## SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

ΙΝ	THE SUPREME	COURT O	r ihe	ONTIED	SIAILS
LOUIS CIMI	NELLI,			)	
	Petition	er,		)	
	v.		)	) No. 2	1-1170
UNITED STA	TES,			)	
	Responde	nt.		)	

Pages: 1 through 77

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: November 28, 2022

## HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
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3	LOUIS CIMINELLI,	)
4	Petitioner,	)
5	v.	) No. 21-1170
6	UNITED STATES,	)
7	Respondent.	)
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9		
10	Washington, D.C	•
11	Monday, November 2	8, 2022
12		
13	The above-entitled matt	er came on for
14	oral argument before the Supre	me Court of the
15	United States at 11:11 a.m.	
16		
17	APPEARANCES:	
18		
19	MICHAEL R. DREEBEN, ESQUIRE, W	ashington, D.C.; on
20	behalf of the Petitioner.	
21	ERIC J. FEIGIN, Deputy Solicit	or General,
22	Department of Justice, Was	hington, D.C.; on behalf
23	of the Respondent.	
24		
25		

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:11 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument next in Case 21-1170, Ciminelli versus
5	United States.
6	Mr. Dreeben.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF MICHAEL R. DREEBEN
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. DREEBEN: Thank you, Mr. Chief
10	Justice, and may it please the Court:
11	For decades, the Second Circuit has
12	applied an invalid theory of wire fraud called
13	the right-to-control doctrine. The government
14	now agrees. It concedes that the
15	right-to-control doctrine "could lead to
16	overbroad results that would expand property
17	fraud beyond the definition at common law and as
18	Congress would have understood it."
19	Instead, the government offers a new
20	and even broader theory of fraud, fraudulent
21	inducement of a transaction. Yet, in the 150
22	years since the mail fraud statute was enacted,
23	no case of this Court has embraced that theory.
24	This Court should not do so now.
25	First, the Court should not entertain

- 1 the theory at all. The theory was not the basis
- 2 for the jury verdict. This Court has held that
- 3 it can "not affirm a criminal conviction on the
- 4 basis of a theory not presented to the jury."
- 5 Second, the government not only
- 6 forfeited but intentionally abandoned a fraud
- 7 theory treating the contract funds as property.
- 8 The government superseded the indictment to drop
- 9 that theory. It proceeded solely on the right
- 10 to control. And it used that theory to exclude
- 11 critical defense evidence.
- 12 Third, the new theory is wrong. The
- theory dispenses with a quintessential
- 14 requirement of common law fraud, harm to a
- 15 traditional property interest if the scheme
- 16 succeeds. It would radically expand federal
- 17 law, violate federalism principles, and end-run
- 18 limits on honest-services fraud. And the
- 19 theory's breadth requires ad hoc patches that
- 20 contradict black letter law and that even the
- 21 government does not fully endorse.
- Instead of wading into those issues,
- 23 the Court should resolve the question presented,
- reject the right-to-control theory, and reverse.
- 25 And because the government has offered no other

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1 theory of property fraud below, the Court should
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- 2 direct entry of an acquittal.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- 4 To begin with the right-to-control
- 5 theory, which is the question presented, the
- 6 Second Circuit crafted that theory based on
- 7 non-traditional ideas drawn from a set of cases
- 8 that did not examine fundamental questions of
- 9 what property means under the property fraud
- 10 statutes.
- 11 Those statutes incorporate the common
- 12 law, as this Court has repeatedly held, and --
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: So, Mr. Dreeben, I
- mean, let's say that you win this case because
- the government presented the right to control as
- 16 a property interest and now is not even
- 17 defending that, all right? So I -- I just want
- 18 to -- so let's -- let's -- let's say you win.
- 19 But -- but you're saying that the
- 20 government doesn't even have it right now, and I
- guess I wonder why that's the case. You know, a
- 22 billion dollars is a lot of property. And, if
- you take what the government is now saying, you
- know, frame it as this was an effort to obtain
- 25 money, the most classic form of property,

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1 through a fraudulent scheme.
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- 2 So why couldn't -- I know it didn't --
- 3 but why couldn't the government have framed its
- 4 case in that way?
- 5 MR. DREEBEN: So, Justice Kagan, the
- 6 fundamental reason why that cannot be a valid
- 7 basis for property fraud is it was not the
- 8 meaning of common law fraud at the time that
- 9 Congress enacted the mail fraud statute and that
- 10 assimilated those common law concepts.
- 11 Fraud requires harm to a traditional
- 12 property interest. It is usually, in government
- prosecuted cases, pecuniary harm. For example,
- 14 the government says this could be an
- overcharging case. It wasn't. But, if the
- 16 government wanted to prosecute pecuniary fraud
- 17 as an overcharging case, that fits within common
- 18 law fraud.
- 19 It also fits within common law fraud
- 20 if the victim is deprived of another --
- 21 JUSTICE KAGAN: So, if -- if I -- if I
- 22 understand you correctly, you're saying that in
- 23 addition -- the government has to prove -- in
- 24 addition to proving that there was a scheme to
- obtain property, a scheme to obtain money, the

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1 government also has to prove that on the other
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- 2 side there was economic loss.
- 3 And I guess that strikes me as just a
- 4 different issue, an orthogonal issue from the
- 5 one that really has been raised in this case,
- 6 which is what does obtaining property look like.
- 7 Is it enough to say the -- the fact that there
- 8 was interference with a right of control, that's
- 9 not property, but the fact that you're trying to
- 10 get contract money, that is property?
- 11 And then, as to all the other elements
- of the prosecution, whether it's what's the
- 13 right materiality standard, whether it's --
- 14 whether it's do you have to show economic loss
- 15 to the defrauded party, as to all those
- 16 elements, I mean, they're just not in this case
- 17 at all.
- 18 Didn't we basically take this case to
- 19 decide was there a scheme to obtain property
- 20 here? Well, no, there wasn't, because the
- 21 government thought about it as the right to
- 22 control, but, yes, if the government had said
- they were trying to obtain a billion dollars,
- that would have been sufficient.
- MR. DREEBEN: So, Justice Kagan, I

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1 completely agree with the first part of what you
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- 2 said. This case is about the right to control
- and whether the right to control is a cognizable
- 4 property interest that can be obtained.
- I would part company on whether the
- 6 government can just shift to a pure fraudulent
- 7 inducement theory either in this case or as a
- 8 general matter. I was answering your question
- 9 about whether it is a valid theory of fraud or
- 10 whether there does need to be some kind of
- 11 pecuniary harm, harm to a distinctive recognized
- 12 property interest of another kind.
- We say yes. The government says no.
- 14 That was not an argument that the government
- made below. It's not something on which this
- 16 Court can look to a wealth of mail fraud cases
- 17 that analyze the question. So we don't think
- 18 that it's in this case.
- 19 And I -- to that extent, I agree with
- 20 you. It is orthogonal. It's not presented.
- 21 It's an improper issue before the Court. If the
- 22 Court were to reach it, it would have --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So -- can I stop
- 24 you there? So, if we could just write an
- opinion saying the right-to-control theory is no

- good for the reasons you've stated and even the
- 2 government acknowledges, then that's the end of
- 3 it?
- 4 MR. DREEBEN: That would be fine with
- 5 us, Justice Kavanaugh, so I --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: We don't have to
- 7 resolve anything more?
- 8 MR. DREEBEN: You do not, except that
- 9 --
- 10 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You want us to,
- 11 but we don't have to, correct? To -- to pick up
- 12 on Justice Kagan's question.
- MR. DREEBEN: The Court should direct
- an entry of acquittal because the only property
- interest that the government offered below isn't
- 16 a property interest. The proof that corresponds
- 17 to the jury instructions and the theory does not
- 18 establish the elements of fraud. That should be
- 19 the end of the case.
- The Court could write a short opinion
- 21 explaining that the right to control doesn't
- 22 have common law provenance. It doesn't satisfy
- 23 the elements of the mail and wire fraud
- 24 statutes. In this case, that's the only theory
- 25 that the government can properly rely on in

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1 order to sustain the prosecution.
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- 2 There was no proof of a traditional
- 3 property interest. Therefore, you enter a
- 4 judgment of acquittal.
- 5 JUSTICE BARRETT: But can't we just --
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: Well --
- 7 JUSTICE BARRETT: -- let the Second
- 8 Circuit figure that out?
- 9 MR. DREEBEN: Well, Justice Barrett,
- 10 the reason why I don't think that it's an
- 11 appropriate issue for the Second Circuit to get
- on remand is this Court's repeated statements in
- 13 cases like Dunn, McCormick, and specifically
- 14 Chiarella and McNally itself that the Court
- 15 cannot affirm a criminal conviction on the basis
- of a theory not presented to the jury.
- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: But that -- but
- 18 there's a -- there's a gulf between not
- 19 affirming and acquitting. I mean, we could not
- 20 affirm and send it back, and then maybe the
- 21 Second Circuit says there has to be a new trial
- on whatever other theory the government has.
- MR. DREEBEN: Well, Justice Jackson,
- 24 the -- that would only make sense if it were
- 25 permissible under the rules of procedure and the

- 1 Constitution for the government to get that
- 2 second bite at the apple.
- And in a case like Chiarella, which is
- 4 pretty much on all fours like the -- with this
- 5 case, the Court simply entered a -- an opinion
- 6 that said reverse. It didn't remand for
- 7 anything else. Chiarella involved the financial
- 8 printer who was charged and convicted of
- 9 defrauding innocent market traders based on
- information that he stole from the print shop
- 11 about upcoming financial transactions.
- 12 The Court said: That's not a valid
- theory of insider trading because it doesn't
- 14 involve fraud. The government came back and
- 15 said: Yes, but he stole the information from
- the print shop, in breach of an established
- 17 fiduciary duty, an agency relationship, and that
- 18 constitutes everything you need for an insider
- 19 trading violation, which, by the way, this Court
- 20 later held in United States versus O'Hagan. But
- 21 the Court said we cannot affirm a criminal
- 22 conviction on the basis of a theory not
- 23 presented to the jury, and the judgment was
- 24 reversed and Chiarella went free.
- 25 And that is the same, I think, result

- 1 that should occur in a case like this one. The
- 2 government's new theory, beyond all of its other
- 3 flaws, was not charged in the indictment. The
- 4 government is actually asking the Court to
- 5 entertain in a theory that would create a
- 6 constructive amendment of the right --
- 7 JUSTICE JACKSON: But you don't -- you
- 8 don't charge theories. I mean, the government
- 9 charged the statute, violation of the wire fraud
- 10 statute, and it went to trial on a particular
- 11 theory as to how that was accomplished. But I
- think the indictment is not defective, is it?
- MR. DREEBEN: Yeah, the indictment
- 14 actually is defective, Justice Jackson, because
- it's not enough at least in a case like this,
- where the government says what the property
- 17 interest is. There is a theory of the
- indictment, and the government has to prove the
- 19 theory that it charged, not a different theory.
- 20 And that is particularly true in this
- 21 case because the indictment specifically charges
- 22 the right to control its assets as the property
- interest, and that was not an accident.
- The government originally had an
- 25 indictment in which it did charge that the

- 1 ultimate state-awarded contracts were the
- 2 property interest, the same thing that my friend
- 3 now says is the property interest.
- 4 But there was a case in the Southern
- 5 District of you -- New York called United States
- 6 versus Davis in which the government had gone to
- 7 trial on a similar indictment that charged a
- 8 contract as the property interest, and then it
- 9 tried to save the conviction by pointing to the
- 10 right-to-control theory, which is very vast and
- 11 nebulous.
- 12 And the district court said you cannot
- 13 do that. That would be a constructive amendment
- of the indictment. So what did the government
- do? It went back and it changed from the first
- 16 superseding indictment to the second superseding
- 17 indictment to delete contract funds as property
- and to substitute the right to control.
- 19 And you can see that most clearly in a
- 20 red-lined document that the government filed
- 21 with the Court, which is Docket Entry 319-2,
- 22 which contains a red line of the differences
- 23 between the two indictments, and you can see
- that the government red-lined out that "the
- 25 scheme to defraud defrauded Fort Schuyler of" --

- 1 now I'm going to read the strick -- the stricken
- 2 language -- "an award of significant
- 3 taxpayer-funded development contracts, " and it
- 4 substituted in "defrauded Fort Schuyler of its
- 5 right to control its assets, and thereby exposed
- 6 Fort Schuyler to the risk of economic harm."
- 7 So the government didn't just not
- 8 charge this theory or not charge any theory. It
- 9 put the defendants on notice, it put the Court
- on notice, and it repeatedly relied on
- 11 right-to-control rather than a property fraud
- 12 conventional theory to exclude critical defense
- 13 evidence.
- 14 And I think, when you have all of
- those features, whether it adds up to a formal
- 16 waiver or as the kind of abandonment of a new
- 17 theory that should foreclose the government from
- 18 getting its second bite at the apple, I think it
- 19 adds up to an acquittal.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, whether there
- 21 was a constructive amendment to the indictment
- is a complicated question and it wasn't one that
- 23 I understood us to take. But put -- putting
- that aside, if in a case there is no objection
- 25 to a jury instruction, it turns out that the

- 1 jury instruction is erroneous, maybe even omits
- 2 an essential element of the offense, but the
- 3 evidence is sufficient to support -- arguably
- 4 sufficient to support conviction under a proper
- 5 interpretation of the statute, and the argument
- 6 that's made on appeal is that the defendant is
- 7 entitled to a judgment of acquittal, is that
- 8 person entitled to a judgment of acquittal?
- 9 MR. DREEBEN: Justice Alito,
- 10 ordinarily not, but that -- that would
- 11 presuppose a situation in which the government
- 12 proceeded on its theory and didn't actually
- abandon that theory in prior litigation so that
- as a matter of whether you call it forfeiture,
- waiver, invited error, whatever you want to call
- it, the government forewent the theory that it
- is now urging upon the Court.
- 18 And so, once that -- it is out of the
- 19 case, I think you have to ask the question
- 20 whether the evidence that was introduced to
- 21 prove the crime charged satisfied the elements
- 22 of that crime. And the government can't come up
- on appeal as it has done here for the first time
- 24 in this Court and said: Since this is a
- 25 sufficiency case, we get to completely reinvent

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1 the theory, we get to substitute in a new one
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- 2 for the defective one that the Second Circuit
- 3 used, and the only question that we ask is
- 4 whether the evidence was sufficient under that
- 5 theory, and we can ask the Court to announce
- 6 this new theory for the first time in this case.
- 7 If that were true, the government
- 8 would have been able to defend the insider
- 9 trading conviction in Chiarella by saying:
- 10 Decide the misappropriation doctrine. After
- all, it turned out to be a valid theory, and
- there were a couple of justices in the dissent
- who thought it was a valid theory even in that
- 14 case. But the Court said no, you cannot affirm
- a criminal conviction on a basis of a theory not
- 16 given to the jury.
- 17 And even if that doesn't hold true in
- 18 every single case -- and I think, Justice Alito,
- 19 Neder and cases like that suggest that there can
- 20 be harmless error -- it should hold true in a
- 21 case like this, where the government's new
- theory emerges only in its merits briefing in
- this Court and was abandoned by amendments to
- 24 the indictment below.
- 25 JUSTICE ALITO: I -- I know --

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1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, you're
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- 2 assuming -- I'm sorry.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Go ahead.
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You can -- no, no,
- 5 no. Finish.
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, this was a
- 7 different point, but --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I was going to
- 9 follow up on this.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why don't you
- 11 go ahead, Justice Sotomayor.
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Justice Alito's
- 13 question assumed a jury waiver, a jury
- 14 instruction waiver.
- 15 Did you waive here?
- 16 MR. DREEBEN: Well, I don't -- I don't
- think we waived anything. We preserved all the
- 18 way through our objection that the
- 19 right-to-control doctrine is not a valid theory
- of fraud. That's preserved at page 103 of the
- 21 JA.
- The Second Circuit dropped a footnote
- 23 and said: The defendants challenge this theory.
- We don't have to reach it because it's settled
- 25 Second Circuit law. And it used that theory to

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1 analyze the sufficiency of the evidence. And
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- 2 that's the theory -- the only theory on which
- 3 the Second Circuit found that the evidence is
- 4 sufficient.
- We've gotten --
- 6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So you say you
- 7 object -- that's reserved --
- 8 MR. DREEBEN: That's preserved.
- 9 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- preserved your
- 10 jury instruction?
- 11 MR. DREEBEN: Correct. That's
- 12 correct. Well, I -- I -- I want to be -- be
- 13 clear, Justice Sotomayor, we're not talking
- about the jury instructions on our theory of the
- 15 argument. What we are talking about is the
- 16 sufficiency of the evidence and the legal
- 17 standard that the Second Circuit used to find
- 18 the evidence sufficient.
- 19 It used an incorrect standard based on
- 20 right-to-control. That's the only theory that
- 21 it used to examine the sufficiency of the
- 22 evidence. Because the evidence is not
- 23 sufficient to prove property under that theory,
- 24 an acquittal is mandated.
- 25 And the government's --

Τ	JUSTICE	SOTOMAYOR.	AII right.	Let's

- 2 go back to Justice Alito.
- 3 MR. DREEBEN: -- tangent has brought
- 4 up things that require me to talk about the
- 5 indictment and the jury instructions because
- 6 it's not, Justice Alito, that we're asking you
- 7 to resolve a constructive amendment theory.
- 8 It's that the government's theory would create a
- 9 constructive amendment. It would change the
- 10 language of the indictment back to the S1
- indictment after having dropped that and put in
- the S2 indictment, a right-to-control theory.
- 13 And we're looking at the jury
- instructions only to answer the question: Did
- 15 the jury resolve the question that the
- 16 government is now putting to it under its
- 17 fraudulent inducement theory? And the answer to
- 18 that is clearly no. The property differs. The
- 19 government won't dispute that.
- 20 Instead of it being the
- 21 right-to-control assets, it migrates over to
- 22 become the contract funds at the end of the day.
- The government offers a new materiality theory
- that says that the misrepresentations have to go
- 25 to the essence of the bargain. There's nothing

- in the jury instructions that contain that
- 2 amorphous characteristic anyway. The jury
- 3 didn't decide that.
- 4 And the government offers a slant on
- 5 "by means of" that the acquisition of the
- 6 property or the obtaining of the property has to
- 7 be by means of the misrepresentation. That
- 8 borrows from this Court's decision in Loughrin
- 9 to say that it has the natural tendency to
- 10 induce the person to part with property. That
- also was not in the jury instructions.
- 12 And, critically, the defense has
- defenses on both of those issues that it was not
- 14 given the chance to litigate because that was
- not the theory of the case that the government
- 16 went forward on below.
- 17 On the essence of the property, the
- 18 essence of the bargain requirement that the
- 19 government now offers, it is highly significant
- that at page 47 of the government's brief the
- 21 government says that a fair exchange can negate
- the materiality under its essence of the bargain
- 23 theory of a misrepresentation.
- 24 JUSTICE ALITO: But what -- what if
- 25 accurate information is the essence of the

- 1 bargain? Now I know you don't think we need to
- 2 get into this, and -- and you may be right about
- 3 that, but I just want to draw on your knowledge
- 4 of -- of criminal law and -- and -- and your
- 5 understanding of common law fraud.
- 6 So take -- take this example. Suppose
- 7 someone hires an agency -- enters into a
- 8 contract with an agency to find, let's say, a
- 9 nanny for the -- the -- their children or a
- 10 caregiver for an older person, and the agency
- 11 promises that they're going to do a thorough
- 12 check of these individuals. They are going to
- 13 contact prior employers and get references and
- do a criminal background check. And, in fact,
- they do none of those things, but it turns out
- that the nanny or the caregiver actually does a
- 17 decent job.
- 18 Is there not fraud there?
- MR. DREEBEN: There may be, Justice
- 20 Alito, and it would turn on whether the -- the
- 21 government chooses to show pecuniary loss.
- 22 Overcharging, overpaying for services that were
- 23 not performed, that is the kind of conventional
- fraud case that the government points to in the
- 25 Finazzo case.

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1 JUSTICE ALITO: Yeah, but what if
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- 2 there is no -- they don't try to prove that they
- 3 paid -- they paid too much, but they paid for a
- 4 person who was unproven?
- 5 MR. DREEBEN: Yes. Yes.
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: And they -- and what
- 7 they wanted was somebody who was a proven
- 8 commodity.
- 9 MR. DREEBEN: Well --
- 10 JUSTICE ALITO: Certainly, they're
- 11 going to think we were defrauded, we were
- 12 exposed to a risk that we didn't want to
- 13 undertake, and we paid money for that. That's
- just why we paid the money.
- Why isn't that fraud?
- MR. DREEBEN: So they certainly were
- 17 deceived. And the government certainly can try
- 18 to show that there would be pecuniary loss
- 19 associated with that, that they paid for
- services that they didn't get, which is a very
- 21 conventional type of fraud claim.
- 22 If all there is is deceit and the
- 23 contract actually was a fair exchange and the
- 24 employee was fully competent, capable,
- 25 certified, qualified, then it wouldn't be common

- 1 law fraud. It might be some other crime that
- 2 covers deception. It might be a civil case that
- 3 would entitle the victim to rescission. The
- 4 civil rules have different criteria and
- 5 requirements than the criminal law. And it
- 6 might be a violation of some other criminal
- 7 statute.
- 8 But the fraud law at common law always
- 9 looked to some kind of a loss, be it be
- 10 pecuniary or a loss of specific property that
- 11 you set out to buy or something else that could
- 12 be monetized, because, after all, fraud law
- originated in protecting people's property
- 14 rights.
- 15 And this Court in McNally said: It
- 16 protected against being wronged in your property
- 17 rights. And it didn't mean conventional
- 18 fraudulent inducement, which is grist for the
- 19 mill in a thousand civil cases that would all
- 20 become fit cases for criminal fraud if the
- 21 government's new and vastly enlarged fraudulent
- 22 inducement theory is adopted.
- So, while the victim may have a
- 24 subjective sense of being wronged, that does not
- 25 mean that it fits within the parameters of what

- 1 has always been required for a fraud scheme up
- till the government's current submission, which
- 3 is some sort of a scheme to deceive someone for
- 4 the purpose of obtaining property in a way that
- 5 would produce a pecuniary loss or some other
- 6 harm to a traditional property interest.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Mr. Dreeben, let's
- 8 say that we don't want to say that this statute
- 9 protects just common law Blackstonian property,
- 10 as you propose in your brief.
- 11 Could we decide that the right to
- 12 control assets isn't a sufficient basis for the
- 13 prosecution another way? Maybe by saying that
- 14 they're conflating -- that the government is
- 15 conflating the materiality element with the
- 16 intent-to-defraud element and that way not have
- 17 to decide cases that aren't before us about
- other, you know, bundles -- sticks in the bundle
- 19 of property?
- 20 MR. DREEBEN: Well, Justice Barrett, I
- 21 -- I think that there are a number of ways to
- 22 conclude that the right-to-control theory is
- 23 invalid. Your Honor pointed to one. It tends
- 24 to merge different elements, not only
- 25 materiality, but the way that the Second Circuit

- 1 has described it, it also subsumes intent to
- 2 defraud by collapsing all the -- those elements.
- 3 It violates core requirements of the statute.
- 4 It also tends to run aground because
- 5 it infringes on turf that's covered by Skilling
- 6 and McNally and would allow the government to
- 7 prosecute a variety of kinds of things -- the --
- 8 through the guise of calling them property fraud
- 9 when it cannot do so under honest services.
- 10 And I'm not saying that the two are
- 11 hermetically sealed worlds, but the way the
- 12 government has treated right-to-control in the
- 13 Second Circuit, it fills in the blanks where the
- 14 right -- where the honest-services doctrine got
- cut off by McNally and not reinstated by 1346.
- 16 So the Court could also say: Congress
- 17 reinstated certain intangible rights in the
- 18 honest-services amendment, Section 1346. The
- 19 right to control assets is not one of them.
- 20 And, therefore, it does not qualify as property
- 21 for purposes of the property fraud statutes.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: And you don't see
- any problem with any of those routes?
- MR. DREEBEN: I think they all
- 25 cumulatively reinforce each other, and the Court

- 1 may wish to take this opportunity to say what it
- 2 has already said in Cleveland and in Carpenter,
- 3 which is that the wire fraud and mail fraud
- 4 statutes protect traditional property interests.
- 5 It does not have to map what every traditional
- 6 property interest is today.
- 7 This is not a case, for example, about
- 8 intellectual property. It's about a made-up
- 9 right to information that bears on an economic
- 10 decision. That has no roots in the common law.
- 11 I think the Court can at least say that without
- 12 prejudicing the government in arguing for other
- 13 kinds of property, whether exotic or
- 14 traditional.
- JUSTICE ALITO: What do you say about
- 16 the statement in Shaw that bank fraud requires
- 17 no actual loss or intent to cause loss?
- 18 MR. DREEBEN: So I think that
- 19 statement is entirely correct. And if you look
- 20 at the -- the facts of Shaw, it involves someone
- 21 who stole somebody's credentials to their
- 22 account and used it to extract money from the
- 23 bank. And the defense was: Hey, I did not want
- 24 to harm the bank. I -- I was just trying to
- 25 defraud the customer. And beyond that, the bank

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isn't going to lose any money because there are
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- 2 all these banking regulations that allow it to
- 3 recoup money from the -- from the customer and
- 4 from other banks.
- 5 And what Justice Breyer was saying in
- 6 that opinion was: That's not a defense. The
- 7 fact that you think that someday the bank will
- 8 be made whole is not a defense to fraud, just as
- 9 it would not be a defense to fraud if I went to
- 10 a bank, totally misrepresented my income, got a
- loan at an interest rate that I never would have
- 12 gotten if I gave my true income, and I said:
- But it doesn't really matter because I'm going
- 14 to come up with the money and pay them back.
- The fact that you think everything
- will turn out okay doesn't obviate the finding
- of a scheme to defraud. And I don't think
- 18 Justice Breyer was doing anything other than
- 19 that in that opinion.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 21 Thomas, anything further?
- Justice Sotomayor?
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I am a little
- 24 confused. Assume that I want to enter a
- transaction, and the other side says I won't do

- 1 it if you have been in cahoots with someone
- who's part of this decision-making.
- Isn't the essence of my bargain that I
- 4 gave you this contract and you took my money?
- 5 You performed services, but I wouldn't have
- 6 entered this contract with you. It's very
- 7 clear. I said it to you.
- 8 MR. DREEBEN: Mm-hmm. And you would
- 9 have an excellent action in breach of contract,
- 10 Justice Sotomayor. You would have potentially a
- 11 --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why isn't that
- 13 false pretenses?
- 14 MR. DREEBEN: Well --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Which is what the
- 16 argument the -- the --
- 17 MR. DREEBEN: -- I -- I --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You call it
- 19 fraudulent inducement, but the government calls
- it a common law false pretenses case.
- MR. DREEBEN: I think the government
- 22 calls it fraudulent inducement. And we and the
- 23 government have disagreed on what fraudulent
- 24 pretenses at common law required. We think that
- 25 it does require some form of a loss. The

- 1 government has countered with citations that it
- 2 thinks supports the opposite.
- 3 One of the problems with this Court
- 4 trying to resolve complicated issues of common
- 5 law when the parties only raise the issue in the
- 6 respondent's brief and then reply briefs is that
- 7 the Court doesn't have a full foundation of the
- 8 literally hundreds of common law cases that
- 9 address this.
- 10 But our view would be there might be
- 11 some other offense, there might be some civil
- 12 action, almost certainly would, but the
- 13 requisites for a criminal conviction, and in
- this case, one that carries 20 years in prison,
- 15 are not met for every misstatement in a
- 16 contract, every false statement that the
- 17 government --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I -- I didn't say
- 19 every false statement or misstatement. A
- 20 material one.
- MR. DREEBEN: True. And -- and the
- 22 government would substitute yet a different
- 23 materiality standard from the one that this
- 24 Court has said in an effort to limit the reach
- of its fraudulent inducement theory because,

Т	taken at lace value, there are hundreds of cases
2	that are litigated in state courts every year on
3	a fraudulent inducement theory, and, under the
4	government's theory, they are all federal
5	crimes, at least if the government can show its
6	new "essence of the bargain" requirement and its
7	"by means of" requirement.
8	And that has never been the way that
9	fraud prosecutions have previously proceeded.
10	Every single case in this Court is either a
11	something-for-nothing fraud or something
12	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But we're back
13	to we shouldn't get into this?
14	MR. DREEBEN: I I would entirely
15	encourage the Court not to get into it and to
16	decide instead the question presented.
17	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Kagan?
18	Justice Gorsuch?
19	Justice Kavanaugh? No?
20	Justice Barrett?
21	Justice Jackson? Okay.
22	Thank you, counsel.
23	MR. DREEBEN: Thank you.
24	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Feigin.

1	
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF ERIC J. FEIGIN
3	ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
4	MR. FEIGIN: Thank you, Mr. Chief
5	Justice, and may it please the Court:
6	If I could just start with two main
7	points, one about the scope of property fraud
8	generally and the other about how the
9	right-to-control doctrine fits into that.
10	It's always been property fraud to
11	have fraudulent inducement like in this case,
12	where the victim is tricked into paying for
13	something fundamentally different from what he
14	bargained for.
15	Both in their reply brief at Footnote
16	2 and just now, Petitioner acknowledges that
17	receiving specific property different from what
18	the victim expected, like a horse with a
19	different name, even if it has equal value, can
20	be fraud.
21	To the extent there's daylight between
22	the parties about the substance of what property
23	fraud covers, I think it goes to cases of what I
24	might call pedigree fraud, where there's a lie
25	about the certification of property or important

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1 to us would be a case where, for example,
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- 2 someone lies about their eligibility for a
- 3 veterans' preference in contracting.
- 4 And we would say that that's fraud,
- 5 and it's always been fraud at common law. And
- 6 that's exactly the paradigm that this case in
- 7 which Petitioner and the other defendants
- 8 schemed to obtain \$750 million in Fort
- 9 Schuyler's funds by rigging the bidding process
- 10 and lying about it fits.
- In maintaining that it fits, we're not
- 12 abandoning the jury's instruct -- findings under
- the right-to-control theory. We're explaining
- 14 how they map on to the more straightforward and
- traditional elements of property fraud as they
- 16 have always been understood.
- 17 And that's, I think, sufficient to
- 18 confirm -- affirm, I'm sorry -- to confirm that
- 19 the conviction should be affirmed because I
- 20 don't really understand on the facts of this
- 21 case and on the indictment that was submitted
- and went to the jury how the jury found any
- 23 difference between the right to control the
- \$750 million and the \$750 million itself.
- 25 I think --

1	JUSTICE THOMAS: Mr. Feigin, are you
2	abandoning the Second Circuit's control theory?
3	MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor, we do
4	think it let me make a few points about that.
5	Just to directly answer your question,
6	we would be fine with the Court explaining that
7	that's not the right way for the Second Circuit
8	to be going about thinking about these cases.
9	The the second point I would make
10	is I think the Second Circuit has gotten a
11	little bit of a bad rap here. I think it's
12	understandable how it got here.
13	Petitioner at pages 22 to 23 of his
14	brief and pages 8 to 9 of his reply brief
15	acknowledges that the use of property can be
16	property. This Court in recent cases like Kelly
17	and Shaw has referred to it as property. And
18	the this Court nodded to the idea of a
19	right-to-control theory, admittedly, without
20	endorsing it, in both McNally and Cleveland.
21	And I think the Second Circuit had a
22	defensible way of doing this at at the
23	beginning, but it's become clear that it's an
24	awkward fit with property fraud as it's been
25	traditionally understood.

1	In particular, what we think the
2	Second Circuit has done that's really its sort
3	of fundamental conceptual mistake is, instead of
4	housing the its idea that there needs to be
5	some way in which the victim is not getting what
6	it's bargained for in materiality, where we
7	think it properly belongs and where the Court
8	put it in, for example, Universal Health
9	Services, interpreting the standard definition
10	of materiality in the particular context of
11	contracting, it has added this tangible harm
12	requirement that goes into the property element.
13	Now I think, if you asked Congress
14	when it implemented the mail fraud statute: Is
15	use of property property? They would have said:
16	Yeah, you know, Blackstone says that it is for
17	for those learned in Blackstone.
18	And but I think, if you ask them:
19	Is use of property that result that is
20	influenced by information about an economic
21	decision that leads to tangible harm property?
22	You're starting to gerrymander the definition of
23	property beyond something that Congress would
24	have understood.
25	CUIFE HIGHICE DODEDTC: Councel given

- 1 what you said about the right to control as,
- whatever you want to say, properly understood
- 3 or, you know, the Second Circuit has gotten a
- 4 bum rap, but there's something here, we should
- 5 go on and decide the question presented, which
- 6 is whether or not the right-to-control theory is
- 7 valid, right?
- 8 MR. FEIGIN: Yeah, I -- I agree that
- 9 the Court should obviously decide the question
- 10 presented. I -- I would urge the Court that in
- 11 doing so -- I -- I guess I would say a couple
- 12 things about that.
- First, as we explain in our brief, we
- think the right-to-control theory properly
- cabined and as it was applied in this case does
- 16 identify cases that are traditional property
- 17 fraud, and I can get to why I think this
- 18 particular conviction should be affirmed under
- 19 the doctrine in a second.
- 20 But I -- I take great issue with the
- 21 idea that cases like this are categorically out
- of the scope of property fraud, which, again,
- 23 I -- I don't really see much difference between
- 24 this and a veteran's benefit -- veterans'
- 25 contracting preference benefits type case, where

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1 there's just a misrepresentation, not about the
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- 2 services you're going to receive, not about how
- 3 good they are, not about the price you're
- 4 getting, but about the fact that somebody who
- 5 owns a business is, in fact, a veteran of this
- 6 nation's armed forces.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, you
- 8 --
- 9 MR. FEIGIN: Yeah.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- you said
- 11 that you're -- you think the theory is still
- valid properly cabined. Was the theory properly
- 13 cabined in the jury instructions?
- MR. FEIGIN: Your Honor, I think, if
- 15 you took the jury instructions outside the
- 16 context of this case, the jury instructions
- 17 encapsulate a view of the right-to-control
- 18 theory that could in some cases lead to
- 19 overbroad results.
- 20 However, the jury received the -- a
- 21 copy of the indictment in this case. If you
- look at Joint Appendix 27, paragraph 14 of the
- indictment, it makes clear that what the goal of
- 24 the scheme here was was exactly what I said at
- 25 the beginning, which was to get \$750 million in

1 government funds by rigging the bidding process

- 2 and lying about it.
- 3 And --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So the -- so
- 5 the theory would be properly cabined because the
- 6 jury would, of course, not simply rely on the
- 7 instructions but would -- but also read the
- 8 indictment and would properly resolve any
- 9 difference between the two?
- 10 MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor, I think
- 11 the instructions told the jury that it had to
- 12 find that there -- that what property here was
- 13 the right-to-control assets. And I think, in
- 14 certain cases -- and it all -- the jury also had
- 15 to find tangible harm. And I think that
- 16 perhaps, in certain cases, even that might still
- 17 go too far.
- But, in the context of nearly every
- 19 fraudulent-inducement case and certainly in this
- 20 case, what the jury's going to find when it
- 21 finds that the property was aimed at the use of
- 22 control of assets in the context of two parties
- that are bargaining for a contract, the assets
- are going to be the contract funds.
- 25 And then what you have is a species of

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1 fraud that has long existed at common law.
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- 2 Again, I -- I -- I take the -- I take them to
- acknowledge the horse of a different name case,
- 4 where what you want is a horse named James and
- 5 you get a horse named Henry. But there -- it
- 6 also covers cases of pedigree fraud.
- 7 I think the best examples are at pages
- 8 --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Feigin, I'm
- 10 sorry to interrupt, but --
- MR. FEIGIN: I'm sorry.
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- I -- I do
- admire the government's concession of -- of
- 14 error here, and I appreciate the candor with
- 15 which you -- you've made it.
- But given that we just took the case
- to resolve the right-to-control issue and not
- 18 this other theory that you're attempting to
- 19 develop about fraudulent inducement of even
- 20 matters of equal value, why isn't the proper
- 21 result here to reverse?
- 22 Maybe you have an argument for vacate,
- 23 but your -- your very able friend on the other
- 24 side makes a strong point that there was a
- 25 superseding indictment here that seemed to rely

- 1 expressly on the right-to-control theory. And
- 2 the government didn't present this alternative
- 3 view until the merits briefing in this Court.
- 4 MR. FEIGIN: Two answers to that, Your
- 5 Honor.
- Just first -- and this actually sort
- 7 of is -- is an additional answer to the Chief
- 8 Justice's question -- I do think it's important
- 9 if this Court does decide to send this back or
- 10 -- or even reverse how it reverses, and it is
- 11 critically important to us for kinds of fraud
- 12 that we prosecute all the time that the Court
- not reach too broadly and impugn, for example,
- 14 the veterans example I was giving --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: So how would you
- 16 have us write that is my question.
- 17 MR. FEIGIN: So I think what the Court
- 18 could say is that the kind of -- some sort of
- 19 what I was saying to the Chief Justice, that the
- 20 kind of property that is now at issue in these
- 21 right-to-control cases, which is the right to
- 22 control assets without assets necessarily in all
- cases, as they would have been here, confined to
- 24 something that's properly understood as
- 25 property, the right to control assets in a

- 1 manner that doesn't expose the victim to
- 2 tangible harm isn't itself something that
- 3 Congress would have conceived of as property and
- 4 can be prone potentially to abuses.
- We don't think it was abused in this
- 6 case. And that -- that'll go to the second part
- 7 of your question. But I think that's really all
- 8 that the Court needs to say here. I wouldn't
- 9 cast any question on --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: I think we're all --
- 11 MR. FEIGIN: Yeah.
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- in -- in radical
- 13 agreement about that. I think the question that
- 14 I'm -- I'm trying to pin -- put my finger on is
- 15 what -- what we should do with this case.
- 16 MR. FEIGIN: Okav.
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: And Mr. Dreeben
- 18 suggests that the appropriate judgment line is
- 19 reversed and -- and that the government
- 20 shouldn't get another chance to reintroduce what
- 21 it believes now to be the correct theory,
- fraudulent inducement I'll use as shorthand,
- 23 because it took that out of the case in a
- superseding indictment, and here we are many
- 25 years later and it's the first -- first time it

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1 appears is in merits briefing before this Court.
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- 2 So why isn't -- or maybe you agree
- 3 that the proper remedy in this case is reversal?
- 4 MR. FEIGIN: No, I -- I -- I don't
- 5 agree with that, Your Honor. So, if we -- if we
- 6 take the government's -- if -- if we're all
- 7 agreed on the broader interests of this case,
- 8 and it's -- the Court's not going to relitigate
- 9 Shaw and Neder and introduce some sort of harm
- 10 concept that it firmly rejected on page 467 of
- 11 Shaw -- and I can -- I can get to why that is --
- then, in this particular case, I think it's
- 13 different from the kinds of cases that Mr.
- 14 Dreeben is citing.
- 15 First of all, all they have made here
- is a sufficiency of the evidence challenge. And
- in a sufficiency of the evidence challenge, the
- 18 question is we compare --
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, I think that
- 20 might be, Mr. Dreeben would tell us, because of
- 21 the way the government litigated this case up
- 22 until its merits brief in this Court. And,
- 23 again, just if -- if we all agree and are in
- 24 radical agreement that the Second Circuit
- 25 misinterpreted the law and if we're all in

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1 radical agreement that that's all -- that the
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- 2 only indictment before the jury was a
- 3 right-to-control theory, why should the
- 4 government have yet another chance to start all
- 5 over again -- this stage?
- 6 MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor --
- 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: In this case?
- 8 MR. FEIGIN: -- first of all, I think
- 9 that this error could be con -- analogized, all
- 10 -- although I will acknowledge that it's
- 11 somewhat broader than the errors in those cases
- 12 like the errors in Neder or --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: I guess I'm --
- MR. FEIGIN: -- Mustacchio or Free --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: I'm sorry to
- interrupt, but just -- and I'll -- and I'll
- 17 stop. This will be my last shot at it. But
- 18 just take that superseding indictment, right.
- 19 Why isn't that a firm waiver of the -- of the
- theories that you wish now to pursue?
- 21 MR. FEIGIN: Your Honor, I think we
- 22 clarified that we're proceeding under a
- 23 right-to-control theory in order to comply with
- 24 Second Circuit law. But I think, if you read
- 25 the indictment as a whole, the jury had it in

- 1 front of it, and in the context of the only
- 2 thing the jury could have found to satisfy the
- 3 instructions and to find quilt on the relevant
- 4 charges in this case, I don't think there has
- 5 been anything close to some sort of switch of
- 6 horses, to continue the horse metaphors,
- 7 midstream here.
- 8 And if I could get back to try and
- 9 answer your question --
- 10 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: What about
- 11 Chiarella? Mr. Dreeben relied on that. How --
- 12 how would you say that's different from what is
- 13 going on here?
- MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor, I think
- what's fundamentally different about that and
- 16 every other case that they cite is, first of
- 17 all, we think that the findings the jury made in
- 18 this case, under the right-to-control theory,
- 19 even without really looking at the rest of the
- 20 evidence, except for things that are obvious and
- 21 undisputed, is enough to show that this was
- 22 actually property fraud.
- But we're not switching -- for the
- 24 reasons I've been stating about what the assets
- 25 at issue as to the right to control actually

- 1 were, I think that there's no way to read this
- 2 case as introducing the kind of new theory you
- 3 had in Chiarella, where all of a sudden the
- 4 victim of the fraud was different, or something
- 5 like in Dunn, where the --
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, Mr. Feigin, I
- 7 -- with respect, the assets that the Second
- 8 Circuit pointed to were not the assets that the
- 9 government now seems to be wanting to have this
- 10 Court recognize with respect to the
- 11 right-to-control theory.
- 12 I'm looking at the actual opinion in
- this case, where I guess it was Judge Chin maybe
- 14 wrote the opinion in the Second Circuit, and it
- 15 says: "This Court has endorsed a
- 16 'right-to-control theory' of wire fraud that
- 17 allows for conviction on 'a showing that the
- defendant, through the withholding or inaccurate
- 19 reporting of information that could impact on
- 20 economic decisions, deprived some person or
- 21 entity of potentially valuable economic
- 22 information.'"
- 23 So it seems as though the asset that
- 24 the Second Circuit was focused on was
- 25 potentially valuable economic information. Am I

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1 wrong that that's what they thought the
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- 2 right-to-control theory was about?
- 3 MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor, I
- 4 think, if one looks at the entire opinion, which
- 5 I -- I -- I know we -- we all have, it's -- it's
- 6 hard to come away from that -- I mean, maybe you
- 7 can pick out a specific sentence, but it's hard
- 8 to come away from the opinion with any
- 9 impression that the Second Circuit thought this
- 10 case was about something fundamentally different
- 11 than what I described. This --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But -- but you --
- 13 you're describing the asset as the actual
- 14 contract, as the money that was tendered in this
- transaction, and I didn't understand that to be
- 16 what the right-to-control theory was about from
- 17 the Second Circuit's perspective.
- 18 So I guess I just don't understand.
- 19 You -- it seems as though you have reinterpreted
- 20 right to control to be the new theory of
- 21 fraudulent inducement in a way that the Second
- 22 Circuit did not seem to put that theory forward,
- 23 and -- and that's what we thought we were taking
- in the context of this question presented.
- MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor, I -- I

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1 fully acknowledge that we're not thinking about
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- 2 this the same way as the Second Circuit. And
- 3 for the reasons I was explaining to Justice
- 4 Thomas, we do think the Second Circuit has
- 5 developed a way of thinking about this that puts
- 6 everything in the property element, that's not
- 7 the right way to think about it.
- 8 JUSTICE JACKSON: And Mr. Dreeben says
- 9 that's the way you argued the case below. So,
- 10 suddenly, now we're at this stage with a
- 11 reinterpretation by the government of what right
- 12 to control means. And why isn't that a sort of
- 13 a forfeiture from the standpoint of, if the
- 14 Court disagrees with you that right to control
- equals this transaction or even if we don't,
- 16 haven't you put forward a case that was based on
- 17 the Second Circuit's conception, and that's how
- it was argued to the jury, that's how the jury
- 19 decided it? So why -- why isn't Mr. Dreeben
- 20 right that if we disagree with that conception
- of the theory, then we have to reverse?
- MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor, the
- jury was instructed on the language of right to
- 24 control assets, and both the jury's instructions
- and deliberations, as well as the Second

- 1 Circuit's consideration of the case, occurred
- 2 against a backdrop factual context where
- 3 everyone understood the undisputed fact that
- 4 what was really at issue here were lucrative
- 5 government contracts.
- And that's why the Second Circuit goes
- 7 on to reject the idea that there's any dichotomy
- 8 between the bid-rigging process and the award of
- 9 the actual contracts. If the theory were as
- 10 broad as the sentence that Your Honor read
- 11 suggested, there'd really be no need to do that
- because you deprived it of economic information
- simply by rigging the bid-rigging process.
- 14 Instead, the court makes clear -- and
- this is at Footnote 9 on page 22a of the
- 16 Petition Appendix -- that one of the reasons why
- this is fraud is because it was an essential
- 18 element of the bargain, which I think maps
- 19 directly onto what materiality would require in
- 20 this context, and that's because it was
- 21 incorporated into the notice to proceed that the
- 22 parties entered into, which is a contract that
- 23 committed LP Ciminelli to spend 3 million in
- 24 funds and the state to repay those funds. And
- 25 then the notice to proceed was later

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1 incorporated into the final contract itself.
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- 2 Those are at Joint Appendix 125 and 134
- 3 respectively.
- 4 So I -- I don't -- I think, in the
- 5 particular context of this case and fraudulent
- 6 inducement cases generally, there's not going to
- 7 be a lot of argument over whether there is
- 8 underlying property at issue.
- 9 I think where the Second Circuit's
- 10 theory is -- is problematic is both, as -- as I
- 11 said, in moving what really is part of the
- 12 materiality inquiry in the particular context of
- 13 contracting and moving that into the property
- 14 element. And then, potentially, outside the
- 15 context of fraudulent-inducement cases, you
- 16 could get circumstances where the Second
- 17 Circuit's theory could be applied too broadly if
- 18 you take loosely language like Just -- Justice
- 19 Jackson appropriately just pointed out.
- 20 So we don't object if what the Court
- 21 wants to do and, frankly, what we'd urge the
- 22 Court to do is to explain that the Second
- 23 Circuit may not be thinking about this in the
- 24 most precise way and the most traditional way.
- 25 But what we would very much object to

- is something that gets -- that suddenly erects
- 2 the harm requirement that the Court firmly
- dispensed with in Shaw, where it not only
- 4 rejected the harm requirement in that case, it
- 5 adopted Judge Learned Hand's quid -- formulation
- 6 that fraud can exist even where there's a quid
- 7 pro quo. It pointed to Carpenter as an example
- 8 of not requiring harm, and Carpenter is a case
- 9 in which the victim, The Wall Street Journal,
- 10 wasn't economically harmed at all.
- 11 And, third, it actually definitively
- 12 resolved the false pretenses debate that
- 13 Petitioner wants to have once again when it
- interprets false pretenses not to require this
- 15 kind of harm.
- 16 And if you want to look at examples of
- 17 how the kind of thing I described as pedigree
- 18 fraud was covered at common law, I'd encourage
- 19 the Court to look at some of the
- turn-of-the-century cases at pages 753 to 754 of
- 21 the Prosser treatise, which is cited in our
- 22 brief.
- One of those cases, Hedden against
- 24 Griffin, is a case by the Supreme Judicial Court
- of Massachusetts at the time when I believe

- 1 Justice Holmes was on that Court, although he
- 2 didn't write the opinion, and in that case, the
- 3 victim was tricked by the defendant into
- 4 thinking that a bunch of his friends had bought
- 5 a particular type of insurance and, in fact,
- 6 they liked it so much, they didn't quite buy the
- 7 company, but they became members of the board of
- 8 directors of the company.
- 9 He himself bought the insurance,
- 10 realized he'd been tricked, and the Court
- 11 acknowledged it was a perfectly valid insurance
- 12 policy. He just didn't want it anymore because
- now he'd been tricked. It wasn't what he
- 14 actually wanted. He was really depending, and
- it was an essential element to him, that the
- 16 friends have bought it and that the friends had
- 17 -- were on the board of directors.
- 18 And that was -- the only measure of
- damages in that case was the small premium that
- 20 he had already paid, and he got a full refund
- 21 and a rescission remedy. There are other
- 22 examples of it, like the cases at pages -- page
- 23 19 and 20 of our brief, where, for example,
- there's a misrepresentation to a buyer that a
- 25 family member wanted the buyer to buy this

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1 particular item.
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- 2 That is not harm in a property
- 3 interest, or if Petitioner would recharacterize
- 4 it as such, I really think that we're slicing
- 5 the conceptual baloney so thinly that it's
- 6 transparent.
- 7 Now we could argue --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Feigin --
- 9 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Hasn't the -- go
- 10 ahead.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- I -- I totally
- 12 remain confused, okay?
- The core of the right-to-control
- 14 theory is that a prosecution is allowed to show
- a deprivation of property simply by showing a
- deprivation of economically valuable
- 17 information.
- You've disavowed that, correct?
- 19 MR. FEIGIN: Your Honor, read simply
- 20 that broadly, yes. We are not --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right. But
- 22 that's how the Second Circuit has read it, and
- you're not defending that, correct?
- MR. FEIGIN: We're not defend -- if I
- 25 could just be clear on --

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1
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Would you --
 2
               MR. FEIGIN: -- what we --
 3
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- would you --
               MR. FEIGIN: -- on what we're
 4
     defending and what we're not?
 5
 6
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, no, no. Just
 7
      answer --
 8
               MR. FEIGIN: Okay.
 9
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- my questions,
10
      okay, because -- are you defending the Second
11
      Circuit's view that a deprivation of
12
      economically valuable information is enough to
13
     prove fraud?
14
               MR. FEIGIN: Your Honor, if the
15
     definition started and stopped there, we do
16
      think that is an overbroad definition of
17
     property fraud.
18
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Okay. So you're
19
      saying that definition by the Second Circuit
20
     you're not defending?
21
               MR. FEIGIN: We are not defending that
22
      in all of its possible permutations. What we
23
     are defending here is how that has been applied
24
     and limited by the Second Circuit, in
25
     particular, with its tangible harm requirement
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1 and by its application in the context of
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- 2 fraudulent-inducement cases like this one where
- 3 there is --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The -- the -- the
- 5 charge here was -- I'm reading directly from the
- 6 charge -- "the victim's right to control the use
- 7 of his assets is injured when it is deprived of
- 8 potentially valuable economic information that
- 9 it would consider valuable in deciding how to
- 10 use his assets."
- 11 Is that an accurate statement of the
- 12 law?
- MR. FEIGIN: Your Honor, I think, in
- 14 the context of this --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Don't give me a
- 16 context.
- 17 MR. FEIGIN: Okay.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Is that an
- 19 accurate statement of the law?
- 20 MR. FEIGIN: That is not how we would
- 21 -- our -- first of all, it did go on to talk
- 22 about the tangible harm requirement. But --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It says
- 24 potentially valuable economic -- I'm reading the
- 25 charge -- information is -- how to use his

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1 assets -- is "information that affects the
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- 2 victim's assessment of the benefits or burdens
- 3 of a" -- "of a transaction or relates to the
- 4 quality of goods or services received or the
- 5 economic risks of the transaction."
- Is that an accurate statement of the
- 7 law? This is a jury charge.
- 8 MR. FEIGIN: Your Honor, I -- I -- I
- 9 -- the reason I -- I mean, I think, if you're
- 10 taking some of these statements in isolation, I
- 11 agree with you. I acknowledge to this Court --
- 12 I believe I've been acknowledging throughout --
- that is not the way that we would formulate it.
- If you're asking me instead whether we
- think it can identify cases that do meet the
- 16 paradigm of property fraud, and if you're asking
- 17 me whether I think the jury could have convicted
- 18 without finding traditional property fraud, then
- 19 I'm going to -- I'm going to defend both the
- 20 instructions and the conviction.
- 21 If you're asking me whether we would
- 22 think that this is the kind of first principles
- 23 right way to articulate it, I'm going to agree
- 24 with Your Honor that the answer is no.
- 25 The -- I think, really, there are two

- 1 main points I just want to -- I just want to
- 2 emphasize here. One is that I do not think the
- 3 Court should cast any doubt on pedigree fraud or
- 4 relitigate whether there is some harm
- 5 requirement for property fraud generally, and
- 6 then, in the specific context of this case, I
- 7 think, if the Court wants to do anything other
- 8 than affirm, it should remand and let the Second
- 9 Circuit sort out where we might be now.
- 10 But if the -- we do think that this
- 11 conviction can be affirmed because the findings
- 12 under the right-to-control theory were -- do map
- on to property fraud in this context because
- there were no other assets we could be thinking
- 15 about other than the 750 million that --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But, Mr. Feigin,
- 17 that's not how it works. I mean, the fact that
- it might map on to another theory of fraud isn't
- 19 sufficient in a criminal case because doesn't
- 20 the jury have to be actually instructed
- 21 concerning the other theory?
- What worries me is the thought that
- 23 the jury was instructed -- and -- and -- and
- 24 Justice Sotomayor just read the instruction --
- 25 the jury was instructed on this right-to-control

- 1 theory, and they convicted on that theory.
- 2 If we determine that that theory is
- 3 not consistent with the law in some way, I don't
- 4 know that we can look at the evidence that was
- 5 presented, especially given the fact that, as
- 6 Mr. Dreeben says, the evidence was presented
- 7 tailored to that theory, but even so, you seem
- 8 to be suggesting that we can go back now and
- 9 look at the evidence that was presented and say:
- 10 Oh, but there was enough for another theory that
- 11 the jury wasn't instructed on, and so we can
- 12 sustain the conviction on that basis.
- MR. FEIGIN: Well, two points, Your
- 14 Honor. One, as the case comes to this Court,
- and -- and without prejudice to whether they may
- 16 have preserved the challenge -- other challenges
- 17 below, as the case comes to this Court, it's
- 18 just a pure sufficiency of the evidence
- 19 challenge, and what that looks at is here are
- the elements of the statute properly construed,
- and here are the facts of the case, and do they
- 22 map on to each other.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: But, wait. How can
- 24 you say that when they have charged throughout
- 25 that the actual law that was being instructed

- 1 was invalid?
- 2 MR. FEIGIN: So, if what the Court
- 3 wants to say is that the jury instructions were,
- 4 in fact, invalid, I think they forfeited a
- 5 challenge like that at -- right at the beginning
- 6 of their petition cert stage reply brief.
- 7 But, again, the Court could send this
- 8 case back to the Second Circuit to sort out
- 9 where we are now, but our submission in this
- 10 Court and the reason we think this Court can
- 11 affirm is that if the jury instructions could be
- 12 characterized as essentially just misdescribing
- 13 the elements of the crime but in a way that
- 14 wouldn't have allowed for the jury to find guilt
- 15 without finding the properly understood from
- 16 first principles elements of the crime, I don't
- think that the defendant has been deprived of
- 18 anything.
- 19 They point to evidence they would have
- 20 introduced, but if you look at Joint -- if you
- 21 look at page 1002 of the court of appeals
- 22 appendix, the district court judge made clear --
- 23 I'm sorry, Your Honor.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You can
- 25 finish.

1	MR. FEIGIN: The district court made
2	clear that it was open to evidence that
3	Ciminelli actually could have done this better
4	than anybody else. What it wasn't open to was
5	evidence that Ciminelli just gave it a quid pro
6	quo, which is exactly the kind of thing that we
7	don't think fits, even under traditional
8	property concepts.
9	Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
10	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
11	Thomas?
12	Justice Sotomayor, anything further?
13	Justice Kagan?
14	JUSTICE KAGAN: So this is just a
15	matter of curiosity, but if let's let's
16	take two things to be true. One is that the
17	right to control one's own assets is not itself
18	a property interest, a sufficient property
19	interest, under this statute. And the second is
20	that in a case like this, the \$750 million is a
21	property interest under the statute.
22	I guess what I'm curious about is how
23	did the Second Circuit and I presume also the
24	government, you know, must have argued these
25	things to the Second Circuit. Why did they go

- 1 down this road? What did -- how did it benefit
- 2 anybody to conceive of the property in the case
- 3 as the right to control assets rather than to
- 4 conceive of the property in the case as the
- 5 contract monies?
- 6 MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor, I can't
- 7 quite speak to what everyone might have been
- 8 thinking back when this originally began, but,
- 9 as I suggested, I think the Second Circuit might
- 10 have gotten a little bit of a bad rap.
- 11 The phrase "right to control" does
- 12 appear in McNally, where the Court distinguishes
- 13 the theory in that case from a --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: So there's no set of
- 15 --
- MR. FEIGIN: -- right-to-control
- 17 theory.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean, whether it's a
- 19 bad rap or -- there's no set of cases that
- 20 people thought, oh, if we define the property
- 21 interest this way, we can get to a certain set
- of cases that we couldn't get to if we defined
- 23 the property interest as the -- the contract
- 24 monies?
- 25 MR. FEIGIN: I don't think that was

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1 the original conception of it, Your Honor. I --
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- 2 I do think the -- I don't want to suggest the
- 3 right-to-control theory only appeared after
- 4 McNally. It -- it does have its genesis in some
- 5 pre-McNally cases.
- 6 And I think it's, to be perfectly
- 7 candid, Your Honor, an -- an easier way for
- 8 courts or potentially prosecutors just to get at
- 9 -- at some of these things because, if you just
- say right to control or deprivation of economic
- information is enough, maybe it's a slightly
- easier route to prove to a jury, for example, or
- -- or to affirm on those grounds.
- But we -- and it is possible for that
- theory to encompass too much. And I don't know
- that it's really actually been subject to very
- much abuse. I -- I -- I won't suggest that it
- hasn't been subject to abuse in some isolated
- 19 cases, but I wouldn't submit that we would
- 20 expect --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Okay.
- MR. FEIGIN: -- a lot of defendants
- 23 to --
- 24 JUSTICE KAGAN: Thank you. You've
- answered the question.

1	MR. FEIGIN: Yeah.
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
3	Gorsuch?
4	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Can I just pick up
5	on Justice Kagan and Justice Jackson's question?
6	Because my understanding is the government's
7	been pushing this theory, and it's not you
8	personally, but the government has been pushing
9	this theory for several decades, and lots of
LO	people have been convicted under it.
L1	And I think the reason is, you just
L2	said, it's easier to convict people under this
L3	incorrect articulation of the theory than under
L4	the correct articulation of the law. I think
L5	you just said that. And that's that's very
L6	problematic to to think back on the various
L7	cases that have been there over the years.
L8	Now I think you said to Justice Kagan
L9	you acknowledge that there are there are some
20	cases like that. And then to, you know, come
21	here in the bright light of this Court, for the
22	government to then say, actually, you know, that
23	theory doesn't hold up, it's again,
24	appreciate the candor, but looking back on the
25	government pushing this theory all those years

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1 is not -- not an ideal scenario.
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- 2 MR. FEIGIN: Well, let me just make
- 3 absolutely clear what I'm saying. I think this
- 4 might have been an easier way in some cases to
- 5 explain things to the jury.
- I am not suggesting that -- and,
- 7 frankly, I have a lot of sympathy for the
- 8 government -- well, I suppose I should, but --
- 9 (Laughter.)
- 10 MR. FEIGIN: -- I have a lot of
- 11 sympathy for the government where you are faced
- 12 with Second Circuit law, for example, that
- 13 just thoroughly --
- 14 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But like in the
- 15 Wallach case, going back --
- 16 MR. FEIGIN: -- insists on thinking
- 17 about it this way.
- 18 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- the Wallach
- 19 case, and, you know, there -- we can name the
- 20 names. There -- the government was not just
- 21 some bystander here. Again, it's not you
- 22 personally. So I'm just looking back at the
- 23 scenario, and then it finally gets to this
- 24 Court, like, oh, actually, that theory doesn't
- work.

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1
                MR. FEIGIN: Your Honor, I suppose we
 2
      could debate particular facts of particular
 3
      cases, but Wallach in particular is a case in
 4
     which the --
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I -- I --
 5
                MR. FEIGIN: -- funds -- yeah.
 6
 7
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- I didn't mean
 8
      to get into particulars.
                MR. FEIGIN: There are various cases
 9
      that we -- and, as we've explained in our brief,
10
11
      the core set of cases to which this has been
12
      applied and the -- the overwhelming set of cases
13
      in which we found Second Circuit decisions on it
14
     have been fraudulent-inducement cases like this
15
      that we could have brought on another theory.
16
                I think it's asking a lot of federal
17
     prosecutors to go to the Second Circuit, say:
18
     Here's some language that this court has -- that
19
      this court has endorsed a couple of times, that
20
      they've never explicitly overruled, but we're
21
     going to tell you that this is wrong. We're
2.2
      going to start thinking about this case in a
23
     different way than you, Judges, have been
24
      thinking about these kinds of cases, and we
25
      still think that it fundamentally covers all the
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1 cases that you, Judges, think it covers, but
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- 2 here is a different way of thinking about it.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So, on -- on the
- 4 word "all" in what you just said, I thought you
- 5 had said to Justice Kagan you were acknowledging
- 6 that it actually is not all.
- 7 MR. FEIGIN: I -- I apologize. I
- 8 forget what I used "all" to modify in that
- 9 sentence.
- 10 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: That all the cases
- would have come out the same way if it had been
- 12 properly charged.
- 13 MR. FEIGIN: Oh, I -- I'm --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And -- and I --
- MR. FEIGIN: I apologize, Your Honor.
- 16 I -- I -- I think we haven't found many cases,
- 17 if any --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: That's fair.
- 19 MR. FEIGIN: -- that we think are
- 20 really problematic.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You gave a good
- answer there.
- MR. FEIGIN: Okay.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: It's fair, you
- 25 know, the Second Circuit. So that's -- I

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1 understand that. So I'll stop there.
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- JUSTICE KAGAN: Truth be told, I mean,
- I guess I was a little bit surprised to hear you
- 4 say it's easier to convince a jury. I would
- 5 have thought it's very easy to convince a jury
- 6 that \$750 million is property and not very easy
- 7 to convince a jury that something called the
- 8 right to control one's own assets is property.
- 9 I -- I mean, I find it a little bit of
- 10 a sort of weird way to think about property, and
- 11 I suspect most juries would too.
- MR. FEIGIN: You --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: So I guess, again,
- it's like why did anybody go down this road?
- MR. FEIGIN: Well, Your Honor, I -- I
- think my answer to you -- and I appreciate the
- 17 chance to clarify it -- is that -- was that it
- was an easier way to go with courts and juries.
- 19 I think courts started to think of it
- 20 this way first. And then, once you have court
- 21 instruction on this, it is a lot easier to
- 22 simply, as I was suggesting to Justice
- 23 Kavanaugh, go along with circuit law and --
- rather than to ask for a whole new, de novo set
- 25 of instructions. And so the indictment in this

- 1 case, the instructions in this case follow along
- 2 with what the Second Circuit has been doing for
- 3 35 years.
- 4 And I think, as to how I suggested
- 5 this might have been an easier way to think
- 6 about it, I think, to judges who articulated
- 7 this theory first -- I don't think it was juries
- 8 or prosecutors necessarily -- if you look at
- 9 judicial opinions articulating this theory,
- 10 they're taking language that was used in this
- 11 Court's own opinions in flagging a potentially
- 12 still valid theory of fraud.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Thank you.
- MR. FEIGIN: And -- yeah. Sorry.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 16 Barrett?
- 17 JUSTICE BARRETT: Mr. Feigin, my
- 18 question is very practical. Coming to the end
- of your argument here, let's say that you lose
- on right to control, meaning, as stated by the
- 21 Second Circuit on the question presented, you
- 22 lose that. Then you have two interests. One is
- 23 to salvage the conviction in this case, and the
- 24 other is to make sure that whatever we say about
- 25 the right to control doesn't harm the

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1 government's long-term interest in prosecuting
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- 2 cases that might come around the edges of it.
- If we write the opinion this way and
- 4 say the right-to-control theory is invalid
- 5 because the right to control one's assets --
- 6 being deprived of economically valuable
- 7 information deprives one of the right to control
- 8 one's assets, and that's not a traditional
- 9 property interest, or that it conflates the
- 10 materiality and intent to defraud one of
- 11 property elements, period, does that solve the
- government's problem about cases coming down the
- pike and are writing this too broadly?
- MR. FEIGIN: So, Your Honor, I think
- 15 -- if -- if I'm understanding correctly, I
- 16 think, if you write an opinion that suggests --
- 17 I wouldn't say it so much conflates the intent
- 18 to harm necessarily -- sorry, there is no intent
- 19 to harm element. The intent to defraud --
- JUSTICE BARRETT: Defraud.
- 21 MR. FEIGIN: -- element and the
- 22 materiality element. I would say it conflates
- 23 the materiality element and the -- and the
- 24 property element. It takes what's properly
- 25 understood as the essential element requirement

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of materiality, which has deep roots --
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- JUSTICE BARRETT: Yeah.
- 3 MR. FEIGIN: -- starting with Justice
- 4 Story, in this -- in the particular context of
- 5 fraudulent inducement and transmutes it into a
- 6 tangible harm requirement that's attached to the
- 7 property.
- 8 I think, if the Court makes clear that
- 9 that's not the right way to go about this and
- 10 that that's the way the Second Circuit has been
- 11 going about this, as long as the Court makes
- 12 clear that in doing so the Second Circuit has
- been identifying a set of cases that may well
- meet the traditional elements of property fraud,
- 15 I -- I -- you know, that's not the --
- 16 JUSTICE BARRETT: We don't even have
- 17 to say that. We're just resolving this case,
- 18 this QP. But, if we resolve it the way -- I
- mean, I don't think you and I are really far off
- in your description of the conflation here.
- 21 But, if we describe it that way and
- 22 just say period and don't talk about alternate
- theories that might sustain the conviction in
- this case or any of the others that you're
- 25 discussing with Justice Kavanaugh, that solves

- the government's long-term problem?
- I mean, when I say long-term problem,
- 3 I mean concern about what harm precedent from
- 4 this Court might do down the road.
- 5 MR. FEIGIN: Well, I would -- perhaps
- 6 I could make a more modest request for an
- 7 additional sentence there that would say we are
- 8 not expressing any view as to whether, through
- 9 application of those requirements, the Second
- 10 Circuit has identified cases that do meet the
- 11 traditional elements of property fraud as
- traditionally understood, without expressing an
- opinion on that one way or another, just to make
- sure the Court's not misunderstood as expressing
- some sort of negative opinion about that.
- 16 JUSTICE BARRETT: Fair enough.
- 17 Thanks.
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 19 Jackson?
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Can I just follow up
- 21 by asking, if we had that additional sentence,
- 22 would it be the government's position that it
- 23 could then go back to the Second Circuit and
- 24 perhaps even to the district court and seek a
- 25 conviction on the traditional basis in this

- 1 case? 2 MR. FEIGIN: We do think that that 3 would be open to us, Your Honor, although, if they have preserved jury instruction issues that 4 the Second Circuit believes are still open, 5 6 which may well be the case, then I think, if 7 this Court were to remand, that would present different issues than the sufficiency issue that 8 I was discussing with Your Honor earlier. 9 10 But I -- you know, our -- our 11 submission to this Court is that on pure 12 sufficiency grounds, the facts that are not only 13 in the record but under the findings that the jury necessarily made in this context do fit the 14 15 traditional elements of --16 JUSTICE JACKSON: So you're --17 MR. FEIGIN: -- property fraud. 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- saying you would
- formulation, with the additional sentence that 2.2 we're not touching traditional property, you 23 could go back in this case and ask the lower

the argument that, on Justice Barrett's

not have to retry Mr. Ciminelli. You could make

- courts for a conviction on the record that 24
- 25 currently exists?

19

20

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1
                MR. FEIGIN: Your Honor, let me make
      -- I think that argument would -- I think we
 2
 3
      would make that argument, and it would encompass
      two pieces. And you might disagree with us more
 4
      on the second than on the first.
 5
 6
                The first is on a pure sufficiency of
 7
      the evidence challenge, we do not think that
      there has been anything established if the Court
 8
 9
      says what Justice Barrett and I were just
10
     discussing, that it has been established that
11
      these defendants did not commit property fraud,
12
     which is the essence of the --
13
                JUSTICE JACKSON: But isn't that the
14
15
                MR. FEIGIN: -- sufficiency challenge.
16
                JUSTICE JACKSON: -- role of the jury?
17
     Doesn't the law need to be settled before it
     goes to the jury so that the jury then makes a
18
19
      determination of whether or not the person is
20
     guilty?
21
                What I'm worried about is the
2.2
      suggestion that we can come now to this Court,
23
      essentially change what the legal requirements
24
      are, and then send it back and have you convict
25
      somebody under the new law without a jury
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- 1 speaking to it.
- 2 MR. FEIGIN: So I'd suggest that if
- 3 that's Your Honor's instinct, that is -- the way
- 4 to encapsulate that would be in the requirement
- 5 of a new trial with new jury instructions if
- 6 these jury instructions weren't harmless error
- 7 on these facts, not by saying that the
- 8 sufficiency challenge succeeds and what these
- 9 defendants did, which would always have been
- 10 considered fraud, is not, in fact, fraud.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 12 counsel.
- Rebuttal, Mr. Dreeben?
- 14 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF MICHAEL R. DREEBEN
- 15 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. DREEBEN: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 17 Justice.
- 18 What Mr. Feigin just said is that we
- 19 raised a sufficiency case, but it should be
- 20 turned into a jury instruction error case. I
- 21 don't see how the government can maintain
- 22 simultaneously that the right-to-control theory
- is invalid and that somehow this case gets to be
- 24 retried under its new legal theory.
- Now, as for Mr. Feigin's contention

- 1 that the jury actually decided the elements of
- 2 its new fraud theory, all the Court has to do is
- 3 look at the jury instructions on pages 60A to
- 4 62A of the Petition Appendix.
- 5 First of all, the scheme was not
- 6 described as one to obtain contract assets,
- 7 which is what my friend now would have the
- 8 scheme constitute.
- 9 On page 60A, the scheme is described
- 10 as a scheme to slant the development contract so
- 11 that Mr. Ciminelli would be selected as
- 12 preferred developers. This was a transaction in
- 13 which the first stage was selection of a
- developer, the second stage was the negotiation
- 15 of the actual River Bend contracts under which
- 16 money would be paid.
- 17 There was no money paid under the
- 18 preferred developer contracts. They do not
- identify the kind of fraud in property proceeds
- 20 that my friend now says is required.
- 21 Then, when you come to the jury
- 22 instructions themselves, as Justice Sotomayor
- read, they identify a different property
- 24 interest. They identify the right to control
- 25 rather than the contract proceeds as the assets.

1	They omit the new essence of the		
2	bargain requirement, which the government		
3	submits is the correct materiality standard.		
4	Had that been the standard at trial, we would		
5	have been permitted to argue that the River Bend		
6	contract is the only contract at issue, this		
7	preferred developer status and the competitive		
8	landscape that led to it was not part of that		
9	contract, it's barred by an integration clause,		
10	and it cannot be the basis for saying that it's		
11	the essence of the contract.		
12	The government also has a new "by		
13	means of " requirement that the acquisition of		
14	the money has to be by means of the false		
15	statement.		
16	Here, there's a break in the causal		
17	chain between the competitive situation to		
18	become a preferred developer and the		
19	hard-fought, arm's length negotiation of the		
20	contract.		
21	And the government itself says that we		
22	would have that defense. At page 47 of the		
23	government's merits brief, it says that, "In		
24	many cases," and I'm quoting, "where a victim		
25	receives fair value in a transaction [ ] a		

- 1 misrepresentation will not have gone to an
- 2 essential element of the bargain."
- 3 It also seems it will not have been
- 4 the circumstance by means of which the money was
- 5 acquired. And the government relied on that
- 6 theory of right to control really answering the
- 7 question that came up in the dialogue with
- 8 Justices Kagan and Kavanaugh.
- 9 It makes the government's ability to
- 10 get a conviction much easier. This isn't an
- 11 abstract question of whether the evidence looked
- 12 at from hindsight years later in this Court
- could conceivably have supported a valid theory
- of property fraud. We were denied again and
- 15 again the right to admit evidence because the
- 16 government relied on the right-to-control
- 17 theory.
- We detailed this at the petition reply
- 19 brief at page 11, the Kaloyeros reply brief at
- 20 page 9, and you can look at the Petition
- 21 Appendix at 33A, where the Second Circuit says
- the defendants wanted to introduce evidence that
- 23 this transaction was entirely fair as a way of
- 24 refuting that it was designed to inflict a
- 25 property harm. The Court says can't do that

- 1 because of right to control.
- 2 So I think that when you add all of
- 3 those things together, this is not a case in
- 4 which the government can revive an abstract
- 5 theory that it has come to this Court for the
- 6 first time and says, if you look at the Second
- 7 Circuit's doctrine differently, it really would
- 8 satisfy the elements of a proper property fraud
- 9 theory.
- 10 They waived that. They waived it, as
- 11 Justice Gorsuch pointed out, when they
- 12 superseded the indictment to get rid of it, and
- they litigated this case throughout
- strategically to make their burden lighter to
- 15 convict on right to control.
- I think, at this point, the only
- 17 proper judgment is a judgment of acquittal.
- 18 This is not an abstract sufficiency of the
- 19 evidence case. This is whether the evidence was
- 20 sufficient to support the charges made in this
- 21 indictment. That is the only legal basis on
- 22 which the conviction could be sustained.
- 23 If the right-to-control theory falls,
- 24 so does the conviction. The Court should
- 25 reverse, should not remand. It should direct

1	the entry	of a judgment of acquittal.
2		CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
3	counsel.	The case is submitted.
4		(Whereupon, at 12:38 p.m., the case
5	was submi	tted.)
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