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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
2	x
3	JESUS C. HERNANDEZ, ET AL., :
4	Petitioners : No. 15-118
5	v. :
6	JESUS MESA, JR., ET AL., :
7	Respondents. :
8	x
9	Washington, D.C.
10	Tuesday, February 21, 2017
11	
12	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
13	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
14	at 10:05 a.m.
15	APPEARANCES:
16	ROBERT C. HILLIARD, ESQ., Corpus Christi, Tex.; on
17	behalf of the Petitioners.
18	RANDOLPH J. ORTEGA, ESQ., El Paso, Tex.; on behalf of
19	the Respondent Mesa.
20	EDWIN S. KNEEDLER, ESQ., Deputy Solicitor General,
21	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on behalf
22	of the Federal Respondents.
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:05 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	first this morning in Case No. 15-118, Hernandez v.
5	Mesa.
6	Mr. Hilliard.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ROBERT C. HILLIARD
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
9	MR. HILLIARD: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
10	please the Court:
11	15-year-old Sergio Hernandez was standing in
12	Mexico, barely across the border, unthreatening and
13	unarmed, when he was shot and killed by a U.S. Border
14	Patrol agent standing inside the United States.
15	This tragic case is one of the most simplest
16	extraterritorial cases this Court will ever have in
17	front of it for five reasons.
18	First, all of the conduct of the domestic
19	police officer happened inside the United States.
20	Second, it was a civilian domestic police officer.
21	Third it was a civilian plaintiff, not an enemy
22	combatant. Fourth, it was one of the most fundamental
23	rights, the right to life. Fifth, the other government
24	involved supports the government of Mexico supports

25

the claim.

- 1 JUSTICE KAGAN: So is that -- I was trying
- 2 to figure out from your brief what exactly your rule is.
- 3 So are all five of those necessary, in your view, for
- 4 there to be a Bivens claim? Is anything else necessary?
- 5 Is that exactly the rule that you want us to adopt?
- 6 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Kagan, the rule that
- 7 we're asking this Court to adopt to avoid the anomalous
- 8 result, when a U.S. domestic officer on U.S. soil shoots
- 9 and there's no constitutional constraints, is that when
- 10 there is a cross-border shooting involving a Federal law
- 11 enforcement officer on U.S. soil, and the resulting
- 12 injury is in close proximity, then Fourth Amendment
- 13 constraints on that officer should apply.
- 14 And --
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that's a --
- 16 that's a test that, surprisingly, fits the exact facts
- 17 of your case.
- 18 (Laughter.)
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It seems to me that
- 20 the principles you're arguing for can't be so narrowly
- 21 confined. And -- for example, how -- how do you analyze
- 22 the case of a drone strike in Iraq where the plane in
- 23 piloted from Nevada.
- 24 Why wouldn't the same analysis apply in that
- 25 case?

- 1 MR. HILLIARD: Chief Justice, if it was a
- 2 drone strike, I'm assuming that it was -- it was
- 3 probably military. I'm assuming that there was
- 4 cooperation with other governments. Here, in our
- 5 case --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if this were, in
- 7 your case, somebody from the -- the State National Guard
- 8 or whatever, then it'd be a different result?
- 9 MR. HILLIARD: Well, if it was a State
- 10 National Guard, I'm not sure that they would be shooting
- 11 across the border, Your Honor. I mean --
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, you can
- imagine a situation that is not precisely like the facts
- 14 of your case where military officials may be involved.
- MR. HILLIARD: I can imagine that scenario,
- 16 but that's not the purpose or the intent of this rule.
- 17 The purpose of intent -- and intent of our rule is
- 18 simply to involve this Court in addressing an ongoing
- 19 domestic routine law enforcement issue along our
- 20 southwest border.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Your --
- MR. HILLIARD: So the --
- 23 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Your brief -- your brief
- 24 excluded military personnel and intelligence personnel.
- 25 Your -- your brief is limited to, as you said, civilian

- 1 border patrol officers. So your drone -- your drone
- 2 example, I take it from your brief, your answer is
- 3 that's a military operation.
- 4 MR. HILLIARD: That's right, Justice --
- 5 Justice Ginsburg. And we -- and we also recognize --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I understand
- 7 that, but I'm trying to see what the logic is, other
- 8 than yours happened to involve a nonmilitary actor and
- 9 my hypothetical involves a military actor. Under a -- a
- 10 Bivens analysis, I'm not sure that that makes a
- 11 difference.
- 12 Maybe there will be some defenses once you
- 13 recognize the cause of action that have to do with the
- 14 military operation, but I'm not sure why you wouldn't
- 15 have a cause of action under your theory.
- MR. HILLIARD: Our theory is meant to -- to
- 17 address the ongoing problem along the southwest border
- 18 that has resulted in at least ten cross-border shootings
- 19 and six Mexican national deaths. And every time the
- 20 Constitution, according to the government, turns off at
- 21 the border, even though all the conduct happens in the
- 22 United States.
- I recognize that under the military
- 24 situation, there are orders that may be being followed.
- 25 Here we have a roque officer who actually is not

- 1 following his own Federal regulations which says you
- 2 can't use deadly force without imminent peril.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: But that isn't the
- 5 question.
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: I suppose the --
- 7 JUSTICE BREYER: No. The question -- the
- 8 question that we -- is our problem, but we have to have
- 9 your help in solving it, is you have a very sympathetic
- 10 case. We write some words. And those words you're
- 11 delighted with because you win. That isn't the problem.
- 12 The problem is other people will read those
- 13 words, and there are all kinds of things that happen,
- 14 maybe military, maybe not. Perhaps a foreign country
- 15 with the collusion of people in our country sets off the
- 16 drone. That's what the Chief Justice brought in.
- 17 And are we, in deciding for you, A, deciding
- 18 as well that anyone who suffers a drone strike can come
- 19 to New York and bring a law case? Are we deciding that
- 20 the matter is unclear so that when the proper
- 21 authorities get advice from their lawyers over in the
- 22 Executive Branch, they have to say we're confused?
- 23 Okay?
- So what are the words that we write that
- 25 enable you to win, which is what you want, and that

- 1 avoid confusion, uncertainty, or decide these other
- 2 cases the proper way? That's the question you've been
- 3 given three times, and -- and I would certainly like to
- 4 know your answer.
- 5 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Brever, this -- this
- 6 world does not involve a drone strike, and I do not
- 7 intend to suggest that it should. This involves only --
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: We know that part. The
- 9 question is: what words do we write so that this
- 10 opinion doesn't affect the drone strike, which is what
- 11 you seem to want?
- MR. HILLIARD: Again, so the -- the rule
- 13 that we are suggesting has a close proximity element to
- 14 it. It has all of the conduct of the United States, of
- 15 the officer on the United States' soil shooting across
- 16 the border. So --
- 17 JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, we can take --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Perhaps --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: -- your test point by point
- 20 and -- and ask you whether it would apply in a situation
- 21 where each of those factors was a little bit different.
- 22 So the -- your client was 15. What if he was 19? Would
- 23 that be different?
- MR. HILLIARD: No, Justice Alito, of course
- 25 it wouldn't be different. But the -- the --

- 1 JUSTICE ALITO: So the rule would apply
- 2 there.
- 3 MR. HILLIARD: The rule would apply if he
- 4 was 19, standing unarmed in Mexico, when he was shot.
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: All right. What if he was
- 6 armed, but he had his hands up?
- 7 MR. HILLIARD: Again, we're not asking for a
- 8 win here. We're simply asking if the Constitution
- 9 applies and that he can -- he can -- the defense of
- 10 self-defense by the officer can happen at the trial
- 11 court then.
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: What if he wasn't in this
- 13 culvert, but he was 200 yards beyond in Mexico. Would
- 14 it be different then?
- MR. HILLIARD: It may be under the
- 16 Boumediene element of nature of the site. So this
- 17 culvert is unique. If the -- if the Court -- I would
- 18 invite the Court to look at Exhibit 180 of the
- 19 Petition's exhibit -- appendix, which is a picture of
- 20 the culvert.
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: And what if the officer was
- 22 not standing in the United States, but actually ran a
- 23 short distance across the border into Mexico? That
- 24 would seem to be worse, wouldn't it? But would you say
- 25 the rule would be different there?

- 1 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Alito, it may be
- 2 because the -- first, the Border Patrol agents are
- 3 strictly prohibited from crossing the border, like
- 4 federales are strictly prohibited from --
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: Right. So suppose he
- 6 violates that rule. He -- he --
- 7 MR. HILLIARD: Well --
- 8 JUSTICE ALITO: -- crosses into Mexico and
- 9 then he shoots the --
- 10 MR. HILLIARD: Right.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: -- the Mexican nationals.
- MR. HILLIARD: Right. It may not -- the
- 13 rule would not apply, but it doesn't mean that under
- 14 Boumediene standards that there's not constitutional
- 15 protections. Did he not know where the line was? Did
- 16 he intentionally go in hot pursuit? Was he called over
- 17 by a federale? The specifics of the facts would affect
- 18 the decision of whether the Constitution applied.
- 19 Under our -- under our proposed rule, as
- 20 Mexico pointed out in its brief, there's been 243
- 21 shootings along the border with the Border Patrol using
- 22 deadly force, 10 of those across the border.
- 23 JUSTICE ALITO: No, I understand that. But
- 24 as Justice Breyer said, we have to articulate a rule
- 25 that applies. We can't just say that in -- that -- that

- 1 on the particular facts here, there was -- the --
- 2 Mr. Hernandez's -- the -- the Petitioner's have a --
- 3 have a Bivens claim and -- and they're -- it states a
- 4 violation of the Fourth Amendment. We have to have a
- 5 rule to -- that can be applied in other cases.
- 6 And I don't know what the rule -- what rule
- 7 you want us to adopt other than to say you win. And, of
- 8 course, that's what you -- you need to do for your
- 9 client. But you need to give us a principle that is
- 10 workable.
- Is it -- is your rule that if the U.S. agent
- 12 commits on foreign soil an action that would be a
- 13 violation had it occurred within the United States,
- 14 there is a Bivens claim and there is a Fourth Amendment
- 15 violation? Is that your rule?
- 16 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Alito, no. So our --
- 17 our rule involves all of the conduct occurring on the --
- 18 on the United States side.
- 19 And I -- and I acknowledge a W, as Justice
- 20 Breyer said, would be nice for our side. But more
- 21 importantly, the Border Patrol is 44,000 strong along
- 22 our southwest border, and they only interact with
- 23 Mexican nationals. We've had 10 shootings across the
- 24 border. So that we might get the W, it will at least
- 25 not turn off the Constitution.

1 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Hilliard, if --2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, your rule would be the same if this was the first time it 3 4 happened, if it was one person and the other facts were the same; right? 5 6 MR. HILLIARD: My rule may be the same, but 7 my response to the question wouldn't have as much meat 8 on it because we're here after many of these shootings 9 have occurred. And we're here because the interaction 10 of the Border Patrol in this area, the government has taken the position that on the border, the Constitution 11 12 turns off if the deadly force goes across the border. 13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: What do -- an anterior question. It has been argued that the Constitution is 14 only for people who are within the United States; 15 16 therefore, an alien injured abroad has no Fourth or 17 Fifth Amendment rights. How do you answer that? MR. HILLIARD: Well, I think that the 18 19 Boumediene made clear, Justice Ginsburg, that aliens 20 abroad have constitutional rights, depending on whether 21 or not there is a -- after the evaluation, whether 22 functionally, the Constitution should apply. This Court 23 has --24 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But that was dealing with 25 habeas.

- 1 MR. HILLIARD: That was dealing with habeas.
- 2 But the Boumediene court did a full survey of the
- 3 entirety of the extraterritory -- extraterritory cases,
- 4 and they said there's a common thread.
- Now, what this Court does is it looks at,
- 6 where are we sending this -- where are we sending the
- 7 Constitution and what are we asking it to do? And I
- 8 acknowledge and recognize and this Court has already
- 9 said it's not a worldwide Constitution. But it has gone
- 10 abroad many times, depending on what it needs to do and
- 11 what it's being asked to do.
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: I think you said what your
- 13 rule is in a pretty clear way. You've said essentially
- 14 it's a border area and the shot came from the United
- 15 States. So that, I take it, is your rule.
- So it seems to me that the harder question
- 17 is actually -- and this goes back to the Chief Justice's
- 18 question -- why is that your rule? You know, what makes
- 19 that confluence of factors different from everything
- 20 else?
- 21 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Kagan, the reason
- 22 that's our rule is because the interaction at the
- 23 border, at our southwest border, has -- has resulted
- 24 often in shots being fired across the border. It's not
- 25 unique to Sergio Hernandez.

- 1 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, I guess you keep
- 2 saying that, Mr. Hilliard, that there's a problem here,
- 3 and I respect that. But there are problems -- there
- 4 might be problems in other situations as well. There
- 5 might be problems when U.S. officials go into a foreign
- 6 nation's territory. So -- so that leaves me still
- 7 uncertain why -- I mean, you're saying as a practical
- 8 matter, this is where the incidents are. But is that
- 9 all you have as to why this is your rule, why the border
- 10 cases are different?
- 11 MR. HILLIARD: So using the -- the framework
- of Boumediene and the factors in Boumediene, and given
- 13 that this fact pattern is unique to the case we're here
- 14 about today, but not unique to the situation on the
- 15 border, yeah, the Boumediene factors are -- are used to
- 16 plug in the rule that we're asking for.
- 17 For example, the -- the Boumediene factors
- 18 are nature of the site, status of the person seeking the
- 19 constitutional protection, importance of the right. So
- 20 those factors we plugged into this rule to address not
- 21 just this specific problem, but in reliance on the
- 22 Boumediene opinion, which said there's a common thread
- 23 in all these cases. And as the functional application,
- 24 we took the -- we took the four elements of -- of the
- 25 framework of Boumediene and applied them into our rule.

- 1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but the one
- 2 obvious difference with Boumediene is in there, you were
- 3 dealing with an area subject to an exclusive control of
- 4 the United States. Here, you're dealing with Mexico, an
- 5 entirely different situation.
- 6 MR. HILLIARD: Mr. Chief Justice, I would --
- 7 I would acknowledge that you're right. We are in --
- 8 Boumediene is in Cuba, but it's a -- it's a -- it's
- 9 basically, as Boumediene recognized, United States
- 10 territory.
- 11 Here, you have a U.S. law enforcement
- 12 officer whose -- 100 percent of his conduct is inside
- 13 the United States, de jure and de sovereign United
- 14 States property. No other government could control his
- 15 actions but our government. And while inside the United
- 16 States under his own Constitution, which he has sworn to
- 17 abide by, he shoots.
- 18 You know, the hypothetical that I have
- 19 may --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but just to
- 21 stop you there. So is it any time that the U.S. officer
- 22 is in the United States that that's -- that satisfies
- 23 the question under Boumediene? It's --
- MR. HILLIARD: No, it does not.
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's because the

- 1 injury occurs in a different jurisdiction; right?
- 2 MR. HILLIARD: It's because the injury
- 3 occurs in close -- close proximity. And this is a
- 4 unique area. Again, I would invite the Court to look at
- 5 Exhibit 180 of the appendix, which shows this culvert
- does not delineate where the United States ends and
- 7 where Mexico --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I assume
- 9 that's true of a lot of borders.
- 10 MR. HILLIARD: Well -- and the reason that
- 11 that's important in regards to the truth of that
- 12 statement is because the United States exercises some
- degree of control into the culvert. And as Michael
- 14 Fisher said in his testimony to Congress, they project
- 15 outwards from the border.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Does the government
- 17 of -- of Mexico agree with that?
- 18 MR. HILLIARD: The government of Mexico
- 19 agree -- agrees that their sovereign is violated when
- 20 the United States shoots bullets into their land and
- 21 kills their citizens.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The question is
- 23 whether the government of Mexico agrees with your
- 24 statement that the jurisdiction of the United States
- 25 extends beyond the Mexican border.

- 1 MR. HILLIARD: Mr. Chief Justice, at -- it
- 2 was not that the jurisdiction extends beyond the border.
- 3 It's that the control projects from our physical border
- 4 as Michael Fisher, the head of Border Patrol said,
- 5 outward. It's not the first or last line of defense.
- 6 The -- the government of Mexico has not addressed his
- 7 statement, but as a fact, along the entirety of the
- 8 southwest border, the Border Patrol stays on the border
- 9 and projects authority outward.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: May I ask about an anomaly
- 11 created by your rule? I take it everybody agrees that
- 12 if there were a Texas State trooper who was involved in
- 13 the exact same conduct, that trooper, you -- you would
- 14 not be able to sue that trooper.
- So why is it that Bivens, which is usually
- 16 thought of as a more limited remedy than 1983, I mean,
- 17 why should you have this situation where you can sue the
- 18 Federal agent, but not the State agent?
- 19 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Kagan, in all
- 20 respects, except where the victim lie, this is a typical
- 21 Bivens case. You have a U.S. law enforcement officer
- 22 exercising unreasonable force, and Sergio Hernandez is
- 23 in the group of victims that are injured as a result of
- 24 excessive force.
- The issue is, is where he fell and where he

- 1 shot, does it take it out of his right to a Bivens?
- 2 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, my -- I -- I've
- 3 waited while the rule was being discussed because that's
- 4 important; but as Justice Kagan's question indicates,
- 5 whether or not there can and should be a Bivens action
- 6 is critical to your case.
- 7 Since 1988, this Court has not recognized a
- 8 single Bivens action. We look for special
- 9 considerations. You've indicated that there's a problem
- 10 all along the border. Why doesn't that counsel us that
- 11 this is one of the most sensitive areas of foreign
- 12 affairs where the political branches should discuss with
- 13 Mexico what the solution ought to be? It seems to me
- 14 that this is an extraordinary case for us to say there's
- a Bivens action in light of what we've done since 1988
- 16 where we haven't created a single one.
- 17 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Kennedy, there is no
- 18 alternative remedy for the family. There has been 283
- 19 shootings, and when those shootings with the border --
- 20 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But that -- that means
- 21 it's a critical area of foreign affairs.
- 22 MR. HILLIARD: We're not attacking the
- 23 policy of the United States government in regards to
- 24 Mexico. In fact, the policy of the United States is a
- 25 Border Patrol agent should not use deadly force without

- 1 imminent peril. We're asking that when this --
- 2 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, the policy of the
- 3 United States, I suppose we can ask them if they're not
- 4 going to give any compensation from a special bill for
- 5 Congress or it might be picked up by an executor
- 6 agreement, the policy of the United States is that this
- 7 injury, a serious injury, goes unaddressed. And if we
- 8 assume that the officer was completely at fault and that
- 9 there's really no defense, we -- we don't know what the
- 10 facts are, but if we assume the facts most favorably --
- 11 favorably to you, there should be some relief.
- But isn't this an urgent matter of
- 13 separation of powers for us to respect the duty that --
- 14 that the -- the principle rule that the executive and
- 15 the legislative have with respect -- respect to foreign
- 16 affairs?
- 17 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Kennedy, I would say
- 18 it is an urgent matter of separation of powers, but it
- 19 would be the opposite.
- 20 The -- the fact pattern, if the Court may
- 21 recall, is Officer Mason had actually grabbed one of
- 22 Sergio's friends and had him by the scruff of the collar
- 23 next to him in the United States. Had he shot that boy,
- 24 there would be a Bivens claim.
- 25 If a Mexican national is shot just inside

- 1 the United States, and the only thing the government can
- 2 say is it implicates one policy in national security, in
- 3 that situation, then you've taken away Bivens claims for
- 4 the largest police force in this country in the area
- 5 that they operate. The -- the location of the boy in
- 6 regards to being shot from the United States should not
- 7 counsel hesitation. If --
- 8 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So, Mr. Hilliard, you want
- 9 me to put down in my notes the location of the boy is
- 10 irrelevant to this case. That's what -- that's what
- 11 we're going to put in our opinion?
- MR. HILLIARD: You start with -- you start
- in your opinion that the -- that if all of the conduct
- 14 happens inside the United States and -- and there's a
- 15 close proximity cross-border shooting, then the Fourth
- 16 Amendment -- Fourth Amendment constraints on deadly
- 17 force apply.
- 18 To -- to hold otherwise, Justice Kennedy,
- 19 is -- is to prevent Bivens in the area of the border,
- 20 whether it's south or north of the line, because if
- 21 it -- if national security and foreign relations is
- 22 affected 30 feet across the line and the -- and an
- 23 officer stands in the same place and shoots Sergio's
- 24 friend right next to him, then you have one kind -- one
- 25 Bivens case and one non-Bivens case.

- 1 JUSTICE BREYER: When I write the reason for
- 2 that, I write the opinion just as you said it, and it
- 3 says, but if it's only 30 feet away, the victim, then
- 4 the Bivens action in the Fourth Amendment apply. But if
- 5 it's 30 miles away or 300 miles, they don't. Okay?
- 6 That's what you want me to write.
- Now, the next sentence has to have the
- 8 reason why I drew that distinction, and that's what I
- 9 think people have been looking for. And so just please,
- 10 if -- if there's anything else you have to say, I think
- 11 you don't have anything else to say, but if you do, I
- 12 would say this is a good time to say it.
- MR. HILLIARD: My point is the -- the close
- 14 proximity takes it away from your analogy, Justice
- 15 Breyer.
- 16 My -- my point is that if all the conduct --
- 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: That isn't a reason you
- 18 normally can give in the opinion. I -- I had a few
- 19 problems with applying it across the board. I mean,
- 20 maybe I could, but is that what I'm supposed to say?
- 21 Because it took away from the problems that Justice
- 22 Breyer had.
- No, of course, you can't say that. So --
- 24 so -- so what -- what is it I can say?
- MR. HILLIARD: If I understand your

- 1 question -- question, Justice Breyer, the reason that
- 2 Bivens should be allowed if all of the conduct happens
- 3 in the United States, is -- is because the -- the
- 4 anomalous --
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, all the conduct
- 6 happens in the United States with the drones.
- 7 MR. HILLIARD: Right. But it would be
- 8 anomalous to say -- anomalous to say that if the Border
- 9 Patrol agent shoots north, west, and east --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Same with the drones.
- 11 MR. HILLIARD: There's a Bivens claim --
- if -- it's -- if -- with all due respect, it's not the
- 13 same with the drones because there is no proximity and
- 14 there's no cross-border shooting. There's a drone that
- 15 goes somewhere else to do something else.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. What about a
- 17 different approach. And I just want your reaction
- 18 because you suggested at the end of your brief, if you
- 19 have anything to add, do it. And yes, all the action
- 20 took place in the United States, but it took place at
- 21 the border. Not beyond the border. At the border.
- The border is the river. We have a treaty
- 23 that says the river. We also have a treaty that says
- 24 there will be a line down the middle of the culvert, but
- 25 the culvert will be maintained by Mexico and the United

- 1 States jointly. And there are many documents, including
- 2 the Treaty of Hidalgo -- you know, that famous treaty
- 3 which I'm drawing a blank on, but --
- 4 MR. HILLIARD: Hidalgo?
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Hidalgo, yes. Right. It's
- 6 referring to the river as the border.
- 7 So it has not taken place in a foreign
- 8 country. It's taking place on territory that
- 9 jurisdictionally, of course, is Mexico's, but which is a
- 10 special kind of -- you -- you started talking about the
- 11 curtilage. Is there any other word? "Curtilage"
- 12 suggests a house. Then you started talking about cannon
- 13 shots going off somewhere. So you did research into
- 14 this.
- Now, if I want to say, this is a special
- 16 kind of physical place, what words do I use?
- 17 MR. HILLIARD: I -- I think, Justice Breyer,
- 18 I -- and I -- if I get -- get your question in, in the
- 19 middle of the river, according to the Treaty of Hidalgo
- 20 is the -- the -- the deepest trench of the middle of the
- 21 river. And there's no river here anymore. It's simply
- 22 a flat culvert, which is part of the --
- 23 JUSTICE BREYER: We are responsible for
- 24 maintaining it, not by ourselves, but with Mexico and
- 25 the reason we are maintaining it is because at one time

- 1 the whole river and now the line down the center are the
- 2 boundary, and we don't want the river to jump its banks
- 3 and create new boundaries. So this is a boundary case.
- 4 Now -- now, you obviously explored that and
- 5 then I think you gave up on it. And so I would like you
- 6 to tell me what you want me to hear about it.
- 7 MR. HILLIARD: So the curtilage cases were
- 8 used in order to show that there is a -- a substantive
- 9 reasonableness evaluation in -- in regards to the close
- 10 proximity requirement of our rule.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Are you -- are you
- 12 relying at all -- I -- I'm not sure you did in your
- 13 brief -- but there in -- in tort law, generally, when
- 14 there's an act outside that causes injury inside, the
- 15 regulating rule can come from the place where the
- 16 conduct occurred. So that that act outside, injury
- inside, is a familiar category in tort law.
- 18 As I understand it, the -- the regulating
- 19 rule can come from either place, the place where the act
- 20 occurs or the place where it's effect.
- 21 MR. HILLIARD: That's right,
- 22 Justice Ginsburg. And as a practical matter, as the --
- 23 the Mexican juris brief points out, there is no
- 24 practical way for the courts of Mexico to review this
- 25 conduct.

- 1 So I appreciate, if I can get back to
- 2 Justice Breyer's concern and inquiry, and that is, if
- 3 all of the conduct happens in the United States and as a
- 4 fact there is some exercise of control right at the
- 5 border, then if the injury occurs in close proximity to
- 6 that border, then that's a rule that would both be
- 7 workable and would take care not only of the issue with
- 8 Sergio Hernandez, but would also take care of the issue
- 9 of the entirety of the southwest border of the United
- 10 States where the conduct continues to occur even today.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: Could I ask you to go back
- 12 to Justice Kagan's question? If the -- if the officer
- 13 here was a State or a local officer, would you be able
- 14 to file a claim for damages in the United States in a
- 15 Federal court?
- 16 MR. HILLIARD: The issue in that regard is
- if -- what does "jurisdiction" mean under 1983? And if
- 18 jurisdiction -- if you're not a citizen and you're not
- 19 in the jurisdiction, are you precluded under 1983?
- 20 The -- the point I was trying to make for
- 21 Justice Breyer is there is some issue of control in the
- 22 culvert, and it's -- it's never been decided what
- 23 jurisdiction is in regards to --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Oh, well, put that aside.
- 25 Let's assume this is in Mexico. Plainly in Mexico.

- 1 Would -- would you have a claim against a State or a
- 2 local officer? And if not, isn't it anomalous for us to
- 3 say that you have a claim under Bivens?
- 4 MR. HILLIARD: You would not have a claim
- 5 over the State officer, but if you don't -- but a Bivens
- 6 claim -- a constitutional Bivens claim could apply to
- 7 the State officer. The issue --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry. Why not? If
- 9 it's a State officer who lives in -- I guess this is
- 10 Texas, right? Why couldn't the family sue that State
- 11 officer under the theory that Justice Ginsburg raised,
- 12 which is if all the acts happened in the United States,
- 13 but were projected injuries into another State, most
- 14 States -- I think including Texas, but I could be
- 15 wrong -- we have counsel for -- for Officer Mesa to tell
- 16 us -- the family could sue the State officer in Texas.
- 17 He did the acts in Texas. He lives in Texas.
- MR. HILLIARD: That's right.
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Personal general
- 20 jurisdiction.
- 21 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Ginsburg -- I mean,
- 22 excuse me -- Justice Sotomayor. I do not --
- 23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's the first time
- 24 ever.
- 25 (Laughter.)

1 MR. HILLIARD: I apologize. 2 Justice Sotomayor, I agree with you, but the 3 issue under 1983 is -- is citizenship and jurisdiction of -- of where it occurred. If I take Justice Alito's 4 hypothetical and put the -- put the victim all the way 5 into Mexico, then -- then there would be a statutory 6 7 exclusion to -- based on jurisdiction. If he came into 8 the United States or was within the -- the control area, 9 that might be jurisdiction, then there would be a 1983 10 claim. 11 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How often do State 12 officers act under cover of State law and outside --13 with an impact outside the United States? 14 MR. HILLIARD: Justice Ginsburg, I've never heard of that. Generally, the interaction at the border 15 16 is the Border Patrol with Mexican nationals on the south 17 and -- south and north side of our border. It's generally the Border Patrol. 18 19 If there are no other questions, I'd like to 20 reserve the rest of my time. 21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel. 22 Mr. Ortega. 23 ORAL ARGUMENT OF RANDOLPH J. ORTEGA

ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT MESA

MR. ORTEGA: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it

24

25

- 1 please the Court:
- The Fourth Amendment does not apply in a
- 3 cross-border shooting of a Mexican civilian on Mexico
- 4 soil by a United States Federal agent.
- 5 The Petitioners' claim for Fourth Amendment
- 6 protection was answered in Verdugo. I don't think this
- 7 Court gets to the question of the functionality
- 8 attest --
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: In Verdugo, the U.S.
- 10 officers were acting in collaboration with -- with the
- 11 approval and cooperation of Mexican officers. That's
- 12 quite a different case, isn't it?
- MR. ORTEGA: It is. However, in Verdugo,
- 14 the person claiming protection was in the United States.
- 15 The act occurred in Mexico.
- 16 Here we have Mr. Hernandez who was seized in
- 17 Mexico. He was never in the United States. The border
- 18 is very real and very finite. It's not elastic.
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But I thought in Verdugo
- 20 the -- the question was a search that occurred wholly
- 21 inside Mexico with the cooperation of the Mexican
- 22 authorities.
- MR. ORTEGA: And this Court denied to extend
- 24 that protection. I believe those facts provide or
- 25 provided even a greater rationale for this Court to

- 1 extend those protections, given the fact that the
- 2 United States planned the acts in the United States with
- 3 Mr. Verdugo in the United States and the search
- 4 occurring in Mexico.
- 5 Here, the seizure occurs in Mexico.
- 6 Mr. Hernandez is in Mexico. He is outside the sovereign
- 7 territory of the United States. There is no de facto
- 8 jurisdiction of the culvert in this area. It's -- it's
- 9 very -- it's dissimilar from Boumediene.
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: If Boumediene had control,
- 11 who controlled the base? And here we know that this
- 12 culvert, at least as far as paving it, keeping it up,
- 13 spending many millions of dollars, seeing that trade, if
- 14 it ever is filled with water, goes across and ships are
- 15 free, et cetera, is a joint effort of Mexico and the
- 16 United States. So this is not just like a fence. It is
- 17 an area of two fences, and between those two areas is
- 18 joint exercise of border maintenance authority.
- 19 So I quess it's like nothing I've seen
- 20 before. But if it's like nothing I've seen before,
- 21 what's the problem with taking Justice Ginsburg's
- 22 approach and applying it to that kind of area where, I
- 23 might add, 500,000 people walk across it every day and
- 24 it's a fair inference that -- perhaps that American
- 25 citizens, adolescents, play in the culvert, too.

- 1 MR. ORTEGA: Your Honor, the culvert, if I
- 2 may, is not an area where anybody plays. I have been
- 3 there. It's not an area --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: We'd have to take as a fact
- 5 here that the children were playing. A jury could find
- 6 to the contrary, but we have to take that as a fact.
- 7 MR. ORTEGA: The border in that area is
- 8 still finite, Your Honor. A -- a Border Patrol agent
- 9 cannot step into the sovereign Republic of Mexico. If
- 10 he were to do that, he would be subjected to a five-year
- 11 minimum mandatory penalty for stepping into Mexico with
- 12 his weapon.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: He was riding a bike in
- 14 the culvert there, correct? The wall is on one side,
- 15 he's on the Mexico side of the wall in the culvert
- 16 riding his bicycle. That's American territory?
- 17 MR. ORTEGA: Yes, Your Honor.
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And so the dividing line
- 19 is just the overpass pillar?
- 20 MR. ORTEGA: The dividing line --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Was the boy at that
- 22 pillar? The boy was at the pillar or behind it?
- 23 MR. ORTEGA: The boy was at the pillar on
- 24 the Mexican side --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: On the Mexican side.

- 1 MR. ORTEGA: -- in Mexican territory.
- 2 Yes, your Honor.
- 3 JUSTICE KAGAN: The dividing line isn't even
- 4 marked on the ground; isn't that right? You can't tell
- 5 on the ground where Mexico ends and the United States
- 6 begins.
- 7 I think the point that Justice Breyer is
- 8 making is this does seem like a very -- you know, it's a
- 9 sui generous kind of case. It's this liminal area. I
- 10 don't want to -- I don't know whether to call it a
- 11 no-man's land, but it's this liminal area, which is kind
- of neither one thing nor another thing. So maybe it's
- 13 that both countries maintain it, maybe it's that -- it's
- 14 sort of neither country. Whatever it is, it's something
- 15 very different from most areas where we know exactly
- 16 whose jurisdiction operates and how.
- 17 MR. ORTEGA: It is very different, but it's
- 18 the center of the culvert that's the dividing line.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: We know from Boumediene
- 20 that the word "sovereign," and even the legal concept of
- 21 sovereign, which in Boumediene belonged to Cuba, is not
- 22 necessarily the line that distinguishes where the Fourth
- 23 Amendment does or does not apply.
- MR. ORTEGA: But what was distinguishing in
- 25 that case, Your Honor, is that we exercise control over

- 1 Guantanamo --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yes. Yes. Correct.
- 3 Correct.
- 4 MR. ORTEGA: -- at least --
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Absolutely right. And
- 6 here, the control is significantly diminished compared
- 7 with the base at Guantanamo. Absolutely correct. But
- 8 the point is -- there are other factors which we've
- 9 heard for half an hour at least, you know, here that,
- 10 no, suggests maybe the Fourth Amendment should apply.
- 11 MR. ORTEGA: But the United States does not
- 12 exercise any de facto jurisdiction beyond the middle
- 13 line --
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: We do two things. We do at
- 15 least have a commission that draws the boundary and with
- 16 Mexico also repairs the culvert. And that's expensive.
- 17 So we do two things with Mexico there. And
- 18 the fences are on either side of the culvert. And it is
- 19 a border. And all -- and those things, taken together,
- 20 either are or are not enough to apply the Fourth
- 21 Amendment. That's why I say add Justice Ginsburg's
- 22 point and add the fact that Mexico would like the Fourth
- 23 Amendment applied.
- MR. ORTEGA: They would like it applied in
- 25 this case, but they have never ceded any of their

- 1 jurisdiction beyond the middle of the culvert.
- 2 I understand that the maintenance of the
- 3 culvert is a joint maintenance; however, the laws of the
- 4 United States do not apply beyond the middle of the
- 5 culvert.
- 6 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But the law of the United
- 7 States, the law is directed to an actor. The actor is
- 8 the Border Patrol member. And the instruction from the
- 9 United States is very clear: Do not shoot to kill an
- 10 unarmed, nondangerous person who is no threat to your
- 11 safety. Do not shoot to kill. That's U.S. law. And
- 12 that's U.S. law that governs the conduct of the Border
- 13 Patrol police.
- 14 So I don't understand all this about Mexico.
- 15 It's the United States law operating on the United
- 16 States official who's acting inside the United States.
- 17 This case has, as far as the conduct is concerned,
- 18 United States written all over it. There's nothing
- 19 about Mexico. The Border Patrol quard doesn't take his
- 20 orders from Mexico.
- 21 MR. ORTEGA: And then I think it would be up
- 22 to the United States to prosecute Mr. Mesa criminally if
- 23 they were to choose -- choose to do so, which would
- 24 provide a remedy to the Petitioners via a restitution --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why?

1 MR. ORTEGA: -- order. 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: They wouldn't get any 3 damages for the death of their 15-year-old son for their emotional suffering. 4 5 But I think I have, following up on what 6 Justice Ginsburg is saying, a more fundamental question, 7 which is I don't think you or the U.S. government is suggesting that anyone is condoning people standing at 8 9 the border and taking potshots at passing Mexicans. 10 MR. ORTEGA: Absolutely not. 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. And, yes, 12 there's a remedy -- criminal remedy for the government 13 to vindicate its position, but why should there be -not be a civil remedy to ensure that border police are 14 complying with the Constitution? The entire -- either 15 16 under the Fourth or Fifth Amendment? Wouldn't shooting 17 potshots at Mexican citizens be shocking to the 18 conscience? 19 MR. ORTEGA: It is shocking. But -- but 20 where would the line apply? The ad hoc totality of the circumstance test as presented by the Petitioners, would 21 it be as far as the bullet can travel? Would it --22 23 JUSTICE BREYER: No --24 MR. ORTEGA: -- it --

JUSTICE BREYER: It would be -- it would be

25

- 1 -- and that's why we use their analogy. It would apply
- 2 when the action that violates the amendment takes place
- 3 in the United States and where the victim is at the
- 4 border. And "at the border" is defined as including
- 5 those areas that are jointly administered as part of a
- 6 border set forth in the treaty, where administration
- 7 means spending significant amounts of money on the
- 8 upkeep of those border positions; where, if you want
- 9 some additional limitation, where both American children
- 10 and Mexican children might play.
- And why do we do that? Because without such
- 12 a rule, the people of the United States who might play
- 13 there, too, are not secure in -- from unreasonable
- 14 seizures such as this one.
- I mean, I made that up.
- 16 (Laughter.)
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: But he has quite persuasive
- 18 analogies in the law with curtilages, cannon shots,
- 19 joint administration, and the purposes of the Fourth
- 20 Amendment, which is to protect the people, we can say
- 21 maybe American and maybe beyond, from unreasonable
- 22 searches. Okay? There is a set of arguments.
- 23 Limitation, absolute limitation. No worry about drones.
- 24 Flows directly from Boumediene and carries out the
- 25 purposes of the Fourth Amendment.

- 1 Now, that's a whole long argument. What do
- 2 you want to say?
- 3 MR. ORTEGA: Well, Your Honor, I believe
- 4 that if -- even if the approach, if taken as framed by
- 5 Your Honor were to be applied, it would still plunge the
- 6 lower courts into a sea of uncertainty as to where that
- 7 line actually ends. I understand that your question is
- 8 focused on the United States' care and upkeep of the
- 9 area and that it would end in that area. But I think
- 10 the ramifications and the tentacles of such an ad hoc
- 11 approach --
- 12 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, Mr. Ortega, you say
- 13 "ad hoc," but --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Kennedy.
- 15 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Justice Ginsburg outlined
- 16 all of the U.S. factors here. Was the U.S. officer in
- 17 the United States subject to U.S. regulation? If we
- 18 were to pull the officer here under Bivens, what would
- 19 be the practical obstacles that would prevent orderly
- 20 administration of that rule? It's a U.S. officer
- 21 subject to U.S. supervision. That's it.
- MR. ORTEGA: The largest, or the most
- 23 profound practical obstacle, I -- I believe, would be
- 24 the application of the rule itself and not applying --
- or not giving lower courts a clear certainty, a clear

- 1 defined rule on which to apply --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, Mr. Ortega, the rule
- 3 is very defined. If the shot comes from U.S. territory
- 4 and it hits somebody in the culvert, then there's a --
- 5 there's a -- there's an action. That's a very defined
- 6 rule. There's nothing unclear about that. You can
- 7 argue is that a good rule? Is that a bad rule? Is
- 8 there a good reason behind that rule? But it's a very
- 9 clear rule.
- 10 MR. ORTEGA: But in areas of the United
- 11 States that -- where there is a clearly defined border,
- 12 as we have here, the Fourth Amendment stops unless the
- 13 person seized -- in this case Hernandez -- had some
- 14 voluntary contact with the United States.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Could I ask you
- 16 briefly, because we haven't talked about it yet, a
- 17 question on the qualified immunity point.
- 18 It seems very odd to me that qualified
- 19 immunity would turn on a jurisdictional issue. Most of
- 20 our cases, you're interested in the conduct of the --
- 21 the officer and whether that conduct was reasonable and
- 22 lacked a precedence, not an issue about whether or not
- 23 he can be sued by the particular plaintiff. Are you
- 24 aware of any of our cases where qualified immunity
- 25 turned on -- in a -- a legal jurisdictional issue?

- In other words, it's odd to say the
- 2 officer's conduct is reasonable so long as it turns out
- 3 the victim, you know, is -- is Mexican, but it's
- 4 unreasonable if the exact same conduct and it turns out
- 5 the victim is American. I'm not aware of any qualified
- 6 immunity case like that.
- 7 MR. ORTEGA: I don't know of any case that
- 8 fits that fact pattern, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Would you recognize
- 10 that -- let's say it was the -- the boy that the Border
- 11 Patrol grabbed and then shot him, so the -- the -- so
- 12 the death would have occurred in the United States,
- 13 Bivens claim?
- 14 MR. ORTEGA: Well, absolutely. Then he
- 15 would be in the territory of the United States, and all
- 16 constitutional protections would apply.
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So does it make a whole
- 18 lot of sense to say if the officer shoots somebody on
- 19 the U.S. side of the border, good Bivens claim? If the
- 20 officer standing in the same place shoots somebody who's
- just across the border, no claim? That doesn't make a
- 22 whole lot of sense, does it, to distinguish those two
- 23 victims?
- 24 MR. ORTEGA: I think it's very
- 25 distinguishable because of the very real border. Wars

- 1 have been fought to establish borders. The border is
- 2 very real.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Counsel.
- 4 Mr. Kneedler.
- 5 ORAL ARGUMENT OF EDWIN S. KNEEDLER
- ON BEHALF OF THE FEDERAL RESPONDENTS
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
- 8 please the Court:
- 9 The antecedent question in this case is
- 10 whether this Court should create a cause of action for
- 11 damages under Bivens. As Justice Kennedy pointed out,
- 12 for many years, this Court has declined to extend Bivens
- 13 to new contexts because -- out of recognition that the
- 14 creation of causes of action is for Congress.
- 15 JUSTICE KAGAN: You're quite right,
- 16 Mr. Kneedler, but there is a difference between this
- 17 case and I think -- I think all -- maybe all but one --
- 18 of these other cases, which is in all of these others,
- 19 the Court has been able to point to some alternative
- 20 remedy. It might not have been the complete relief that
- 21 a plaintiff in a case wanted, but it was something. And
- 22 there was an ability to say, Congress has given you some
- 23 way to address the harm that you've suffered.
- And here, there really is nothing. I mean,
- 25 there's the idea that you might prosecute this person

- 1 criminally, but what does the family get from that? And
- 2 anyway, you almost never do.
- 3 So -- so here, there's just no remedy. And
- 4 isn't that really quite different from all these other
- 5 Bivens cases that you referred to?
- 6 MR. KNEEDLER: First of all, the Court has
- 7 made clear in Stanley and Wilkie that the presence or
- 8 absence of a remedy is not the only factor, that there
- 9 is the additional --
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, we said that, but, you
- 11 know, Stanley might be the only case on your side. And
- 12 Stanley is a military case where there is like the
- 13 ultimate special factor. So for the most part, every
- 14 time we've said no Bivens, we've said because there's an
- 15 alternative remedy. And here we can't say that.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, when you say Stanley
- 17 and Chappell v. Wallace, ultimate special factors
- 18 because of the political branches' control over the
- 19 military. That is directly applicable here. Here, you
- 20 have a -- a cross-border incident which necessarily
- 21 gives rise to foreign relations problems, which are
- 22 committed to the political branches.
- 23 The -- the -- and when Congress has chosen
- 24 to address remedies as a statutory matter under the --
- 25 under the Federal Tort Claims Act, it has created an

- 1 exception for -- for injuries occurring in foreign
- 2 countries.
- And in response to Justice Ginsburg's
- 4 question, as a matter of Federal law, under the FTCA,
- 5 under this Court's Sosa decision, if the injury occurs
- 6 outside the United States, it is excluded from liability
- 7 even if the conduct occurred in -- in the United States.
- 8 JUSTICE GINSBURG: That's the U.S. -- U.S.
- 9 liability, not the officer liability.
- 10 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, but I -- but I think if
- 11 the Court is considering whether to fashion a judicially
- 12 created remedy, looking to what Congress has done where
- 13 it has acted -- and 1983 is another very prime
- 14 example -- and where Congress has chosen to create
- 15 monetary compensation for persons injured abroad by the
- 16 United States, it has always done it in an
- 17 administrative --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, why -- why -- why do
- 19 you use words like "create," "extend," et cetera,
- 20 "fashion," if, in fact, a Federal policeman, a Federal
- 21 agent violates the Fourth Amendment and seizes someone
- 22 unreasonably in Alaska, does the victim have a Bivens
- 23 remedy?
- MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, but --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Of course. Now, if he does

- 1 it in Puerto Rico, does the victim have a Bivens remedy?
- 2 I'll tell you by making this up, but there never has
- 3 been a Bivens action in Puerto Rico. It's the first
- 4 one.
- 5 Does he have a Bivens action?
- 6 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, but there's --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yes. Okay.
- 8 MR. KNEEDLER: But there's something --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Now, let's see where I've
- 10 gotten -- I'm trying to go somewhere with the question.
- 11 MR. KNEEDLER: But -- but there's something
- 12 fundamentally different about creating a Bivens remedy
- 13 for --
- 14 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, why creating? I
- 15 would have thought if you want to say in there --
- MR. KNEEDLER: Or extend --
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: Wait. Extending. You see,
- 18 there those words assume the answer to the question.
- 19 I can absolutely see you're saying that if
- 20 this Court fashions a civil remedy for a violation of
- 21 the Third Amendment or the Second Amendment, you would
- 22 be extending Bivens, but I thought Bivens made
- 23 absolutely clear that where a Federal agent hurts
- 24 someone by violating the Fourth Amendment, there is a
- 25 Bivens action. Now we have an exception. And the

- 1 exception is the military.
- 2 So I think you can look at this either way.
- 3 But I think the -- the more -- I would tend to look at
- 4 it as saying, of course there is a Bivens remedy if
- 5 there is a Fourth Amendment violation unless you're in
- 6 the military, which no one says this is true.
- 7 So that's how I've been thinking about the
- 8 Bivens action. I've been thinking the answer to that
- 9 question turns on the answer to the Fourth Amendment
- 10 question.
- Now you can tell me why it's better to use
- 12 the words you've been using.
- MR. KNEEDLER: No. The -- the Court -- just
- 14 because the Court has recognized a Bivens action for
- 15 violation of a particular constitutional provision in
- 16 one context or with respect to one set of defendants, it
- 17 doesn't mean that it should extend it. And that's the
- 18 word the Court has used.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: Oh, yes. In, like, Puerto
- 20 Rico?
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, no, in the -- under the
- 22 Eighth Amendment, under -- in Carlson v. Green, the
- 23 Court recognized a Bivens remedy against Federal
- 24 employees that --
- 25 JUSTICE BREYER: That's Eighth versus

- 1 Fourth.
- 2 MR. KNEEDLER: I --
- JUSTICE BREYER: I'm saying that's Fourth in
- 4 Puerto Rico.
- 5 MR. KNEEDLER: No, I'm -- I'm -- what -- my
- 6 point about the Eighth Amendment is that the Court
- 7 declined to recognize a Bivens remedy for Eighth
- 8 Amendment violations --
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Kneedler, you --
- 10 Mr Kneedler: -- for private confirmations.
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- you get the point. The
- 12 point of it is that it's the heartland of Bivens for a
- 13 law enforcement officer to use deadly force in violation
- 14 of the Fourth Amendment. That's the heartland of
- 15 Bivens. We don't have to make up anything new. We
- 16 don't have to extend it. We don't have to create
- 17 anything. That's just Bivens.
- MR. KNEEDLER: It is the heartland of
- 19 Bivens' special factors analysis for the Court to create
- 20 a damage remedy in a situation fraught with foreign
- 21 relations issues. And this ties directly into your
- 22 point about --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, could you say -- let's
- 24 talk about that. How is this fraught with foreign
- 25 relations issues? Because Mexico would surely prefer

- 1 that -- that its citizen have a Bivens remedy.
- 2 So you seem to be using foreign relations as
- 3 if sort of this touches some other country. But in the
- 4 usual case, I think we've asked what's the interference?
- 5 What's the disruption? So tell me what the interference
- 6 or the disruption is.
- 7 MR. KNEEDLER: Any -- any --
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: The problem we would
- 9 create --
- 10 MR. KNEEDLER: Any time --
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- not just the fact that it
- 12 has something to do with another country.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Any time -- any time the
- 14 officers of one country injure someone in another
- 15 country, that creates the potential for a foreign
- 16 relations incident and it's illustrated here by a number
- 17 of factors.
- 18 Mexico requested the extradition of -- of
- 19 Mesa in this case, and the United States refused because
- 20 it had done its own investigation of this incident and
- 21 concluded that the -- that prosecution should not be
- 22 brought --
- 23 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm sure Mexico cared a lot
- 24 about this. The question I'm asking is how does the
- 25 presence of the Bivens remedy disrupt or interfere with

- 1 the United States' ability to carry out its foreign
- 2 policy?
- 3 MR. KNEEDLER: And another illustration, and
- 4 I think -- I think it's tied to that is one of the
- 5 reasons is that -- why there is not a remedy in Mexico
- 6 is because Mexico would recognize the official immunity
- 7 of Officer Mesa in this circumstance according to the
- 8 amicus briefs. I have no reason to disagree with that.
- 9 That is a recognition by Mexico itself that the conduct
- 10 of a -- of a U.S. officer in these circumstances
- involves foreign sovereign problems.
- 12 And the -- another -- another issue here is
- 13 that the plaintiff here is -- plaintiffs here are
- 14 seeking to insert the courts into the resolution of a
- 15 dispute about which the United States and Mexico have
- 16 a -- a different view of the facts. And -- and --
- 17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But suppose -- suppose
- 18 the -- the victim, the same -- the same location across
- 19 the border, but were a U.S. citizen, as Justice Breyer
- 20 mentioned, many -- and many transients will go -- go
- 21 across from Juarez to El Paso. Suppose it had been a
- 22 U.S. citizen that was the victim of the shooting?
- 23 MR. KNEEDLER: We -- we think there would
- 24 not be a Bivens remedy there either because of the
- 25 extraterritorial applications.

- 1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And then if it were, if
- 2 it were the young man who was grabbed by the Border
- 3 Patrol guard and shot on the U.S. side, Bivens?
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes, there would be. But --
- 5 but in -- in terms of the questions about line drawing
- 6 that were raised before, the two nations have drawn a
- 7 line here, and this is a circumstance where this -- the
- 8 conduct here is clearly extraterritorial. The fact that
- 9 there may be joint maintenance of the culvert is a very
- 10 minor factor considering that the only law that
- 11 governs --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: If it -- but that's the
- 13 point. If, in fact, all that mattered were the
- 14 existence of a well-recognized boundary line, this case
- 15 is over. You win.
- 16 But that well-recognized boundary line was
- 17 present in Boumediene, and certainly Boumediene
- 18 suggests, while it is a factor, it is not the only
- 19 factor that determines the reach of the Fourth
- 20 Amendment. So there -- there we are. We're in court,
- 21 because it is not the only factor.
- 22 And now you add in all the stuff about the
- 23 culvert and who's playing there and who might be playing
- there, and the 500,000 people who cross every day, and
- 25 the joint maintenance of the culvert, and the fact that

- 1 all this conduct happened in the United States, that's
- 2 what your opponent brother over there is trying to do.
- 3 MR. KNEEDLER: Boumediene had to do with
- 4 the -- the substantive application of the Fourth
- 5 Amendment, which I want to get to in just a minute.
- But the antecedent question is whether this
- 7 Court should answer those questions in a private damage
- 8 remedy when it hasn't recognized a new context for one
- 9 in 35 years.
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, what would the
- 11 government --
- MR. KNEEDLER: If they're thinking --
- 13 think --
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: What would the government of
- 15 Mexico say if we wrote an opinion that says because the
- 16 United States spent a lot of money to pave this culvert,
- 17 we think that the United States' authority with respect
- 18 to the culvert is basically the same as the authority
- 19 that we have in Guantanamo.
- 20 MR. KNEEDLER: I think the Mexican
- 21 government would be very offended by it.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm sure it wouldn't have to
- 23 be written that way.
- 24 (Laughter.)
- MR. KNEEDLER: This -- this case -- this --

- 1 no, but this -- this -- this case is -- this case is
- 2 fundamentally different than Boumediene.
- 3 In Boumediene, the Court said that the
- 4 United States is not answerable to anyone else. Here
- 5 the United States is answerable to Mexico. In
- 6 Boumediene, the Court said only --
- 7 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How? How?
- 8 MR. KNEEDLER: Pardon?
- 9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: You did say in your brief
- 10 the United States is answerable to Mexico for any
- 11 cross-border use of force. How is the United States
- 12 answerable to Mexico?
- 13 MR. KNEEDLER: Mexico -- Mexico holds us
- 14 accountable for doing something about it. We
- 15 investigated criminally and -- and concluded that a
- 16 criminal prosecution should not be brought, but Mexico
- 17 regards it as the United States' responsibility to
- 18 control this conduct.
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The responsibility to
- 20 Mexico is prosecution in the United States? That's --
- 21 MR. KNEEDLER: To -- to control -- to
- 22 control the conduct, yes.
- 23 And -- and let me just reemphasize here.
- 24 Where Congress has -- has decided the damage remedies
- 25 are important, it has never provided for judicial

- 1 remedies. It has provided for administrative remedies
- 2 and it has not done it in this context.
- 3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So you wanted to talk
- 4 about the Fourth Amendment?
- 5 MR. KNEEDLER: Yes. This Court's decision
- 6 in Verdugo, as we read in this, established a
- 7 categorical rule that the Fourth Amendment does not
- 8 apply to some mass of persons outside the United States.
- 9 Nothing in Boumediene changes that.
- 10 Boumediene, looking at the insular cases and
- 11 whatnot, was talking about territory over which the
- 12 United States exercised jurisdiction, independent of the
- 13 incident that was at issue there.
- 14 Here the United States --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Can we --
- MR. KNEEDLER: Does not --
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- go back to my
- 18 hypothetical. Border policemen are shooting
- 19 indiscriminately from within the United States across
- 20 the border. This is the allegation in this complaint.
- 21 And I understand you say the government has investigated
- 22 and sees the facts differently.
- 23 Have you seen the -- the film that appeared
- 24 on the YouTube?
- MR. KNEEDLER: I have.

- 1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I did, and I can't
- 2 square the police officer's account of this incident
- 3 with that film.
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: There were other videos.
- 5 The -- the -- the press release -- nothing in the record
- 6 and nothing in a -- in a public account --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That's fine.
- 8 MR. KNEEDLER: But there was --
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm just curious.
- 10 MR. KNEEDLER: -- there was other evidence
- 11 and other video -- surveillance videos that were taken
- 12 into account in the investigation. If I could --
- 13 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Let me ask one other
- 14 question.
- 15 Are -- are there examples in the past ten
- 16 years of the Congress of the United States passing
- 17 special laws for -- to compensate victims for instances
- 18 somewhat like this where the United States has either
- 19 accidentally or deliberately transgressed on the rights
- 20 of foreign persons?
- 21 MR. KNEEDLER: I don't know if the -- if
- 22 there have been private bills, but that would be the
- 23 solution. This is -- this is something that should be
- 24 up to Congress.
- 25 And, again, on the application --

- 1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Of course, I guess you
- 2 could say that with reference to Bivens acts generally,
- 3 even in the United States.
- 4 MR. KNEEDLER: Well, and this -- this Court,
- 5 in deciding whether to apply Bivens, has -- has looked
- 6 to the question of whether Congress is the right body to
- 7 decide rather than the courts.
- 8 And here we think it clearly is because of
- 9 the foreign relations implications, not to mention the
- 10 deeply-rooted presumption against extraterritoriality,
- 11 all the more so in -- in with respect to this Court's
- 12 creation --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: As far --
- MR. KNEEDLER: -- of a cause of action.
- 15 JUSTICE GINSBURG: As foreign relations are
- 16 concerned, at least a Justice of this Court has said
- 17 that the behavior of our law enforcement agents abroad
- 18 sends a powerful message about the rule of law to
- 19 individuals everywhere. And you're asking us to make a
- 20 distinction that if the law enforcement agent shoots and
- 21 kills somebody who's on one side of the border, there is
- 22 Bivens liability, you tell me that. If it's just on the
- 23 other side, although the conduct is identical, the
- 24 officer is standing in exactly the same place. I don't
- 25 know what kind of powerful message about the rule of law

- 1 that would send.
- MR. KNEEDLER: Well, Bivens has to do with a
- 3 particular remedy and -- and who should create that
- 4 remedy. The rule of law can be enforced and
- 5 demonstrated in other ways; by discipline, by -- the --
- 6 the Border Patrol --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Yeah, but it doesn't
- 8 happen. We know that.
- 9 MR. KNEEDLER: No. The border -- the Border
- 10 Patrol, since this incident -- and we -- we cite this in
- 11 our brief, has undertaken numerous reforms. It has
- 12 changed its training, it has given more detailed
- instructions on the use of deadly force, it has
- 14 adopted -- and this -- this does go to the rule of law.
- 15 Adopted a transparent system of investigations after --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: If the.
- MR. KNEEDLER: And the --
- 18 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- if the Border Patrol
- 19 agent stood where he stood and took the shot he did, and
- 20 the only difference was that the teenager in the culvert
- 21 was an American citizen, is there a Bivens action?
- MR. KNEEDLER: We think there would not be,
- 23 but that -- that's obviously a different question
- 24 than -- than whether an alien should have a cause of
- 25 action given 1983, and Congress's action in this area,

- 1 which indicates a judicial remedy should not be
- 2 available.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
- 4 And, Mr. Hilliard, you have a minute left.
- 5 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF ROBERT C. HILLIARD
- ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
- 7 MR. HILLIARD: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
- 8 To Justice Ginsburg's hypothetical, both of
- 9 my friends on the other side have now said there's a
- 10 Bivens claim for the boy who shot next to the officer.
- 11 Take that position into this hypothetical.
- 12 The officer shoots the bullet -- shoots the gun. The
- 13 bullet leaves the gun. It's constitutionally -- there's
- 14 constitutional consequences as the bullet travels all
- 15 the way to the border.
- 16 If there's a boy between the bullet -- I
- 17 mean, the gun and Sergio, and that bullet goes through
- 18 that boy in the -- in the U.S., and then the same bullet
- 19 hits Sergio, their position is that there's a Bivens
- 20 claim and there's a constitutional constraint as to the
- 21 first boy who dies, but not the second boy that dies.
- 22 The -- the -- the conduct occurring in the
- 23 United States, a hundred percent of it, if it gives a
- 24 Bivens claim, if it gives a normal, standard Bivens
- 25 claim to the boy who shot somewhere with the -- with the

Τ	bullet and then does not give one to Sergio Hernandez
2	is ends up being anomalous.
3	As to Justice Kennedy's question on the
4	Fourth Amendment, Boumediene decided that it is a it
5	is a functional test. It's a question of judgment, not
6	compulsion, as Justice Harlan said in Reid, and as as
7	Boumediene suggested.
8	Verdugo has nothing to do with the
9	application of the seizure by shooting someone dead to
10	the search inside the property. I think Boumediene
11	Boumediene confirms that the fact pattern of someone
12	being killed is enough in a practical way to provide
13	limited constraints.
14	Thank you very much.
15	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
16	The case is submitted.
17	(Whereupon, at 11:06 a.m., the case in the
18	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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