1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES 2 3 LILLY M. LEDBETTER, : 4 Petitioner : 5 v. : No. 05-1074 6 THE GOODYEAR TIRE & : 7 RUBBER COMPANY, INC. : 8 9 Washington, D.C. 10 Monday, November 27, 2006 11 The above-entitled matter came on for 12 13 oral argument before the Supreme Court of the United 14 States at 11:03 a.m. 15 **APPEARANCES:** KEVIN K. RUSSELL, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf 16 17 of the Petitioner. 18 GLEN D. NAGER, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of 19 the Respondent. 20 IRVING L. GORNSTEIN, ESO., Assistant to the Solicitor 21 General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; as amicus curiae on behalf of the 22 23 Respondent. 24 25

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1 PROCEEDINGS 2 (11:03 a.m.) CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear 3 4 argument next in Ledbetter versus Goodyear Tire & 5 Rubber Company. Mr. Russell. 6 7 ORAL ARGUMENT OF KEVIN K. RUSSELL, 8 ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER 9 MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Chief Justice, and may 10 it please the Court. A jury found that at the time Petitioner 11 12 filed her charge of discrimination with the EEOC, 13 Respondent was paying her less for each week's work 14 than it paid similarly situated male employees and 15 that it did so because of her sex. The question for 16 the Court is whether that present act of disparate 17 treatment because of sex constituted a present 18 violation of Title VII. This Court has already 19 answered that question. 20 Consistent with the law's traditional 21 treatment of pay as arising from recurring 22 transactions and giving rise to recurring causes of 23 action, and consistent with the paycheck accrual rule 24 everyone agrees Congress adopted for the Equal Pay 25 Act, this Court in Bazemore versus Friday held under

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Title VII, each week's paycheck that offers less to
 an employee because of her race or sex --

3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But are you saying that 4 the rule for paycheck decisions is different than the 5 rule for other sorts of decisions?

б MR. RUSSELL: It -- it is. For example, 7 the respondents give the example of promotion 8 decisions but we think that there are analytical and well as practical and historical distinctions that 9 10 Congress, that led Congress to treat pay differently. 11 As a practical matter, while it's always the case or 12 almost always the case that somebody knows they have 13 been subject to disparate treatment in a promotion 14 case -- they know that they didn't get the promotion 15 and somebody else did -- it is frequently possible 16 for an employee to be subject to disparate pay 17 without ever knowing that she has been treated 18 differently than anybody else. And certainly --

JUSTICE KENNEDY: That seems to me to work the other way around, just like the case we've just heard argued in the last hour. It's a question of specificity here. If the, if the employee, he alleges that promotions were based on experience and the employee didn't have the experience because of past discrimination, why is that different than the

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1 paycheck rule? I take it indicates that you would 2 not allow the, a cause of action unless the 3 discrimination was within the statute of limitations 4 period?

5 MR. RUSSELL: Yes. A promotion --6 discrimination in promotion is different analytically 7 than with discrimination with respect to pay decisions themselves. Because in a promotion 8 decision the employee is deprived of the opportunity 9 10 to take on added responsibilities and therefore earn 11 more pay, but in, but the pay itself is not 12 discriminatory in the sense of treating people doing 13 the same work differently.

14 JUSTICE SCALIA: I don't really see a vast 15 difference between a promotion and being elevated to 16 a higher pay grade. I mean, there may be no 17 different responsibilities but it's a single act of 18 discrimination: "No, you're not going to move up to 19 the next pay level." I don't see why that's 20 different from "no, you're not going to move up to 21 the next job." 22 MR. RUSSELL: Because, I think the

23 difference is that when somebody is denied a 24 promotion for discriminatory reasons the paychecks 25 themselves are not discriminatory. They treat

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1 similarly situated workers differently.

2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Russell, I thought 3 that your argument was that yes, you know that you 4 haven't got the promotion, you know you haven't got 5 the transfer, but the spread in the pay is an incremental thing. You may think the first year you б 7 didn't get a raise, "well, so be it." But you have, you have no reason to think that there is going to be 8 9 this inequality. I mean she started out getting the 10 same pay, right?

11 MR. RUSSELL: Yes, and that practical 12 distinction I think does support Congress's decision 13 under the Equal Pay Act as well as under Title VII to 14 choose a paycheck accrual rule because it's 15 frequently that even if an employee knows she has 16 been subject to disparate pay, it's frequently very 17 difficult for her to have a good faith belief that 18 that pay is intentionally discriminatory without more 19 information.

20 So for example, if you look at that chart 21 on page 174 of the joint appendix, which summarizes 22 the pay decisions for one of the years at issue here, 23 if Petitioner knew only the pay raise that she got 24 that year, she would know that she got a 5.28 percent 25 raise which is not - which is not suspicious. If she

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1 knew what Mr. Conte had gotten, she would know that 2 in fact that pay raise decision decreased the 3 disparity between her pay and Mr. Todd's pay. If she 4 knew what also happened with respect to Mr. Bice she 5 would see that he got a higher absolute raise than she did, but she got a bigger one than Todd. 6 It's 7 only if Petitioner had all of the information in this 8 chart, that she would know that that pay raise decision increased the overall disparity between her 9 10 wages and the average wages of men doing the same 11 job. And even then the amount of that disparity, standing alone wouldn't provide a sufficient reason 12 13 to go claim intentional discrimination to the EEOC. 14 JUSTICE SCALIA: How does, how does time 15 solve that difficulty? 16 MR. RUSSELL: It's only after -- one would 17 expect in a merit system that there would be some 18 level of variation in the area and that would work 19 out over time. It's only when it doesn't, when the 20 disparity persists, when the different treatment 21 accrues again and again and the overall disparity in 22 the wages increases, that the employee has some 23 reasonable basis to think that it's not natural 24 variation in the pay decisions but actually 25 intentional discrimination.

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1	In the paycheck accrual rule that's been
2	applied by the lower courts for more than 20 years
3	without incident, adequately balances the interest of
4	employees and being able to come forward once they
5	find out that there is a reason to suspect
6	discrimination, with an employer's reasonable
7	interest in avoiding having to defend against stale
8	claims.

9 I think it's important to note that the 10 Equal Pay Act, which everybody agrees has a paycheck 11 accrual rule, imposes all of the same burdens on 12 employers that respondents allege would have led 13 Congress to never impose a paycheck accrual under 14 Title VII.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: What happened to the Equal Pay Act claim? You started out with a Title VII claim and an equal pay claim and somewhere along the way the equal pay claim dropped out.

MR. RUSSELL: It did. The magistrate judge initially recommended dismissing both the Title VII and equal pay claims on the grounds that there was a nondiscriminatory reason for the disparity. The district court held that there were fact disputes that precluded that conclusion, but for some reason only reinstated the Title VII claim.

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1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Why didn't you ask for 2 the equal pay claim? As I understand the magistrate 3 judge he said, yes, you had made it across the first 4 hurdle, you had a prima facie case. You showed that 5 you're a woman, and you're getting this and all the men are getting much higher. But the employer has б 7 come forward with any other factor other than sex and 8 the other factor is that, your inadequate

9 performance.

10 MR. RUSSELL: We should have objected to 11 the failure to reinstate the Equal Pay Act claim. We 12 didn't; we didn't think it was that important and the 13 time because we still had the Title VII claim.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: Because in the Title VII case assuming you're right, that you get across the first threshold, you're also faced with the same defense. Right?

18 MR. RUSSELL: Yes. It's essentially the 19 same case kind of case in each instance. Although 20 the jury has to find intentional discrimination in 21 the Title VII case; under the Equal Pay Act the jury 22 has to determine whether the employer has shown that 23 the present disparity is the result of some factor other than sex. And so in both cases, the jury 24 25 always has to consider the basis of prior decisions

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1	that are the cause of the present disparity.
2	JUSTICE ALITO: Do you have to show that
3	at the time when a particular paycheck in question is
4	issued, there was an intent to discriminate?
5	MR. RUSSELL: No. The execution of a
6	prior discriminatory decision constitutes a present
7	violation of Title VII. It's frequently
8	JUSTICE ALITO: What if the situation is
9	that when the particular paycheck is cut, the
10	company, the employer, whoever it is, has no intent
11	whatsoever to discriminate? They think that they are
12	issuing this pay on a totally nondiscriminatory
13	basis?
14	MR. RUSSELL: It still constitutes a
15	violation because they are executing a present
15 16	violation because they are executing a present disparity that is because of sex within the meaning
16	disparity that is because of sex within the meaning
16 17	disparity that is because of sex within the meaning of the statute.
16 17 18	disparity that is because of sex within the meaning of the statute. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if 15 years
16 17 18 19	disparity that is because of sex within the meaning of the statute. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if 15 years earlier a discriminatory decision was made to give a
16 17 18 19 20	disparity that is because of sex within the meaning of the statute. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if 15 years earlier a discriminatory decision was made to give a pay raise of 4 percent rather than 5 percent, and
16 17 18 19 20 21	disparity that is because of sex within the meaning of the statute. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if 15 years earlier a discriminatory decision was made to give a pay raise of 4 percent rather than 5 percent, and that over the 15 years became the basis with other
16 17 18 19 20 21 22	disparity that is because of sex within the meaning of the statute. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So if 15 years earlier a discriminatory decision was made to give a pay raise of 4 percent rather than 5 percent, and that over the 15 years became the basis with other raises, you think you can challenge the

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1 into the current 180-day period.

2 MR. RUSSELL: Yes. That kind of claim 3 would be timely under section 706. The employer 4 would have an awfully good laches defense. 5 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Would that be true if б there were a change in ownership of the company, so 7 the discrimination originally occurred under owner A, 8 then the company is purchased by owner B, completely 9 unrelated, and the, the disparity is used for 10 bonuses, et cetera? 11 MR. RUSSELL: That would depend on the 12 general rules for attributing a liability from a 13 successful --14 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, under the, under 15 the answer that you gave to the Chief Justice and the 16 rule you propose, what of the case of differing 17 ownership? 18 MR. RUSSELL: I would think that they are 19 still responsible in the same way that they are 20 responsible for other actions that the prior company 21 took. 22 JUSTICE SCALIA: But that, but that would 23 not be the result if the reason for the disparity 24 between 4 percent and 5 percent was not a, a denial 25 of a pay increase to a higher pay level, but rather

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1 denial of a promotion to another job. 2 MR. RICHARDS: That's correct. 3 JUSTICE SCALIA: If that were the case, 4 then it washes out and you have to challenge it right 5 away. 6 MR. RUSSELL: That is correct. And we 7 think --8 JUSTICE SCALIA: Does that make any sense? MR. RUSSELL: Well, I think that it does 9 10 for the reason that I said before, that that kind of 11 consequence is a secondary effect of the prior 12 unlawful employment practice, but under Evans, which 13 that kind of problem goes to --14 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, you could call it a 15 secondary effect but the only reason you want to get 16 promoted to another job is to get more money. I 17 think it's a primary effect. 18 MR. RUSSELL: Well even if the Court 19 didn't think that this is a completely satisfactory 20 analytical line to draw, as I said before there are 21 good practical reasons for drawing it, and every 22 reason to think that Congress did draw it, because 23 Congress enacted this statute against the background 24 legal principle that pay, that the pay aspects of the 25 employment relationship arise out of recurring

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1 transactions and give rise to recurring causes of 2 action. And that's the rule that everybody 3 acknowledges Congress adopted under the Equal Pay 4 And to hold that there is a different rule Act. 5 under Title VII would for example lead to the 6 anomalous proposition that Congress intended to 7 permit women, a white woman in 1967 to challenge the present disparity in her pay, but not a black man 8 under Title VII because the discrimination there was 9 10 racial. We don't think that Congress intended the 11 two acts to perform in such dramatically different 12 ways. In fact --13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, Congress 14 could have specifically provided for the Equal Pay Act rule under Title VII, but it didn't do that. 15 MR. RUSSELL: No, it didn't have the same 16 17 elements, but there's no reason to think that the 18 difference in the elements --19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: It didn't have the same defenses because the Bennett amendment makes the 20 21 defenses under the Equal Pay Act applicable under 22 Title VII, right? 23 MR. RUSSELL: That's right. And as a result the claims and the process of adjudicating 24 25 both kinds of claims are not particularly different.

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1	JUSTICE BREYER: Suppose you go back to
2	the 15-year old action which led to disparity that
3	continues up to today, and suppose at the beginning
4	or in July of 2006 the woman discovers it and brings
5	her claim and suppose she wins. Now, is it the case
6	and here I'm uncertain. I thought there was some
7	rule in respect to getting damages that you could
8	only go back 2 years?
9	MR. RUSSELL: There is a provision of
10	Title VII that limits back pay to at most 2 years.
11	JUSTICE BREYER: And in that case would it
12	mean that in this case where it happened 15 years ago
13	and she won, but she didn't bring her act until
14	August of 2006, that she could only then collect the
15	extra money for the preceding 2 years?
16	MR. RUSSELL: That's correct.
17	JUSTICE BREYER: So it isn't going to open
18	up tremendous liability for 15 or 20 years ago.
19	MR. RUSSELL: That's absolutely right, and
20	in fact there's no reason to think that such claims
21	are particularly common. This has been the rule in
22	effect for 20 years in the lower courts and
23	Respondent is unable to show any actual evidence that
24	these kinds of claims are common. But much more
25	common are instances in which an employee has no

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1	reasonable basis for filing a charge of
2	discrimination within 180 days of the disparity.
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I suppose all
4	they'd have to do is allege that sometime over the
5	past I mean, it doesn't have to be 15 years. It
б	could be 40 years, right that there was a
7	discriminatory act, in one of the semi-annual pay
8	reviews I was denied this, a raise that I should have
9	gotten. It may have been 20 years ago. It may have
10	been 40 years ago.
11	MR. RUSSELL: They can certainly make that
12	allegation, but the employer is left open to avail
13	itself of the equitable defenses and they'll have a
14	very easy time of showing that there's been undue
15	delay.
16	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Where does it say
17	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why is that if
18	they just discovered it? I just learned about what
19	happened 30 years ago at this company and it's I
20	filed right away. There's no laches.
21	MR. RUSSELL: In that case
22	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But then they have
23	to go back and litigate what happened 30 years ago.
24	MR. RUSSELL: I do acknowledge the
25	traditional laches defense would be more difficult

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1 than those --

2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought your answer 3 before was that this is not -- if she's going to 4 bring a case I got a 2 percent raise, he got a 3 5 percent raise, her chances are very slim, but if this builds up year by year to the point where she is 6 7 saying, I am being denied equal pay, it's a 8 requirement of the antidiscrimination law that I get 9 equal pay, so today I'm not getting equal pay, I 10 thought -- I mean, the chance that she could win when 11 she gets a salary review and she gets a little less 12 than the other person are nil. 13 MR. RUSSELL: Yes, and it's only after 14 that same kind of decision has been repeated over a 15 number of years that you actually have a case that 16 you can bring to the EEOC. But under Respondent's 17 view by that time it's too late. 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That's not your 19 theory. I mean, if it happened once 20 years ago you 20 have a case that you can bring, isn't it? 21 MR. RUSSELL: That's true, but the 22 practical --CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You've got a memo 23 24 that says we're going to pay, 20 years ago, we're 25 going to pay males this much and we're going to pay

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1	females this much, and she says that obviously
2	affected my pay over the ensuing 15, 20 years.
3	MR. RUSSELL: That's true, but the
4	paycheck accrual rule also serves the function of the
5	much more common case in which somebody doesn't
6	derive notice of the potential discrimination until
7	the discrimination has been repeated over time.
8	JUSTICE ALITO: But isn't your position
9	that an employer violates Title VII unless the
10	employer periodically reviews the entire pay record
11	of every employee to make sure that there has never
12	been an uncomplained of act of discrimination at any
13	point in the past that would have a continuing
14	present effect on the amount of money that the
15	employee is paid?
16	MR. RUSSELL: No. They certainly have an
17	incentive to do that under both the Equal Pay Act,
18	which everybody acknowledges puts the employer
19	subject to liability for any present disparity based
20	on any prior decision that can't be justified as
21	based on some factor other than sex, and that
22	incentive has been around for a very long time and
23	respondents aren't able to show that that's been an
24	unmanageable burden. But employers as a matter of
25	basic agency law know from the very beginning whether

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or not they've been paying the plaintiff less because
 of her sex.

3 JUSTICE ALITO: How do they know that? 4 10 years ago the employee got a particular, got a 5 particular job evaluation and that dictated the 6 amount of pay that that employee was going to get for 7 that period and all, all subsequent pay built on that 8 base, and then it turns out many years later that there was discrimination in the way the employee was 9 10 evaluated way back when, even though there was no 11 complaint about it; then under your theory that would 12 be a present Title VII violation, to cut a paycheck 13 that built, that was based on pay that was built on 14 this act of discrimination that occurred long ago? 15 MR. RUSSELL: Because this Court made 16 clear as recently as Faragher and Ellerth that when 17 an employer delegates a pay-setting authority to a 18 supervisor the discrimination undertaken by that 19 supervisor is imputed to the employer as a matter of 20 agency law principles.

JUSTICE SOUTER: Oh, yes, but that assumed a present discrimination, and it seems to me the problem that we've got is the problem of connecting a past discrimination with what may in fact be an apparently neutral act 15 or 20 years later.

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1	MR. RUSSELL: Well, I don't think that the
2	proof that the act is discriminatory is any more
3	difficult or any more difficult in concept when it
4	happened several years ago than when it happened 180
5	days ago. It's still the employer the employee
6	still has to show that the present disparity is
7	because of sex. And the fact that it may be more
8	difficult as a practical matter is something that the
9	Court can take into account under a laches defense.
10	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Does he have to know
11	that the present decision to continue the pay
12	structure is discriminatory?
13	MR. RUSSELL: No. It's enough that the
14	employer knows as a matter of basic agency law that
15	the Petitioner is being paid less because of her sex,
16	because of prior discriminatory decisions.
17	JUSTICE GINSBURG: The as I remember
18	the facts of this case, wasn't it in 1995 that she
19	got a substantial raise and the reason, according to
20	her supervisor, was that he noticed that her pay was
21	below the minimum of the appropriate range for her
22	job?
23	MR. RUSSELL: That's true. She did get a
24	higher raise that year and that was his testimony.
25	He also testified that he had told her differently,

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1 that she had done a very good job that year and 2 that's why she had gotten it, and the jury was 3 entitled to believe that. 4 JUSTICE STEVENS: May I ask a question? I 5 didn't understand one of your answers. Supposing that today the management does not know of the prior 6 discrimination. Just, records that have been lost, 7 8 it happened a long time ago. But there was evidence 9 that there was a firm policy that women get 20 percent less than men forever and it's still -- that 10 11 policy has continued up to date, but that these 12 people making the decision today did not know that. 13 Would there be liability or not? 14 MR. RUSSELL: There would. JUSTICE STEVENS: I thought you said the 15 16 That's why I was -other. 17 MR. RUSSELL: I apologize if I was unclear 18 about that. There would be liability, and basic 19 agency law principles impute to the employer those 20 prior decisions. So it's not possible for Goodyear

21 as a matter of law to claim that it did not know 22 about those decisions when they occurred, and I'm not 23 aware of any principle of agency law --

JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, the question iswhether or not there was a discriminatory act and if

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the employer, let's say it's an employer that has just purchased a business, thinks that it's a neutral criterion to base wages or bonuses or increase on a prior pay scale and he doesn't know about the prior discrimination, why isn't that a defense?

6 MR. RUSSELL: It may be a defense. I'm 7 not quite certain how agency law principles apply in that circumstance when there's been a change of 8 9 ownership. But certainly when there hasn't been it's 10 not unfair to the employer to say that so long as you 11 base present pay on long past decisions it's your 12 responsibility to make sure that that present pay is 13 not discriminatory.

14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And it's not 15 enough presumably for somebody to come in and even up 16 everybody? I mean, if you see that the women are 17 making 20 percent less than the men you don't escape 18 liability by paying everybody the same going forward, 19 because perhaps if nondiscriminatory decisions had 20 been made the women would have making 20 percent more 21 than the men. You have to go back and revisit every 22 pay decision or you're exposed to liability for 23 current pay.

24 MR. RUSSELL: That's true, that they have 25 an incentive to do so. They also have that incentive

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concededly under the Equal Pay Act and nothing in this Court's decision in this case is going to remove that incentive or that burden. And the fact that Congress didn't find that burden inappropriate under the Equal Pay Act is good reason to think that Congress wouldn't have thought it was inappropriate here.

3 JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, what is your burden 9 to prove? You've talked about their burden to go 10 back when -- do I understand it that your view is 11 that the only thing you have to prove is that in this 12 case a woman was being paid at a rate which is 13 different from the rate of a man doing a comparable 14 job?

MR. RUSSELL: No, that's not our position.
We have to prove in addition that that disparity is
because of sex, which necessarily --

JUSTICE SOUTER: So you too then have to go, unless you can find a present policy to discriminate on sex, you too in your proof have to go back whatever it may be, you know, the 15 or 20 years?

23 MR. RUSSELL: Yes, and the longer that an 24 employee waits the harder it is for her to sustain 25 her burden of proof on that score. And in fact --

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1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Why is that true? 2 I mean, it depends. I suppose it may be harder for 3 the company to mount a defense over time, so it may 4 be to her advantage to wait.

5 MR. RUSSELL: But if the employer can show 6 in fact that there is a disadvantage, that there is 7 prejudice, it can ask the court to limit the scope of 8 the claim or eliminate it entirely under an equitable 9 defense such as laches.

10 I think it's important to keep in mind that this is not the first time that this Court has 11 12 struggled with this question when does the unlawful 13 employment practice occur in a disparate pay case. 14 This Court confronted precisely that question in 15 Bazemore and held that -- and rejected the Fourth 16 Circuit's interpretation in that case that the 17 present payment of a disparate wage was simply a 18 consequence and not in itself a present violation of 19 Title VII?

JUSTICE SOUTER: What do you say of the explanation that was given in Bazemore? I forget the subsequent case. It was in footnote 6. You know what I mean. Which referred to Bazemore as a case that involved a present discrimination which, which is inconsistent with your theory. What do you say

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1 about footnote 6?

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2 MR. RUSSELL: I don't think it's 3 inconsistent. There was present discrimination. 4 There was, people were being paid less and it was 5 because of their race. It just so happened that the because of their race was based on a decision that 6 7 was made before the effective date of the act. Ι don't think --8

JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, the policy -- I 9 10 thought the assumption was that the policy was in 11 fact a policy which, which was sort of currently 12 honored and intended to be honored by the company, 13 whereas the case that we're concerned about is the 14 case in which there was a discriminatory act, you 15 know, 5, 10, 15 years ago. Nobody remembers the 16 discrimination now. It's just that it continues to 17 have these ripple effect consequences. I would have 18 thought that the subsequent explanation in Bazemore 19 would have been inconsistent with your position with 20 respect to the current ripple effect.

21 MR. RUSSELL: No, I don't think that's an 22 accurate description of what was going on in 23 Bazemore. Recall, for example, that there were 24 plaintiffs in Bazemore --

JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, do you take -- I'm

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sorry, I can't think of the name of the case. You
 know the case that I'm talking about with the
 footnote?

4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Lorance? 5 JUSTICE SOUTER: I guess. Do you think 6 that the Court in the footnote misstated Bazemore and 7 that therefore we should trust to Bazemore and not 8 the subsequent explanation?

9 MR. RUSSELL: No. I thought -- I'd take 10 the footnote in Lorance, if that's what you're 11 referring to, to simply say that, like a facially 12 discriminatory pay policy which discriminates every 13 time it's implemented, a facially discriminatory 14 seniority policy that discriminates every time it's 15 implemented, the Court was -- considered in Bazemore 16 a similar kind of recurring violation because, just 17 like a facially discriminatory policy, a 18 discriminatory pay structure or pay decision treats 19 differently -- similarly situated people differently 20 every time it's implemented.

JUSTICE SOUTER: But that assumes that the company in effect says, we have a pay structure and our pay structure as it is now treats people differently depending on sex, race, or whatever. And that's not the kind -- that's something very

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1 different from the ripple effect argument.

2 MR. RUSSELL: I don't think that it is. 3 For example, remember that in Bazemore there were 4 plaintiffs, workers who were hired after the merger, 5 after 1965, and when they were hired they were paid 6 the same rate as the white employees, and the 7 disparity in their wages in 1972 arose solely because of the discriminatory application of a merit-based 8 9 pay raise decision, system, which is exactly the same 10 kind of claim that we're making in this case. But 11 this Court nonetheless held that continuing to pay workers, those workers, less than similarly situated 12 13 whites because of that discrimination that occurred 14 before the effective date of the act was still a 15 present violation of Title VII.

16 JUSTICE STEVENS: May I ask this question? 17 Supposing in the annual review before a promotion is 18 concerned the officer making the recommendation was 19 instructed not only to decide what increase would be 20 appropriate but also to review past history and 21 decide whether or not the employee was being paid 22 fairly in a nondiscriminatory basis and that was part 23 of the assignment. Would you have a case if that 24 were the case?

MR. RUSSELL: The plaintiff would be

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1 required to show that that de novo decision was 2 intentionally discriminatory. 3 JUSTICE STEVENS: You couldn't rely on the 4 past history in that situation? 5 MR. RUSSELL: That's right. 6 JUSTICE STEVENS: Because I think that's 7 sort of what Justice -- Judge Jofla thought was going 8 on here. MR. RUSSELL: I don't think that he -- he 9 10 couldn't have thought that because the facts are 11 absolutely clear and Goodyear acknowledges in this 12 Court that the pay system that they had in place 13 simply made an annual decision whether to make a 14 marginal increase into the raise and took the prior 15 salary as given. 16 If I could, before I sit down, I'd like to 17 make the point that to the extent the Court doesn't 18 think Bazemore decides this case, and doesn't think 19 that the statute is clear on this question, it should 20 defer to the expert opinion of the EEOC on this 21 question in which they have particular expertise 22 because they see thousands of these claims every 23 year. They know better than anybody else whether the 24 paycheck accrual rule is unworkable in practice, or 25 that the pay decision accrual rule will lead to the

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1	elimination of many claims that Congress would have
2	intended to preserve. If I could reserve the
3	remainder of my time.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you counsel.
5	Mr. Nager, we'll hear now from you.
6	ORAL ARGUMENT OF GLEN D. NAGER
7	ON BEHALF OF RESPONDENT
8	MR. NAGER: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice,
9	and may it please the Court:
10	This Court has repeatedly said that a
11	claim of intentional discrimination is timely and
12	actionable only if it concerns intentionally
13	discriminatory acts taken during Title VII's charge
14	filing period.
15	And the question presented in this case
16	asks the Court to hold that a disparity in pay states
17	a timely actionable claim for intentional
18	discrimination if it is merely the result of
19	allegedly discriminatory actions taken outside of the
20	charge filing period. The question presented is
21	inconsistent with holding after holding of this
22	Court. When Goodyear issued paychecks during the
23	charge filing period, it did not commit intentionally
24	discriminatory acts. No one at Goodyear took
25	Miss Ledbetter's sex into account during the charge

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1 filing period in deciding what to pay her.

2 JUSTICE STEVENS: Mr. Nager, can I test 3 your theory with a hypothetical question? Supposing 4 20 years ago, there was an actual written policy 5 statement, we pay women 20 percent less than men. And that was written up and everybody knew it. 6 And 7 then nothing changed for the next 20 years, and the 8 person then sued today. Would she be -- and there 9 was no intent to do anything, this is just the way 10 it's always been. Would she have a cause of action? MR. NAGER: 11 The answer to that, I think, 12 is no, if I understand your hypothetical, if the 13 employer was not intending to classify on the basis 14 of gender.

JUSTICE STEVENS: If present intent was merely to do what we have always done, you have to go back 20 years to find out that what we have always done is the result of a policy decision made 20 years ago that we can hire women at a less expense than men so we will continue to pay the same rate. Would the per paycheck rule apply to that case?

22 MR. NAGER: I think the answer is it 23 clearly would be untimely insofar as the allegation 24 is that there is discrimination today merely because 25 there was discrimination yesterday. Whether or not

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there is discrimination going on during the charge filing period, whether or not women are intentionally being treated differently than men, I think the answer, based upon your hypothetical, is no, given what you've said.

6 JUSTICE ALITO: If the employer had a 7 policy of paying women, all women, 20 percent less 8 than men, and it continued that policy, surely it 9 would know in the present day when it issued those 10 paychecks that it was paying women less than men. So 11 it would be intentionally discriminating at this 12 time, wouldn't it?

13 Justice Alito, that's why I MR. NAGER: 14 qualified my answer to Justice Stevens, because I 15 think that the question his hypothetical raises, like 16 your question, goes to the sufficiency of evidence 17 necessary to prove intent during the charge filing 18 period. And I don't want in any way to be heard that 19 there is anything in our position in this case that 20 tries to answer that question.

The reason I'm not trying to answer that question in this case is because that question is not before the Court except with one small respect. If the only thing that the plaintiff is relying upon is discrimination outside of the charge filing period,

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1 that is legally insufficient under this Court's cases 2 in Evans, Ricks, Lorance and Machinists before it. 3 What Bazemore dealt with was a case very 4 much like your hypothetical, Justice Alito, of an 5 allegation of an ongoing racial classification during the actionable time period. And it was because of 6 7 that allegation of ongoing actionable racial 8 classification and pay that there was both a timely claim, and according to Justice Brennan's opinion for 9 10 all nine members of the Court of that -- in that 11 case, a very serious potential error by the district 12 court in that case as to whether or not it had been 13 clearly erroneous in holding that the United States 14 had failed its proof of proving an ongoing intentional race discrimination case --15 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Nager, why does it 17 make any sense to treat this area any different from 18 the Equal Pay Act? 19 MR. NAGER: Because they are two different 20 statutes and the elements of the plaintiff's claims 21 are fundamentally different. That's the fundamental flaw in the Petitioner's claim in this case. Let me 22 23 explain, if I may, Justice Scalia. 24 In a Title VII case, in an intentional discrimination case, the question is whether or not 25

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there is an act that is motivated by gender during the charge filing period. That is not an element of the plaintiff's cause of action in an Equal Pay Act case.

5 In an Equal Pay Act case, all the 6 plaintiff has to do is allege they are performing 7 equal work to a male, and that they are paid 8 differently. And it's that cause of action that 9 triggers the statute of limitations in an Equal Pay 10 Act case. That's fundamentally different. As Chief 11 Justice Roberts said --

JUSTICE GINSBURG: Why is it different if the one further statement is made? And the employer knew that every woman is being paid less than every man. Why isn't that sufficient under Title VII? And if you want evidence, your own supervisor said, oh, we saw one year that she was outside the range appropriate for this job.

MR. NAGER: Well, knowledge is a necessary condition, but it's not a sufficient condition, Justice Ginsburg. In Evans, the employer knew it previously had a sexual -- a gender-based discriminatory policy about whether or not female flight attendants could work after they got married. But that prior knowledge of prior discrimination by

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1 the employer wasn't sufficient to make the neutral 2 action taken --

3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Evans involved a factor 4 that simply is not present here. I mean, Evans 5 involved a seniority system. And if this person who had been off the job were to come back two years 6 7 later, and bump people who had been there every day, 8 well, certainly that's a different case than this one, where she is saying, I should have been paid 9 10 equally. I wasn't. And I know I can go back only 11 two years. That's quite a bit different than the Evans situation. 12

13 MR. NAGER: Justice Ginsburg, Title VII 14 allows proof of dissimilar treatment as evidence of 15 present intentional discrimination, but it's not the 16 elements of the claim. As Chief Justice Roberts was 17 pointing out, Title VII would prohibit paying a woman 18 the same amount as a male if the employer would have 19 paid the female more because she had a -- more 20 degrees or other criteria that the employer 21 ordinarily took into account.

The elements of those two claims are fundamentally different. What makes this case untimely and unactionable is that there is no claim and there can be no claim because it's the law of the

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1	case that Goodyear took Miss Ledbetter's sex into
2	account during the charge filing period.
3	What Goodyear did was the same kind of

4 neutral rule as in Evans. What Goodyear did was it 5 said, we are looking at the pay rate contained in our payroll system, and applying those rates as they are 6 7 mandated for all of our employees, male or female. And what Goodyear did at the beginning of each 8 evaluation period was say, we are starting this 9 10 payroll period with the pay rates that were paid in 11 the last period for all of our employees, male or 12 female, no matter what their prior causes.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: If only the 180 day period counts, and she can complain only about discrimination in that period, then how do you account for her being able to go back not 180 days, but two years for her remedy?

MR. NAGER: The two-year rule is only a damages rule that applies only in Title VII cases. And it's triggered in cases such as where there has been equitable tolling or equitable estoppel, because the employer -- it was a promotion case or a pay case --

24JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought it was the25lid on the amount of compensation you could get in

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1 Title VII cases. You can't go back more than two 2 years for damages. But it would seem that doesn't 3 fit at all whether you can go back only 180 days. 4 What the 180 days is for MR. NAGER: No. 5 is determining the time period during which the allegedly illegal act must occur. That period can be б 7 tolled using a tolling rule. It can tolled for three 8 years possibly. The back pay rule says, even if you tolled the statute of limitations for more than the 9 10 two-year back pay period, you can only get back pay 11 for two years. What is going on, of course, in this 12 case, is they are trying to use allegedly 13 discriminatory acts that occurred 10, 15, 20 years 14 ago, both to make neutral acts actionable, and to get compensatory and punitive damages. 15 16 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Why is she claiming 17 that in 1995, a supervisor recognized that my pay was 18 way out of line. Isn't that what the supervisor 19 testified? 20 MR. NAGER: He did. And he said he raised 21 her pay up the maximum amount he was entitled to that 22 year. And she didn't file a charge of discrimination 23 in 1995. 24 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Maybe she thought that, 25 well, they are on the right track. Next year, they

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1 are going to raise me up to the equal pay level. 2 MR. NAGER: And what the purpose of the 3 charge filing requirement under Title VII, as this 4 Court has repeatedly said, is to require that 5 employee to come forward promptly within 180 days of the date that the alleged unlawful employment action 6 7 is communicated to her, and bring that claim or lose it, that the purpose of section 706 was to create 8 9 repose. 10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The question that I 11 asked Mr. Nager that I think is really important, and 12 that is, where do you put these pay cases? Do you

13 put it in the box with the hostile environment that 14 builds up over time, and as long as the environment 15 is hostile at the time you bring your complaint, then 16 it doesn't matter that it started 20 years ago. This 17 notion of one year, it's 2 percent, and the other 18 person got 3 percent, you really don't have an 19 effective claim unless it builds up to the point 20 where there is a noticeable disparity.

21 MR. NAGER: Justice Ginsburg, the 22 Petitioner in this case has agreed with us that this 23 is the kind of discrete employment action that 24 triggers the 180-day period. It is not like a sexual 25 harassment claim.

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1 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Where is that 2 agreement?

3 MR. NAGER: It's in their brief. They 4 repeatedly quote the portion of Morgan which 5 described pay claims as discrete acts subject to the 6 discrete trigger rule in the Morgan opinion. And 7 that, of course, is an obvious concession that they 8 had to make in this case, because Mr. Russell would not concede when Justice Scalia asked that that first 9 10 pay rate decision was not an identifiable act, that 11 it wasn't an actionable -- immediately actionable 12 claim.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought that the Morgan decision quotes Bazemore for saying, under Title VII, each week's paycheck that delivered less to a black than to a similarly situated white is a wrong, actionable under Title VII.

MR. NAGER: And that's in the portion of the opinion that's dealing with discrete employment action. It's not in the portion of the opinion dealing with sexual harassment claims. I'm trying to answer your question about which portion of Morgan pay claims fall into.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: Whatever portion it's in, it says each week's paycheck that delivered less

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1 to a black than to a similarly situated white is a 2 wrong, actionable --

3 MR. NAGER: Because Justice Thomas' 4 opinion was accurately describing the holding in 5 Bazemore on the facts of Bazemore, because in Bazemore there was a claim, in contrast to this case, 6 7 of ongoing intentional race discrimination in 8 classifying employees on the basis of their race and 9 paying the black employees less than the whites. Ιf the Court would look at the remand order in the 10 11 Bazemore case, they'll see that the Court did not 12 remand with instructions that judgment be entered for 13 the United States merely because there was a 14 disparity in salaries.

JUSTICE BREYER: Justice Brennan's opinion sounds to me, part one, as if he is saying what the mistake was that the company made here is that they didn't really eradicate the effects of the past bad act, and they were trying to eradicate it.

20 MR. NAGER: Well, actually, the United 21 States' allegations in the case were trying --

JUSTICE BREYER: That's another part of the case that's part two and part three about the evidence that came in. In fact, there are about six other parts. I'm just talking about part one.

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1	MR. NAGER: That's part one.
2	JUSTICE BREYER: Yes. All right. So I
3	read that. Now, this is my this is my cost/benefit
4	analysis here. If we follow the other side's rule,
5	it's very simple, we just said Bazemore applies,
б	whether there's a practice or whether it was a
7	discrete thing, or whatever, so it's simple. But we
8	do have to distinguish pay from the other kinds of
9	things. And we have heard them explain why there is
10	a distinction. I want to get to your side and you
11	can then attack both, or whatever.
12	Your side of it, it seems to me, if I
13	agree to you, I now have to create in the law some
14	kind of thing that sounds very complicated about
15	whether that old bad thing was somehow a pattern or a
16	practice that, as a pattern or a practice, didn't get
17	eradicated within the last few years, or was a
18	totally discrete act, and therefore, had no
19	implication as a pattern or practice that didn't get
20	eradicated. That sounds hard.
21	And the second thing I guess I'd have to
22	do is to create a lot of tolling law because there
23	will be probably a significant number of
24	circumstances where a woman is being paid less, and
25	all she does is for the last six months get her

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paychecks and she doesn't really know it because pay is a complicated thing, and through no fault of her own, it takes about eight or nine months or even a year for her to find out. And we are going to have to toll, aren't we?

6 So I have, legally speaking, a complicated 7 tolling system that I have to graft on to this, your 8 I also have to start distinguishing Bazemore case. 9 which is pretty hard to do. But on the other side, 10 they are just saying, go with the flow. Nobody is 11 really hurt, because the employer has to worry about 12 all this stuff anyway under the Equal Pay Act. I'm 13 giving you that summary so you can just shoot it 14 down.

MR. NAGER: Well, it was a compound 15 16 question, but I'll try to answer each of its parts. 17 The first point I would make is that 18 Bazemore came after Evans and Hazelwood and Ricks, 19 and it did not distinguish Evans or Hazelwood or 20 Ricks on the grounds that Bazemore is a pay case and 21 Hazelwood and Evans were not pay cases. It 22 distinguished them on the grounds of whether or not 23 the alleged discrimination was taking place in the 24 charge filing period. So this notion that Bazemore 25 stands as a proposition that Evans and Lorance and

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1 that line of cases doesn't apply because they don't 2 apply to pay cases was not the opinion of the Court 3 in Bazemore.

4 Secondly, we are not asking you, and I 5 don't think it takes any difficulty to apply the rule that we are proposing in this case. We are proposing 6 7 the same rule that's set forth in Justice Stevens' 8 opinion for the Court in Evans, the same rule that's set forth in Justice Powell's opinion in Ricks, the 9 10 same rule that's set forward in Justice Scalia's 11 opinion for the Court in Lorance.

JUSTICE STEVENS: But there is a slight difference in that you're focused on whether discrimination occurred within the 180-day period. And if I understand you correctly, discrimination would occur during the 180-day period if the employer knew of the policy that I described, because then he would be knowingly paying less.

MR. NAGER: No. Not if he had knowledge
of --

JUSTICE STEVENS: I thought your answer toJustice Alito made that point.

23 MR. NAGER: Well, what I said to Justice 24 Alito was, if the employer knew that it previously 25 had a policy and if it knew and intended that its

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1 present pay would be done for gender-related reasons 2 or racially-related reasons, it would constitute --3 JUSTICE STEVENS: But the question of 4 whether just knowing that that's a source of the 5 policy would be a gender-related reason. 6 MR. NAGER: Well, the question is whether 7 there is a present policy. That's the point the 8 Solicitor General makes in its brief and the point we make in our brief. 9 10 JUSTICE STEVENS: Well, in my hypothetical 11 there was a policy established 20 years ago, a 20 percent differential, never been changed. And the 12 13 only question that would differ, in some cases the 14 employer knows about it and in some others he 15 doesn't. 16 MR. NAGER: And if the employer is 17 presently applying, and knowingly and intentionally 18 doing so, a 20 percent differential for male and 19 female employees for no reason other than the gender 20 of the employees, that's a present violation. 21 JUSTICE STEVENS: Well, what his reason 22 is, this is always the way we did it. That's his 23 reason. 24 Well, if what he's saying is, MR. NAGER: 25 the way we have always done it is engage in gender

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discrimination, then doing it in the present time
 period would state a present claim.

3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But suppose he has no 4 intent to discriminate as a present matter, but he 5 also knows that his decision is necessarily based on 6 a policy that was discriminatory some years ago. 7 What result?

8 MR. NAGER: I think if I understood the 9 question, Justice Kennedy, I think no present claim, 10 because the only thing you said that he knew is that 11 they previously engaged in discriminatory actions. 12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: He knows it, but his

13 present decision is necessarily based on some prior 14 decision that was discriminatory.

MR. NAGER: That in and of itself is not sufficient. That's the point that, the seniority system in Lorance was necessarily based upon an earlier decision that the employer --

JUSTICE KENNEDY: How is that -- how is that consistent with the statement in Bazemore that the employer has a duty to eradicate past discrimination?

MR. NAGER: Well, the duty was to
eradicate the alleged ongoing facially discriminatory
pay practices that preceded the enactment of Title

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1 VII and were alleged to have been maintained for 2 racially purposeful reasons after Title VII became 3 effective to a public employer. There is no 4 contemplation in that case that that duty would 5 require an employer to investigate discrete employment decisions made in years gone by that 6 7 weren't made the subject of a timely charge. What 8 this Court has said repeatedly is when the charge 9 filing period passes and no charge is brought, the 10 employer is entitled to treat that past act as if it 11 was a lawful act. That's what Justice Thomas' 12 opinion in Morgan says. That's what, the opinion 13 that Justice Stevens wrote for the Court in Evans. 14 JUSTICE SOUTER: Is that so even if they 15 know it was in fact originally an unlawful act? 16 MR. NAGER: Yes. 17 JUSTICE SOUTER: You draw a line between 18 present purposeful discrimination and present 19 knowledge of past discrimination which is knowingly 20 carried forward. 21 MR. NAGER: That's correct. Because the 22 purpose of section 706(e) is to give repose for those 23 past decisions. 24 JUSTICE GINSBURG: How do you describe --25 deal with a case like Manhart where they were

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complaining about a pension plan that had been instituted, oh, way longer than 180 days, years and years before?

4 That plan was facially MR. NAGER: 5 discriminatory. It included on the face of the plan gender-based mortality tables. And as Justice 6 7 Scalia's opinion for the Court in Lorance and the footnote that Justice Souter pointed out to, a 8 facially discriminatory policy necessarily evidences 9 10 present intent each time it is applied, and that is 11 the important distinction. On the one hand you have 12 cases that are both timely and as a matter of law 13 show present intent because they are facially 14 discriminatory. On the other end of the continuum 15 you have cases that are only about past 16 discrimination and do not involve any present 17 actionable claim of intentional discrimination, and 18 they are both untimely and legally insufficient. And then you have the cases in the middle which concern 19 20 present allegations of discriminatory practices so 21 obnoxious, as alleged in Bazemore, that the Court 22 held that district court may have been clearly 23 erroneous in its conclusion that there was no present 24 intentional discrimination.

25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,

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1	Mr. Nager. Mr. Gornstein?
2	ORAL ARGUMENT OF IRVING L. GORNSTEIN
3	ON BEHALF OF THE Respondent
4	MR. NAGER: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
5	please the Court:
6	Title VII gives employees like Petitioner
7	180 days to challenge an individual pay decision such
8	as a denial of a pay raise. Employees who allow the
9	180-day period to pass may not years later and even
10	at the end of their careers challenge their current
11	paychecks on the grounds that they are the result of
12	a number of discrete individually discriminatory pay
13	decisions that occurred long ago.
14	JUSTICE GINSBURG: This would be a good
15	Equal Pay Act case, wouldn't it?
16	MR. NAGER: If it met the requirements of
17	the Equal Pay Act, which is that it has to be the
18	same knowledge, skills and responsibilities and
19	effort for the job, then every time that you have a
20	failure to deliver equal pay for equal work there is
21	a violation of the act. But Title VII is not an
22	equal pay for equal work statute, it is a
23	nondiscrimination statute, and so that you have to
24	show intentional discrimination in pay, not just the
25	absence of equal pay.

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1	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Why doesn't it become
2	intentional, at least after 1995, when the supervisor
3	recognizes that he's got an employee that is out of
4	the appropriate range for her job, whether she does
5	it badly or well?
6	MR. GORNSTEIN: Justice Ginsburg, if an
7	employee brought a claim within 180 days of the
8	decision made then, that is to not, to not equalize
9	the pay further
10	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Why would she bring it
11	then? They gave her a big raise that year.
12	MR. GORNSTEIN: Well, because I think what
13	you're suggesting is they didn't give her a big
14	enough raise, because there was still intentional
15	discrimination from prior years that were not, that
16	were unchallenged.
17	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Wouldn't she have every
18	reason to expect, well, they finally noticed it, so
19	next year I'm going to get that same size raise, but
20	then it didn't happen the next year?
21	MR. GORNSTEIN: And if it doesn't happen
22	that next year, then that employee has 180 days to
23	challenge that pay decision on the ground that it's
24	intentionally discriminatory. If she does not do
25	that, she cannot come back 15 years later and say

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1 that a decision that was made 15 years ago and 14 2 years ago were based on my gender, and they --3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: She is not talking 4 about a decision made 15 or 14 in this case. She 5 starts out even, and it builds up over time. 6 MR. GORNSTEIN: Well, I think in some, in 7 some cases that, pay cases, it will build up over 8 In some cases it will happen immediately. But time. 9 in either case, what Title VII says is that you have 10 180 days to challenge a discrete pay decision. Ιf 11 you do not do that, you cannot come back later, years 12 later, four years later, six years later, or here at 13 the end of her career, and challenge every pay 14 decision that's been made up until then on the 15 grounds that intent, it was intentionally 16 discriminatory and continues to have ongoing effects. 17 JUSTICE STEVENS: But you could if the 18 person making the decision was aware of the 19 discriminatory policy. 20 MR. GORNSTEIN: Knowledge of prior unlawful acts is relevant evidence in deciding 21 22 whether it's present day intentional discrimination. 23 But just as in a case where there's a promotion and I'm aware that there was a prior discrimination in a 24 25 promotion and that was not timely challenged, and the

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for discriminatory reason but she did not timely challenge it, my decision not to give her that promotion is not automatically discriminatory. JUSTICE STEVENS: But you're changing the hypothetical. My hypothetical was simply a pay case. MR. GORNSTEIN: I understand that, and I'm saying the same rule applies in a pay case that applies in a promotion case. JUSTICE STEVENS: You're saying, I think contrary to your colleague if I remember correctly, that even if the employer knew of the 20 percent differential policy established 20 years ago, it could still carry it into effect today. MR. GORNSTEIN: What I'm saying with respect to a policy is if you have an ongoing policy that is still being applied in the limitations period, and that your current policy is to pay less to women than to men, then of course you can sue based on the current policy. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Let's say it's the same person who made the decision. You know, five years ago he said I'm giving a 6 percent raise to	1	person comes to me today and says I want my promotion				
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24 years ago he said I'm giving a 6 percent raise to	22	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Let's say it's the				
	23	same person who made the decision. You know, five				
	24	years ago he said I'm giving a 6 percent raise to				
25 men, I'm giving a 3 percent raise to women, and then	25	men, I'm giving a 3 percent raise to women, and then				

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1 he decides that's illegal, and so from now on 2 everybody is going to get a 4 percent raise every 3 year if you meet certain standards. Is that ongoing 4 discrimination or is that a neutral thing, that he 5 doesn't have to take into account the past 6 discrimination? MR. GORNSTEIN: That's a neutral discrete 7 8 act that was made at the time. It was not 9 challenged. 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Even though he 11 knows that it carries forward the illegal discrimination? 12 13 MR. GORNSTEIN: Even when the employer -you can have an inference from knowledge of past 14 15 illegal conduct that your present intent is to carry 16 forward that differential based on the person's sex, 17 but it is not an automatic inference. You can also, 18 the employer could say look, that was a decision that 19 occurred a while ago. A lot of people did this. 20 There were decisions made that affected a lot of 21 other people --2.2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you're talking 23 about --MR. GORNSTEIN: -- and I didn't correct 24 25 those either, and that's a neutral policy.

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1	JUSTICE GINSBURG: But that's a defense.
2	And you're talking about, yes, you might draw that
3	inference but that inference would be wrong because I
4	have a defense. The defense is poor performance
5	explains it, not sex discrimination.
6	MR. GORNSTEIN: But under Title VII, poor
7	performance isn't a defense. It is negating
8	intentional discrimination. It's the employer's
9	employee's decision
10	JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought at least in
11	this area, the defenses were the same as under the
12	Equal Pay Act.
13	MR. RUSSELL: Well, there are there is
14	an additional layer of defense, but still the
15	employee has to prove an additional element in a
16	Title VII claim, not just the absence of equal pay
17	for equal work, it has to
18	JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Gornstein, why should
19	we listen to the Solicitor General rather than the
20	
	EEOC? I mean, they have taken a different position
21	EEOC? I mean, they have taken a different position from the one that you're urging upon us.
21 22	
	from the one that you're urging upon us.
22	from the one that you're urging upon us. MR. GORNSTEIN: The EEOC has taken a

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give deference to the EEOC under Skidmore or under
 any other standard.

3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: So why don't we at 4 least hear from the EEOC? That has happened in other 5 cases where the Department of Justice and the EEOC take different positions, at least the EEOC filed a 6 7 brief even though it wasn't the Government's brief. 8 MR. GORNSTEIN: That has occasionally 9 happened in the past. It has not happened as a 10 regular matter, or to my knowledge it does not 11 ordinarily occur. The EEOC --12 JUSTICE SOUTER: If the EEOC is upheld in 13 the court of appeals and review is sought here, will 14 the Government confess error? 15 MR. GORNSTEIN: I'm sorry, Justice Souter? 16 JUSTICE SOUTER: If the EEOC's position is 17 upheld by one of the courts of appeals and there is 18 an attempt to bring the case here on cert, will the 19 Government confess error? 20 MR. GORNSTEIN: If the Court rules in the 21 Government's favor in this case, then that case would have to be vacated and remanded for reconsideration 22 23 in light of this Court's decision today. The EEOC's 24 _ _

JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, I'm asking a

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simpler question. Let's assume that somehow we fudge it. If -- if there is a clear cut case in which the EEOC takes a position different from the one the Government is now espousing, and a court of appeals upholds it, and cert is sought here, will the Solicitor General say please remand, or simply confess judgment?

8 MR. GORNSTEIN: Justice Souter, I would 9 like to answer that question today but of course if 10 the Court doesn't resolve the question today that's 11 been decided today, but issues a new decision, 12 anything we would have to do would have to look at 13 that new decision and make a judgment about what the 14 law is at that time. And so my -- my point is --I think I got your point. 15 JUSTICE SOUTER: 16 JUSTICE SCALIA: Touche.

17 MR. GORNSTEIN: To go on, there are three 18 decisions of this Court that control the result here, 19 Evans, Ricks and Lorance, each of which says that the 20 employee cannot circumvent the limitations period by 21 challenging conduct within the limitations period on 22 the grounds that it is the result of a prior act of 23 intentional discrimination that was not timely 24 challenged.

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A second reason to reject Petitioner's

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rule is that Petitioner's rule, as Petitioner admits,
creates a special rule for pay cases when there is
nothing in the language of Title VII that would
justify a special rule. Title VII has the same
mandate of nondiscrimination for pay as for any other
practice. It has the same 180-day period for pay
claims as any other claim.

8 And the third reason to reject Petitioner's view is that it would undo the statute 9 10 of limitations in pay cases, because the result would 11 be, what you have here is that an employee could wait 12 until the end of their career, or at least a very 13 substantial number of years, and then challenge 14 current pay on the basis of past acts that took place 15 a long time ago. And Justice Breyer, you talked 16 about it being limited to just back pay during the 17 two-year period. The courts that have looked at this 18 have not decided whether it's the 180-day period or 19 the two-year period if you buy Petitioner's theory, I 20 don't think he has either. But the important 21 additional point is you're still hinging liability on 22 past acts long ago and you're adding the possibility 23 of compensatory relief and punitive damages, so it's 24 not the limited damage award that you're 25 contemplating necessarily.

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1 JUSTICE BREYER: What would you do on the 2 other side of this? It if you win on this, then 3 don't you have to have a fairly relaxed standard of 4 allowing the woman, tolling or something, when she 5 just gets some paychecks that would take her a while to figure out that these are really reflecting some 6 7 old discrimination and she doesn't know. It's 8 different in that respect from the promotion itself. 9 MR. GORNSTEIN: Well in some -- if she's 10 denied a pay raise and she's aware that other people 11 are getting substantial pay raises -- I don't think 12 it's that much different than somebody else getting 13 the promotion and me not getting that promotion.

JUSTICE BREYER: Well, she knows this. She knows that, all these boxes on her paychecks and she's not quite sure what they mean. All right, your answer is not much different.

MR. GORNSTEIN: Well, to the extent that you want to address equitable tolling. That's the question, should there be equitable tolling until such time as she's aware of the disparity. But what Petitioner's theory does is says even after the employee is aware of the disparity she can wait 15 more years and then sue.

25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,

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1 counsel.

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2	Mr. Russell, you have 3 minutes remaining.						
3	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF KEVIN K. RUSSELL						
4	ON BEHALF OF THE Petitioner						
5	MR. RUSSELL: I think the fundamental						
6	disagreement in this case comes down to what is the						
7	unlawful employment practice Congress was referring						
8	to when it prohibited discrimination with respect to						
9	compensation. If it is under our view, in our view,						
10	the payment of an intentionally disparate wage, then						
11	there's no question that under Bazemore the violation						
12	occurred during the limitations period. The fact						
13	that the intent was formed outside the limitations						
14	period doesn't make the present payment of a						
15	disparate wage because of sex any less intentionally						
16	discriminatory. But the difference in the						
17	conceptions, which frankly isn't answered by the						
18	plain text of this statute itself, should be resolved						
19	in light of the practical consequences of the						
20	differences in the rules.						
21	The Solicitor General acknowledges that a						
22	paycheck accrual rule applies at least in a case of a						

24 rule to administer for the EEOC, which must make a

25 determination of timeliness before it even has

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policy of discrimination, but that's a very difficult

1 authority to investigate a claim. It shouldn't be 2 left to the EEOC to figure out whether there's an 3 unwritten practice or an unwritten policy which would 4 require an extensive investigation not only of the 5 Petitioner's pay but of everybody else's. You recall that in Bazemore they had to conduct a multiple 6 7 regression analysis to establish a pattern of discrimination there. 8

9 Our rule is simple to administer and has 10 been administered for decades in the lower courts and 11 it's the rule that the EEOC itself has chosen in 12 construing this ambiguous aspect of the statute. 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: Do you agree that their 14 action is just based on Bazemore or their reading of

15 Bazemore?

16 MR. RUSSELL: No, that's incorrect. I 17 mean, the EEOC has taken this position that you can challenge present pay disparities even before the 18 19 Court's decision in Bazemore and it continued to adhere to it afterward. The fact that they cited to 20 21 Bazemore shouldn't disentitle them to the kind of 22 deference that they're ordinarily entitled to when 23 they construe a statute that's given to them, and this is precisely the kind of question Congress would 24 25 have intended them to exercise their expertise on.

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1	Finally, I would like to raise the point						
2	that under Respondent's rule the Extension Service						
3	would have been permitted to pay blacks less than						
4	whites in perpetuity in Bazemore so long as it did so						
5	because of cost and not because it wanted to continue						
б	to discriminate on the basis of race. And similarly,						
7	under the Solicitor General's view an employer who						
8	had intentionally discriminated through discrete						
9	decisions against some of its employees prior to the						
10	act would be allowed to continue to do so after the						
11	act because the decision would have been the						
12	potentially unlawful act in that case and that						
13	wouldn't have been actionable.						
14	We respectfully suggest that Congress						
15	intended nothing less than a complete						
16	JUSTICE ALITO: How could cost justify a						
17	dual pay scale?						
18	MR. RUSSELL: It could the Extension						
19	Service						
20	JUSTICE ALITO: You'd have to have another						
21	factor in the decision, which was that you didn't						
22	want to change pay. But cost alone couldn't justify						
23	that.						
24	MR. RUSSELL: It would be a						
25	nondiscriminatory reason. They would they would						

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1	say that, the reason we didn't immediately equalize
2	salaries is because it cost too much, it would have
3	required we'd be required to cut down on our
4	programs. And under Respondent's view that is not
5	intentionally pay-maintaining discrimination.
6	JUSTICE ALITO: No, you'd have to say, we
7	don't want to spend any more and we also don't want
8	to equalize pay. You have to say the second too.
9	MR. RUSSELL: They would say, we don't
10	want to equalize pay because it costs too much, and
11	that's not a discriminatory reason for maintaining
12	the prior disparity. But ultimately
13	JUSTICE ALITO: If you say you're not
14	going to equalize pay, you're saying you're going to
15	discriminate on the basis of race.
16	MR. RUSSELL: Which is what happened here.
17	Goodyear continued to discriminate on the basis of
18	sex, knowing as a matter of agency law that it had
19	done so, it had set her pay for discriminatory
20	reasons in the past.
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You can equalize
22	pay by lowering others. You don't raising the
23	discriminated-against class is not the only way to
24	equalize pay. So I don't see how cost is a
25	justification for continuing the disparity.

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1	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Not under the Equal Pay
2	Act. You can only equalize up, not down.
3	MR. RUSSELL: That's true.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Under Title VII
5	you can equalize either way, right?
б	MR. RUSSELL: It would, but if they chose
7	not to equalize at all because they don't want to
8	spend the money that would be a nondiscriminatory
9	reason.
10	JUSTICE ALITO: You'd certainly have a
11	very happy work force if you equalized one way.
12	MR. RUSSELL: Thank you.
13	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
14	counsel.
15	The case is submitted.
16	(Whereupon, at 12:04 p.m., the case in the
17	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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