## SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SU	PREME COURT OF THE	UNITED STATES
		_
TIMOTHY J. SMITH	)	
	Petitioner,	)
v.		) No. 21-1576
UNITED STATES,	)	
	Respondent.	)

Pages: 1 through 93

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: March 28, 2023

## HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

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3	TIMOTHY J. SMITH,	)			
4	Petitioner,	)			
5	v.	) No. 21-1576			
6	UNITED STATES,	)			
7	Respondent.	)			
8					
9					
10	Washington, D.	C.			
11	Tuesday, March 28	3, 2023			
12					
13	The above-entitled matter	came on for oral			
14	argument before the Supreme Cour	rt of the United			
15	States at 10:08 a.m.				
16					
17	APPEARANCES:				
18	SAMIR DEGER-SEN, ESQUIRE, New Yo	ork, New York; on			
19	behalf of the Petitioner.				
20	SOPAN JOSHI, Assistant to the So	olicitor General,			
21	Department of Justice, Washi	ngton, D.C.; on behalf			
22	of the Respondent.				
23					
24					
25					

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:08 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We will hear
4	argument first this morning in Case 21-1576,
5	Smith versus United States.
6	Mr. Deger-Sen.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF SAMIR DEGER-SEN
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. DEGER-SEN: Mr. Chief Justice, and
10	may it please the Court:
11	The government agrees that when it
12	elects to take the question of venue before a
13	jury and fails to satisfy its burden of proof, a
14	judgment of acquittal is the appropriate result
15	and the government is barred from seeking
16	reprosecution. The jury instruction it agreed
17	to in this case, on JA 113, states exactly that.
18	If the government fails to establish proper
19	venue for any count, you must find the defendant
20	not guilty as to that count.
21	The government's position is that this
22	result should somehow differ when an appellate
23	panel reviewing a Rule 29 motion for judgment of
24	acquittal finds that the jury erred in its
25	determination and there is insufficient evidence

- 1 to sustain the conviction.
- 2 Put another way, the government's
- 3 position is that when a jury does its job
- 4 correctly and acquits, a defendant may not be
- 5 reprosecuted, but, when the jury fails to
- 6 correctly discharge its duty, the government
- 7 gets a do-over.
- 8 That is what this Court in Burks
- 9 called a purely arbitrary distinction. The
- 10 government has no real explanation for that
- 11 result. It anchors its view on what it
- describes as a settled and unbroken practice of
- 13 permitting retrials when a jury acquits for lack
- 14 of venue.
- But there was no such practice. At
- both the common law and at the founding, the
- 17 government's failure of proof as to venue
- 18 resulted in a general verdict of acquittal,
- which carried all of the ordinary consequences
- 20 of an acquittal. The rule the government relies
- on is instead the one this Court squarely
- rejected in Ball, that a prosecutor was entitled
- 23 to a second bite at the apple even after a
- 24 general verdict of acquittal on any ground for
- 25 -- by challenging the insufficiency of the

- 1 indictment in the first trial.
- 2 But, if the framers rejected that rule
- 3 for purposes of the Fifth Amendment, they
- 4 absolutely would have done so for violations of
- 5 the venue right. As Justice Story explained,
- 6 the venue right was an area where the framers
- 7 sought to leave as little discretion in the
- 8 government's hands as possible.
- 9 There is no reason to think that the
- 10 framers would have singled out venue as the one
- issue that goes to a jury, but the government's
- 12 failure of proof does not yield an acquittal but
- 13 rather a do-over.
- 14 At bottom, an insufficiency-of-the-
- evidence determination, whether by a jury, a
- judge, or an appellate panel, must lead to a
- 17 judgment of acquittal.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: When we have --
- 20 normally have constitutional errors at trial,
- 21 isn't our rule a -- a -- a mistrial or a
- 22 retrial?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: That -- that's
- 24 correct, Your Honor. But the -- at the venue
- 25 right is, I think, fundamentally different to

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1 all other kinds of rights because what it means
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- 2 to violate the venue right is that the
- 3 government fails to satisfy its burden of proof
- 4 before a jury. So that's -- it's not that the
- 5 defendant has to show his right was violated.
- 6 The meaning of the violation is the failure to
- 7 satisfy the government's burden.
- 8 And then the question is, what should
- 9 the consequences of that be? And the
- 10 consequences of that, you know, at common law
- and at the founding were the same as when the
- 12 government fails to satisfy its burden of proof
- 13 --
- 14 JUSTICE THOMAS: How is it different
- 15 --
- MR. DEGER-SEN: -- any other way.
- 17 JUSTICE THOMAS: -- from other
- 18 constitutional errors?
- 19 MR. DEGER-SEN: It -- it -- it's --
- it's different in that sense, that the meaning
- of the violation is that the government has a
- 22 burden that it takes to the jury as to -- as --
- as -- to establish venue, and if it fails to do
- that, that is a violation of the venue right.
- 25 And so no other constitutional violation looks

- 1 like that.
- 2 JUSTICE THOMAS: So how do you know
- 3 that in a general -- in a general verdict?
- 4 MR. DEGER-SEN: You -- you -- you
- 5 don't know in a general -- in -- in a general
- 6 verdict, and you didn't know it at the founding.
- 7 The longstanding practice has always been to
- 8 take the question of venue to a jury, and that
- 9 yields a judgment -- a general verdict and a
- 10 judgment of acquittal.
- 11 And so, at the founding, venue had
- 12 equal status to anything else. If for any
- 13 reason -- you know, if -- if the government
- 14 fails on one of the conduct elements, if the
- government fails as to an affirmative defense,
- if the government fails as to a venue, the
- 17 result was a general verdict of acquittal.
- 18 And the government agrees that's what
- 19 happens in this case. You know, that was the
- 20 jury instruction it submitted to in -- in -- in
- 21 this case. It said you must find the defendant
- 22 not quilty. That's very likely what happened as
- 23 to one of the counts here.
- 24 JUSTICE JACKSON: So is it your
- position that venue is an element? I mean, I

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1 saw that assertion in your cert petition, but,
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- for some reason, it wasn't in your briefs here.
- 3 So is -- is that the position that
- 4 you're taking in this case?
- 5 MR. DEGER-SEN: I -- I think the word
- 6 "element" is sort of a word with -- of many
- 7 meanings, but if by "element" you mean something
- 8 that the government bears the burden of proof,
- 9 and if it fails the burden of -- you know, they
- 10 must establish that and if it fails that, to --
- 11 to establish that --
- 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, I quess I
- mean, you know, you're setting up an argument
- 14 that, you know, if a jury decides it, and as a
- result, you say, if the jury was wrong because
- it's reversed on appeal, then there would be no
- 17 retrial.
- We've said that with respect to
- 19 elements, but elements have to be presented to a
- 20 jury, and they have to be proven beyond a
- 21 reasonable doubt. I don't know that venue has
- 22 to be presented to a jury in every case.
- Is that your position?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: No, it doesn't. It's
- 25 -- it's similar to an affirmative defense in

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1 that sense. It has to be put at issue.
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- JUSTICE JACKSON: All right. So, if
- 3 venue is not presented because it's not an
- 4 element, I guess, what result? Does your
- 5 argument change?
- 6 MR. DEGER-SEN: If -- if -- if the
- 7 defendant doesn't ever present venue, then venue
- 8 is waived. Indeed, it -- it would -- it could
- 9 never even go to the jury. So that I don't --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So you're saying, if
- 11 a judge -- because I -- I -- I understood your
- original comments to say, you know, if the judge
- got it wrong as well, you would have the same
- 14 answer. But --
- MR. DEGER-SEN: If -- if it's a
- 16 sufficiency determination. So, if -- if when it
- is put in issue by the defendant then and the
- 18 government takes it to the jury, like it did in
- 19 this case, so we put it in issue at the
- 20 indictment stage and said this indictment should
- 21 be dismissed for lack of venue. The government
- 22 said, no, no, no, this is actually a fact
- 23 question, and we should take it to the jury, the
- jury should decide. The government went to the
- 25 jury.

- 1 The government agrees that if the jury
- 2 had then acquitted, that's the end of the story.
- 3 It bars reprosecution.
- 4 JUSTICE JACKSON: Does it matter that
- 5 it's -- do you -- do you contest that the
- 6 standard of proof is different for venue than it
- 7 is for elements?
- 8 MR. DEGER-SEN: No, but the standard
- 9 of proof for affirmative defenses is different
- 10 than it is for elements, and affirmative
- 11 defenses are also something where you have --
- the defendant has an initial burden to put it in
- issue, and then, if the government fails to
- satisfy its burden of rebutting the defendant's
- 15 affirmative defense, then --
- 16 JUSTICE JACKSON: It's a mistrial and
- 17 you could do it over, no?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: No. It's a -- it's --
- 19 it's a -- it's an acquittal. That -- that's
- 20 this -- this Court's decision in Burks. And so
- 21 that -- that leads to an acquittal. And just as
- in Burks here, it's -- this case, I think, is in
- that sense on all fours with Burks. The jury in
- 24 Burks got it wrong. They said that the
- 25 government had satisfied its burden. And then

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1 the appellate court said, you know, no, that was
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- 2 incorrect, the government failed on the
- 3 sufficiency of the evidence, there was a
- 4 sufficiency-of-the-evidence ruling, and then the
- 5 appellate court said but the result here could
- 6 be a retrial.
- 7 This Court granted certiorari from
- 8 that decision and said, no, when you have a
- 9 sufficiency-of-the-evidence determination by an
- 10 appellate court, that is exactly the same thing
- 11 as a Rule 29 determination by a judge, and
- that's exactly the same thing as a judgment of
- 13 acquittal by the jury. It would be a purely
- 14 arbitrary distinction to say, because the jury
- got it wrong the first time, suddenly the
- 16 government has a chance to reprosecute.
- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: And was Burks a
- double jeopardy case? Was it a Sixth Amendment
- 19 case --
- MR. DEGER-SEN: It was a double
- 21 jeopardy case.
- 22 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- a Fifth Amendment
- 23 case?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: A double jeopardy
- 25 case.

JUSTICE JACKSON: You don't make a

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2
      Fifth Amendment arguing -- argument here, do
 3
     you?
 4
                MR. DEGER-SEN: Oh, I -- I think our
      argument is interwoven with the Fifth Amendment
 5
 6
     because our point is, just as in Burks, that the
 7
     remedy here -- the remedy for a violation of the
      -- of the venue right should be a judgment of
 8
 9
      acquittal that then is going to have -- you
10
     know, bear all the ordinary consequences of a
11
      judgment of acquittal, which would include
12
     barring reprosecution --
13
                JUSTICE JACKSON: But, in your brief
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- MR. DEGER-SEN: -- under double
- 16 jeopardy.

14

- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- you said they
- were separate, so I'm trying to understand. I
- 19 mean, I did not appreciate from the question
- 20 presented that you were making a Fifth Amendment
- 21 argument, and then, in your brief, at page 44,
- 22 you're very clear that the Fifth Amendment
- argument and the Article III and Sixth Amendment
- 24 arguments are independent.
- 25 MR. DEGER-SEN: I -- I there -- there

- 1 is sort of an independent Fifth Amendment
- 2 argument if you think of the Fifth Amendment
- 3 just standing alone. You know, with the Fifth
- 4 Amendment standing alone without the venue
- 5 right, you know, we don't necessarily raise that
- 6 argument.
- 7 But our Sixth Amendment argument
- 8 itself is interwoven with the Double Jeopardy
- 9 Clause. It has to be because the thing we're
- 10 asking for is a judgment of acquittal, which
- 11 bears the ordinary consequences of a judgment of
- 12 acquittal, and that includes preclusion and
- 13 objecting.
- 14 JUSTICE JACKSON: But it's not.
- interwoven just because of that. I mean, you
- 16 can't make a Sixth Amendment argument in this
- 17 case, I think, because the government hasn't put
- 18 you in jeopardy, or has he?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Well, it's exactly
- 20 like Burks. I mean, in -- in Burks, that was
- 21 certiorari from a decision by the court of
- 22 appeals that said retrial is permitted in this
- 23 circumstance. There wasn't a reprosecution, but
- there was a decision by the court of appeals
- 25 saying you can be retried.

1	And that's essentially what we're
2	coming to court and asking for, is we want that
3	judgment of acquittal. We want that piece of
4	paper that says you can't reprosecute us.
5	And the and what the Eleventh
6	Circuit gave us is the opposite. It gave us a
7	piece of paper that says the government can
8	reprosecute you. You don't have the ordinary
9	effects that you'd get with a judgment of
LO	acquittal.
L1	And so that's the injury that we're
L2	suffering here. And so what we're saying is the
L3	remedy here should be that judgment of
L4	acquittal, that piece of paper that allows us to
L5	entitle you know, entitles us to the
L6	subsequent defense.
L7	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel
L8	JUSTICE ALITO: Do you have
L9	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, no, go ahead.
20	JUSTICE ALITO: Do you have any
21	decision from the founding era that actually
22	precluded retrial based on a prior verdict of
23	improper venue?
24	MR. DEGER-SEN: But I I don't think
25	that there's any the the dominant practice

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1 at the founding is that it always went to a
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- 2 general verdict. And so that would have the
- 3 ordinary consequences of a general verdict. In
- 4 the mine run of cases, the government's not
- 5 going to retry.
- 6 The rule that they point to, the --
- 7 the rule, is the one rejected in Ball, which is,
- 8 if you have a general verdict of acquittal, even
- 9 if that's on a conduct element, you know, the
- 10 jury -- somehow we know the jury said they
- 11 really didn't do it, you know, he's completely
- 12 innocent, even in that situation, the government
- was allowed to subsequently collaterally attack
- 14 that and say there was a deficiency in the
- indictment, including a deficiency in venue.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: I -- I take it
- 17 your answer is no, you don't have any case from
- 18 the founding era that actually precluded retrial
- 19 based on a prior verdict of improper venue.
- 20 MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, I think any --
- 21 any -- you -- you wouldn't really know
- 22 whether it's a prior verdict, just like today, a
- 23 prior verdict of an improper venue, because you
- 24 would have a general verdict of acquittal. So
- you wouldn't know if that verdict of acquittal

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1 was based on, you know, venue or something else.
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- 2 JUSTICE ALITO: Do you dispute the
- 3 argument that many -- that there are many
- 4 treatises from the founding era and extending
- 5 into the 19th Century that say quite from
- 6 respective authorities, Blackstone, et cetera,
- 7 that say that a -- a reversal based on improper
- 8 venue does not preclude retrial?
- 9 MR. DEGER-SEN: We do dispute that.
- 10 So I think what the government does is it has
- 11 sort of a mishmash of two kinds of cases, one of
- 12 a motion to arrest judgment cases, and that's
- 13 Arundel's Case, that's Tharbeau, that's the Coke
- 14 treatise.
- And a motion to arrest judgment was,
- 16 after a conviction, a defendant challenges the
- indictment, and that's how this Court described
- 18 it in -- in -- in United States versus
- 19 Sisson. That's a -- that's a challenge to the
- 20 indictment, not -- so that doesn't involve any
- 21 determination that the government failed its
- 22 proof. That's not an insufficiency context.
- In that situation, we completely
- 24 agree. The same thing would be true. If we had
- an appeal where we were challenging the

- 1 sufficiency of the indictment or instructional
- 2 error or anything other than sufficiency and
- 3 then that was the -- the, you know, the --
- 4 the -- we got a reversal from the court of
- 5 appeals, absolutely, the government could
- 6 reprosecute. That would be the modern analogy
- 7 to the motion to arrest judgment and that would
- 8 be a mistrial. But that's not a sufficiency
- 9 situation.
- 10 And in the other kind of case that the
- 11 government relies on are the cases I was just
- 12 describing, which is the Ball case, and -- and
- 13 -- which is -- which is the rule rejected in
- 14 Ball, and that is that you can collaterally
- 15 attack even any kind of judgment of acquittal by
- 16 saying there was no venue.
- What the government does not have is
- anything, any case in the common law or at the
- 19 founding that treats a venue acquittal as a
- lower status than other kinds of acquittals.
- 21 They were treated in -- in equal status and had
- 22 exactly the same kinds of effects. Those
- 23 effects may now have changed over time as double
- 24 jeopardy jurisprudence has changed, but they
- 25 were always of equal status.

- 1 And the government agrees they're of
- 2 equal status today when it goes to a jury. It
- 3 just says on appeal somehow the rule should be
- 4 different.
- 5 And I don't -- I almost think it's a
- 6 non sequitur to use this --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, part of your --
- 8 part of your argument seems to be based on the
- 9 original understanding of the Venue and Vicinage
- 10 Clauses, but it doesn't seem to me that that is
- 11 sufficient -- you -- that you can win on that
- 12 alone. But you try to buttress it by injecting
- 13 elements of our modern double jeopardy
- 14 jurisprudence. So you have kind of a hybrid
- 15 argument.
- 16 If we look just at our modern double
- 17 jeopardy case law, have we said that retrial is
- 18 barred when there is a reversal on appeal on a
- 19 ground that does not concern the culpability of
- 20 the defendant?
- 21 MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, I think it
- 22 depends what you mean by culpability, but I
- don't think that venue is any less about
- 24 culpability than, for example, a jurisdictional
- 25 element. You know, whether a bank is operating

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in -- in -- in interstate commerce just doesn't
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- 2 seem like it goes to inherent culpability
- 3 either. And then, if it's about elements, well,
- 4 we know we have affirmative defenses.
- 5 So, you know, the what -- what
- 6 is the thing that unifies affirmative defenses,
- 7 jurisdictional elements, and conduct elements?
- 8 The only thing I think that substantively
- 9 unifies them is they are things that go to a
- jury and the government bears the burden of
- 11 proof, and when the government fails that burden
- of proof, there's a judgment of acquittal.
- And that's exactly the same thing for
- 14 the venue right. And what the government is
- 15 basically saying is the venue right has some
- 16 special status where it just is exempt from
- that, and they're saying, in addition, it only
- 18 has that special status on appeal.
- 19 You know, if it went to the jury,
- 20 we're happy to treat it in exactly the same way.
- 21 We're happy to submit jury instructions that
- 22 allow for general verdicts, that allow for
- 23 preclusion. But, on appeal, the results somehow
- 24 could be different. And I just don't think that
- 25 follows.

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1
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS:
                                        Can a judge
 2
      dismiss a prosecution because of erroneous venue
 3
      in its discretion presumably?
                MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, it depends at
 4
      which stage. The -- a judge, if -- if -- if you
 5
     move to dismiss the indictment because it's
 6
 7
      insufficiently alleged, then the judge can do
      that, and that wouldn't have preclusive effects.
 8
                If it's after the close of the
 9
      government's evidence and it's a Rule 29 motion
10
11
      for judgment of acquittal, then that would --
12
     you know, that's the sort of -- that, as this
      Court said in Evans, is basically the same thing
13
14
      as a jury acquittal, and so that would have
15
     preclusive effect.
16
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And can he do
17
      that dismissal with prejudice or without
     prejudice depending upon the particular
18
19
      circumstances?
20
                MR. DEGER-SEN: I -- I don't think he
      could do it without -- if -- if he's making a
21
2.2
      sufficiency-of-the-evidence determination on a
     Rule 29, as in he said the government's evidence
23
      is closed, the -- I just don't think the
24
25
     government has provided sufficient evidence to
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1 support venue here, then he would --
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- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: What -- what
- 3 about -- what about before that?
- 4 MR. DEGER-SEN: As in mid-trial? I
- 5 think mid -- I don't know if there's a vehicle
- 6 --
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Or at the --
- 8 or at the indictment stage.
- 9 MR. DEGER-SEN: Oh -- oh, yeah, at the
- 10 indictment stage, the government could say the
- indictment isn't sufficient, that -- the -- the
- defendant could say, as we tried to say, it's
- 13 not sufficiently alleged, the government can
- 14 withdraw and try and go to a different venue,
- the judge can dismiss the indictment, he can go
- to a different venue. I think it might have
- 17 issues with --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, can he
- 19 dismiss it with prejudice?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: He can -- he can
- 21 dismiss it with prejudice probably as to
- 22 refiling in the same venue under issue
- 23 preclusion principles. I don't think he could
- 24 dismiss the indictment with prejudice as to any
- other prosecution in another venue, but that's

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1 -- that's -- you know, there are basically two
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- 2 kinds of dismissals. There's the indictment
- 3 stage and there's the sufficiency stage, and the
- 4 government's cases try to blur that line.
- 5 But this Court has always said that
- 6 distinction has fundamental consequences because
- 7 one is a sufficiency determination, and all
- 8 agree this was a sufficiency determination, and
- 9 the other is a question of, you know, the
- indictment and whether it's sufficiently
- 11 alleged, and the government does get another
- 12 chance in that --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: But -- but, if the
- 14 government can come back again if a -- if it's
- dismissed pretrial, why -- why isn't what you're
- saying, you know, why doesn't the difference lie
- in the Double Jeopardy Clause, not in the venue
- 18 provision?
- 19 MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, I think the
- 20 difference lies in the double jeopardy
- 21 principles that would have animated the -- the
- framers in thinking through what the remedy was
- 23 for purposes of the double -- for -- for
- 24 purposes of the venue clause. I mean, as this
- 25 Court sort of describes --

1	JUSTICE KAGAN: I guess what I'm
2	suggesting is, if if the government can
3	refile in another venue pretrial and then you
4	say, well, there's a big difference once the
5	government submits its case, I mean, there might
6	be a big difference, but it might be a double
7	jeopardy difference, not a venue difference.
8	MR. DEGER-SEN: I I just think
9	they're they're inseparably interwoven here
10	because what it means for the venue right to be
11	violated is for the government to fail its
12	burden of proof before a jury. That is what it
13	has always meant. There's no such thing as a
14	venue violation separate from the government's
15	failure of proof before a jury.
16	And so you only ever really know that
17	the venue right has been violated and requires
18	a a remedy once the government has failed its
19	proof in front of a jury.
20	JUSTICE JACKSON: Why can't the remedy
21	just be to vacate the conviction? I mean, what
22	you're asking for is a vacatur plus a statement
23	by the Court that you can't be retried, and I
24	guess Justice Kagan's point is, why don't you
25	get that one when the when the government

- 1 tries to retry you and then you invoke double
- 2 jeopardy?
- 3 MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, in -- in
- 4 Burks, that's not what this Court did, but I
- 5 guess, at an absolute minimum, we would need --
- 6 you know, we couldn't have a decision on the
- 7 books that the Eleventh Circuit's saying we
- 8 don't have the ability to assert double
- 9 jeopardy. So, at a minimum, then the -- the
- 10 Eleventh Circuit --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: I don't think that
- 12 -- is that what the Eleventh Circuit said in
- this case? It just said you're not entitled to
- 14 a statement from the judge right now that says
- 15 you can't be reprosecuted. I don't think it
- 16 made a double jeopardy holding.
- 17 MR. DEGER-SEN: I quess I read -- I
- 18 read the Eleventh Circuit's decision as saying
- 19 that the remedy is vacated and so the government
- 20 gets to retry.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Counsel, I want to
- 22 go back to your discussion with Justice Alito
- about Arundel's Case and some of the original
- 24 materials. I understand your -- your position
- 25 is that those cases allowing retrial for

- 1 improper venue were challenges essentially to
- 2 the sufficiency of the indictment.
- But I would have thought that we'd
- 4 still have some cases where, as in this case, a
- 5 jury found venue improperly, and there would
- 6 have been an appeal taken afterwards by the
- 7 defendant, as you have, and there would be some
- 8 evidence that -- that an acquittal would have
- 9 been the remedy given on appeal. But I didn't
- 10 see that in your briefs.
- 11 So what's your -- what's your
- 12 understanding as to why that -- that evidence
- 13 doesn't exist?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, the criminal
- 15 appellate right has only existed, you know,
- since 1891, so the early case, the common law
- 17 and the founding, there was no criminal right of
- 18 appeal. So this is sort of all a little bit sui
- 19 generis. And the way that this Court has
- 20 aligned that fact is it said, as in Burks, when
- 21 you have an appellate reversal for insufficiency
- of the evidence, that functions like a jury
- 23 acquittal would at the founding.
- And what we do have is, you know,
- evidence that jury acquittals at the founding,

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1 you know, on the basis of venue, had all the
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- 2 same --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: No, I -- I -- I
- 4 understand that, but your -- your --
- 5 your -- your answer, I think, is there is no
- 6 right to appeal until 1891 in this country.
- 7 MR. DEGER-SEN: Right. I mean,
- 8 there's no cases --
- 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: How about at common
- 10 law?
- 11 MR. DEGER-SEN: -- either way
- 12 basically for that reason.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah. Right. How
- 14 about -- how about at common law?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Right. There wasn't.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: The same thing?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Exactly.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. All right.
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Exactly.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, your
- 21 argument today is a bit different than your
- 22 brief. I think you're right the two are
- interwound, but this is really not a venue
- 24 clause, Article III, or a vintage clause of the
- 25 Sixth Amendment. This is really a double

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1 jeopardy argument. Justice Jackson asked that,
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- and you keep saying, well, no, I'm not making an
- 3 independent one. But it's totally that.
- 4 A judge can -- on the sufficiency of
- 5 the element, there could be a motion to dismiss
- 6 before trial, and if it's denied, we don't
- 7 require an acquittal then. Or, if the judge
- 8 grants it, it goes up on appeal and we reverse
- 9 it and it goes back because there wasn't a trial
- 10 before the jury, correct?
- 11 MR. DEGER-SEN: Correct. Right.
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, if there's a
- motion to dismiss for lack of venue and the
- judge grants it and there's an appeal by the
- 15 government and it's not a judgment of acquittal,
- 16 the government can then retry -- can try the
- 17 case, correct?
- 18 MR. DEGER-SEN: Right. It's -- it's
- 19 when --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So, really, the
- 21 issue is what happens after a jury finds that
- the government has not met its burden of proof.
- 23 That's the point you're trying to make, correct?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Yes. And that's how
- 25 we framed it in the petition and in --

- 1 throughout our briefs.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So what you're
- 3 saying is, if for -- the only thing that's
- 4 generally submitted to the jury is either
- 5 elements or affirmative defenses or venue. If
- 6 the jury has acquitted or if the jury has
- 7 convicted and an appellate court says the
- 8 evidence was insufficient, we don't permit the
- 9 government to retry the case.
- 10 MR. DEGER-SEN: Correct.
- 11 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And so you're
- saying this is no different than an affirmative
- 13 defense that sometimes is proven by a
- 14 preponderance of the evidence. If the court
- 15 says the judge was wrong on an affirmative
- 16 defense because the evidence was in -- was
- 17 sufficient -- or insufficient to -- to disprove
- it, then they can't try it again.
- 19 MR. DEGER-SEN: That's Burks.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And you're saying
- 21 we should apply the same principle, any issue
- that has to be submitted to the jury, that the
- 23 jury finds and then an appellate court says it
- 24 was insufficient, that should be end -- the end
- of the case. I think that's your argument.

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1 MR. DEGER-SEN: Exactly.
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- 2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So what do we do
- 3 with all the statements in the common law, among
- 4 jurists here, including Justice Story, that do
- 5 say that if an issue is about insufficient venue
- 6 or that venue is not right, that retrial is the
- 7 norm?
- 8 MR. DEGER-SEN: That -- that's not
- 9 what the historical sources say. I mean, the
- 10 government does a sort of crafty job of piecing
- 11 together, like, a variety -- two different kinds
- of cases, and, you know, it sort of makes it
- 13 seem like there is this line --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right.
- MR. DEGER-SEN: -- of separation.
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Break that down
- 17 for me because --
- 18 MR. DEGER-SEN: Right. It --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- it was more
- 20 convincing to me than you're let -- letting me
- 21 believe right now. But go ahead. Break it
- down.
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Well -- well -- so --
- 24 so -- so, first of all, the government starts by
- 25 talking about the -- the sort of case like

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1 Arundel's Case, the Coke treatise, and Tharbeau,
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- 2 which are the motion -- which are the motion-to-
- 3 arrest-judgment cases. And motion to arrest
- 4 judgment, as this Court said in -- in United
- 5 States versus Sisson -- this is what it said:
- 6 "For the purpose of this case, the critical
- 7 requirement is the judgment can be arrested only
- 8 on the basis of an error appearing on the 'face
- 9 of the record' and not on the base of proof
- offered at trial." And then, at Footnote 10, it
- 11 explains "face of the record" basically means
- 12 the indictment and the official documents.
- So motion-to-arrest-judgment cases
- 14 necessarily are not insufficiency cases. So the
- 15 Coke treatise, Arundel's Case, all of those
- things are totally consistent with our rule,
- 17 which is the rule you were just describing
- 18 earlier. If it's at the indictment stage, it's
- 19 a mistrial. Those are not sufficiency cases.
- 20 Then the government slips into talking
- 21 about this rule which says -- which is the rule
- 22 rejected in Ball, which is that a -- a -- a
- 23 prosecutor in a second prosecution is always
- 24 entitled to basically challenge the sufficiency
- of the indictment not just on venue grounds but

- on other kinds of grounds too. And even if you
- 2 have a general verdict of acquittal that goes to
- 3 culpability, you know, the guy didn't do it, you
- 4 still get to reprosecute him based on
- 5 challenging the sufficiency of the indictment.
- 6 Their own sources, like the Holmes
- 7 case, describe that rule as monstrous, and Ball
- 8 squarely rejects it. So their idea is that that
- 9 somehow now needs to be imported into thinking
- 10 about the venue clause, even though we know that
- 11 the framers thought the venue clause was
- 12 fundamentally important and required additional
- 13 protection. So I don't think that makes sense.
- But even on its own terms, it doesn't
- make sense because the government doesn't
- 16 believe in that rule even now. The government
- doesn't think that when the -- that the second
- 18 prosecution can be initiated on the basis of
- 19 challenging a venue in the first prosecution
- 20 when there's a general verdict of acquittal.
- 21 So it doesn't think that rule applies
- 22 generally. It somehow thinks it applies just
- for trying to understand what happens when
- you're on appeal and you get a reversal on
- 25 insufficient evidence of venue. And I just

- don't even see how that follows.
- 2 And all of that leads to the big thing
- 3 that's lacking, I think, in the government's
- 4 case, which is anything which says -- you know,
- 5 they had lots of cases that said venue
- 6 conventionally went to special verdicts, and
- 7 when you got an acquittal just on venue,
- 8 everyone just reprosecuted.
- 9 But they don't have anything like
- 10 that. And, in fact, special verdicts were not
- 11 that typical at the founding, and a court
- 12 couldn't even require a jury to enter a special
- 13 verdict. So there just wasn't any distinction
- 14 being made between venue and other kinds of
- 15 elements. They had equal status at the common
- law and at the founding. And the rule that the
- government pieces together just isn't accurate
- 18 when you really dig into those sources.
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Thank you.
- 20 JUSTICE ALITO: Other than the speedy
- 21 trial right and the double jeopardy right, can
- 22 you think of any example where a retrial is not
- 23 sufficient to cure the violation of a criminal
- 24 right?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: No, Your Honor, but

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1 there is no other --you know, we're already in
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- 2 such different terrain with the venue right
- 3 because there is no other right where the
- 4 violation is defined by the government's failure
- of proof before a jury. And so I think we're
- 6 already in sort of a strange place. That makes
- 7 it, I think, similar to double jeopardy
- 8 principles.
- 9 And I think there are some, you know,
- 10 significant analogies to the speedy trial right
- 11 because, you know, the -- you know, the right
- 12 here was -- is grounded in trying to avoid the
- 13 hardship of being -- you know, of having the
- 14 trial in an alien place. And, to some degree,
- once that trial in an alien place has occurred,
- 16 it's not remediable. It's not like the next
- trial necessarily puts you back to where you
- 18 were before. You've already had the experience.
- 19 And we know there's mountains of
- 20 evidence at the founding that it was the
- 21 experience of that trial that was the
- 22 constitutional hardship or constitutional wrong.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 24 counsel.
- 25 Justice Thomas?

Т	Justice Alito?
2	JUSTICE ALITO: Well, you can make the
3	the argument that you just made about the
4	violation of many other trial rights.
5	MR. DEGER-SEN: I I think that
6	every every trial is
7	JUSTICE ALITO: Practically every
8	trial right, you can make that.
9	MR. DEGER-SEN: Right. Absolutely.
10	Every trial is a hardship, but not every
11	constitutional right is concerned with avoid
12	specifically concerned with avoiding the
13	hardship of trial. And when you have a
14	constitutional right that's based on you don't
15	want that trial that that hardship to
16	occur in the first place, you need, as with the
17	speedy trial right, something that has some
18	front-end deterrence.
19	So that's our argument on that. You
20	know, you piece it together with the fact that
21	the government does have a lot of unfettered
22	discretion here, you know, as as William
23	Grayson described it, an absolute uncontrollable
24	power over venue. I think that requires some
25	more front-end deterrence

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- 2 fact that, of course, the venue right is already
- 3 fundamentally different. And when you put all
- 4 those things together, I think acquittal is the
- 5 appropriate remedy.
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: Are the modern
- 7 standards for venue in criminal cases the same
- 8 as the standards for venue that existed at the
- 9 time of the founding?
- 10 MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, I think,
- 11 broadly speaking, yes. We still look to try and
- 12 find what the locus delicti is and we look to
- 13 the -- where the conduct occurred. And that's
- 14 basically what happened in this case.
- 15 Obviously, the types of cases that
- occur, you know, the government now has far more
- ability to select different kinds of venues.
- 18 Congress has expanded the power of the
- 19 government to do that. So you have -- this
- 20 issue arises more and more. But, ultimately,
- 21 you still look to -- to the locus delicti.
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 23 Sotomayor?
- Justice Kagan?
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Was the right really

- 1 about the burden of a faraway trial? I thought
- 2 it was much more about having a jury that knew
- 3 the details of your crime and was of your
- 4 community.
- 5 MR. DEGER-SEN: It was -- it was about
- 6 both. And -- and the -- the -- the --
- 7 the founding documents describe a lot of the
- 8 time the hardship of trial in an alien place.
- 9 That's how this Court described it in
- 10 United States versus Johnson. But they also
- 11 describe it as the unfairness -- potential
- 12 unfairness of the conviction because you can't
- get your witnesses, because there's all sorts of
- 14 hardships that come there.
- And I think, as to both of those, we
- think that acquittal aligns with the purpose.
- 17 Acquittal is the only thing that has that
- 18 front-end deterrence, and acquittal is the only
- 19 thing that prevents the kind of forum shopping
- that the framers were acutely aware of. I mean,
- 21 this is the rare area where we just know that
- there was egregious governmental abuse,
- 23 egregious governmental practice that was
- happening in the founding era.
- So the idea they would have just

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1 thought, well, venue, that's just a thing of
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- lower status that we leave at the government's
- 3 grace, just seems highly implausible.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 5 Gorsuch?
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: What do you
- 7 understand the proper burden of proof of the
- 8 government to be in -- in venue cases?
- 9 MR. DEGER-SEN: I'm -- I'm
- 10 not -- I -- I think that there is -- there is --
- 11 that the historical evidence on that is
- 12 extremely muddled. I think it would be great
- 13 fodder maybe for --
- 14 JUSTICE GORSUCH: That's why I'm
- 15 asking you.
- 16 MR. DEGER-SEN: I -- I -- I think
- it would be great fodder for another cert
- 18 petition, Your Honor, but I don't think anything
- 19 turns on it in this case because, as we've been
- 20 discussing, there are things like affirmative
- 21 defenses where the burden of proof is not
- 22 necessarily beyond a reasonable doubt and it's
- 23 still the key thing is that it goes to the --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Sufficiency.
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Exactly.

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1 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I got it. Okay.
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- 2 And then what about -- the Chief Justice asked
- 3 you about transferring the case. As I
- 4 understand it under the criminal rules of
- 5 procedure at least currently, that's hard to do
- 6 without the defendant's consent. What do we do
- 7 about that?
- 8 MR. DEGER-SEN: I -- I think that a
- 9 defendant -- so a defendant has -- has to
- 10 basically put venue in issue, and the way it
- 11 typically does that is by doing it at the
- 12 indictment stage. And at the indictment stage,
- if the government says, oh, you know, you're
- absolutely right, this is in the wrong venue,
- the government can withdraw the powers and --
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Can it -- can it do
- it unilaterally, or does it require the
- 18 defendant's consent?
- 19 MR. DEGER-SEN: I think, at the
- 20 indictment stage, it can just withdraw the
- 21 indictment and refile somewhere else.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: All right. Okay.
- 23 Thank you.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 25 Kavanaugh?

1	Justice Barrett?
2	Justice Jackson?
3	JUSTICE JACKSON: Yeah. I just think
4	there's something conceptually strange about
5	going from being tried in an improper venue to
6	being fully acquitted, and so can I just go back
7	to to Justice Kagan's point, which is, if we
8	assume that the point of venue or at least a
9	point of venue was to ensure that the community
10	in which this crime occurred had some say in
11	how how these facts were tried, then why
12	would it be that the only permissible remedy for
13	having tried a person in the wrong venue would
14	be to acquit them entirely and not let the
15	community that is the right venue exercise that
16	prerogative?
17	MR. DEGER-SEN: And and but I
18	think that's a natural consequence of how it's
19	always been because, at at the common law
20	JUSTICE JACKSON: But, I mean, if
21	if we assume that part, at least part, is to
22	make sure that the people who were victimized,
23	victimized by the crime, are participating in
24	the trial, it seems to me that your remedy robs
25	them in some sense of the ability to speak to

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1 the crime and the issue, because you say the
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- 2 person who may have done this can't be retried
- 3 if he's tried in a -- in -- in the wrong place.
- 4 So what do we do about -- about that?
- 5 MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, the -- the law
- 6 has always sort of placed the -- it has --
- 7 has -- has sort of balanced that and basically
- 8 said that the defendant's right to venue is more
- 9 significant. That's the only -- that's the
- 10 natural --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: And the community's
- 12 right to participate in the trial?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Well, because that's
- 14 what would happen. I mean, you would in at --
- 15 at the common law and at the founding, if the
- 16 government initiates the prosecution in the
- 17 wrong venue, takes it to the jury and there's an
- 18 acquittal, that's the end. If there's an
- 19 acquittal and -- you know, the government
- doesn't then go and get to say, well, now --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Isn't that the --
- 22 MR. DEGER-SEN: -- those in the
- 23 community get to try.
- 24 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- but isn't that
- 25 the balancing scenario? If he's acquitted in

- 1 the wrong venue, then we say his right to not be
- 2 tried takes precedent. But, if he's convicted
- 3 in the wrong venue, I guess I wonder why that
- 4 means that the jury that actually has the
- 5 greatest stake in this situation doesn't get the
- 6 opportunity.
- 7 MR. DEGER-SEN: Because, under this
- 8 Court's precedent, he has been acquitted. A
- 9 jury acquittal over --
- 10 JUSTICE JACKSON: All right. So let
- 11 me -- let me talk to you about that because
- that's another part that I'm struggling with.
- 13 You -- you admit that venue doesn't
- 14 have to be submitted to a jury. I mean, even
- 15 when you raise it, is it -- does -- is it the
- 16 kind of thing that has to go to the jury or not?
- 17 MR. DEGER-SEN: It -- it -- it
- 18 basically is. I mean, the -- the circuits are a
- 19 little --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, no, not
- 21 basically. I'm saying, okay, we're at trial,
- 22 pretrial, and the defendant raises a venue
- objection. Is that something that the judge can
- 24 resolve, or must it be submitted to the jury?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: It basically must be

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1 submitted to the jury. The circuits are a
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- 2 little divided on how much a defendant has to
- 3 put it in issue, but everyone agrees that once
- 4 it's put in issue -- and the threshold is low --
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: Okay. But I thought
- 6 you said earlier that we had a scenario in which
- 7 a judge could be ruling on this as a matter of
- 8 Rule 29, where the judge could be deciding, all
- 9 right, so you're --
- 10 MR. DEGER-SEN: On -- on sufficiency
- 11 grounds, yes.
- 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: All right. So let's
- say it was put to the jury and then there's a
- 14 Rule 29 and the judge resolves it. In that
- 15 situation, if the judge says no venue, is it
- 16 your position that the government can't appeal,
- 17 that's tantamount to an acquittal verdict?
- 18 MR. DEGER-SEN: Yeah. If -- if --
- 19 if -- if the government said -- if the -- if
- 20 the -- if the judge rules that there's a Rule 29
- 21 motion for judgment of acquittal on venue
- 22 grounds, absolutely. That's basically Evans.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: It's -- it's not
- 24 going to -- I'm saying it's -- do we have cases
- 25 that say that, or are you just making this

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1 analogy? I guess I'm wondering, would I ever
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- 2 find --
- 3 MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, it's -- it's
- 4 the natural --
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- an appellate --
- 6 MR. DEGER-SEN: -- consequence of our
- 7 rule. It's -- it's a consequence --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: It's a natural
- 9 consequence of your rule, but I'm asking you
- 10 about the law exactly in this -- in the
- 11 following sense: Would an appellate court ever
- 12 be called upon to decide whether the judge was
- 13 correct on a JNOV Rule 29 motion in the
- defendant's favor on venue grounds?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: They shouldn't be. I
- mean, the circuits are divided on what you can
- 17 hear.
- 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: So, if I find those
- 19 cases, you lose?
- MR. DEGER-SEN: No. I mean, the
- 21 circuits currently are divided. I mean, there's
- lots of circuits that have a retrial rule on
- 23 appeal, just like the Eleventh Circuit, and so
- 24 I'm sure there will be lots of examples where
- judges in those circuits do exactly that, and

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1 the result is that it doesn't, you know, qualify
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- 2 as an -- as an acquittal in the same way because
- 3 that's --
- 4 JUSTICE JACKSON: No, but I guess -- I
- 5 guess, doesn't that -- why doesn't that
- 6 undermine your argument? I mean, my -- if it is
- 7 an acquittal, then it seems to me that the --
- 8 that there shouldn't be an appellate right for
- 9 the government to go and ask for a review of the
- judge's determination that there's no venue on
- 11 --
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Right. I mean, I --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: -- a post-trial
- 14 motion. So, if we find those, then it would
- seem as though the law does not treat the venue
- 16 question as tantamount to --
- 17 MR. DEGER-SEN: I -- I -- I --
- 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- a judgment of
- 19 acquittal.
- 20 MR. DEGER-SEN: -- I think those cases
- 21 would be wrong just like the circuits that
- 22 disagree with us would be wrong.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So, in ruling in
- 24 your favor, we'd have to also rule about that, I
- 25 quess --

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                MR. DEGER-SEN: I -- I -- I --
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                JUSTICE JACKSON: -- because the
      implication would be --
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               MR. DEGER-SEN: Yeah, I -- I -- I
 4
      mean, I think, basically, as this Court said in
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 6
     Burks and reaffirmed in Evans, a jury acquittal,
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      a judge acquittal under Rule 29, and an -- an
      appellate reversal of a Rule 29 motion for
 8
 9
      insufficiency, those are all insufficiency
10
     determinations, and it's a purely arbitrary
11
      distinction to say that, you know, because the
12
      jury made a mistake, the government now suddenly
      gets to reprosecute. The -- it's -- it's not
13
14
      fair to say that that is what it all turns on.
15
                And that's this Court's holding in
16
     Burks. And the government in this case at JA
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      113, 114, said to the jury: Acquit. If you
18
     find -- if you find we didn't, you know, bear
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      our burden of proof here, you should acquit.
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     They agreed that bars reprosecution.
21
                And they're saying there should be
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      exactly the arbitrary distinction that this
23
     Court rejected in Burks for venue, and it
24
     doesn't -- there's no basis for thinking venue
25
      should be treated differently because venue has
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1 never been treated differently historically at
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- 2 the common law. It's always had the --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Except insofar as
- 4 our law might allow the government to raise
- 5 venue questions on appeal if ruled on by a
- 6 judge.
- 7 MR. DEGER-SEN: I don't think I
- 8 understand.
- 9 JUSTICE JACKSON: In other words, you
- say venue has never been treated differently.
- 11 But I've identified a situation in which it has
- 12 perhaps. I don't know because I haven't
- 13 researched it. That's why I'm asking you. It
- would be treated differently or it has been
- 15 treated differently if the government could
- 16 actually bring an appeal on a judicial
- 17 determination of venue and have that --
- 18 MR. DEGER-SEN: I mean, I -- I -- I --
- 20 because of motions of acquittal --
- 21 MR. DEGER-SEN: Right. I -- I --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: -- or -- or -- or
- judgments of acquittal would not be appealable.
- MR. DEGER-SEN: -- I haven't seen a
- 25 case like that. I don't know if they exist,

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1 Your Honor, but, if they do, I would think that
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- 2 they're just basically another instance of the
- 3 rule that we're challenging in this case, as the
- 4 court of appeals have, and that rule is itself
- 5 the thing which violates Burks.
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 8 counsel.
- 9 Mr. Joshi?
- 10 ORAL ARGUMENT OF SOPAN JOSHI
- ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- MR. JOSHI: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
- 13 it please the Court:
- 14 The remedy for a defendant convicted
- in a wrong venue is, one, reversal of his
- 16 conviction; two, dismissal of the count in the
- 17 indictment. Petitioner got both of those
- 18 remedies here.
- 19 His contention here is that the
- 20 Constitution requires an additional third
- 21 remedy, which is immunity from reprosecution.
- 22 But he hasn't identified a single word of the
- 23 actual text of the Constitution that mandates
- 24 that remedy. And we think centuries of
- 25 prefounding history and precedent belie that

- 1 contention.
- Now Petitioner mentioned this morning
- 3 and in his briefing that juries are instructed
- 4 to acquit a defendant if the government fails to
- 5 prove venue, and he says that we haven't shown a
- 6 founding era federal case in which a jury
- 7 acquittal was followed by a retrial.
- 8 I think that's a little bit of a
- 9 strawman. A general verdict of acquittal always
- 10 precludes retrial under double jeopardy
- 11 principles. We have never contested that.
- But that's not this case. He was not
- 13 acquitted by the jury. He was convicted. The
- question is what happens when a reviewing court
- 15 determines that a conviction was obtained in the
- 16 wrong venue.
- 17 Of course, there's no founding era
- 18 precedent on that because, as my friend
- mentioned, there was no right of appeal in
- 20 federal criminal cases until 1889 for defendants
- and 1907 for the government.
- 22 But Petitioner's case basically boils
- down to, from start to finish, a conflation of a
- 24 jury's general verdict of acquittal and a
- 25 reviewing Court's determination that a

- 1 conviction was improper or the result of
- 2 constitutional error.
- 3 This Court has squarely rejected that
- 4 conflation, including in Scott, which was one of
- 5 the trilogy of double jeopardy cases decided the
- 6 same day as Burks. And what the Court said in
- 7 Scott was that, look, a general verdict of
- 8 acquittal doesn't give reasons, and so we adopt
- 9 a defendant-friendly categorical rule that a
- 10 general verdict of acquittal is final and
- 11 preclusive.
- 12 That's not true when a court decides
- 13 something. When a court decides something, the
- 14 dividing line for whether retrial is or is not
- permissible is whether the legal basis for the
- 16 ruling goes to factual guilt or innocence or
- criminal culpability, as Evans against Michigan
- 18 said.
- 19 Venue does not go to factual guilt or
- 20 innocence. It does not go to criminal
- 21 culpability. And, therefore, retrial is not
- 22 forbidden.
- I welcome the Court's questions.
- 24 If there aren't any, let me --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, how many

- 1 times does the government, for example, get to
- 2 either mistake or deliberately sue in the wrong
- 3 venue?
- 4 MR. JOSHI: If on --
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You can
- 6 imagine a situation, perhaps a rare one, but you
- 7 can imagine it, where what's involved is an
- 8 abuse of their right to charge wherever they
- 9 want, not out of the blue, but in any case --
- 10 many cases, like, take internet crimes and
- 11 things like that, there must be dozens of places
- where the government could charge, and why don't
- they just start with one and go through and wear
- 14 down the defendant?
- MR. JOSHI: So let me address a couple
- of things there.
- 17 First of all, if your suggestion is
- 18 that the government is -- is prosecuting in a
- 19 correct venue, well, then that should be fine,
- and, you're right, there are sometimes many,
- 21 many venues under continuing crime statute that
- 22 -- that Congress has passed that defines crimes
- as taking place in many venues. So, you're
- 24 right, the government can pick one of those
- venues, but those would be proper venues.

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1 I take the thrust of your question to
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- 2 be, well, what if the government serially tries
- 3 to retry someone in the wrong venue? I -- I
- 4 don't think that's realistic, and I'm going to
- 5 give you a few answers here, and I -- I
- 6 understand some may be more satisfactory than
- 7 others.
- 8 The first is that we think our rule
- 9 has been the dominant rule in the circuits and
- in this country for hundreds of years. I think
- 11 Petitioner identified at the cert stage, I
- 12 think, just two cases, neither of which we think
- 13 actually stand -- adopts his principle. But I
- don't think we've seen any suggestion that the
- 15 government has ever engaged in that kind of
- 16 practice. Petitioner had all the incentive in
- 17 the world, as amici did, to identify such a
- 18 case. They haven't been able to.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, but, I
- 20 mean --
- 21 MR. JOSHI: Now I understand that --
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- you -- you
- 23 say that they're all going to be correct venues,
- 24 but often you don't know that until after
- 25 there's extensive pleading practice and

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1 everything else and the government, you know,
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- 2 it's -- is an imposition on the defendant to
- 3 have to litigate with the government, whether or
- 4 not his, you know, vacation trip to wherever was
- 5 enough to establish venue there.
- 6 MR. JOSHI: Yeah, that -- that's a
- 7 fair point. Sometimes it's going to be
- 8 difficult. This is, I think, one of those
- 9 difficult cases. And I -- I -- but I took your
- 10 question to be asking about bad faith. I think,
- if it's a difficult case and the government
- 12 believes sincerely that venue is appropriate,
- 13 the jury agrees unanimously that venue is
- 14 appropriate, and the trial court agrees that
- venue is appropriate, it seems -- I don't think
- 16 you could call that bad faith, you know, in
- 17 addition to the fact that --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Why was this brought
- in the Middle District of Florida, which -- I
- 20 mean, everyone seemed to -- you were alerted
- 21 pretty early on that that wasn't the right
- 22 venue. Are -- are they just not that busy in
- 23 the Middle District?
- 24 (Laughter.)
- MR. JOSHI: So -- so this was brought

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1 in the Northern District.
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- 2 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Sorry, the Northern
- 3 District. It should have brought in the Middle
- 4 District or in Alabama.
- 5 MR. JOSHI: Yeah.
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I apologize. I got
- 7 the wrong district. So apologies to the Middle
- 8 District of Florida.
- 9 (Laughter.)
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: They're obviously
- 11 very busy. Maybe the Northern District isn't.
- 12 MR. JOSHI: So I believe -- so I don't
- 13 know --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: We don't know?
- MR. JOSHI: -- everything that went
- into the prosecution decision, but I think the
- 17 Northern District of Florida was the natural
- 18 home for this because that's where all the harm
- was felt, that's where the victim was, that's
- 20 where --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah, but none of
- 22 the -- none of the "crime" occurred there?
- MR. JOSHI: I -- I don't think that's
- 24 right.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: All right.

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1 MR. JOSHI: We -- we -- we didn't
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- 2 cross-petition for cert on it --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah.
- 4 MR. JOSHI: -- because it was
- 5 fact-bound, and remember the --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: The Eleventh
- 7 Circuit's wrong about that too? Go ahead.
- 8 MR. JOSHI: -- the -- the jury agreed
- 9 and the appellate court agreed, and Petitioner
- 10 hasn't sought review of the other finding, which
- is that the extortion count was proper --
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
- 13 MR. JOSHI: -- in the Northern
- 14 District. And so you --
- 15 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Let me ask you a
- 16 more fundamental question.
- 17 MR. JOSHI: Yeah.
- 18 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I'm sorry. I just
- 19 wondered if -- if you happened to know, and you
- don't know why it was brought in the Northern
- 21 District. That's fair.
- 22 Your colleague on the other side makes
- an interesting point about Arundel's Case and
- 24 the other authorities you cite, that those had
- 25 -- had to do with challenging the indictment,

- 1 arresting the indictment, and not after a
- 2 sufficiency-of-the-evidence determination by the
- 3 fact-finder.
- 4 What say you?
- 5 MR. JOSHI: So I'm -- I'm not sure
- 6 that's right for a couple of reasons. One is
- 7 that -- and I admit this is -- I -- I
- 8 couldn't find the author. It might be Lord
- 9 Hill, it might be someone else, but it's an
- 10 annotation to Coke's -- Coke on Littleton. It's
- 11 -- it's -- it's in a footnote clearly added by
- the editor, so at a later time, but in the early
- 13 1800s or even earlier. It's undated. But it
- 14 makes the point that arrests of judgment and
- 15 appeal are essentially treated the same for
- 16 these purposes. And, on that point, my second
- 17 point is --
- 18 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, how could that
- 19 be if there were no -- if there was no appeal?
- 20 Maybe you can explain that to me.
- 21 MR. JOSHI: Oh. Oh, so there -- there
- 22 -- there -- there -- there was a limited right
- of appeal in England long before there was one
- 24 in -- in the -- in the federal system here. And
- so that's going to lead me to my second point,

- 1 which is Rex against Welsh, which we cite in our
- 2 brief. That's from 1827, so it's post-founding.
- 3 But there's been no suggestion that that case
- 4 somehow represented a break in the English law.
- 5 There, the jury was directed to acquit
- 6 the defendant in Southwark because it became
- 7 apparent that the crime took place in London.
- 8 And then he was reindicted in London and -- at
- 9 the Old Bailey, and the judges gathered together
- 10 and they decided unanimously that his plea of
- 11 autrefois acquit was no good in London because
- it was -- his acquittal was on venue grounds.
- So I think that disposes of
- 14 Petitioner's objection here that there is
- somehow this big difference between them.
- I also think our modern case law
- 17 disposes of that objection. Again, he -- he
- 18 discusses Burks a lot, but Scott was decided the
- 19 same day, and both Burks and Scott overruled
- 20 several of the Court's earlier double jeopardy
- 21 cases, which they had just begun to have
- 22 experience with, and -- and -- and they -- they
- 23 decided -- of course, Burks I take no issue
- 24 with. What Burks did was overrule Brian. Brian
- 25 said that, if an appellate court reverses for

- 1 insufficient evidence, you could have a retrial.
- 2 And Burks said, no, we're not going to do that
- 3 because it's a -- it's a verdict of acquittal,
- 4 it ought to be final, we don't always know why
- 5 the jury acquitted someone, and so benefit of
- 6 the doubt to the defendant.
- 7 That's not true when an appellate
- 8 court weighs in or a reviewing court, even if
- 9 it's the trial court, weighs in on an issue.
- 10 Now --
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: Can I -- can I take
- 12 you back to the Chief Justice's question? At
- 13 your brief at some point, you say, in
- 14 extraordinary circumstances where appropriate, a
- 15 court can dismiss with prejudice.
- 16 So what did you mean there? Is that
- supposed to respond to the possibility of bad
- 18 faith? What -- what's appropriate? What are
- 19 extraordinary circumstances?
- 20 MR. JOSHI: Yeah, I -- I think that's
- 21 right. The question presented in this case is
- 22 whether the Constitution compels a forbidding of
- 23 retrial. Our answer is no. But we don't think
- 24 the Constitution forbids that either. Congress,
- for example, could pass a statute and say the

- 1 government gets one shot and that's it. That
- 2 would be perfectly constitutional.
- 3 And we think that if there is actually
- 4 an allegation of bad faith conduct on the part
- of the government, like any litigant engaging in
- 6 bad faith conduct, courts have inherent powers
- 7 to discipline the litigants, and if a court
- 8 thinks that the government is walking in and
- 9 serially retrying someone just for the purpose
- of harassing them in bad faith, it can issue a
- 11 preclusive order like that.
- 12 And we think that there's nothing in
- the Constitution that forbids it. There may be
- some other statutory law or something, but
- nothing in the Constitution forbids it, and
- that's what we were trying to say.
- But, as I -- as I was saying to the
- 18 Chief Justice, I -- I really don't think this is
- 19 a likely possibility, and this is not an
- 20 argument that says, you know, trust us. This is
- 21 more an argument about trust human nature.
- Like, prosecutors like convictions, and they
- don't like reversals of convictions.
- 24 And so it wouldn't really make sense
- 25 for a prosecutor to deliberately try a defendant

- in the wrong venue knowing that there's a risk
- 2 the jury might acquit, and then that's going to
- 3 be final, and then, even if the jury convicts,
- 4 knowing that the appellate court might reverse
- 5 the conviction --
- 6 JUSTICE JACKSON: But why does it all
- 7 have to come down to bad faith? I mean, you can
- 8 imagine a world in which there are -- there's a
- 9 nonfrivolous possibility that this crime was
- 10 committed, it's a complicated fraud crime, and
- there are nine different places, you know, actus
- 12 reus is a part of it. And I -- I quess I don't
- 13 understand why it matters that the government is
- deliberately trying to do something to the
- 15 defendants.
- Isn't there something to your friend
- on the other side's point that the government
- should not be allowed to in seriatim try this
- 19 defendant if it turns out that one after the
- other after the other, a determination is made
- 21 that that's the wrong venue?
- MR. JOSHI: No. I mean, you can
- imagine a trial in which there's an uncounseled
- 24 -- uncounseled statement is introduced against
- 25 him. It gets reversed. Then he goes up, and

- then an un-Mirandized confession gets introduced
- 2 against him. That's reversed. Then there's --
- 3 evidence in violation of the exclusionary rule
- 4 is introduced. That's reversed. But --
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: Right. But, at the
- 6 heart of it, I guess, is this question of
- 7 whether a venue determination is more like the
- 8 ones that you just articulated or like an
- 9 insufficiency determination. And your friend on
- 10 the other side says that when you present it to
- 11 a jury, as was done here, and when the
- 12 government, in my view, a little puzzle --
- puzzlingly says, we are okay with a jury
- 14 instruction that says you can acquit if the
- government hasn't proven by clear and convincing
- 16 evidence that this is the right venue, why isn't
- 17 that, like, you know, tantamount to an
- insufficiency such that if the government -- if
- 19 the jury gets it wrong, says the appellate
- 20 court, then it's over, the government doesn't
- 21 get to come back and marshal new evidence and --
- 22 and do it again?
- MR. JOSHI: Because I think this Court
- 24 has rejected that principle, and I'll explain
- 25 why, but I just want to observe at the outset

- 1 that just because, you know, two things are
- 2 alike in one sense doesn't mean they're alike in
- 3 all senses. And I don't think -- just because
- 4 venue might be -- go to the jury and the jury
- 5 might decide a question of venue doesn't make it
- 6 like an element or like an affirmative defense.
- 7 You know, juries decide statute of limitations
- 8 as well. Like, that's got nothing to do with --
- 9 with acquittal, but --
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: What do you think
- 11 would happen may -- did -- did I interrupt you?
- 12 Sorry.
- 13 MR. JOSHI: If I -- if I could just
- 14 fully answer. I'm sorry, Justice Kagan.
- Just the -- the -- I -- I said this
- 16 Court has rejected that principle, and what I
- was going to say there is illustrated by Evans
- against Michigan on the one hand and Musacchio
- 19 against United States on the other.
- In both cases, the courts were under
- 21 the misimpression that there was an extra
- 22 element of the crime that wasn't actually there.
- 23 In Evans, the defendant was acquitted for
- insufficiency of the evidence with respect to
- 25 that element that wasn't actually an element.

- 1 And this Court said, sorry, acquittal is final.
- 2 That -- you know, that's the end of the story
- 3 because it goes to criminal culpability.
- But, in Musacchio, exactly the same
- 5 thing happened. The jury was instructed to find
- 6 an extra element that wasn't actually an element
- 7 of the crime. The jury nevertheless convicted.
- 8 And on appeal, the defendant said,
- 9 hey, insufficient evidence for this element
- 10 that's not actually an element, and this Court
- 11 said, we don't care, it's not actually an
- 12 element. You're on appeal now. And, as a legal
- ground, like, because it's not actually an
- element, you're not going to get your conviction
- 15 overruled.
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You're missing the
- 17 point there. If the jury convicts and convicts
- 18 wrong, you can get a new trial. But, if it
- 19 acquits, that's the whole purpose of the Double
- Jeopardy Clause, and we did repeatedly, in Burks
- 21 and other cases, we have said the Double
- 22 Jeopardy Clause forbids a second trial for the
- 23 purpose of affording the prosecution another
- 24 opportunity to supply evidence which it failed
- 25 to muster in the first proceeding.

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1 MR. JOSHI: Agree --
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- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If a jury acquits,
- 3 it's saying you fail to muster.
- 4 MR. JOSHI: Yes.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If it convicts, it
- 6 says you did muster the evidence. But why
- 7 should we permit you the opportunity to retry
- 8 the case again for insufficient evidence?
- 9 MR. JOSHI: Because Scott tells us
- 10 that when a jury convicts and then a court
- 11 decides that the conviction was obtained on the
- 12 basis of some constitutional error, a retrial is
- 13 permissible if that error does not relate to
- 14 factual guilt or innocence.
- 15 Burks and Scott were decided the same
- 16 day. Every Justice in the majority in Scott was
- in the majority in Burks, other than one who was
- 18 recused, I think, or didn't participate. I
- 19 don't -- I'm quessing he was recused.
- 20 So Burks and Scott, you have to read
- them together, and the dividing line is whether
- the legal basis for setting aside the conviction
- goes to factual guilt or innocence. Venue does
- 24 not go to factual guilt --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: What would --

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1
               MR. JOSHI: -- or innocence.
                JUSTICE KAGAN: -- happen if -- if
 2
 3
      there were a special verdict form and the jury
      said, we're finding this defendant not guilty
 4
      and the reason we're doing it is because there
 5
 6
      was no venue here? Could you retry?
 7
                MR. JOSHI: I -- I think we could, and
      let me -- let me just break it down. I mean,
 8
 9
      just to be super-analytic about it, suppose
10
      there are two questions. One, did the
11
      government prove quilt beyond a reasonable doubt
12
      on all the elements of the crime? Question two,
13
     did the government prove venue by a
14
     preponderance or whatever the standard of proof
15
     might be?
16
               And in that case, I think, you know,
17
      if -- if the jury answers yes and yes, that's
      this case, we think retrial is permissible.
18
19
                JUSTICE KAGAN: Yeah, that wasn't my
20
     question.
21
                MR. JOSHI: Yeah, no, but I just want
2.2
      to make sure we're on the same page. If the
23
      jury answers yes and no, which I think was your
24
      question, we -- we do think that -- we do think
25
      that you could be retried in that -- in that
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- 1 circumstance.
- 2 And just to round out the four
- 3 permutations, if the jury answers no and yes, so
- 4 guilty -- not guilty but right venue, obviously,
- 5 that's just like a regular old acquittal.
- 6 And if the jury answers no and no,
- 7 that's actually a tough question because venue
- 8 was wrong, so maybe they shouldn't have opined
- 9 on anything. But we think, under Ash against
- 10 Swanson and Yeager and that line of cases, we
- 11 could not retry a defendant in that scenario.
- 12 So that's my complete answer to -- to the
- 13 special verdict.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Does that apply --
- 15 JUSTICE KAGAN: That's all the boxes
- in the matrix checked off.
- 17 MR. JOSHI: That's right. And -- and,
- 18 you know, speaking of special verdicts, you
- 19 know, Petitioner mentioned them when -- or, I'm
- sorry, my friend mentioned them when he was up
- 21 here that, you know, special verdicts were never
- used.
- That's actually not correct. One of
- 24 the very cases he cites had a special verdict.
- 25 So this is Wright that he cites in his brief.

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1 And in Wright, there was a special verdict, and
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- the jury, you know, found facts and said, well,
- 3 look, like, here are the facts we found, and,
- 4 you know, if -- if it -- if the Court determines
- 5 then, you know, that these facts took place in I
- 6 think it was Washington, D.C., then --
- 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Your -- your answer
- 8 to Justice Kagan, though --
- 9 MR. JOSHI: Yeah?
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- seems to suggest
- 11 guilt on -- on elements, going to guilt or
- innocence, but wrong venue, special verdict,
- 13 retrial permissible, I believe, is your answer.
- 14 What's left of the notion that the
- wrong venue leads to an acquittal? I would
- 16 think that the government would have every
- incentive in the world to have special verdict
- 18 forms with respect to venue in every case or at
- 19 least try very hard to get them.
- 20 MR. JOSHI: You know, I would have
- 21 thought the same thing, and somehow that doesn't
- 22 play out in practice.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, it hasn't yet.
- MR. JOSHI: Yeah.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But, after today,

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1 why wouldn't it?
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- 2 MR. JOSHI: Maybe I think courts -- my
- 3 understanding from those who -- who practice in
- 4 the courts is that district courts are hesitant
- 5 to give --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Oh, they won't do
- 7 it. They won't do it. Okay. I -- I -- I got
- 8 the practical argument. But, if we take
- 9 seriously the founding evidence that does
- 10 suggest that a jury's verdict on -- of acquittal
- on venue means something, then why would it be
- 12 different if it comes in the form of a special
- 13 verdict rather than a general one?
- MR. JOSHI: Oh, I think -- I think I
- was making maybe the opposite point. I think
- 16 Rex against Welsh shows that a jury's verdict of
- 17 acquittal when we can definitively say it is on
- 18 venue grounds but not --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: You've got that one
- 20 case, I've got that. Okay. All right.
- 21 MR. JOSHI: It's -- it's cited -- I
- 22 mean, look like --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: It's a good case.
- MR. JOSHI: It's a good case, and I --
- 25 I will also point out --

- 4 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Yeah.
- 5 MR. JOSHI: That's true. But there's
- 6 no suggestion --
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: I'm not sure why
- 8 we rely on that.
- 9 MR. JOSHI: There is no suggestion
- 10 that it represented a break from the law, and we
- 11 know that later additions of Coke and Hale and
- 12 Hawkins' treatises all cite Welsh as being in
- line with all the other cases, including
- 14 Arundel's Case.
- 15 And I guess my point here is that the
- 16 framers were familiar with all of these sources,
- 17 and I admit they're sparse. I know you can poke
- holes and say, well, it's not quite exactly the
- 19 same. But here's the thing: A hundred percent
- of them support our rule. Not a single one
- 21 supports Petitioner.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But a hundred
- 23 percent of them also support the rule that a
- jury's verdict of acquittal on venue meant
- something and that was enough and that was the

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1 end of the case.
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- 2 MR. JOSHI: No, no --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: And there's a lot --
- 4 we've got a lot of evidence on that too.
- 5 MR. JOSHI: No, no, Justice --
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: At least with this
- 7 in a general verdict, you -- you would -- a
- 8 general verdict, good to go.
- 9 MR. JOSHI: Yes.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: A special verdict,
- 11 the rule somehow flips.
- MR. JOSHI: Yes, that's right.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: What's -- yeah.
- 14 What's left of the general rule?
- MR. JOSHI: Because the -- well, I --
- 16 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Other than district
- 17 courts won't let you do it.
- 18 MR. JOSHI: -- I -- I think -- I
- 19 think you've got the general rule wrong.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay.
- MR. JOSHI: We think the general rule
- 22 was that an acquittal, if it was on venue
- grounds, as in Welsh, did not preclude retrial.
- 24 But a general verdict of acquittal categorically
- 25 precludes retrial under the Double Jeopardy

- 1 Clause.
- 2 This Court in Scott, I think it's
- 3 Footnote 5, it might be Footnote 4, I can't
- 4 remember, specifically said that that is an
- 5 American rule that postdates the founding and is
- 6 a deviation from the original meaning of the
- 7 Constitution, but well settled and we'll just
- 8 keep it.
- 9 So that rule is very
- 10 defendant-protective. It's the rule that was
- 11 announced in Ball. But it's strange that
- 12 Petitioner relies on Ball, because Ball actually
- involved three defendants. One was acquitted
- 14 initially. The other two were convicted. It
- comes up to this Court in 1891, when appeal is
- 16 allowed finally, and this Court says venue was
- 17 bad. It wasn't adequately alleged. Reverses
- 18 the convictions.
- 19 It goes back down. Venue is now
- 20 adequately alleged, proved to be in the same
- venue, so not quite the issue here. All three
- 22 are convicted again, as -- as Petitioner notes.
- It comes back up to this Court, and
- this Court says, all right, the defendant who
- 25 was originally acquitted, his is bad. You can't

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1 retry him. Once he was acquitted, that was it,
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- 2 that's the end of the story. But the other two
- 3 whose convictions we reversed because of failure
- 4 to prove venue, those new convictions can stand.
- 5 So I don't think Ball helps him all
- 6 that much. All Ball does is establish the rule
- 7 I just mentioned, the rule I mentioned in my
- 8 introduction, which is that a general verdict of
- 9 acquittal, yes, preclusive, final. It's
- 10 different when the jury convicts and then a
- 11 reviewing court is determining that the
- 12 conviction was obtained by constitutional error.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel --
- MR. JOSHI: In that case --
- 15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- I had the same
- 16 thought that Justice Gorsuch did and you did. I
- 17 did a little research. We have a case that
- 18 dissuades district court justices from --
- 19 judges from doing special interrogatories,
- 20 because I too as a district court judge never
- 21 had someone ask me and I wondered why.
- 22 So there is a Supreme Court case that
- 23 discourages special interrogatories in criminal
- 24 cases, and I think that's the reason why.
- But you're now going much further,

- 1 because you're suggesting to me that a whole
- 2 bunch of special issues, like a dispute about
- 3 the date a crime occurred and whether it's in
- 4 the statute of limitations, you're suggesting
- 5 that if a reviewing court found the government
- 6 failed to supply sufficient evidence to negate a
- 7 statute of limitations defense, that the
- 8 government could try that case again and collect
- 9 more evidence.
- 10 Why not?
- 11 MR. JOSHI: I'm -- I'm not --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Because you're
- 13 saying there's now a conviction, the court --
- 14 reviewing court says no, this didn't happen
- within the statute of limitations, that you
- 16 could collect more evidence and have another go
- 17 at it because that wasn't a decision on the
- 18 sufficiency of the evidence.
- 19 It's an affirmative defense, just like
- 20 you're saying, treat it like venue, it goes --
- 21 doesn't go to the culpability. The guy did
- 22 commit the crime, just on a different date. And
- 23 you're suggesting that you can, after a
- 24 conviction, retry.
- 25 MR. JOSHI: No, that wouldn't work for

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1 a different reason, which is that it would be
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- 2 preclusive that the crime is outside the statute
- 3 of limitations. I don't think the government
- 4 could then under law-of-the-case principles
- 5 prove that it actually, in fact, is in the
- 6 statute of limitations.
- 7 Venue is different because venue --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why?
- 9 MR. JOSHI: -- you go and -- because
- 10 --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You got -- you got
- 12 new evidence.
- MR. JOSHI: Because you'd be going to
- 14 a different venue, which is -- which would not
- 15 be precluded under the -- the -- the
- 16 findings that have been made in the earlier
- 17 case.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Isn't the -- isn't
- 19 the issue, though, always why are we giving the
- 20 government another chance at an apple it already
- 21 took a bite at? And isn't that the center of
- our entire double jeopardy ruling? If the jury
- is going to determine whether you have
- 24 sufficient evidence or not to prove either an
- 25 element, a defense, a material I don't know

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1 what, because our case law is very confusing as
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- 2 to what "venue" is, we seem all to -- to agree
- 3 or people assume it's not an element of the
- 4 crime, yet we submit it to the jury, and yet we
- 5 do put the government to a burden of proof, and
- 6 yet we don't want to call it an element. It's a
- 7 little bit like that platypus, this mixed-up
- 8 animal, isn't it?
- 9 MR. JOSHI: It -- it is a little mixed
- 10 up. And I -- I admit, reading the historical
- 11 sources, I'm not entirely sure why it gets
- 12 submitted to the jury. All I can rest on here
- is this Court's trilogy of double jeopardy cases
- 14 decided on the same day, including --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well --
- 16 MR. JOSHI: -- Burks and Scott.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- that's my
- 18 problem with the historical record, because the
- 19 historical record thought about it as a court
- 20 who tried a person without venue had no
- 21 jurisdiction, and -- and we have destroyed that
- 22 concept here because we say the district court
- 23 has jurisdiction; it's just not this particular
- 24 venue.
- 25 MR. JOSHI: Look, this -- this Court,

- 1 until -- all of its early cases addressing venue
- 2 did treat it as jurisdictional. You're
- absolutely right. It's only in the middle of
- 4 the 20th Century that it moved away from that
- 5 understanding of it.
- 6 So, if you want the original
- 7 understanding, then -- of -- of what the framers
- 8 would have expected to be the result of a
- 9 violation of the venue or vicinage clauses, I
- 10 think that's pretty straightforward.
- But, if you're having trouble with the
- 12 historical sources, I guess I would say just
- 13 look at Burks and Scott together, look at those
- 14 double jeopardy principles, and the -- the
- bright line, the one that was then applied in
- 16 Evans, one that was applied in Smith against
- 17 Massachusetts has been, does it go to factual
- 18 guilt or innocence? Does it go to criminal
- 19 culpability?
- 20 JUSTICE JACKSON: Can I --
- 21 JUSTICE KAGAN: Does Mr. Smith have a
- 22 live double jeopardy claim?
- MR. JOSHI: What do you -- oh, are you
- 24 asking whether the Eleventh Circuit's decision
- forecloses it? No, I don't think so. I think,

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if we attempted to reprosecute him, he would be
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- 2 entitled to raise a double jeopardy defense if
- 3 he want -- you know, if -- if that came to pass.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: But there would have
- 5 to be some steps taken to -- by -- by the
- 6 government?
- 7 MR. JOSHI: Yeah, that's right.
- 8 JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean --
- 9 MR. JOSHI: That's right. Yeah, we
- 10 would have to actually reindict him. It would
- 11 actually have to be within the statute of
- 12 limitations. His -- his offense conduct, I
- 13 believe, took place in, like, May and June of
- 14 2018, so we're coming up on five years. So it's
- 15 -- it's not at all clear that that would be --
- that would be possible.
- I do want to address --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Can I -- I'm sorry.
- 19 Before we leave too far Justice Sotomayor's
- 20 point, so you've been saying that the test is
- does it go to factual guilt or innocence as to
- 22 whether or not a person can be retried, but then
- you also admitted, I thought, in response to her
- that a jury finding related to the timing of the
- 25 crime vis-à-vis a defendant claiming outside the

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1 statute of limit -- limitations would be
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- 2 preclusive.
- 3 Did you say that? Did you say that if
- 4 a jury were to find based on evidence presented
- 5 that this crime took place on X date and that
- date is outside the statute of limitations, then
- 7 the government could not retry the person?
- 8 MR. JOSHI: Correct, because the jury
- 9 would have found it's outside the statute of
- 10 limitations.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So you couldn't go
- 12 to another jury to -- to have that fact --
- MR. JOSHI: Correct.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: -- redone. So what
- 15 -- what about a scenario in which there's a
- 16 special verdict form that asks the jury to
- 17 determine where this crime took place? So
- 18 similar to her what -- you know, when did it
- 19 happen. Now the question is where. And the
- jury has a line, and they write Los Angeles or
- 21 Detroit or wherever. If they pick the wrong
- 22 place, sufficiency of the evidence, is that
- going to be a problem in terms of the government
- 24 venue issue?
- 25 MR. JOSHI: So, if -- if I understand

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1 the question correctly, the jury picks a place
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- 2 and that place is the correct venue?
- JUSTICE JACKSON: No, incorrect --
- 4 MR. JOSHI: Oh.
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: -- venue.
- 6 MR. JOSHI: It's incorrect venue.
- 7 JUSTICE JACKSON: The jury picks a
- 8 place --
- 9 MR. JOSHI: Oh. Well, then -- then
- 10 that finding is preclusive, right?
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Well, that's --
- MR. JOSHI: Like, the jury has found
- 13 that it took place in a particular location.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Right.
- MR. JOSHI: Then that's the finding of
- 16 the jury. I -- I -- I think our -- our
- 17 submission here --
- 18 JUSTICE JACKSON: But wait, why
- doesn't that totally undermine the government's
- 20 position in this case?
- 21 MR. JOSHI: Oh, no. Perhaps I
- 22 misunderstood the question. Our -- our -- our
- 23 submission here is that where the jury finds
- venue is appropriate and then a reviewing court
- determines that, in fact, as a matter of law,

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1 venue is inappropriate, in those circumstances,
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- 2 a retrial is permissible just --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: So it's not really a
- 4 special verdict versus a general verdict issue?
- 5 I was sort of responding to Justice Gorsuch's
- 6 point too.
- 7 MR. JOSHI: The -- the --
- 8 JUSTICE JACKSON: If we have a special
- 9 verdict where it's clear that the jury is
- 10 picking a place that is -- turns out on appeal
- is the wrong venue, what result?
- MR. JOSHI: Oh. So, again, I just
- 13 want to make sure --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.
- 15 MR. JOSHI: -- I understand your
- 16 question.
- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes. Yes.
- 18 MR. JOSHI: So the jury, on a special
- 19 verdict, says we find all the elements of the
- 20 crime --
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Yes.
- 22 MR. JOSHI: -- have been proved beyond
- 23 a reasonable doubt, and we find that this crime
- 24 takes place in -- every single element of this
- 25 crime took place in Washington, D.C., and all of

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1 these things happened in Washington, D.C., but
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- 2 trial is in the District of Maryland.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: Correct.
- 4 MR. JOSHI: What then?
- 5 JUSTICE JACKSON: Correct.
- 6 MR. JOSHI: Then, in that case,
- 7 retrial would be permissible.
- 8 JUSTICE JACKSON: Would be?
- 9 MR. JOSHI: Would be. Would be, yeah.
- 10 That's our -- that's the natural result of our
- 11 position.
- 12 JUSTICE JACKSON: All right.
- MR. JOSHI: Right. Now, again, this
- 14 basically never happens, and venue errors are
- also, you know, quite rare, but -- but I do want
- 16 to address the point that -- that --
- 17 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Why should venue
- 18 go to the jury?
- 19 MR. JOSHI: I'm not entirely sure. I
- 20 think Petitioner is right that as a matter of
- 21 historical practice, it often did go to the
- 22 jury. Of course --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: But just today.
- MR. JOSHI: Today? I -- I'm not sure
- it has to, except for this Court's decision in

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1 Jackalow, which is from 1862. That -- that
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- 2 decision said that there were it -- it came up
- 3 to the Court, not on appeal, because there was
- 4 no appeal; it was on a division of the circuit
- 5 judges this Court could review discrete issues
- 6 of law in the pre-appeal era. And it came up to
- 7 the Court because the circuit judges disagreed
- 8 on whether a particular crime took place within
- 9 the boundary of New York or not, or outside of
- 10 New York, in which case the defendant could be
- 11 tried in New Jersey.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 13 counsel.
- 14 Justice Thomas?
- 15 Justice Alito?
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: I had two questions I
- 17 hope are quick questions. The first is I'm not
- quite sure I understand what you're saying about
- 19 the double -- double jeopardy question, because
- 20 the Eleventh Circuit said, on 15a of the
- 21 petition to the -- the appendix to the cert
- 22 petition, "The Double Jeopardy Clause is not
- implicated by a retrial in a" -- "in a proper
- venue after we vacate a conviction for improper
- 25 venue."

1	So didn't the Eleventh Circuit decide
2	that question, and having held against
3	Petitioner on that question, would not an
4	affirmance by this Court preclude the assertion
5	later of a double jeopardy claim?
6	MR. JOSHI: I don't think so, and
7	maybe
8	JUSTICE ALITO: Why? Why?
9	MR. JOSHI: Yeah.
10	JUSTICE ALITO: Why?
11	MR. JOSHI: Maybe maybe I'm slicing
12	the baloney a little thin here, but I viewed
13	Petitioner's claim as being that he wanted a
14	judgment of acquittal that would be preclusive,
15	and the court denied him that relief.
16	The reason it denied him the relief
17	was because it thought that double jeopardy
18	didn't compel it to give him that relief. But I
19	don't think that would preclude a bona fide
20	double jeopardy challenge if there were actually
21	to be another prosecution. All that he would
22	have is a nonpreclusive judgment from the
23	Northern District of Florida by virtue of the
24	Eleventh Circuit's judgment.
25	But even though the reason for it was

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double jeopardy, I don't think that alone would
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- 2 be preclusive. That's just the reasoning of the
- 3 court. The court could have just denied him
- 4 that relief for any reason.
- 5 JUSTICE ALITO: Okay. Second
- 6 question. Do you think that Burks or Brian is
- 7 more consistent with the original understanding
- 8 of the meaning of the Double Jeopardy Clause?
- 9 MR. JOSHI: So we -- we take Burks as
- 10 it comes. Scott suggested that Brian might have
- been more consistent with the original meaning,
- 12 but we don't take an issue on that. I think
- even Scott accepted that the times have moved on
- 14 and that a general verdict of acquittal, just
- 15 full stop, is -- is always preclusive.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: So, if that's
- 17 correct -- I guess I'm going to add a third
- 18 question. If that is -- if that is correct,
- 19 would we not have to extend our double jeopardy
- 20 precedents even further beyond the original
- 21 meaning of the Double Jeopardy Clause in order
- 22 to find that double jeopardy precludes retrial
- in a case like this where, on appeal, it is
- 24 decided that the -- that venue was improper?
- 25 MR. JOSHI: You would. You would have

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1 to stray further and create an exception to
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- 2 Scott's otherwise quite categorical rule.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Anything
- 4 further, Justice Sotomayor? No?
- 5 Justice Kagan?
- 6 Justice Gorsuch?
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Can you just
- 8 finish your answer to my question --
- 9 MR. JOSHI: Yes.
- 10 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- about -- about
- 11 why venue should go to the jury? You were in
- 12 1860, I think.
- 13 (Laughter.)
- MR. JOSHI: Yes. So -- so Jack -- so
- 15 Jack -- so Jackalow was a division of -- of
- 16 authority on whether -- like, all the facts were
- found by the jury, like it took place on this
- ship which was docked here, it was an assault,
- 19 but the question was whether it was within
- 20 New York's territorial waters or without.
- 21 And this Court, on reviewing it, said,
- 22 well, we actually don't know because we need to
- 23 know where New York's boundary is in waters, and
- that's going to require some maps and facts that
- we don't have, so send it back for a new trial

1 so that the jury can, like, get those facts in

- 2 evidence.
- 3 But Jackalow was very clear that the
- 4 ultimate determination of venue was for the
- 5 court, not the jury. So, it -- given Jackalow,
- 6 it's puzzling to me why we -- we continue to
- 7 just send it to the jury, but, like, that's what
- 8 we do. That's what prosecutors do. That's what
- 9 we all do.
- 10 Certainly, nothing forbids sending it
- 11 to a jury. And just like the extra element
- thing, we can send all sorts of things to the
- 13 jury.
- 14 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: And nothing
- forbids not sending it to a jury. You're just
- 16 saying --
- 17 MR. JOSHI: Right.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: -- it's just the
- 19 way it's developed.
- 20 MR. JOSHI: It's the way it's
- 21 developed.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 24 Barrett?
- 25 Justice Jackson?

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1 JUSTICE JACKSON: So I did not
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- 2 understand this to be a double jeopardy case,
- 3 and I'm trying to understand, could we enter a
- 4 judgment on the QP in this case on these facts
- 5 that does not speak to this defendant's double
- 6 jeopardy rights?
- 7 MR. JOSHI: I -- it's a difficult
- 8 question because the -- at the petition stage, I
- 9 think, as you observed in -- in talking to my
- 10 friend, his argument was all about double
- 11 jeopardy. He claimed that venue was an element
- of the crime and, therefore, forbidden by double
- 13 jeopardy.
- On the merits, he's totally abandoned
- 15 that argument, and so I -- I'm not entirely
- 16 sure.
- 17 JUSTICE JACKSON: What if -- what
- if -- would the government object to looking at
- 19 this as homing in on the particular request that
- 20 he is making?
- 21 So you said it in response to Justice
- 22 Alito, which is he's requesting per the vicinage
- and venue clauses of the Constitution a judgment
- 24 preclusive of the government's ability to --
- 25 to -- to retry him, and I guess one could say

- 1 that the Constitution, those clauses don't give
- 2 rise to that remedy without speaking to, if the
- 3 government were to eventually or in the future
- 4 seek to retry him, what the Double Jeopardy
- 5 Clause would say about it.
- 6 MR. JOSHI: Yeah, I think that would
- 7 be fine. So you could write a -- an opinion
- 8 that says -- I mean, this would be possible.
- 9 You could write an opinion that says, look, the
- 10 framers codified the venue and vicinage rights
- in the Constitution, they tweaked them a little
- 12 bit, you know, they changed county to state and
- vicinage to district, but they didn't touch the
- remedial principles that accompany that right,
- 15 that old soil remains intact.
- 16 When the framers wanted to address
- 17 retrial, they did so in the specific clause of
- double jeopardy, so we're not going to go
- 19 hunting for a retrial remedy in the silence of
- 20 the venue and vicinage clauses, and Petitioner
- 21 doesn't claim --you know, doesn't raise or has
- 22 abandoned his double jeopardy argument. Full
- 23 stop. Affirm.
- JUSTICE JACKSON: And, really, that
- argument isn't ripe because the government

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1 hasn't sought to retry him, or has it at this
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- 2 point?
- MR. JOSHI: No, we -- we have not.
- And, you're right, we think the argument wasn't
- 5 ripe, but we made that point in our brief in
- 6 opposition, obviously, unconvincingly, and so --
- 7 JUSTICE JACKSON: Thank you.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 9 counsel.
- 10 Rebuttal, Mr. Deger-Sen?
- 11 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF SAMIR DEGER-SEN
- 12 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. DEGER-SEN: Thank you, Mr. Chief
- 14 Justice. Four quick points.
- 15 On the historical evidence, I -- I
- 16 think it was telling just how remarkably thin it
- 17 was, the -- the -- the -- the
- 18 government's answer was on that. They cited a
- 19 treatise that I don't know what they're
- 20 referring to and I've never heard of. If -- if
- 21 the Court wants supplementary briefing on that
- treatise, we're happy to do it, but I don't know
- what they're referring to.
- 24 And then Rex v. Welsh, a post-founding
- 25 English case, and that case was the -- the

- 1 indictment was in the general Quarter Sessions
- 2 in Southwark, which was a court of limited
- 3 jurisdiction, and the ruling was very much about
- 4 the fact that because of its jurisdictional
- 5 limitations, it was not a court of general
- 6 jurisdiction, that the judgment there wouldn't
- 7 be preclusive.
- 8 But that has no implications here.
- 9 The government agrees it's not jurisdictional.
- 10 The framers clearly didn't incorporate the
- jurisdictional principles of English common law,
- 12 certainly not jurisdictional principles of later
- 13 English common law into the Constitution.
- So I just -- if that's the best
- 15 historical evidence, I think it underscores that
- 16 the dominant practice here was the venue was
- 17 respected and treated just the same as anything
- 18 else that went to a general verdict of
- 19 acquittal.
- 20 On the case law, I don't -- again, you
- 21 know, they cite Musacchio. That's an
- 22 instructional error case. And Scott was a
- 23 dismissal for preindictment delay.
- Now it happened after jeopardy
- 25 attached, but it was not a sufficiency-of-the-

- 1 evidence case. The sufficiency-of-the-evidence
- 2 case is Burks, and in Burks, the -- this Court
- 3 said an -- an appellate sufficiency ruling is
- 4 the same thing as a jury sufficiency ruling.
- 5 Those other cases the government cites
- 6 did not involve sufficiency evidence. And the
- 7 same thing was true for the people who were
- 8 convicted in Ball. Those -- those individuals
- 9 didn't have a sufficiency-of-the-evidence
- 10 ruling. The government never took its evidence
- 11 to venue and failed. And that's what happened
- 12 here. The appellate -- the Eleventh Circuit
- 13 said the government's evidence failed. That
- 14 leads to acquittal under this Court's settled
- 15 precedent.
- 16 On the idea of no risk -- further, on
- 17 the idea of no risk for zero prosecution, the
- 18 government's answer is just trust us. And I
- 19 think Justice Story's statement here is very
- 20 telling. He said, there is little danger indeed
- 21 that Congress would ever exert their power in
- 22 such an oppressive and unjustifiable manner, but
- 23 upon a subject so vital to the security of the
- 24 citizen, it was fit to leave as little as
- 25 possible to mere discretion.

Τ	if that's true, now could it possibly
2	be the case the framers would have contemplated
3	a remedy that did allow just at the government's
4	discretion being shipped to London and then to
5	Manchester or maybe even being retried in London
6	multiple times. The government doesn't even
7	disclaim the Ninth Circuit's rule, where you can
8	just keep being prosecuted in the same
9	jurisdiction.
10	And then and I I think, Justice
11	Gorsuch, you're absolutely right to say the
12	government is going to request special verdicts
13	in every case, and you can't imagine a rule
14	that's more antithetical to the rule at the
15	founding when not only were special verdicts not
16	used in situations like this, a court couldn't
17	even require a jury to come back with special
18	verdicts and they'll be required in every case.
19	That is completely contrary to the original
20	intent here.
21	And, finally, on the question of
22	remedy, I mean, as Justice Alito said, the
23	the the double jeopardy question was
24	adjudicated against us in what under any
25	ordinary principle is not dicta, it's something

- 1 that would be preclusive as exactly the kind of
- 2 judgment people challenge all the time, and the
- 3 Court then said the remedy for improper venue is
- 4 vacatur of the conviction, not acquittal or
- 5 dismissal with prejudice.
- 6 So, I mean, I think that's absolutely
- 7 -- you know, we -- we have the opposite of what
- 8 we're asking for. Our question presented asked
- 9 for an acquittal barring reprosecution of the
- 10 offense. What we have is a judgment that says
- 11 you absolutely do not get that. You have the
- opposite of it. And it absolutely would bar us
- 13 from -- from raising a double jeopardy case in
- 14 another instance.
- 15 And to Justice Jackson's question
- 16 about ripeness, this is exactly the same
- 17 procedural posture as Burks, which was a double
- 18 jeopardy case.
- In Burks, you had an order from the
- 20 court of appeals basically saying the
- 21 government's case fails on insufficiency of the
- 22 evidence, but a retrial is permissible. That's
- 23 exactly what the Eleventh Circuit did here.
- 24 This Court reviewed that on certiorari and
- 25 reviewed -- and -- and reversed on double

_	jeopardy grounds. That is on all rours with
2	what we have in this case.
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
4	counsel. The case is submitted.
5	(Whereupon, at 11:25 a.m., the case
6	was submitted.)
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