1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES - - - - - - - - - - - - - x 2 3 BLAINE LAFLER, : 4 Petitioner : : No. 10-209 5 v. 6 ANTHONY COOPER. : 7 - - - - - - - - - - - - x 8 Washington, D.C. 9 Monday, October 31, 2011 10 The above-entitled matter came on for oral 11 12 argument before the Supreme Court of the United States at 10:03 a.m. 13 14 **APPEARANCES:** JOHN J. BURSCH, ESQ., Solicitor General, Lansing, 15 16 Michigan; on behalf of Petitioner. 17 WILLIAM M. JAY, ESO., Assistant to the Solicitor 18 General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; 19 for United States, as amicus curiae, supporting 20 Petitioner. 21 VALERIE R. NEWMAN, ESQ., Assistant Defender, Detroit, 22 Michigan; appointed by this Court, on behalf of 23 Respondent. 24 25

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:03 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	first this morning in Case 10-209, Lafler v. Cooper.
5	Mr. Bursch.
6	ORAL ARGUMENT OF JOHN J. BURSCH
7	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
8	MR. BURSCH: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
9	and may it please the Court:
10	There are three points that I would like to
11	press this morning regarding deficient plea advice.
12	First, this Court has consistently limited the effective
13	assistance right to ensuring the reliability of the
14	proceedings where a defendant is adjudicated guilty and
15	sentenced. Mere outcome is not the Strickland prejudice
16	standard.
17	Second, when asserting an ineffective
18	assistance claim, the defendant
19	JUSTICE KAGAN: Could I can I stop you on
20	the first? You say mere outcome is not enough,
21	reliability of the proceedings. How does that fit with
22	Kimmelman, where we said it, the right to effective
23	assistance, does attach to suppression hearings,
24	obviously where evidence would not make the proceedings
25	more reliable?

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1	MR. BURSCH: Justice Kagan, even in
2	Kimmelman, the Court remanded back to the lower courts
3	to determine whether there was prejudice, and the
4	obvious implication was that if there was no prejudice
5	on the fairness of the adjudicatory proceeding itself,
6	there would be no Sixth Amendment violation.
7	The second point that I wanted to press this
8	morning was that when asserting an ineffective
9	assistance claim, a defendant must show deprivation of a
10	substantive or procedural right, and this Court has
11	already held that a defendant has no right to a plea
12	bargain.
13	Third, every possible remedy for deficient
14	plea advice creates intractable problems
15	demonstrating the right
16	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, isn't there a
17	right to make a critical decision on whether to accept
18	or reject a plea bargain, once offered? There's no
19	right to demand one or to keep it, but isn't there a
20	right to make that kind of critical decision?
21	MR. BURSCH: Justice Sotomayor, the the
22	not guilty plea is an assertion of the defendant's
23	constitutional rights. It's invoking the right to trial
24	that the Sixth Amendment contemplates. And so this
25	situation is really more like Fretwell. It's not a

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1 decision that you have, for example, whether to have a 2 jury or not to have a jury, or whether to have this 3 attorney appointed for your counsel or not, because in 4 each of those cases you have an underlying substantive 5 or procedural constitutional right; and you have no right to a plea. And so this fork in the road is really 6 7 an illusory one, because you have no right to choose the 8 other side of the fork.

9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Suppose this were a death 10 -- a death case, and roughly the same facts, failure --11 failure to communicate. And that leaves me just one 12 other question based on your opening remarks. We can 13 think about adjudication as having a constitutional 14 violation, injury, and remedy. Are you saying that 15 there was a violation in the abstract here but no 16 injury, or was there a violation and an injury but just 17 no remedy?

18 MR. BURSCH: I'm saying --

19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So if you could do all of 20 that, including the death penalty, I --

21 MR. BURSCH: Yes, I'm saying that there's no 22 violation, because in order to prove a Sixth Amendment 23 violation, you have to demonstrate unreliability of the 24 adjudicatory process. I'm also saying that there's no 25 reasonable remedy, and I'll talk about that in a minute.

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1	With respect to the death penalty in
2	particular, I would refer this Court right back to the
3	Fretwell decision, because there, too, defendant and his
4	counsel had an opportunity to raise a Collins objection
5	that would have changed the sentence to avoid the death
б	penalty in that case. Collins obviously was overruled
7	before habeas process, and this Court held that the
8	defendant could not use the vehicle of an ineffective
9	assistance claim to regain that lost opportunity because
10	he had no constitutional right in it. And so, really
11	the remedy I'm sorry. The severity of the sentence
12	doesn't enter the analysis once you've established that
13	there has been no violation.
14	JUSTICE GINSBURG: When you say no violation,
15	you don't mean that there was no ineffective assistance
16	of counsel? I thought that was conceded, that there was
17	ineffective assistance.
18	MR. BURSCH: That's correct, Justice
19	Ginsburg. We have conceded for purposes of argument
20	that there was ineffective assistance. But Strickland
21	is a two-part test, and even after you get past the
22	deficiency prong, there's still the question of whether
23	this casts some doubt on the reliability of the
24	proceedings.

JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, I thought that the

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1 second part of the test asked about harm. And here the 2 person is sitting in prison for three times as long as 3 he would have been sitting in prison had he had 4 effective assistance of counsel at the plea bargaining 5 stage. So, why doesn't that just meet the requirements of Strickland, both deficiency and prejudice? б 7 MR. BURSCH: Well, that's actually the best 8 argument that the Respondent has in this case. And the 9 reason --10 JUSTICE KAGAN: Sounds like a good argument. 11 (Laughter.) MR. BURSCH: Well, the reason why it's wrong 12 13 is because this Court has been very careful to define 14 what that harm is. Specifically, the word was "outcome" 15 in Cronic and Strickland. If you --16 JUSTICE KAGAN: And outcome -- there is a 17 different outcome here. He's sitting in prison for 18 three times as long. That's a different outcome. 19 MR. BURSCH: Yes, but the Court went on to 20 define "outcome" to mean reliability of the adjudicatory 21 process. In fact, specifically, the language was 22 whether absent the deficiency, the defendant -- I'm 23 sorry. Absent the deficiency, the factfinder would have had a reasonable doubt respecting guilt. And what we 24 25 have here is a situation where everyone acknowledges --

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1	JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, take the sentencing
2	cases. The sentencing cases, the determination of guilt
3	is over, and the question is, is this person sitting in
4	jail for 1 day longer because his counsel was
5	ineffective? And if he is, we would find prejudice
б	there. So, why isn't the same thing true here?
7	MR. BURSCH: Well, I don't believe it's quite
8	that simple. If there was some legal error, you know,
9	an error to which he had a constitutional right, then
10	certainly what you said is exactly true. But if you're
11	talking about more or less days because of, for example,
12	a judge thinking that the the difference between
13	crack and cocaine sentences was not appropriate or other
14	things that are really up to the discretion of the trial
15	court judge, Strickland says absolutely those things are
16	not Sixth Amendment violations.
17	JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, I guess I don't
18	understand that answer, because that answer seems to
19	suggest that the that the assistance being provided
20	was not ineffective. But here, as Justice Ginsburg
21	notes, you've conceded that the assistance is
22	ineffective. That assistance has led to a much, much,
23	much longer sentence. You know, as opposed to some of
24	the sentencing cases suggest that 24 hours is enough,
25	this is 10 years or something. And, you know, that

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1 should be the end of the game, no?

2 MR. BURSCH: Well, let's try another 3 sentencing hypothetical, where it's clear that there was 4 deficient performance. Say that there's a local trial 5 court judge and everyone knows that he has a certain predilection that if you like the local sports team, б 7 he's going to give you a break. If the attorney comes 8 in and he does not press the argument that this convicted defendant likes the local sports team, he gets 9 10 a higher sentence, that's still not a Sixth Amendment 11 violation.

12 Really, once you shift to sentencing, the 13 question is, were you legally entitled to the result? 14 And simply because he failed to appeal to the right 15 discretionary tendencies of the trial court doesn't 16 really make a difference. Here we're talking, 17 obviously, about the quilt phase, and it's much easier 18 here because it says clearly in Strickland and Cronic 19 and Kimmelman and many, many other cases that that 20 outcome difference, the harm difference, has to be 21 reliability of the process itself. It's a process --22 JUSTICE SCALIA: You acknowledge, though, 23 that it's ineffective assistance of counsel if you're --24 well, no, I guess you haven't acknowledged. Let me ask 25 you: Have you provided ineffective assistance of

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1 counsel if you are a lousy bargainer? You're just no
2 good at the -- you know, at -- I don't know -- the game
3 of bargaining. And so, you do a bad job in bargaining
4 down the sentence, I mean a notoriously bad job. Is
5 that ineffective assistance of counsel?

6 MR. BURSCH: Under the Court's first prong of 7 Strickland, you would have to look at whatever the 8 standards of professional practice were, and depending 9 how lousy the bargainer was, it could or could not be 10 deficient. But the important thing is if it didn't have 11 any effect on the subsequent trial and sentencing, then 12 it would not be a Sixth Amendment violation.

JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, I don't even agree with the first part. I don't think our legal process is -- is a bargaining game. Shouldn't be.

MR. BURSCH: Well, we could agree with that. Bargaining is not what this is about, and that's why this Court has held in Weatherford and other cases that there is no right to the plea bargain itself. And that's really the second --

JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You can -- you can agree with that when 95 percent of the criminal cases are disposed of by way of bargaining?

24 MR. BURSCH: Because in the 95 percent of 25 cases that are disposed of that way, this Court has

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1 already held in Padilla and Hill that there is a 2 constitutional right to have effective counsel when 3 you're accepting that plea. And the difference is when 4 you're accepting a plea, you're being convicted. That 5 is the conviction. And this Court frequently establishes different tests when you're waiving a right, 6 7 for example the right to go to trial, versus invoking a 8 right, going to trial. 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How can you talk about the reliability of a process or its fairness when you 10 11 have an attorney who has fundamentally misgauged the 12 law? How can a trial be fair when the attorney is going 13 into a trial thinking his client can't be convicted 14 because the shots fired hit below the waist? 15 MR. BURSCH: Because --JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, how can that kind of 16 17 trial ever be fair? 18 MR. BURSCH: Because there's no evidence 19 here, not even a contention, that his belief had any 20 impact whatsoever on the fairness of the trial 21 proceeding. And this Court has drawn a bright-line rule 22 at trial. You know, if you look at the preliminary 23 hearing, if there's attorney error there, deficiency --24 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, but you skipped over 25 a step. I think we do assume that the deficient advice

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1 led to the -- the determination to plead not guilty. 2 MR. BURSCH: Right. Again -- but that fork 3 in the road is not one to which he has a substantive 4 procedural right. 5 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, but that's the question -- that's the question we're confronting. So, 6 7 I think --8 MR. BURSCH: Well, I --9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- your answer was a 10 little too facile on that point. 11 MR. BURSCH: I think --12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: We have to assume there's 13 ineffective assistance of counsel in advising the client 14 the nature of the charge for the -- so that the client 15 can make up his mind whether to plead guilty or not 16 guilty. 17 MR. BURSCH: Right. 18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: We have to assume that in 19 this case, correct? 20 MR. BURSCH: Correct, we are assuming that. 21 But what I would submit respectfully is that the plea 22 stage isn't any different than a preliminary hearing or 23 a line-up or a suppression hearing, where if there was some deficient attorney conduct, this Court would still 24 25 then look to see whether it had an adverse impact on the

1 adjudication of guilt.

2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Suppose the defective 3 advice causes the defendant to enter a plea that he 4 would not have entered if he had been properly advised. 5 Can he get relief? 6 MR. BURSCH: Absolutely. Under Hill and 7 Padilla, this Court has said when you give up your right to trial, that's a very different situation and that 8 9 there is a remedy for that. And --10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So, explain why defective 11 advice causing a plea, that qualifies, but defective 12 advice causing defendant to turn down a plea --13 MR. BURSCH: It's just --14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- does not? 15 MR. BURSCH: It's just like the difference 16 between deciding to proceed with counsel, in which case 17 there's -- there's no barrier to entry, or deciding to 18 proceed without counsel, giving up the constitutional 19 right. 20 JUSTICE SCALIA: No, the difference -- that's 21 not the difference at all. It seems to me the 22 difference is when you plead guilty you deprive yourself 23 of the 24-karat test of fairness, which is trial by jury 24 before nine people who have to find you guilty beyond a 25 reasonable doubt. When you plead guilty, you give up

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1 that.

When you don't plead guilty, you get what is the best thing in our legal system. You can't do any better than that.

5 MR. BURSCH: Justice Scalia, you said it much 6 more artfully, but that's exactly the point I was trying 7 to make with Justice Ginsburg, that when you invoke your 8 constitutional right, your right to have an attorney, to 9 go to a trial, to have a jury, we don't set up barriers 10 to entry. It's only when you give up those rights.

11 JUSTICE KAGAN: I take it, then, Mr. Bursch, 12 you would have the same answer if the State had never 13 provided counsel at all. So long as -- if the plea 14 negotiations were all done between the prosecutor and the individual defendant, and the -- and the State 15 16 refused to provide the individual defendant with 17 counsel, but so long as the person in the end decided, 18 oh, I don't like this plea, I'll go to trial, then it's 19 all fine and dandy under the Sixth Amendment? 20 MR. BURSCH: That would be our position, because that's consistent with this Court's holding in 21 22 Coleman and Wade and Kimmelman, that --23 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And that would also be your

23 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And that would also be your 24 position in a capital case?

25 MR. BURSCH: Yes. Under Fretwell, this Court

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held definitively that so long as the reliability of the adjudicatory process and sentence were intact, that the deficient advice didn't affect it, that the severity of the punishment was not legally relevant. JUSTICE SCALIA: So, your position is you're

entitled to effective assistance of counsel before you 6 7 plead quilty, but you're not entitled to effective 8 assistance of counsel in evaluating plea offers? 9 MR. BURSCH: I would say it slightly 10 different --11 JUSTICE SCALIA: All right. 12 MR. BURSCH: -- that you are entitled to 13 effective counsel at every critical stage; however, it 14 is not a Sixth Amendment violation unless it casts doubt 15 on the reliability of the adjudication of guilt. 16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: That gets back to my 17 question: Is it a violation in the abstract then, of 18 damnum absque injuria? 19 MR. BURSCH: I'm sorry. 20 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Damage without injury. 21 MR. BURSCH: No, because under the Strickland 22 and Cronic cases, there is no damage, there's no Sixth 23 Amendment violation, unless you can prove the prejudice.

24JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, all of this is25theoretically interesting, and it may be that capital

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1	cases are sui generis here. But I thought the heart of
2	your argument was that there just is no way to
3	unscramble the eggs in this situation; there is no
4	and that was your third point, and I understood it.
5	MR. BURSCH: Correct.
6	JUSTICE ALITO: There is no remedy that can
7	put the parties back into the position where they would
8	have been had the error regarding the legal issue not
9	occurred.
10	MR. BURSCH: That's exactly right. And let's
11	talk about the two remedies that are most frequently
12	bandied about in the circuit courts. The first is to
13	order a new trial. And to us, it makes no sense to
14	order a second trial after you've already had a first
15	error-free trial.
16	In addition, you think about these habeas
17	cases; if you're issuing a habeas writ and vacating a
18	sentence 8 or 9 years after the fact, like you are here,
19	essentially you're releasing the defendant, because
20	witnesses will die, they'll move away, memories will be
21	sparse. And so, that's the natural effect of that.
22	And in Cooper's brief, he doesn't even
23	advocate for a second trial; he asks for specific
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24	performance. The problem with that is there you're

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1 sacred, to say what his plea offer is going to be. And 2 circumstances have changed once a trial has taken place. 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, "sacred" is a 4 little strong, don't you think? I mean, it is a -- to 5 some extent, unfair to the prosecutor because he knows б already he's got a guilty verdict in his pocket, and he 7 has to go back. But why is it so terribly difficult to 8 tell the defendant he has a right to accept that offer 9 if he wants, but then go through the normal process, 10 which is it has to be approved by a judge and all that 11 stuff? I don't see what's terribly difficult about 12 that. 13 MR. BURSCH: We contend it violates the 14 separation of powers. But you bring up an important point because circumstances have changed in two 15 16 respects. The first is that you learn more information. 17 So, here, for example, the prosecutor learned that not 18 only did Mr. Cooper shoot Kali Mundy, but he did it 19 while she was screaming and running away from him. 20 That's a changed circumstance. He might not give the 21 same plea. Even more so in Frye, where they learned 22 that he was picked for another criminal violation after

23 the plea was given, and the prosecutor testified that he 24 would have taken the plea back when he knew that.

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But the bigger changed circumstance is the

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1	trial itself, because the prosecutor has now gone
2	through the risk of having an acquittal. He has also
3	put, for example, the 8-year-old sexual abuse defendant
4	on the stand, something he tried to avoid with the plea
5	offer. And it truly is an egg that cannot be
6	unscrambled.
7	And unless there are further questions, I
8	will reserve of the balance of my time.
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
10	Mr. Jay.
11	ORAL ARGUMENT OF WILLIAM M. JAY
12	ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
13	SUPPORTING THE PETITIONER
14	MR. JAY: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
15	please the Court:
16	Petitioner's convictions and sentence are
17	reliable because the proceedings that produced them were
18	reliable. And to collaterally attack his convictions or
19	his sentence based on allegedly ineffective assistance
20	of counsel, he has to show that the ineffective
21	assistance of counsel prejudiced him. As this Court's
22	Strickland cases have used that term, that means he has
23	to show that a reviewing court should lack confidence in
24	the proceeding that produced the convictions or the
25	sentence.

JUSTICE BREYER: Well, you -- first, there's nothing about this in the Sixth Amendment, is there? I mean, the text of the Sixth Amendment talks about criminal prosecutions requiring the assistance of counsel for defense, period. MR. JAY: The Sixth Amendment requires the

7 assistance of --

8 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. So, there's nothing 9 in the Sixth Amendment that has these qualifications. I 10 haven't seen anything in any case which was other than 11 case specific. That is, this issue hasn't been decided 12 before, not to my knowledge. The language can be taken 13 out of those cases, as you've very properly done. And 14 so, there's nothing that I could find in the cases. 15 Nothing in the Sixth Amendment itself. In 95 percent of 16 the cases, they do plead quilty. And what's the problem 17 about ordering the prosecution to simply repeat the 18 offer he gave before?

Well, I mean, I don't really see if there -and prejudice? What if a person's been executed? If he had gotten the -- if he had gotten the plea offer, he would have pled guilty for 50 years in jail, okay? That's my imaginary case. I can think of one where there's prejudice. He's dead. All right? So, what's the answer in my imaginary case, if it's not in the

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1 amendment, not in -- not a holding, et cetera? 2 MR. JAY: Well, I think that -- let me 3 address that capital hypothetical that has come up 4 several times. And I think that it's instructive, 5 Justice Breyer, to look at this Court's Strickland cases and look at what remedy they order when there has been 6 7 ineffective assistance that shakes the reviewing court's 8 confidence in the proceeding that produced it. They 9 order a new proceeding. They don't order a specific 10 sentence. That's why the outcome has never been the --11 the yardstick by which ineffective assistance of --12 JUSTICE BREYER: I don't want to -- I want to 13 stop you there because I don't understand it. The 14 suggestion is -- I'm not taking this case; I'm making up 15 a hypothetical since we're discussing it really based on 16 the next case. The defendant never heard the offer, 17 never heard it. It is crystal clear that if he'd heard 18 it, he would have accepted it. Okay? I'm trying to 19 separate out difficulties of this case, which strikes me 20 as difficult because of the facts, from the principle. 21 And what I want you to do is to tell me why I shouldn't 22 accept the principle, and then we can worry about what's 23 a clear case. 24 MR. JAY: But I think the principle,

25 Justice Breyer, is that you look at what the -- you look

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1 at what it is the Court's being asked to set aside. 2 JUSTICE BREYER: Death. Let's say death. 3 MR. JAY: Right. So, in this case, you look 4 How was that death sentence at the death sentence. 5 produced? If the defendant can show, for example, that he got bad advice about the plea --6 7 JUSTICE BREYER: He shows that never did he 8 ever become aware, because his lawyer was sleeping and moved on vacation and never told him about the plea 9 10 offer. That's my hypothetical. 11 MR. JAY: I think that's actually an easier 12 hypothetical than the bad advice because you could show 13 that if the lawyer then gets -- stands up and does a 14 bang-up job at trial, right -- the defendant is 15 convicted of capital murder. The defendant can't show 16 any prejudicial effect on the trial. That means that no 17 other lawyer doing a better job could have gotten the --18 could even show a reasonable probability that a 19 different verdict would ensue. JUSTICE ALITO: No, the Court has said --20 21 MR. JAY: That defendant has a reliable 22 capital murder conviction. 23 JUSTICE ALITO: The Court has said that death And did you think it is inconceivable 24 is different. 25 that there could be a different rule for capital cases,

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1 such as a rule requiring that, in a capital case, any 2 offer of a noncapital sentence as part of a plea bargain 3 actually be waived by the defendant in court so that 4 this doesn't come up? This is not a capital case. 5 MR. JAY: This is not a capital case, and I think that it certainly --6 7 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. If you don't 8 want to do the capital case? I'm still trying to get to 9 the principle. 10 MR. JAY: I'm happy to do the capital case, 11 Justice Breyer. 12 JUSTICE BREYER: I'll change my hypothetical 13 and say all that happened was that this perfect trial, 14 because of mandatory sentencing rules, led him to prison 15 for 50 years, as compared with a plea bargain which 16 would have given him 2 years. Now, he is in prison for 17 48 years more, and I consider that that's at least 18 harmful to him. So, where the amendment doesn't speak 19 of it, where the misbehavior of the lawyer is crystal 20 clear, where it's 48 years more in prison, what is it 21 that bars what seems to me obvious that an inadequate assistance of counsel, remedial through a specific 22 23 decree saying reinstitute the offer, led to enormous unfairness and prejudice? 24 25

MR. JAY: Two points, Justice Breyer. I'm --

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1	and I want to make sure that I get out my answer to your
2	capital hypothetical, because you don't look just at
3	whether the sentence that resulted was worse than the
4	sentence that could have resulted. If that were the
5	case, Fretwell would have come out the other way.
6	That's death if with no objection made, life sentence
7	if the objection had been made. So, it's not an
8	outcome it's not a narrow comparison of outcomes.
9	What you look at is how the sentence was produced. Is
10	this defendant entitled, had this to a lesser
11	sentence?
12	Is this had this defendant had a better
13	lawyer at sentencing, is there even a reasonable
14	probability that the that that lawyer, through a
15	different strategy for identifying a legal error
16	JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Jay, you disagree with
17	the assertion that Justice Breyer made that this was
18	unfair. This man deserved to get the sentence he got,
19	didn't he? He had a full and fair trial. A jury of 12
20	people, finding him guilty beyond a reasonable doubt,
21	determined that he deserved that sentence. How could it
22	be unfair to give him the sentence that he deserved?
23	MR. BURSCH: Yes, that's correct. In every
24	case
25	JUSTICE BREYER: The lists are legion where

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1 people don't get the sentence that they deserve because, 2 for example, the lawyer was inadequate. I mean --3 MR. JAY: And in those cases, Justice Brever, 4 you show that the lawyer had a bad strategy at 5 sentencing. That may well have been the same bad 6 strategy that led the lawyer to recommend a not guilty 7 plea. Let's qo to trial on my crazy strategy. If he 8 can show that and he can show that a better lawyer with a better strategy would produce a different result, then 9 10 the Sixth Amendment entitles that person to a new 11 proceeding. The Sixth Amendment never entitles the 12 person to have a court order a particular sentence. 13 And you can't use the prosecutor's offer 14 made at a different time as the benchmark and say, well, 15 the prosecutor was okay with it at this other time; 16 therefore, the prosecution must be forced to live with 17 it now. And that's because a plea offer rests on a 18 number of considerations: the need to obtain the 19 defendant's cooperation in other cases; the desire to 20 spare the witnesses and the victim the burdens of trial; 21 and, frankly, to avoid the risk of an acquittal. And 22 the prosecution in this case and in cases like this one, 23 where there has been a reliable conviction and reliable 24 sentencing, the prosecution has already incurred all of 25 those burdens. So, to look at the 51-month minimum

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1 offer that was made 8 years ago and have that be the 2 benchmark simply is not something that this Court has ever done in its Strickland cases. And I think that 3 4 it's revealing about the Respondent's --5 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Jay, you don't contest 6 that plea bargaining is a critical phase, entitling 7 somebody to a lawyer and to an effective lawyer, do you? 8 MR. BURSCH: We don't -- we don't think --9 that's not part of our argument here. 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: Yes, because we've said that 11 many times; isn't that right? MR. BURSCH: Well, the Court -- let me be 12 precise, Justice Kagan, because there are two things 13 that the Court can be talking about. There's the --14 15 there's the -- the interaction between the State and the 16 defendant, and that's where the Court has customarily 17 used language like "critical stage," a confrontation 18 between the defendant and the prosecution. 19 That's not what we have here. This is about 20 private advice between the lawyer and the client, and 21 we're not contesting that he has a right to have that advice be effective. 2.2 23 JUSTICE KAGAN: What we have recognized, 24 right, is that plea bargaining is a critical phase 25 because about 98 percent of the action of the criminal

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1 justice system occurs in plea bargaining. And to 2 deprive somebody of a lawyer at that stage of the 3 process, where 98 percent of the action occurs, is 4 inconsistent with the Sixth Amendment. That's what 5 we've said. Isn't that right? 6 MR. BURSCH: Well, I don't think the Court 7 has faced up -- faced this particular situation, Justice 8 Kagan. 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: So, it's not a critical 10 phase. It's only a critical phase depending on the 11 outcome of what happens at that phase? 12 MR. JAY: We are -- we are assuming that --13 that Mr. Cooper in this case had a right to receive 14 effective advice about whether to enter this plea. But we're -- our position is that he wasn't prejudiced 15 because what --16 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: Has -- have you ever seen a 18 critical phase before in our Sixth Amendment 19 jurisprudence where the right to a lawyer depends upon 20 what has -- what happens during that critical phase, 21 where if one outcome results, there is no Sixth 22 Amendment right, but if another outcome results there 23 is? MR. JAY: Well, again, we don't think this is 24 25 in any way crucial to deciding this case, but

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1 Scott v. Illinois, Justice Kagan, is an example of that. 2 JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Jay, couldn't --3 couldn't it be said that what our cases hold is that 4 pleading guilty is a critical phase? Would that be 5 enough to explain our cases? MR. JAY: It certainly is correct that 6 7 pleading -- that a guilty plea hearing, where the 8 defendant --JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, it's correct, but is 9 10 it enough? Do you want us to write an opinion that plea 11 negotiations are not a critical stage of the criminal 12 process unless at the end of the day a guilty plea 13 results? 14 MR. JAY: That's not at all what we're asking, Justice Kennedy. 15 16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Okay. So, we --17 MR. JAY: What we are asking -- I'm sorry. 18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Justice Kagan and I want to 19 know what your test is. 20 MR. JAY: Our test to resolve this case is to 21 look at what it is that the habeas petitioner is 22 challenging. He's challenging conviction and his 23 sentence. In the conviction, he was found guilty by a 24 jury. He now says, page 14a of the red brief, that he 25 is guilty and he wishes he had pleaded guilty sooner.

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1	No basis for challenging the conviction.
2	May I finish the thought on the sentence?
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Sure.
4	MR. JAY: And on this sentence, he was
5	sentenced in accordance with law. He had effective
6	representation at sentencing, and he got the sentence
7	that corresponds to the counts of conviction. What he
8	wants is to reinstate a deal that was in the
9	prosecution's discretion to offer once upon a time.
10	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
11	MR. JAY: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
12	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Ms. Newman.
13	ORAL ARGUMENT OF VALERIE R. NEWMAN
14	ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
15	MS. NEWMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
16	and may it please the Court:
17	It is uncontroverted here that Anthony Cooper
18	received incompetent advice from his counsel. It is
19	uncontroverted here that, as a result of that
20	incompetent advice, Mr. Cooper is serving between 100
21	and 134 months of extra time of imprisonment.
22	JUSTICE GINSBURG: I think that's not that
23	he got ineffective assistance, yes, that's not
24	controverted. But that he would have gotten the 51
25	months or 68 is certainly controverted because of two

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1 interventions. The prosecutor can say: No deal; I'm 2 withdrawing it, even after an initial acceptance. And 3 the judge can say: I think 51 to 68 is entirely 4 improper for what this man did. 5 MS. NEWMAN: Those are both true, Justice 6 Ginsburg -- Justice Ginsburg, but, however, the 7 Strickland test requires a reasonable probability of a 8 different result. And on this record, we have no reasonable probability -- we have no reason to expect 9 10 that that's not exactly what would have happened. 11 JUSTICE ALITO: The relief that you want is 12 specific performance of the plea bargain. 13 MS. NEWMAN: Correct. 14 JUSTICE ALITO: Isn't that correct? 15 What if it had come to light or come to the prosecutor's attention during this intervening time that 16 17 your client had committed four or five other shootings? 18 Would you still be entitled to specific performance? 19 MS. NEWMAN: Yes. We evaluate the case, and the Strickland analysis is an imperfect -- the 20 21 Strickland remedy is an imperfect remedy. It has always 22 been an imperfect remedy. It will always be an 23 imperfect remedy. 24 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What -- what is the judge 25 supposed to do? Let's say the remedy is it goes back

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1 before the judge. We're trying to unwind the clock or 2 whatever the metaphor is. Does the judge have to 3 prescind all knowledge of what he learned in the trial? 4 MS. NEWMAN: Well, this Court has stated 5 numerous times that it presumes a conscientious decisionmaker, and a conscientious decisionmaker would 6 7 put --JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, I'm asking what --8 9 I'm a conscientious decisionmaker, and I'm asking for 10 your advice on what I should do. 11 MS. NEWMAN: That you would --12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I know the details of this 13 crime, which were more horrific than I would have 14 expected, because I've heard them at the trial. Do I 15 just somehow forget about that, prescind that? 16 MS. NEWMAN: You would evaluate the case as 17 you would have evaluated it at the time of the 18 proceedings. 19 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So, the answer is "yes." 20 I -- I ignore everything that I learned during the 21 trial. 22 MS. NEWMAN: Yes, because the deficient -you evaluate things at the point of the deficient 23 performance. And at the point of the deficient 24 25 performance, the judge had a certain amount of

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1	information before him, the prosecutor had a certain
2	amount of information before him, and the defense
3	attorney had a certain amount of information before him.
4	JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, that's pretty
5	incredible. It doesn't matter what the defendant has
6	done in the has been discovered to have done in the
7	interim? Committed 5 murders, 10 murders?
8	MS. NEWMAN: Well, in that case
9	JUSTICE ALITO: Wipe it out of your mind; you
10	get you get the plea bargain that was offered at an
11	early point in in the investigation of the case?
12	MS. NEWMAN: Yes, because what happens in
13	ineffective assistance of counsel claims is the State
14	has to bear the burden of the unconstitutionality. And
15	so, that is a price that this Court has said the State
16	will bear when there is when there's a constitutional
17	violation, because there is no perfect
18	JUSTICE GINSBURG: How can the judge the
19	judge he knows what the plea let's say he knows
20	what the plea bargain was, but he also knows that for
21	one of the crimes, felon in possession, that alone, the
22	sentencing range is 81 to 135. So, without any
23	considering anything that happened at trial, the judge
24	knows that the plea bargain was for less than if the man
25	had been charged with only with a felon in

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1 possession.

2	MS. NEWMAN: Yes, that's accurate.
3	JUSTICE GINSBURG: So, it it seems most
4	unlikely that a judge would have accepted the plea
5	bargain for 51 to 68 for the crimes that were charged.
6	MS. NEWMAN: No, I would disagree with that.
7	This in this Court and I can represent to the
8	Court, in my practice before this Court, which I have
9	practiced before this Court for many, many years, this
10	plea bargain was an ordinary plea bargain. This was not
11	anything extraordinary. It was very run of the mill.
12	It was it was a run-of-the-mill case
13	JUSTICE GINSBURG: That may be, but is it not
14	true that the sentence range was 81 to 135 for a felon
15	in possession?
16	MS. NEWMAN: I did not typically, you only
17	score out the guidelines for the most serious offense.
18	So, the guidelines may have been high for the felon in
19	possession offense, but, however, the judge in
20	fashioning the remedy, you're not going to this Court
21	would not take discretion away from the judge. So, in
22	fashioning the remedy, in adopting the remedy of the
23	Sixth Circuit if this Court were to do that, this case
24	would go back before this same judge if he's still on
25	the bench, and it would be would put people back

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Mr. Cooper would accept the plea, but the judge retains
 sentencing discretion.

JUSTICE BREYER: It wouldn't be a problem. The problem with Justice Alito's hypothetical, I take it, is what the order would say is that the prosecution has to, for a reasonable time, extend the same offer. And then if it's accepted, you go to the judge. The judge doesn't have to accept the plea.

9 MS. NEWMAN: Right. You can't find --10 JUSTICE BREYER: You can't make him do that. 11 But I have a bigger problem with this case, which is --12 which I may be the only one to have. But as I've looked 13 at it, I don't see ineffective assistance of counsel 14 within the AEDPA meaning. That is, you have two courts 15 in the State which have said this is not ineffective. 16 And as I look at it, it's somewhat ambiguous at best. 17 And we have the Sixth Circuit saying it is. Well, I 18 know both sides agree, but I mean, both sides couldn't 19 make us decide a case by saying there's a murder when in 20 fact it's not.

I mean -- so, what am I supposed to do about that? I find this a tough case. I've read the record, and in my own opinion at this moment, perhaps no one else's, there is no ineffective assistance of counsel such that the Sixth Circuit could set that aside -- a

Official

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1 contrary finding of the State court.

2 What do I do?

JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If Justice Breyer permits me to add an addendum to give the reasons why I might agree with him or a way of viewing this, as I read the lower court's decisions, they said there wasn't ineffectiveness because he was just trying to get a better deal.

And I think that, translating what he said, 9 10 the very reasonable view by the court was the prosecutor 11 may think of a lesser charge, because if this guy really 12 wanted to kill this woman, he would have hit her head or 13 her chest, but he aimed low. So, he was really just 14 angry and shooting enough so that if he hit her, okay, 15 if she died, okay. But he really didn't have that 16 heinous intent to execute, you know, a gunshot to the 17 brain. And so, he was hoping to negotiate something 18 better. If that's -- Justice Breyer is shaking his 19 head. If that in fact -- if this is an AEDPA case, and 20 we have to give deference to the State courts, doesn't 21 that resolve this case? 22 MS. NEWMAN: No. 23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: We have to give

24 deference to their finding.

25 MS. NEWMAN: You do have to give deference

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1 to their finding. There's no question under AEDPA 2 there's -- there's deference. And there's actually no 3 question there's sort of a doubly deferential review, 4 given the Strickland analysis. However, the State 5 courts did not decide this case on Sixth Amendment grounds. So, there is nothing to give deference to. 6 The State courts decided this, and the trial court said 7 Mr. Cooper made his own choices. That's not an 8 ineffective assistance of counsel analysis. 9

10 The court of appeals in Michigan also did 11 not engage in a Sixth Amendment analysis. They adopted 12 the trial court and said that Mr. Cooper made his own 13 choices. So, there is -- and this claim was raised 14 specifically on Sixth Amendment grounds from the very 15 beginning of the appeal until it reached this Court. 16 So, there is no AEDPA deference to give to the State 17 courts' decisions. There is no question as well that it 18 was ineffective assistance, because the State court 19 record does not bear out that Mr. McClain was trying to get a better deal. The State court --20

21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You said -- you said 22 earlier that the district court, the trial court judge, 23 still retains discretion as to whether or not to approve 24 the plea bargain, right, whether to accept it? 25 MS. NEWMAN: The sentencing.

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes well, which is
2	it, the bargain or the sentence? It includes the
3	sentence, correct?
4	MS. NEWMAN: It's a sentence recommendation,
5	and under Michigan law, the judge cannot
б	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: He has discretion
7	he has discretion.
8	MS. NEWMAN: Correct.
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, is he allowed to
10	take into consideration all that's happened before, not
11	just with respect to guilt or innocence or the result of
12	the trial, but in imposing the sentence or approving it?
13	MS. NEWMAN: Well, he can take into account
14	anything that he could have taken into account in the
15	first place. But in this case
16	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But nothing that he
17	learned at trial, I take it.
18	MS. NEWMAN: I would argue no. I mean,
19	certainly this Court's set of parameters
20	JUSTICE SCALIA: What if he turns what if
21	he turns it down, Ms. Newman? He says, no, I can't
22	accept this. What happens then? You have a new
23	MS. NEWMAN: I would say that's not an
24	option oh, I'm sorry. For the judge
25	JUSTICE SCALIA: Yeah, the judge. It goes

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1 back to the judge. We agree with you, and we send it 2 back to the judge. We reinstate the offer, okay? He 3 accepts the offer. It goes to the judge, and the judge 4 says: No, this is outrageous. I'm not going to approve 5 this plea bargain. 6 What happens then? 7 MS. NEWMAN: Well, in that case, the case 8 would proceed under Michigan law. In that case, the 9 judge would say --10 JUSTICE SCALIA: We would have a new trial; 11 is that it? 12 MS. NEWMAN: No. I don't -- I think it would 13 be perfectly acceptable to say a new trial is not -- not 14 an appropriate remedy in this case, because he had a 15 trial. JUSTICE SCALIA: Okay. So, if the judge 16 17 turns it down, then the prior trial is valid; is that 18 right? 19 MS. NEWMAN: It would depend on the reasons 20 why the judge would turn it down. JUSTICE SCALIA: He turned it down because --21 22 MS. NEWMAN: It would have to be a legitimate 23 reason under a State law; otherwise, there would --24 JUSTICE SCALIA. Yes. Yes, then the prior 25 trial is okay?

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1	MS. NEWMAN: It's not that it's okay, but I
2	think under imperfect circumstances, it's the result
3	that we're seeking.
4	JUSTICE BREYER: Well, why? Why? I mean,
5	why wouldn't the remedy be, as judging what you said
б	before, is an order saying to the prosecution
7	re-institute the plea bargain and give him whatever, a
8	week or whatever it is? Now, we imagine the defendant
9	says I accept. So, then they go to the judge, just as
10	they would have before.
11	MS. NEWMAN: Right.
12	JUSTICE BREYER: And the judge has the
13	freedom to accept that or to reject it.
14	MS. NEWMAN: Correct.
15	JUSTICE BREYER: If he rejects it, there is
16	no plea agreement. Now the defendant must plead. He
17	can plead guilty or not guilty. And whatever flows from
18	that, flows from it.
19	MS. NEWMAN: That's a also a perfectly
20	acceptable remedy. I think the purpose the reason
21	JUSTICE SCALIA: Wait. Both can't be
22	perfect. Either he has another trial, although he's
23	just been found guilty by a jury of 12 with an entirely
24	fair proceeding, or else he doesn't have a new trial.
25	Which is it?

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1	JUSTICE BREYER: He does. He does. His
2	suggestion is perfect, but mine is more perfect.
3	(Laughter.)
4	MS. NEWMAN: Okay. The
5	JUSTICE BREYER: You could do it. You don't
6	have to you would he's right, you would have to,
7	under my suggestion, have a new trial, even though there
8	was a trial that took place 2 years ago or whatever it
9	is, correct?
10	MS. NEWMAN: Correct.
11	JUSTICE BREYER: But that isn't the end of
12	the argument.
13	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, if you're the
14	defense counsel, the best thing for you to do is not
15	communicate any plea offer you get, and then if your
16	client is found guilty, then you can go back and say,
17	oh, by the way, I didn't tell you about this, and he
18	gets a whole new trial.
19	MS. NEWMAN: No. The the bar on habeas
20	well, the bar on Strickland, even not on habeas, is a
21	very high bar, as this Court said in Padilla. And it's
22	not a bar that can often be met. And so, you have to
23	show under a Strickland analysis deficient performance
24	and prejudice. So
25	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, I don't know if that's

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1 going to be so --

2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: A deficient 3 performance --

4 JUSTICE ALITO: I don't know that that's 5 going to be so hard to show. Do you think it's feasible to draw a distinction between this case, where there was 6 arguably inaccurate legal advice, and the case in which 7 the defense attorney simply makes a terribly mistaken 8 calculation about the chances of a favorable verdict at 9 10 trial? A favorable plea bargain is offered, caps the 11 guy's possible sentence at, let's say, 3 years. The 12 defense attorney says: We've got a great shot at an 13 acquittal. Let's go to trial. I'm going to rip the 14 prosecution's witnesses apart.

The trial turns out to be a disaster. 15 16 Convicted on all counts, 25 years. Do you think that 17 it's impossible for the rule that you want us to adopt 18 here to be applied in that situation as well? 19 MS. NEWMAN: T think it would be much more 20 difficult, because this Court on habeas review and State 21 courts on non-habeas review are very deferential to 22 strategic decisions. Almost anything that qualifies --23 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, you say that. But, as an administrative matter, I think we have to have 24 25 some concern that these plea negotiations and

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1 discussions are in myriad circumstances. The defense 2 attorney is by the water cooler; the prosecutor walks by 3 and says I'm thinking of offering you a good bargain in 4 the Jones case. He knows he's going to have that 5 prosecutor in court the next day and really beat him. He thinks he's going to soften him up. So, he doesn't 6 7 communicate it to the client, and the prosecutor later 8 says withdrawn.

9 We're going to have inquiries post hoc on 10 all of these negotiations and discussions. And it seems 11 to me that, absent some other rule, which I don't think 12 we have the authority to impose, that all plea offers 13 must be in writing and be stated with specificity, that 14 if -- what you're proposing is simply unworkable.

MS. NEWMAN: I disagree, Your Honor. We've had Hill -- we've had Strickland and Hill jurisprudence for three decades. There's -- there was a floodgates argument when Hill was decided, that we're going to have all these people that the -- and we've had, since McMann v. Richardson, this Court saying plea bargaining is a critical stage, and --

JUSTICE KAGAN: And most of the circuits follow your rule; isn't that right?

24 MS. NEWMAN: Right. We already have
25 unanimity --

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1	JUSTICE KAGAN: And the floodgates have not
2	opened.
3	MS. NEWMAN: I'm sorry.
4	JUSTICE KAGAN: Go ahead.
5	MS. NEWMAN: Yes, we have unanimity in the
6	Federal circuits, and we have almost every State that
7	has addressed this issue has addressed it in the same
8	manner. And so
9	JUSTICE GINSBURG: What is the unanimity on
10	the remedy? Here, the court said that the writ shall be
11	granted conditioned on the State taking action to offer
12	the 51-to-85-month plea. So, that doesn't bind the
13	judge, but it does bind the prosecutor.
14	MS. NEWMAN: Correct.
15	JUSTICE GINSBURG: And it removes the
16	possibility of the prosecutor saying, I would have
17	withdrawn that initial offer.
18	MS. NEWMAN: Correct.
19	JUSTICE GINSBURG: So, the prosecutor the
20	remedy is is that the remedy that's uniform? That
21	the prosecutor has no discretion, only the judge does?
22	MS. NEWMAN: Well, the remedies vary. When I
23	said "unanimity," I didn't mean every every court in
24	every circuit does handles this exactly the same way.
25	Unanimity in the sense that every Federal circuit and

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1	almost every State that has addressed this issue, and
2	they've addressed this issue for over 30 years, has
3	found that there is an there is a cognizable Sixth
4	Amendment violation that can be remedied on appeal.
5	JUSTICE KAGAN: And perhaps the lack of
6	unanimity on the remedy question is appropriate. I
7	mean, people have been trying to suggest different
8	remedies. But perhaps one way to deal with the remedy
9	question is to recognize that these cases present very
10	different factual circumstances, that there are a lot of
11	variation in them, and to give a substantial amount of
12	discretion to the lower courts to work out what the best
13	remedy is, consistent with that factual variation.
14	MS. NEWMAN: Absolutely. And it's the same
15	thing the courts have been doing, again, since
16	Strickland and Hill were decided.
17	JUSTICE SCALIA: Like what? What factual
18	variation do you think justifies a categorically
19	different remedy? I mean, it seems to me some of the
20	remedies are good and some are bad.
21	MS. NEWMAN: Correct.
22	JUSTICE SCALIA: What factual I mean, give
23	me an example of the different remedies and how a
24	certain fact situation could make one okay and the other
25	not okay.

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1	MS. NEWMAN: Well, even in the two cases
2	before the Court today I mean, in Mr. Frye's, case he
3	accepted a plea, and the State court ordered a new trial
4	as the remedy for the for the ineffective assistance
5	of counsel violation. In my case and Mr. Cooper's
6	case
7	JUSTICE SCALIA: Right. And why was that
8	okay there?
9	MS. NEWMAN: rejected pardon?
10	JUSTICE SCALIA: Why was that okay there?
11	What what factual circumstances made that okay there?
12	MS. NEWMAN: Well, that just I don't know
13	that the factual circumstances make it okay, but it was
14	the remedy that the State I'm not sure I understand
15	your question. It was a remedy that the State ordered,
16	and, in this case, it's just the remedy that was ordered
17	by the Federal court was the remedy
18	JUSTICE ALITO: You have a situation where
19	the where the defendant turns down where a plea is
20	turned down and the defendant goes to trial. Are there
21	any facts in any facts that would make any remedy
22	other than specific performance the correct remedy in
23	that situation?
24	MS. NEWMAN: These cases are so
25	fact-specific, Your Honor, I don't want to evade the

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1	question about a hypothetical, but there's every case
2	is so fact-specific that I think there's the
3	possibility exists that a that the remedy would
4	JUSTICE ALITO: You recommend you
5	recommend specific performance as the remedy for your
6	case, and I agree with you that is if there is to be
7	a remedy, it's the only remedy that makes a any
8	modicum of sense. The remedy of giving a new trial when
9	the person has already had a fair trial makes zero
10	sense.
11	MS. NEWMAN: That's correct.
12	JUSTICE ALITO: So, what I'm looking for is
13	any situation in which you said leave it to the
14	discretion of the trial judge. But what is what
15	discretion is there? What remedy in that situation
16	other than specific performance would be an
17	appropriate would remedy what you claim to have been
18	the violation?
19	MS. NEWMAN: Well, in Mr. Cooper's case, I
20	think the the remedy in the Sixth Circuit is the only
21	appropriate remedy that that puts every that is
22	narrowly tailored to the Sixth Amendment violation, and
23	that's what this Court has said.
24	I mean, this Court has given direction to
25	the courts, to the lower courts, that you just narrowly

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1 tailor the remedy to fit the situation, because there's 2 so many factual discrepancies --

JUSTICE BREYER: Well, what's wrong -- let me 3 4 go back because I'm now becoming convinced -- I'm trying 5 out what Justice Scalia suggested. Maybe that does work better. What -- what you'd say is, first, throw the 6 7 defendant out, unless you are convinced that not only is there ineffective assistance, but also it would have 8 9 made a difference; he would have accepted the plea 10 bargain.

11 MS. NEWMAN: Correct.

JUSTICE BREYER: So, now they have to hold the plea bargain open. They then do it. They then go to the judge, like any plea bargain. Ninety percent of the time the judge will say fine, and that's the end of it.

17 MS. NEWMAN: Correct.

JUSTICE BREYER: But should the judge decide that this is a case where he would reject a plea bargain for any one of a variety of reasons, then our assumption was wrong, and we reinstate the previous trial. Now, the -- just say it's over? You were tried, you were convicted, that's the end of it. Now, what's wrong with that as a remedy? I

24 Now, what's wrong with that as a remedy? 1
25 mean, what's -- why is that -- why does that muck up the

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1 criminal justice system in some way? 2 That's, I think, pretty much what 3 Justice Scalia suggested, and I -- and I am now trying 4 that out, because the more I think about it, the more I 5 think maybe that's okay. 6 MS. NEWMAN: Well, I -- I believe it is what he suggested. And I --7 8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Don't -- don't blame it on 9 me. I don't --10 (Laughter.) 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't -- it's your 12 suggestion that we set aside a perfectly fair 13 conviction. 14 JUSTICE BREYER: Yes, but I --15 JUSTICE SCALIA: This is just a hypothetical. 16 If you're going to set it aside --17 MS. NEWMAN: Right. 18 JUSTICE SCALIA: -- I think you should put it 19 back in. 20 MS. NEWMAN: Well, again, right. It's going 21 to depend on what happens -- happens below, and that -we don't -- I mean, the -- the concept here is one --22 23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You're -- you are begging 24 the question. 25 MS. NEWMAN: Okay.

1	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Okay? Because I think,
2	yes, Justice Breyer's first statement, you have to prove
3	the guy was going to take the plea, because there's no
4	sense in in giving him a remedy that he
5	MS. NEWMAN: Right.
6	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: would have never
7	sought.
8	MS. NEWMAN: Absolutely.
9	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right? But it goes
10	back to, I think it was Justice Alito or Chief or the
11	Chief Justice's question, on what basis can the judge
12	reject the plea? You have said earlier that he has to
13	put aside any information he learned during the trial.
14	And that's really the nub of this case. What are the
15	grounds that you're proposing the judge can use to
16	reject the plea?
17	MS. NEWMAN: That any grounds that would
18	have existed in the original circumstances. So, if the
19	judge in in Michigan, there's a variety of reasons
20	why a judge can say I I'm not going to accept this
21	sentencing recommendation.
22	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, how are you ever
23	going to know that the defendant would have accepted the
24	plea agreement? Because by not accepting it, he's got a
25	chance of going scot-free. He's going to have a fair

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1	trial, that's the assumption; and he may be acquitted.
2	So, how is a judge supposed to say I
3	mean, presumably the defendant will always say, I would
4	have taken that deal, because it's better. Well, how is
5	a judge supposed to go back and decide whether that's
б	true or not?
7	MS. NEWMAN: Well, always in large part,
8	it's not going to depend on the defendant; it's going to
9	in larger part it's going to defend on depend on
10	defense counsel
11	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why?
12	MS. NEWMAN: in making that determination,
13	because Strickland always looks at strategy. I mean,
14	that that's the underlying
15	JUSTICE KENNEDY: I think you can
16	MS. NEWMAN: value of Strickland.
17	JUSTICE KENNEDY: answer the Chief
18	Justice's question. The Chief Justice said how are you
19	going to know you have to show prejudice.
20	MS. NEWMAN: Correct.
21	JUSTICE SCALIA: And there's no prejudice
22	unless he would have accepted the deal.
23	MS. NEWMAN: Right.
24	JUSTICE KENNEDY: How are you going to know
25	that he would have? Of course, he's always going to say

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1	he that would have, but how is the trial judge going to
2	make a credibility determination on that on that
3	issue? I guess it's just a credibility determination.
4	I don't know how he's going to do it. I think you can
5	answer the Chief Justice's question yes or no.
6	MS. NEWMAN: I don't think I can
7	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How is the judge
8	MS. NEWMAN: answer it yes or no.
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How is the judge
10	how is the judge ever going to know, be able to decide,
11	whether the defendant would have accepted the deal or
12	not?
13	MS. NEWMAN: The same way that the trial
14	courts decide any question of fact. In this case, we
15	had testimony from the trial attorney. The trial
16	attorney told the judge, I told him not to accept the
17	plea because he legally could not be convicted of the
18	charge. I mean, Mr. Cooper was
19	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's the defendant's
20	choice; it's not the lawyer's choice. It's the
21	defendant's choice.
22	MS. NEWMAN: But he but he has a right to
23	the assistance to the effective assistance of counsel
24	in making that critical choice, and he didn't have the
25	effective assistance of counsel. He wrote Mr. Cooper

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1 wrote letters to the judge --2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's the 3 ineffectiveness question. I understand that to be taken 4 out of the case by the concessions on the other side. 5 I'm talking about the prejudice question. 6 MS. NEWMAN: Correct. 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How is a judge 8 supposed to know? 9 MS. NEWMAN: The judge looks at the record 10 before him. So, in this case, we had Mr. Cooper's 11 testimony --12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: People have different -- some people are willing to take the chance. 13 14 Okay? Let's assume there's a 20 percent chance the 15 person will be found guilty. 16 Some people will say, I'm willing to take 17 that chance because I just don't want the chance of 18 going to jail; I'm willing to roll the dice. Other 19 people will say, no, that's too much. 20 Now, whether you want to go to jail may cut 21 one way or the other, but how is a judge supposed to 22 decide? Ask him, are you -- do you take chances? 23 MS. NEWMAN: No, by -- by looking at --Mr. Chief Justice, by looking at the evidence in the 24 25 record before him. In this case, Mr. Cooper wrote --

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So, the judge should
2	decide whether he would take the deal.
3	MS. NEWMAN: No
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Look at the evidence
5	before him and say, boy, I'd take that deal.
6	(Laughter.)
7	MS. NEWMAN: No, no, no, no. Mr Mr.
8	Cooper wrote two letters to the judge saying, I want to
9	accept a plea. Mr. McClain, the trial attorney who
10	provided the incompetent advice, told the judge in a
11	postconviction hearing that Mr. Cooper wanted to take a
12	plea. I mean, there there is no it is beyond
13	question in this case.
14	JUSTICE ALITO: Do you think the length and
15	the complexity of the trial has any bearing on this?
16	This was a relatively short and simple trial. But let's
17	say a prosecutor offers a plea deal in a case in which
18	the trial is going to take 6 months and it's going to
19	cost and it's going to cost a million dollars, and if
20	they try that case, there are going to be other cases
21	that they won't be able to try. The plea is rejected,
22	the case is tried, and then afterwards the the remedy
23	is to to to reinstate this plea offer, which was
24	predicated on the relieving the prosecutor of the burden
25	of having to try that case.

1	MS. NEWMAN: Well, every plea bargain is
2	predicated on relieving the prosecution of having the
3	burden of of trying a case. I mean, the key here
4	is let's get back to what Strickland stands for, and
5	it's the unreliability or the unfairness of the
6	proceedings. It's not just an unreliability
7	determination.
8	So, in this case, Mr. Cooper had two
9	choices. He could take a certain plea with almost a
10	certain sentence or he could have really what was a
11	charade of a trial because his attorney told him you
12	you can't be convicted of this offense; you will not be
13	convicted of this offense following a trial. You'll be
14	convicted of a lesser
15	JUSTICE GINSBURG: You conceded you
16	conceded he had a fair trial.
17	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Right.
18	JUSTICE GINSBURG: That's not in the case.
19	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Right.
20	MS. NEWMAN: I didn't
21	JUSTICE GINSBURG: It can't be a charade and
22	still be fair.
23	MS. NEWMAN: It's an unfairness of the entire
24	proceedings that were presented. All right? So,
25	there's no separate habeas claim with respect to the

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1 trial, but the -- but reality is when you look at the 2 criminal -- when you look at the Sixth Amendment, it 3 talks about the criminal proceedings. 4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: You're saying it was unfair 5 to have a fair trial? MS. NEWMAN: I'm saying it's unfair to go to 6 7 trial when your attorney tells you, you can't be 8 convicted. 9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: You're saying it's unfair 10 to have a fair trial; isn't that correct? 11 MS. NEWMAN: I'm --12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: That has to be your 13 position. 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: Of course, it is. 15 I'm saying it's unfair to say MS. NEWMAN: 16 that the trial erases the unfairness when there was no 17 possibility but for a conviction at the end of the road. 18 So, this was a certain guilty plea or this was a long 19 guilty plea under the math of a trial. 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But you can never say 21 that there's no possibility of acquittal. Juries can decide not to convict no matter what the evidence. 2.2 23 MS. NEWMAN: There was no defense. I mean, 24 there was no possibility --25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's up to the

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1 jury. It's not up to us ex ante to decide this guy is 2 definitely going to lose; so, let's not waste our time. 3 Juries -- I don't want to say often, but it's not --4 it's certainly not inconceivable that a jury may decide 5 for whatever reason we are not going to convict this guy. Right? 6 7 MS. NEWMAN: That's true, but in this case, 8 Mr. McClain told Mr. Cooper he would be convicted. I mean, he assured him of conviction. He said: You will 9 10 be convicted at the end of the trial; you're just going 11 to be convicted of a lesser offense. The guidelines --12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, what was the 13 defense at trial? 14 MS. NEWMAN: I'm sorry. 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What was the defense at 16 trial? 17 MS. NEWMAN: There wasn't -- there was no 18 defense presented. There was no real defense presented 19 at trial because --20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Did he deny having 21 committed the act of the shooting? 22 MS. NEWMAN: Never. 23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: At trial? 24 MS. NEWMAN: No. 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Is it the case that, in

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most of the cases in which motions of this kind are brought to trial, judges -- if there is a defense of mistaken identity or of "I didn't do it," that judges often find the defendant has not proven that they would have taken the plea? Sorry. I didn't hear the rest. MS. NEWMAN: JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In most cases in which a trial is had, where the defendant is pleading misidentification or "I just didn't do this act," in those cases, do most of the trial judges not permit or don't find that the defendant has met their burden of proving that he or she would have taken the plea? MS. NEWMAN: I don't know that the cases bear out that if you have a valid defense, it would be harder. But I -- I would agree with that -- if that's a hypothetical, that if you have a valid defense, it would be a lot harder to be in this position of showing that you would have taken the plea.

JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I thought in this case, and you can correct me if I am wrong, that your client told the attorney from the beginning: I did it; I want to plea.

23 MS. NEWMAN: That's correct. There was never 24 -- there was no question in this case at any step, at 25 any stage of the proceedings, and there was no -- never,

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1	never anything from the trial attorney other than
2	incompetent advice. He never
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Did you I mean
4	MS. NEWMAN went to trial for an acquittal.
5	He went to trial because he believed legally his client
б	would be convicted of a lesser offense that would put
7	him in a better position than if he had accepted the
8	plea. That was the only reason.
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You said there's I
10	want to make sure I understand your point. You said
11	there was no defense. Does that mean you didn't he
12	had a frivolous defense or that he literally didn't put
13	on a defense; just said, look, the State has to prove
14	the case and they haven't done it.
15	MS. NEWMAN: Well, he held the State to its
16	burden, and that is a defense. I mean, I
17	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Did he did he
18	MS. NEWMAN: I'm not saying literally no
19	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Oh.
20	MS. NEWMAN: I'm not saying literally no
21	defense, and I apologize if that's the way it came
22	across, but no cognizable defense. It wasn't mistaken
23	identification or we didn't intend to hit her. I mean,
24	never contested the basic facts of that case.
25	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's something the

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1 jury could have accepted, right? Even if it's not 2 legally true that if you shoot him -- at the -- the 3 person below the waist, that's not a defense, but I can 4 see a reasonable juror saying he probably didn't intend 5 to kill her. He shot her, you know, below the waist. Maybe that is not such a bad strategy. 6 7 MS. NEWMAN: Except the defense counsel on 8 this record specifically said that he -- that he was not 9 running a strategy and hoping for that, that he told the 10 client legally that's the only thing that could happen 11 to him, so he was in a better position by going to 12 trial. 13 Thank you, Your Honor. 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel. Mr. Bursch, 4 minutes. 15 16 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF JOHN J. BURSCH 17 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER 18 MR. BURSCH: Thank you. I'd like to start at 19 the one point where I think all of us, including counsel 20 on both sides, agree, and that's that a second trial 21 after an error-free first trial doesn't make sense. And 22 that right there says a lot about Mr. Cooper's case, 23 because a Strickland remedy is typically a new trial. 24 And it's exceedingly strange that they're now saying 25 that I don't want a new trial. That demonstrates that

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1	what they are claiming is not a Strickland violation.
2	I would like to address, Justice Breyer,
3	your suggestion that maybe you could have specific
4	performance of the plea; and if it's rejected, then the
5	trial result could simply be re-imposed. And the
6	question is: Well, what's the problem with that? And I
7	can tick off at least five.
8	First, as Justice Ginsburg pointed out, it
9	takes away the prosecutor's ability to withdraw the
10	plea, which he or she undeniably would have had the
11	right.
12	Second, as Justice Alito said, it ignores
13	that there's information that could be learned in the
14	interim. Mr. Cooper shot three or four other people.
15	Third, it ignores the fact that an
16	error-free trial has taken place. The prosecutor has
17	taken the risk of putting that 8-year-old sexual abuse
18	victim on the stand, and you cannot take that risk away.
19	Fourth, as I already mentioned, we've got
20	the separation of powers issue and prosecutorial
21	discretion.
22	Fifth, we're going to have intractable
23	problems. Say the offer was plead to A, we'll dismiss
24	B. He rejects it based on deficient advice. You go to
25	trial. He is convicted on A and acquitted on B. And

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now we're going to try to enforce the plea on A? I
 mean, that's almost a double jeopardy problem. So,
 there's intractable problems.

4 The second point I want to make is about the 5 death situation. And that's one we take very seriously. And, Justice Alito, it may be that in a death penalty 6 7 situation, there could be a due process right or some 8 other constitutional right that may mitigate in favor of 9 requiring something to be put on the record. But what's 10 clear is that, under this Court's existing precedent, 11 that is not a Strickland violation because the amount of 12 the sentence, whether it's death or 50 years, has 13 nothing to do with the reliability of the adjudicatory 14 proceeding and the sentence.

15 Finally, the last point that I want to make 16 is something else on which we can all agree. Mr. Cooper 17 is quilty of shooting Kali Mundy. He also got exactly 18 the sentence that the people prescribed for the crime 19 that committed. There is very little unfair about 20 holding him to that sentence. As Justice Kennedy said, 21 it's the position of Mr. Cooper that it is unfair to 22 have a fair trial. And from our perspective, that is 23 really the beginning and the end of this inquiry. 24 And unless you have any further questions --

JUSTICE KENNEDY: I have one, but it's more

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1 appropriate, I think, for the Government of the United 2 States. Under the Federal rules, Rule 11, there has to 3 be a colloquy before a plea is entered. Do you think 4 the Federal rules and perhaps State rules should be 5 amended so that judges, trial judges, before imposing a sentence inquire: Have there been plea offers; have 6 7 they all been communicated to the defendant? 8 Is that good practice? 9 MR. BURSCH: It could be good practice, but 10 it wouldn't have solved the problem here, because even 11 if they had put the fact of the plea on the record, the 12 problem was the alleged deficient advice that the lawyer 13 gave to the client in private. And so, that doesn't 14 solve the core problem. The core problem is that 15 they're trying to claim that it was unfair to have a 16 fair trial. 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, if they had -- if 18 plea offer had come out -- well, I don't know how it 19 would work. When you enter a not guilty plea, you enter 20 a not quilty plea. 21 MR. BURSCH: Right. You know, the judge, 22 under your theory then, would have had to inquire: 23 Well, what advice did your attorney give you with respect to that? And then evaluate whether that advice 24

25 was good advice or bad advice. And I would respectfully

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1	submit that that would not be a good policy to adopt by
2	rule.
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
4	Counsel.
5	MR. BURSCH: Thank you.
6	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The case is
7	submitted.
8	(Whereupon, at 11:04 a.m., the case in the
9	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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