 F.3d 893 (4th Cir. 2019), Mr. Jones appealed the district's court's denial of his 28 U.S.C. § 2255 motion requesting that his sentence for assault, beating, or wounding a law enforcement officer³ be set aside or corrected because under recent Supreme Court decisions, his prior South Carolina conviction no longer qualified as a predicate offense under the ACCA. In reversing and remanding the case for re-sentencing, the Fourth Circuit noted that the least culpable offense that can reasonably be charged under the statute in question is "assault" and because assault can be committed without the use of violent physical force against another, that offense is not a "violent felony" under

³ See Appendix C for the complete text of the South Carolina's assault, beating or wounding a law enforcement officer statute.

the ACCA's use of force clause.

In *Jones*, because the offense at issue did not specifically define “assault”, the Fourth Circuit looked to South Carolina’s definition of the term and stated:

The Supreme Court of South Carolina has defined an “assault” in various but similar ways. For example, an assault is an “attempted battery or an unlawful attempt or offer to commit a violent injury upon another person, coupled with the present ability to complete the attempt or offer by a battery

Jones at 905, citing *State v. Sutton*, 92 S.C. 427, 75 S.E.2d 283, 285-286 (2000).

The Court further noted that “In other decisions, the state supreme court has described an assault as ‘intentionally creating a reasonable apprehension of bodily harm’ in another person by words or conduct.” *Jones*, *Id.*, citing *In re: McGee*, 278 S.C. 506, 299 S.E.2d 334 (1983).

It was upon consideration of these definitions of “assault” that the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals determined that their assault, beating, or wounding a law enforcement officer statute cannot qualify as a violent felony for purposes of the ACCA.

Mr. Rogers asserts that the language in the definitions for assault analyzed by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals can also be applied to the concept of intimidation because they each involve the idea of creating apprehension of bodily harm in the victim. Mr. Rogers contends that like Oregon’s statute relating to assault, beating, or wounding a law enforcement officer, the bank robbery by intimidation offense should not qualify as “crime of violence” under 18 U.S.C. 924 (

c).

Mr. Rogers acknowledges that the cases cited in support of the argument that a conflict in jurisdictions exists involve primarily cases falling under the Armed Career Criminal Act, and not 18 U.S.C. 924 (c), but asserts that the language in the force clause at issue is identical to that set forth in the Armed Career Criminal Act.

This Court has made clear that similar language must be interpreted consistently. In *Johnson, supra*, the Court held that Florida’s offense of felony battery did not qualify as a predicate offense for a heightened sentence under the Armed Career Criminal Act. The Court was called upon to interpret the definition of a “violent felony” as it applies to Florida’s felony battery offense. The Court found that such offense fell under the “residual clause” of § 924(e)(2)(B)(ii), and then determined that the wording in such statute is impermissibly vague.

In *Sessions v. Dimaya*, 584 U.S. ___, 138 S.Ct. 1204, 200 L.Ed.2d 512 (2019), the Court was called upon to evaluate the term “crime of violence” within the context of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The specific language at issue was 8 U.S.C. § 16(b), the residual clause of which defines a “crime of violence” as “...any other offense that is a felony and that, by its nature, involves a substantial risk that physical force against the person or property of another may be used in the course of committing the offense.”

In determining that §16(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to be void for vagueness, the Supreme Court relied on its prior decision in the *Johnson* case,

stating that “Johnson is a straightforward decision, with equally straightforward application here”. Dimaya at 1213.

In *United States v. Davis*, 588 U.S. ____, 139 S.Ct. 2319, 204 L.Ed 2d 757 (2019), the Court again crossed the bridge. In *Davis*, the Supreme Court, noting the resemblance between the residual clauses under the Armed Career Criminal Act and under 18 U.S.C. 924(c), and relying on the opinions in *Johnson* and *Dimaya*, found the residual clause of 18 U.S.C. 924(c)(3)(B) to be unconstitutionally vague.

Mr. Rogers asserts that by interpreting the same language within different statutes inconsistently, the courts of appeal have established a conflict amongst themselves, and involvement of the Supreme Court is necessary in order to resolve such conflict, and to promote consistency throughout the circuits.

Given the important and recurring nature of this issue, Mr. Rogers respectfully seeks this Court’s review.

CONCLUSION

For the above reasons, Mr. Rogers respectfully requests that this Court grant his petition.

Respectfully submitted,

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