1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES 2 - - - - - - - - - - - - x : 3 UNITED STATES, 4 Petitioner : 5 v. : No. 07-308 6 CLINTWOOD ELKHORN : 7 MINING COMPANY, ET AL. : - - - - - - - - - - - - x 8 9 Washington, D.C. 10 Monday, March 24, 2008 11 12 The above-entitled matter came on for oral 13 argument before the Supreme Court of the United States 14 at 10:41 a.m. 15 APPEARANCES: WILLIAM M. JAY, ESQ., Assistant to the Solicitor 16 17 General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; on 18 behalf of the Petitioner. 19 PATRICIA A. MILLETT, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf 20 of the Respondents. 21 22 23 24 25

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:41 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	next in Case 07-308, United States versus Clintwood
5	Elkhorn Mining Company.
б	Mr. Jay.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF WILLIAM M. JAY
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. JAY: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
10	please the Court:
11	Respondent sought and received a full refund
12	of the tax they paid on exported coal for the full
13	three-year period permitted them by the tax-refund
14	statute. What the court of appeals' decision permitted
15	them to do was to bring an additional action for
16	indistinguishable relief, but for a three-year period
17	beyond what the tax-refund statute permits.
18	We submit that that decision was erroneous
19	for two principal reasons: First, the plaintiff
20	JUSTICE GINSBURG: It might help if you
21	raise that lectern a bit.
22	MR. JAY: Hang on.
23	Is that better, Your Honor?
24	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Yes, thank you.
25	MR. JAY: Thank you.

3

1	The plain and unambiguous terms of the
2	tax-refund statute, section 7422(a), expressly provide
3	that any claimant who alleges that a tax has been
4	illegally assessed, no matter the reason, must before
5	proceeding to court file a refund claim with the
6	Internal Revenue Service within three years after filing
7	the tax return on which the illegal tax was paid.
8	JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Jay, is the government
9	running with the fox and chasing with the hounds? You
10	want us to apply the provisions governing the Internal
11	Revenue Code with regard to whether the statute has
12	expired, but when it comes to interest you say oh, no,
13	no, no, that doesn't apply. Why? Why shouldn't the two
14	go pari passu, as we say?
15	MR. JAY: Well, we think, Your Honor, that
16	the interest provision is in fact a key part of the
17	tax-refund statute and so Respondent's attempt to invoke
18	the tax-refund judgment interest provision is
19	inconsistent with their theory, that they're proceeding
20	outside the scope of the tax
21	JUSTICE SCALIA: Oh, yes, they make the same
22	mistake, but that doesn't justify your making the same
23	the same mistake.
24	MR. JAY: Well, we think, Your Honor
25	JUSTICE SCALIA: I mean, it's either, you

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1 know, they're both in one pot or they're both in the 2 other pot. And both sides want to -- want to split them 3 up, but why don't they go together?

4 MR. JAY: Well, we think the whole case is 5 in the Title 26 pot, Your Honor, that the whole case should proceed under the provisions of Title 26, meaning б 7 that Respondents have already received the full tax 8 refund to which they are entitled. And to be sure, they received interest on that refund. And had they had to 9 10 sue for it, they would have received interest under 11 section 2411. But because they are -- because they are 12 no longer able to proceed under the exclusive tax-refund 13 procedure, of course we think that they -- that they 14 can't plead around that by claiming constitutional 15 damages instead.

But if the Court were to agree with them and 16 17 agree that they could pursue damages for a violation of 18 the Export Clause, section 2411 does not apply to such a 19 claim because it's not a claim for an overpayment of 20 tax. The term "overpayment" in the interest statute 21 ties back to the section 6402, which is the linchpin of 22 the tax-refund statute. And the -- when a taxpayer has 23 made an overpayment, that triggers the obligation of the 24 IRS to provide a tax refund if one is timely sought, and 25 if one isn't timely sought, as this Court recognized in

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1 the Brockamp case, the Congress has provided an 2 unusually emphatic limitation on the Commissioner's 3 ability to --4 JUSTICE BREYER: Can you explain one thing 5 to me? I take it that they -- everybody says they went through all the right IRS hoops to get back three years б 7 worth of damages, i.e., they get their payments back and 8 they get interest. 9 MR. JAY: That's right. 10 JUSTICE BREYER: Now, what they want is they 11 want three years before that. 12 MR. JAY: That's exactly --13 JUSTICE BREYER: And they're too late under Title 26. So what you're saying is, one, you can't get 14 any interest and, two, you can't get your money back at 15 16 all. 17 MR. JAY: Well, on the interest, Your Honor, 18 we're saying that they were entitled to the interest on 19 the three years. 20 JUSTICE BREYER: I'm saying for three years 21 they're home-free. They get their payment back and they 22 get their interest. Now let's go to the three preceding 23 years. I'm a little confused about that because I can't 24 work out -- I suppose that the government is saying: You get nothing, you don't get your money back, and you 25

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1 don't get your interest. Or is the government saying: 2 You get your money back; you just don't get the 3 interest? Which is it? And I don't see how it could be 4 the latter. 5 MR. JAY: It is the former, Your Honor --6 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. 7 MR. JAY: -- because we're saying that 8 because Respondents waited for 21 years while paying the tax without -- without filing a refund claim, that 9 10 they're limited to the three years immediately preceding 11 the refund claim --12 JUSTICE SCALIA: Right. I thought you were 13 making a second argument, that even if they were 14 entitled to it despite the statute, they wouldn't be 15 entitled to interest. You don't make that claim? 16 MR. JAY: No -- if they were entitled to sue, 17 not under the tax -- under the Tax Code at all, but on 18 the theory countenanced by the court of appeals, that 19 this is not a suit for a tax refund at all, but a suit 20 for damages arising directly under the Constitution --21 JUSTICE SCALIA: I see. 22 MR. JAY: -- then there is no provision in 23 Title 28 or anywhere else that provides the required 24 express provision --25 JUSTICE SCALIA: Right.

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1	MR. JAY: of interest that's necessary to
2	award interest on a claim against the government.
3	JUSTICE SCALIA: It's all right. Okay.
4	JUSTICE GINSBURG: But why shouldn't it be a
5	suit contesting the constitutionality? I mean, in the
б	usual case where you seek a refund, there are
7	adjustments that have to be made. But here, if the only
8	question is the constitutionality of the tax, then what
9	is the point of going through any kind of administrative
10	process of the refund route?
11	MR. JAY: In the context of the coal tax,
12	Your Honor, and the Export Clause claim, the purpose of
13	requiring exhaustion, requiring Respondents to proceed
14	before the IRS, is that the coal tax is exempt from
15	taxation under the Constitution only if the coal, at the
16	moment the tax is imposed which in this case is when
17	it's first sold by the manufacturer, the mining company
18	if at that moment, the coal was in the stream of
19	export. And in the context of the coal industry that can
20	be a fairly fact-specific question, and the IRS technical
21	advice memorandum that we've cited on page 11 of our
22	reply brief explains that to some degree. So it's
23	possible for a timely refund claim to allow the IRS to
24	examine the facts and circumstances of the transaction
25	and determine whether in fact the coal was in the stream

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1 of export at all.

2 Further, the IRS -- if it has only an excise tax return from the taxpayer, IRS has no idea what 3 4 percentage of that coal was exported. Well over 90 5 percent of the coal mined in the United States remains 6 in the United States and there's nothing on Form 720, 7 the excise tax return, that specifies how much of that 8 coal is exported. So effectively by filing the two-page 9 refund claim the taxpayer puts the IRS on notice of what 10 percentage of coal in the given years was in fact in the 11 stream of export when it was sold, whether in fact the 12 broker or whoever purchased it actually exported it from 13 the country, and also how -- what the dollar amount of 14 tax refund is being sought.

So all of those, we think, are perfectly valid purposes for requiring a short but reasonable time to proceed before the IRS. And if the IRS denies the claim, then of course Respondents could have proceeded directly to court.

The IRS did not in fact deny their claim, and the IRS has issued a notice of acquiescence specifying that coal tax -- that coal tax payers who paid this coal tax and filed timely refund claims will receive a refund to the full extent that Congress has permitted the IRS to grant refunds.

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1	JUSTICE SCALIA: Plus interest.
2	MR. JAY: Plus interest, that's right, Your
3	Honor. Under section 6611, interest is fully available
4	on refunds. And again, if the if the IRS had denied
5	the claims and Respondents had been forced to go to
б	court, they would have received interest accounting for
7	that time delay as well.
8	So we think that section 7422 is the
9	exclusive means of bringing a claim that a tax was
10	illegally or erroneously assessed or collected. The
11	terms of the statute are clear; they're unambiguous; and
12	they're exclusive. 7422(a) simply is the only way of
13	bringing this claim.
14	And we think that whether Respondents
15	denominate their claim as a statutory-refund claim or a
16	constitutional claim, the terms of section 7422(a)
17	plainly cover it. So we think that the Court need not
18	necessarily answer the question of whether the Export
19	Clause creates a self-enforcing cause of action at all,
20	because
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Could the IRS say
22	that the statute or Congress, I guess say the
23	statute of limitations is one month?
24	MR. JAY: To file a timely refund claim,
25	Your Honor?

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1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes, and anything 2 after that, any constitutional violation after that, is 3 just not remediable. 4 MR. JAY: Well, the constitutional violation 5 would have taken place before in Your Honor's hypothetical. 6 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Five weeks before. 8 MR. JAY: In the McKesson case, Your Honor, the Court outlined a number of the options that taxing 9 10 authorities have to respect their strong fiscal interest 11 in the stability of their tax revenues while providing 12 appropriate relief. And the Court listed as one way in 13 which States can -- States and other taxing authorities 14 can protect that by providing a short statute of 15 limitations. The Court also suggested that --16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We're talking about -- we're talking about the Constitution here. And in 17 18 effect -- I mean, I assume I could run through the usual 19 routine. I mean, you wouldn't say they could have a 20 statute of limitations of two days, right? 21 MR. JAY: Well, Your Honor, in McKesson the 22 Court pointed to another alternative, which is requiring 23 that the tax be paid under protest. And that effectively is a statute of limitations of zero days, in 24 25 that when -- in that when the tax is paid, the

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1 taxpayer has to identify the basis of the constitutional 2 challenge and the amount being paid under protest. 3 And under -- before the Tucker Act, and 4 indeed in the early years of the Tucker Act, taxes had 5 to be paid under protest or the taxpayer was out -- was out the remedy against a collector. And Congress has 6 7 since provided that in general taxpayers don't have to 8 pay their taxes under protest. Instead, they can bring a refund claim within three years afterwards. But that 9 10 three-year limitation period, while relatively generous, 11 is absolute. 12 And the Court held in the Brockamp case that 13 the three years can't be extended, not even for an 14 individual taxpayer suffering from senile dementia for 15 the entire time period. 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Do you think there are any 17 circumstances in which a taxpayer can bring a claim 18 under the Tucker Act for the refund of an 19 unconstitutional tax? 20 MR. JAY: Well, we think -- I want to 21 clarify, Your Honor, that any lawsuit, whether it's on Respondent's theory or on our theory, any lawsuit that's 22 filed is in fact under the Tucker Act. 23 24 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, any situation in which 25 such a suit can be brought without having filed a claim

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1 previously with the IRS? 2 MR. JAY: If the only -- if the only basis 3 for the taxpayer's recovery is that the taxpayer has 4 paid a tax and the tax was illegally or erroneously 5 assessed because it was unconstitutional, we think that section 7422(a) and the associated time limits provide 6 7 the procedure for recovering under the Tucker Act. Section 2501, which is what Respondents 8 9 contend is the only procedure that applies to the claims 10 that they have brought, section 2501, as the Court 11 recognized --12 JUSTICE ALITO: Just to be clear, so your 13 argument is not limited to the Export Clause. It 14 doesn't matter what provision of the Constitution the 15 tax violates. The same rule would apply? 16 MR. JAY: Congress has made no 17 distinction in the statute between one type of 18 constitutional claim and another, or indeed one type of 19 illegality or another. And we've cited some -- some examples in our opening brief of numerous constitutional 20 21 provisions that taxpayers may bring challenges under. And there are at least five clauses in the original 22 23 Constitution that regulate the Federal Government's taxing authority. There are at least four more that 24 25 regulate the States, and, you know, not to mention the

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1 Bill of Rights.

2	So constitutional claims are commonly
3	brought by taxpayers against Federal taxes, and the
4	tax-refund procedure provides a full a fully
5	effective, fully adequate way of vindicating that right.
6	The only requirement is that it be submitted in writing
7	to the IRS within three years after filing the tax
8	return in question.

9 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Do you know, what happened 10 before the Tucker Act with inverse condemnation claims? 11 The government violates the Fifth Amendment Takings 12 Clause or the Fourteenth Amendment Takings Clause 13 applied to the Fifth by inverse condemnation, and there 14 is no Tucker Act. Was there a constitutional cause of 15 action for damages?

MR. JAY: Before there was the Tucker Act, Your Honor, when the government took property and was obliged to pay compensation, the claim was presented to Congress; and Congress could legislate relief by a private bill.

Eventually, Congress created the Court of Claims purely as an Article I tribunal. There was no judicial review because its decisions were always subject to revision by Congress. And eventually Congress, having tired of adjudicating all these claims

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in a legislative manner, gave the Court of Claims
 independent status with its decisions reviewable in
 Article III courts. And so, by enacting the Tucker Act,
 takings claims became brought in the Court of Federal
 Claims.

6 So, because we think section 7422(a) is a 7 completely adequate remedy for any constitutional claim that Respondents might bring, we submit that this 8 Court's Bivens cases and this Court's unlawful-tax cases 9 10 show that there is no warrant to create a new cause of 11 action directly under the Constitution in circumstances 12 like this where the taxpayer has a fully effective 13 remedy, allows that remedy to become time-barred, but 14 instead brings a claim, purportedly under the 15 Constitution, against the identical defendant, in the 16 identical forum seeking the identical relief. Under 17 those circumstances, this Court has never fashioned a 18 Bivens-type implied cause of action for a violation of 19 the Constitution.

Indeed, in Bush versus Lucas, Schweiker versus Chilicky, and other cases, the Court has recognized that when Congress has legislated a remedial scheme, it doesn't -- this Court will still stay its hand before creating a new Bivens action, even if that remedial scheme has very short time limits, such as the

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30-day time limit, the civil service remedies that were
 at issue in Bush, or the exhaustion requirement of Title
 VII which substitutes for an equal-protection claim for
 Federal employees.

5 Even in those circumstances, and even if the remedies that are available are equitable and not money 6 7 damages, even in those circumstances this Court will not 8 create a new cause of action for money damages. And in this case, if Respondents had filed in a timely way in 9 10 this -- referring to the relief that they're seeking in 11 this case, they're seeking relief for 1994, 1995 and 12 1996. If they had filed by April 30th, 1997, by which 13 point Cyprus Amax Coal Company was already vigorously 14 litigating the constitutionality of the coal excise tax 15 in the Court of Federal Claims, if they had filed by 16 that time, they could have received full relief. 17 So their failure to assert their rights in a 18 timely way certainly didn't give the court of appeals

19 warrant to create a new Bivens-type implied right of 20 action.

21 If the Court has no further questions at 22 this time, I'll reserve.

23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
24 MR. JAY: Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice.
25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Ms. Millett.

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1 ORAL ARGUMENT OF PATRICIA A. MILLETT 2 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS 3 MS. MILLETT: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it 4 please the Court: 5 This is a question of statutory construction 6 and if Congress -- what this Court's precedent has made 7 clear in Enochs versus Williams Packing, is that if government -- if the government wants to enjoy the 8 special, extraordinary protections of the tax-refund 9 scheme, it has to assert a plausible basis for tax 10 11 liability. It hasn't done that here. There was never 12 any claim that they have any legitimate right to this 13 revenue as a source, as a basis, for taxes; that they 14 have any legitimate tax regulatory power over this 15 export process; or that they have any legitimate basis 16 for defending the statute as constitutional under any 17 circumstances of the law. 18 JUSTICE STEVENS: Ms. Millett, if it was --19 if it was that obvious, why did it take so long for the 20 coal companies to realize that the government owed them 21 money? 22 MS. MILLETT: Justice Stevens, that's 23 because my clients are not Fortune 100 companies, and I 24 don't think the Constitution or Congress imposes a test 25 on the Tax Code that requires that sort of level of

1 scrutiny.

I've got -- we've clients here that are small. They have no in-house lawyers and they had accountants who paid the taxes. And so the short answer is they didn't notice.

6 It's not that they looked at it and thought 7 it was constitutional. One thing that is clear is that 8 as soon as anybody looked at this statute, as soon as 9 anybody -- the court, the government that collected the 10 tax for 20 years and did have a constitutional duty to 11 look at the Constitution, as soon as anyone looked at 12 it, there was no defense offered. This is an 13 extraordinary case, where the government made no effort 14 to defend this tax whatsoever in district court.

JUSTICE KENNEDY: Were there any other cases where they said, well, it's not in the stream of commerce yet, or there was an intermediate broker, or anything like that? Are there any complexities like that?

20 MS. MILLETT: Justice Kennedy, there is a 21 statutory definition, 26 U.S.C. 4221, that deals with 22 stream of commerce and that mirrors this Court's decision 23 in the A.G. Spalding case, which says that either the 24 direct sale -- that, you know the manufacturer does a 25 sale directly to the exporter or has the broker, so one

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or two steps, is stream of commerce, and after that it's
 not going to be. That's the same thing this Court did
 in A.G. Spalding.

4 If someone wanted to fight about that 5 statutory application, they wouldn't be raising a constitutional claim like we are here. What happened --6 7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But in none of these cases 8 did they have those sorts of problems? 9 MS. MILLETT: Not in these cases. My 10 clients -- I think almost all of the claims they 11 directly exported it themselves. There was no dispute 12 whatsoever. 13 If there's a debate, factually or legally, about whether this is in the stream of -- if it's not in the 14 export stream, it's not an Export Clause violation. 15 If there is a factual debate, it wouldn't fall within 16 17 the Enochs versus Williams Packing exception. There was

18 no factual debate. There is a stipulated judgment in

19 this case.

What Enochs tells us, again, is that the government can't have a tax be a tax solely for the purpose of curtailing constitutional recovery. That's the only way that this was a legitimate tax in their view, not to collect revenue.

25 JUSTICE GINSBURG: If 7422(a) had said

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any -- any Internal Revenue tax, including a tax imposed in alleged violation of the Export Clause, that would cut -- cut out the six-year statute of limitations, right? If it said the refund procedure applies to any Internal Revenue tax including one imposed in alleged violation of the Export Clause?

7 MS. MILLETT: I think it would clear up an 8 awful lot. If I could just clarify, though. What this 9 court held in Enochs versus William Packing is that the 10 phrase "any tax" only applies if the government is at 11 least willing to assert a plausible defense for the tax. 12 And so it would depend on whether "any tax' would still 13 include that limitation in your scenario, if they are 14 willing to assert a plausible Export Clause claim 15 defense.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: Nothing different from what it is now, but just Congress makes clear that a tax and alleged violation of the Export Clause falls within the term "any Internal Revenue tax"?

20 MS. MILLETT: Then I think my position would 21 be that it does not, because this Court has held for 22 half a century without Congress changing it that "any 23 tax" means a tax that the government asserts is valid. 24 It doesn't have to be correct. It has to assert that 25 it's valid. Otherwise it's in the guise of a tax and it

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1 doesn't fall --

2 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, it asserted it was 3 valid if this coal was not shipped overseas. You're 4 putting an awful burden on the government to know when 5 the coal is severed and shipped. You're saying if they mistake a shipment as being only for domestic use rather б 7 than for shipment abroad, they don't have any basis 8 whatever for the tax claim. I'm not sure I agree with 9 that.

10 MS. MILLETT: The problem in this case, 11 Justice Scalia, is that there were two statutes. There was a statute imposing the coal tax, 26 U.S.C. 4121 --12 13 this is all on the first page of our brief -- and then 14 there was an amendment to the exemption for exports in 15 26 U.S.C. 4221 that specifically said the general tax 16 exemption for exports does not apply to this coal tax, 17 and that provision captured nothing but exports of coal. 18 JUSTICE BREYER: So your point is that you 19 don't have to go through the refund requirements of 7422 if the government was -- although it did ask for the 20 21 money as a tax, they are really out to lunch. I mean, 22 the trouble -- is there any authority for an argument 23 like that? I mean, the trouble I guess that I would 24 have that argument is, one is linguistic, because it goes on to say "or of any sum alleged to have been 25

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1	excessive or in any manner wrongfully collected."
2	And then the other thing is just common
3	sense: Suppose you have an insane tax collector. You
4	know, I mean, that could happen. And the insane tax
5	collector they discover some years later has been
б	assessing all these penalties for no reason and people
7	have been paying some of them because, terrible tragedy,
8	terrible thing. But I guess they'd be stuck, I'd always
9	thought, with the three-year statute of limitations, so
10	even though it's really nuts.
11	Now, is there is there any authority for
12	us making a distinction between an insane to get an
13	extreme an insane assessment of a tax and just a
14	wrongful assessment of a tax?
15	MS. MILLETT: The authority is this Court's
16	unanimous opinion in Enochs versus Williams Packing which
17	dealt which said that if when it used that was
18	dealing with it was a tax injunction act, but the same
19	language: "No suit shall be maintained for any tax in any
20	court." And it said in that that statutory language,
21	"any tax" means something that the government can
22	plausibly defend as a tax. It doesn't have to
23	JUSTICE BREYER: What about the "any sum,"
24	"in any manner"? You know, what about that language?
25	MS. MILLETT: Again, the key language

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1 JUSTICE BREYER: "Any sum in any manner 2 wrongfully collected."

MS. MILLETT: Right. This Court dealt with 3 4 that, I think in -- in Dalm, and -- has its own rules in 5 the taxing, but this is -- the question is "any tax," and "any tax" doesn't mean something that's just in the guise б 7 of tax, whether the quy is insane or Congress just forgot 8 to read the Export Clause. But as soon as we look, everyone knows this is unconstitutional, then understand 9 10 what the impact of that is. That means the only way this 11 is a legitimate tax under the government's view, the only legitimate tax function that this serves is to cut off 12 13 constitutional remedies. That's its only role. 14 JUSTICE BREYER: No. No. Their argument 15 is, I'm terribly sorry, that if the way you're hurt is 16 you paid a tax you shouldn't pay and you want to get a 17 refund, go through the administrative procedure. 18 MS. MILLETT: This Court said in Enochs that 19 you don't -- that tax -- the whole point of a tax 20 injunction act is to funnel everyone in to the tax-refund 21 procedure. And this Court said you don't have to go if 22 it is not a tax. And what they mean by not a tax, is 23 that it can't plausibly be defended by the government as 24 This doesn't happen often. This is an a tax. 25 extraordinary exception. But this is the case where it

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1 did. And if the government --

2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So why do you I
3	take it, though, that you concede the six-year statute
4	of limitations under the Tucker Act, right? I mean,
5	your brief says this is an unbending and unqualified
6	prohibition on the use of exports except up to if
7	it's before six years and one day. You take an
8	adamant position with respect to three years but you
9	give up six years.
10	MS. MILLETT: No. It's unbending and wrong
11	whether it's within six years or ten years. But we
12	agree that a constitutional right can have a statute of
13	limitation if there is a constitutional right that
14	doesn't have any statute of limitations, I don't know
15	what it is and it's not this one. The question is
16	JUSTICE SOUTER: Why aren't three years
17	enough?
18	MS. MILLETT: I'm sorry?
19	JUSTICE SOUTER: Why aren't three years
20	enough?
21	MS. MILLETT: This is a question of
22	statutory construction. And Congress determined what
23	the right statute of limitation is for a constitutional
24	claim, and that's six years. If Congress had a
25	three-year statute of limitations under the Tucker Act

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for all constitutional claims, we wouldn't be here. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So -- so, the rhetoric in your brief how this is a constitutionally based prohibition is not pertinent? You're saying if the statute was clear and it said three years, that would be fine, even though it's a claim under the Export Clause?

8 MS. MILLETT: We don't say that the Export 9 Clause, right, distinguishes between three years and six 10 years in its own right. What the Export Clause does, 11 though -- there is the statutory construction argument 12 and we have the Enochs argument, but we also think there 13 are substantial constitutional concerns here. And the 14 Export Clause makes it most imperative for this Court to 15 continue to adhere to its definition of "any tax" from 16 Enochs versus Williams Packing, and that's because --17 JUSTICE SCALIA: Why is the Export Clause 18 so, so significant? The only other self-executing 19 constitutional clause that provides for damages 20 automatically that comes to mind is the Takings Clause. 21 And we have allowed the States to require claimants to 22 jump through innumerable hoops. They have to exhaust 23 all their administrative remedies before they can bring a suit here. Why -- why is the Export Clause any -- any 24 25 more sacrosanct?

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1	MS. MILLETT: Because we don't under the
2	Constitution the government hasn't done anything wrong
3	unless until unless and until it actually effects
4	a taking and doesn't pay for it through process. Those
5	processes are how we determine get to the point where
6	there has been an actual constitutional violation here.
7	No administrative process is necessary to
8	have to know that tax has been posed on exports. And
9	what's distinct about the Export Clause, to get back to
10	Chief Justice Roberts' question, is that it is this
11	Court said unanimously in U.S. Shoe, a simple, direct,
12	unqualified prohibition on congressional tax power in
13	terms, and it disallows any effort to raise revenue
14	through the Tax Power Act.
15	JUSTICE SCALIA: Volenti non fit injuria.
16	If indeed the taxpayer pays out the money for an
17	unconstitutional export tax, it seems to me that person
18	has no claim until he complies with the administrative
19	procedures that render that tax unconstitutional. But
20	up until the point where he is paying it voluntarily, it
21	seems to me there is no constitutional violation.
22	MS. MILLETT: Congress eliminated in the
23	early 1920s any prepayment protest requirement under the
24	tax law. And the tax law the Internal Revenue Code
25	applies sweepingly to Americans across this country,

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vast majority of whom are not equipped with tax lawyers at their side to make protests at the moment they pay their taxes. That's never been required. The question --

5 JUSTICE SCALIA: I'm not saying it has to be 6 made at the moment they pay their taxes. I'm just 7 saying until it's made there is no unconstitutional, 8 unconstitutional export tax.

MS. MILLETT: That's right. Until the tax 9 -- well, there can be an unconstitutional statute on the 10 11 books. No one has been injured by it or affected by it 12 until somebody actually pays it or is required by the 13 government to pay it. I don't dispute that, but keep in 14 mind we're dealing with a tax-refund scheme. The tax-15 refund scheme is an extraordinary creature in the law 16 for many good reasons but that -- that reverses the 17 order of everything. It makes you pay before any 18 entitlement has been shown to that money by the 19 government.

20JUSTICE GINSBURG: I thought you didn't have21to pay --22JUSTICE KENNEDY: Yes, but here there was a

23 payment. Here there was a payment.

24 MS. MILLETT: Yes.

25 JUSTICE KENNEDY: It's different than if you

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1 try to enjoin the collection at the outset. 2 MS. MILLETT: It's only different --3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So that argument doesn't 4 work. 5 MS. MILLETT: It's only different in the б sense that the government's interests are less, and the 7 government's interests are most acute in having people pointed to the tax-refund scheme, this Court has said 8 time and again, before -- to pay first and fight later. 9 And as a result -- I mean --10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, what about the 11 12 deficiency procedure? And I don't know if that applies 13 with excise taxes, but suppose they didn't pay this tax 14 and they get a notice of deficiency. Where would they 15 qo? 16 MS. MILLETT: There -- there's nowhere for 17 them to go for this particular tax. You can't go to tax 18 court. 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Why not? 20 MS. MILLETT: Because Tax Court doesn't 21 apply to excise taxes for the most part. There may be a 22 few exceptions. It essentially applies to income gift 23 and estate taxes, and it certainly didn't apply to this provision here. They could have -- they could have 24 25 gotten the assessment and gotten on the phone with the

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1 IRS. Otherwise they'd have to wait for a lien or levy. 2 Now, the government, by the way, in its reply 3 brief suggests --JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, but if we -- if we 4 5 accept your view in this case, they can go in a district court and enjoin it. It's not a tax. The Tax б 7 Injunction Act doesn't apply. 8 MS. MILLETT: The -- if you accept this 9 Court's --10 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And -- which is just what 11 Justice Ginsburg's questions point out. And earlier I 12 had indicated that in this case they did pay the tax. 13 MS. MILLETT: I --14 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So it seems to me there is a distinction. It may be that you would prevail in your 15 16 argument. 17 MS. MILLETT: Oh, no. We couldn't have --18 JUSTICE KENNEDY: If they tried -- if they 19 tried -- do you think they could enjoin the collection 20 of a tax refund? 21 MS. MILLETT: No, they couldn't because in 22 addition to showing the government's imposition of the 23 tax is legally indefensible, you still have to show 24 entitlement to an injunction, and unless you can 25 establish irreparable harm just by paying money, which

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1 I'm not aware of any coal company that could have, you 2 couldn't have gotten the injunction. And everything --3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, but I mean, in your 4 argument you say it is absolutely void, that it doesn't 5 apply. Just get an injunction. 6 MS. MILLETT: You can't get an injunction 7 just because something is unlawful. That's never been allowed under equity. You also have to show irreparable 8 9 harm. 10 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, then we'll invent 11 the hypothetical company that is going to go broke and 12 all that stuff. 13 MS. MILLETT: Well, I mean, it's not a 14 question of inventing. This Court dealt with exactly 15 that question in Enochs, where -- Enochs versus Williams 16 Packing, and later again in South Carolina versus Regan, 17 Commissioner versus Shapiro -- that you can't just 18 come in and say it's unlawful, that you actually have to 19 then establish irreparable harm. Everything in the tax 20 scheme points to taxpayers with enormous penalties and 21 enormous risks to pay first, fight later. And when a taxpayer does that, it's also --22 23 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But you can't have it both 24 You're saying it isn't a tax for your purposes, ways.

25 and then in my hypothetical case you say, oh, well, you

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1 have to go through the tax --

2 MS. MILLETT: It's the government that --3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And the same with your 4 answer, what I thought was your answer to Justice 5 Ginsburg's question.

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6 MS. MILLETT: It's the government that wants 7 to have it both ways. It wants to say it is a tax just 8 for purposes of making it a nonconstitutional case under 9 the Tucker Act and to make you go through the tax scheme, 10 but in no other way is this defensible as a tax.

11 JUSTICE BREYER: In looking at your 12 argument, I see it now, I think, if I'm right. You're 13 -- that it would have very broad reach. It would reach 14 -- it doesn't just concern the constitutional claim; it 15 concerns any claim you'd have against the IRS. And 16 there's authority that says if the IRS position is too 17 far out, you can go get an injunction. That's what 18 you're pointing to. And then you're argument is, 19 because of that authority, that kind of an exception for 20 the far out IRS claim also applies to the statute of 21 limitation and administrative requirement. And your 22 problem is the latter has never been held. And the 23 reason that that's a problem, I take it, is because when you're talking about injunctions, you're talking about 24 25 basic equity, but when you're talking about later-on

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1 administrative requirements, there's really no reason 2 they couldn't have filed the claim. And if we were to 3 accept an argument on the -- to the contrary and 4 analogize it, it's going to cut through rules, 5 regulations, statutes, constitutional claims, everything, really making a hash of their provision 6 7 there -- of the administrative provision. So, what is 8 your response to that thought which --

9 MS. MILLETT: I have two responses: One, 10 it's going to have far less effect in this situation, in 11 the post-payment situation, than it did in Enochs, where 12 it wasn't limited to the Export Clause. This situation 13 is only going to work where you not only establish the 14 government has no basis for this tax, a hard thing to 15 do, but that you have a money-mandating constitutional 16 provision. There aren't many of those. If you don't 17 have a money-mandating provision, you've got nowhere else 18 to go but the tax scheme.

19 So it's extremely limited, but I want to get 20 back -- this is not about an equity rule. This Court 21 was specific in Enochs versus Williams Packing, when it 22 said, our prior decision under Miller versus Standard 23 Nut, which had done a more generous view of this 24 get-around-the-Tax-Injunction-Act, was wrong, because 25 the Tax Injunction Act is not an equitable rule. Enochs

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1 was a statutory construction rule. Pages 6, 7, and 8 of 2 that decision make it plain in terms -- we talk about 3 what the Act requires, and the language of this Court is 4 construing is the phrase "any tax." And if it has no 5 legitimate basis, then it's in the guise of a tax.

6 That same language has been on the books for 7 almost half a century. Congress went back to the Tax 8 Injunction Act eight times without changing it in response to this Court's decision. Enochs has been 9 10 reaffirmed by this Court five times. Congress enacted 11 an entirely new Internal Revenue Code in 1986 that used that "any tax" language in 7422, with this Court's five 12 13 decisions on the book and kept that language. And it 14 makes sense. Congress doesn't -- doesn't enact a tax 15 where it's only tax function is to cut off constitutional 16 remedies.

17 JUSTICE BREYER: So what do you want to do 18 about your argument, as I hear it, has nothing to do 19 with the nature of the claim that you're asserting to 20 get the money back. It has to do with the nature of the 21 IRS's defense and -- well, can you do it that way? Can 22 you say the word "any tax" or "any claim" -- I can't 23 remember that other -- what was it? It was any -- "any 24 sum" -- "any sum" or "any tax." Can you say, well, it 25 means one thing if they are saying that the reason they

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1 want it back is that it violates the Constitution, and 2 those words mean a different thing if the reason that 3 you want it back is it violates an IRS req, it violates 4 an IRS statute? 5 MS. MILLETT: I'm not saying that "any tax" means anything different. I'm just pointing out that if 6 7 you succeed --8 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, if it doesn't mean 9 anything different and then if the very far-out claim to a tax is so far out it isn't a tax, that would be true 10 11 in the regulation context, in the statutory context as 12 well as the constitutional context. Am I missing 13 something? 14 MS. MILLETT: No, because you have to have a 15 money-mandating claim under the Constitution to fall 16 within the Tucker Act. The -- as this Court said, the 17 Tucker Act for purposes of statutory claims under 18 the Internal Revenue Code, as this Court said in 19 Kreider, takes three years to the statute of 20 limitations. So I don't think, after Kreider, that you 21 would still have a six-year statute of limitations under 22 the Tucker Act for a statutory tax claim. The difference is constitutional 23 enforcement, and this is fundamentally a constitutional 24 25 right that's being enforced. And the question is, would

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1 Congress have thought -- this is all a question of 2 statutory construction -- would Congress have thought 3 this is more a constitutional claim or a tax claim? And 4 they've made the sensible decision, at least as this 5 Court construed it in Enochs, in South Carolina versus Regan -- addressed it in Janis and Bob Jones University 6 and the "Americans United" case, all of which are in our 7 8 brief --

9 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you're saying it's 10 both. You're not saying it's "either/or" because for 11 three years you did use the refund procedure. So you 12 used the refund procedure for the years that were within 13 the three-year period, and then for the years that were 14 outside the three-year period, you have this other 15 theory. So you're not saying this is not for refund. 16 That route is closed. The only route is this 17 constitutional -- this claim directly under the Export 18 Clause. But your own conduct seems to have been it's 19 our option. We can treat it as a refund claim or we can 20 treat it as a constitutional claim.

MS. MILLETT: One can get -- there is nothing in the tax administrative scheme where one when shows up to file a tax refund where you say if I go by this route, I'm waiving all others. It's not like I'm agreeing to go through arbitration and forgoing my

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1 rights to go through a court procedure. Congress has --2 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But I thought what you 3 were just telling us is that this is not a refund claim; 4 this is a constitutional claim. But you are now saying, 5 I think, that it's both; it's whatever the taxpayer or the plaintiff wants it to be. 6 7 MS. MILLETT: It's a constitutional claim to 8 get your tax money back. That's right. And the 9 administrative scheme is fully amenable to that. That's 10 certainly the government's position, and we don't 11 disagree. The question is --12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Plus you get 13 interest. 14 MS. MILLETT: Yes. Absolutely. We think we get it on both grounds, but you get --15 16 JUSTICE GINSBURG: You're saying you get 17 interest too in either way. You say -- I thought 18 you said for the three years that are within the 19 three-year refund limit, you get interest and then 20 you're also saying, going back six years, you also get 21 interest. You're not saying that if you -- if you're 22 outside the refund procedure you don't get interest. 23 MS. MILLETT: Right. But that's because 24 we're -- I mean, there's a -- there's a separate 25 interest provision in the Tax Code for the

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1 administrative refund procedure. They don't really an 2 28 U.S.C. 2411. I think it's 26 U.S.C. 6511. But 3 there's a specific administrative brief on tax -- I'm 4 sorry, interest provision for the administrative refund 5 scheme. And so, under that, when you're in the administrative scheme, you get what the administrative 6 7 scheme's interest provision gives you. We don't dispute 8 that. And then the question is, once you've gone 9 10 to court, the relevant interest provision is the one in 11 28 U.S.C. -- not in the Tax Code, by the way -- but in 28 12 U.S.C., providing -- providing for interest when you've 13 recovered an overpayment of taxes. JUSTICE KENNEDY: Is the interest the same 14 15 in amount in either case? MS. MILLETT: Yes, because in 2411 it 16 17 cross-references the -- well, let me clarify. There is 18 one potential wrinkle, but generally speaking 2411 if 19 you look at it, and it's at the end of the --20 cross-references --21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But 2411 -- 2411 is what 22 you use in the court when you have a straight tax-refund 23 claim. It's not as though 2411 is there for some other 24 claim. It's what you get when you go to court and you're suing for a refund. That's 2411. That's 25

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1 applicable if you get a judgment for an overpayment in 2 respect of any Internal Revenue tax. That's what --3 it's in Title 28, but that's what it's for. It's for an 4 overpayment in respect of any Internal Revenue tax. 5 MS. MILLETT: This is all on page 4a of the government's brief if you want to see where it 6 7 cross-references the Internal Revenue interest 8 provision. 9 No, there's nothing there that says you have 10 to have gone through the administrative scheme. All you 11 have to have is an overpayment. If you have an 12 overpayment, under Bonwit Teller --13 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But -- an overpayment of any Internal Revenue tax, and you -- your whole argument 14 15 is this isn't an Internal Revenue tax; it's so clearly 16 not an Internal Revenue tax that you have a 17 constitutional claim directly under the Constitution. 18 So how does it become, for purposes of 2411, an Internal 19 Revenue tax? 20 MS. MILLETT: I'm sorry, I misunderstood 21 your question, Justice Ginsburg. But I want to make 22 clear that you don't have to go through the refund 23 scheme to get this. This interest would apply in Bonwit 24 Teller for accounts stated, in the Rosenman case for 25 deposit on taxes. That's how we read it.

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Your second point, yes, that if we say this is not a plausible tax under Enochs versus Williams, what we would -- then I think, and if this Court agrees, that this is not a tax under Enochs versus Williams, so that we're not bound by 7422, then I agree that our interest argument becomes harder at that point textually.

7 I will tell you that I still think the fact 8 that they say "in respect of any Internal Revenue tax" 9 gives us room to say that where the government has at 10 least treated it and collected the money as though it 11 were an Internal Revenue tax, that might be a way to get 12 interest. If this Court agrees, though, that it's 13 not --

14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you don't agree in 15 your basic claim that if the government is treating it 16 as an Internal Revenue tax, which it certainly didn't, 17 you'd say that works only for the interest, not --18 MS. MILLETT: Only -- I'm sorry. Only 19 because we have the "in respect of" language. That's 20 the only -- but if this Court disagrees with that, and 21 we recognize it's harder if this Court agrees, we have a 22 separate constitutional argument that the Export Clause, 23 just like the Just Compensation Clause, requires interest 24 paid in its own right. And so that's the alternative 25 basis.

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1	And this Court, of course, can affirm the
2	judgment on any basis supported by the record.
3	But I want to get back, very clearly that
4	there is the bottom I mean, Justice Scalia, you
5	talked about, you know, which pot you want to put this
6	in. The rarity of this case and what's unique about it
7	is that the government came in agreeing up front,
8	stipulated judgment, no fact disputes, no law disputes,
9	this is in the pot of "no legitimate status as a tax.
10	No claim whatsoever. The government couldn't think of
11	anything.
12	But for purposes of limiting your
13	constitutional relief, then it's in the pot of a
14	legitimate tax. And we think they can't have it both,
15	ways and particularly as a matter of statutory
16	construction. This is ultimately a question of which
17	scheme is better fitted to vindicating the Constitution.
18	And Congress said "any tax," just like it said in the Tax
19	Injunction Act. This Court has said what "any tax" means.
20	It said it five times after Enochs. And Congress has
21	not reacted to it.
22	Stare decisis applies most powerfully in the
23	statutory construction Congress context, and if
24	Congress thought there were a problem with what with
25	how this Court defined "any tax," it would have said so.

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It could have done so. It's had half a century to do something.

3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You give all of this 4 up when it comes to the statute of limitations. I mean, 5 the government's argument could be just as implausible as you suggest it is here. But if it involves a claim 6 7 six years and one day out, it's just too bad. It doesn't matter that it's a constitutional claim. 8 Ιt 9 doesn't matter how erroneous the government's position 10 was, because the government can impose limitations like that even on the assertion of constitutional claims. 11 12 That's all they are doing here.

MS. MILLETT: But the Tucker Act doesn't use the word "any tax" in defining the statute of limitations. It's a statute of limitations for constitutional claims.

Our argument is about what the word "any tax" means in 7422 and does it force us to go through the tax refund scheme. Our argument is, as this Court said unanimously in Enochs -- a decision that has never been questioned by any justice of this Court -- that "any tax" does not apply if it has no tax status for any other purpose. It can't be just to limit --

24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, we said just as 25 unanimously a couple of things last year in Hinck and EC

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Term as well, and that -- certainly the Federal Circuit's
 decision wouldn't have come out the same way if they had
 had Hinck and EC Term of Trust on the books.

MS. MILLETT: I'm not sure -- I'm not sure it would have come out differently. Maybe they would have explained things differently. But this Court said in those cases, the question is which statutory scheme is better fitted. And at two levels we think the Tucker Act is better fitted for this claim.

10 One, because "any tax" only applies when 11 there is an asserted, legitimate basis for the tax; and 12 two, the Export Clause is a unique limitation, 13 specifically denies the government any authority to use 14 exports as a source of revenue. And you have a refund 15 scheme here that has been designed over the years 16 specifically to protect revenue interest, to make you pay 17 the revenue first and have them hold it.

18 It's not just holding them for six months. 19 They had to pay every two weeks. But, of course, the government didn't treat that as "paid for purposes of 20 21 interest" until the end of the quarter when a return was 22 filed. That's one way why the interest calculation 23 might be different under the Tucker Act than it would be 24 under the refund scheme, just the timing of whether it's 25 the deposit or the actual return.

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Justice Kennedy, I forgot to get back to you
 on that.

3 But the question here is whether the Export 4 Clause can be fully enforced by -- which it's -- it's 5 not a suggestion and it doesn't say when you're doing your tax stuff, it's okay if you slop over on exports a б 7 little bit. Exports are completely off limit for the 8 tax power. And Congress using its tax power to create a 9 tax scheme that specifically preserves and protects 10 revenue and is not a revenue neutral system is not the 11 best scheme for vindicating the Export Clause. It's not 12 better fitted for that. It is at cross-purposes with the 13 Export Clause.

14 But at bottom, this Court doesn't need to get to that constitutional question. We think it 15 16 certainly informs the analysis. It certainly is enough 17 of a constitutional concern or doubt to conclude that 18 Enochs still applies "any tax" in the Tax Injunction Act --"any tax in any court." "No suit shall be maintained for 19 20 any tax in any court" means the same thing in 7422 that 21 it means in the Tax Injunction Act. If Congress thought 22 it meant something different, it has had half -- almost 23 half a century to tell us.

It hasn't done that, and the Export Clause can't serve its unique historical function of keeping

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1 government's tax regulatory hands off the Export -- may I 2 finish my sentence? 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes. 4 MS. MILLETT: Keep my hands -- hands off the 5 tax export process and the revenue out of the Federal 6 fisc unless this is treated as a constitutional claim. 7 Thank you, Mr. Chief Justice. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: 8 Thank you, Ms. Millett. Mr. Jay, you have 15 minutes. 9 10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Jay, I hope in the 15 11 minutes, you will state what the government's position 12 is on this Enochs case that's been mentioned at least a 13 dozen times. 14 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF WILLIAM M. JAY 15 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER 16 MR. JAY: I'll be glad to, Your Honor. 17 Enochs case construed not section 7422, but section 18 7421, the Anti-Injunction Act provision of the Tax Code. 19 And the question in Enochs was whether the taxpayer 20 simply by alleging that the tax was so -- so invalidly 21 applied that it was only in the guise of a tax, could 22 avoid paying the tax and bring an injunctive claim. The Court in Enochs held that it could not 23 because the taxpayer had not, in fact, satisfied the 24 25 basic requirement of all claims for injunctive relief as

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1 irreparable injury. And the Court also held that 2 whether a tax is defensible for purposes of this very 3 narrow exception is to be determined on the basis of the 4 information to the government at the time of suit. So 5 in this --6 JUSTICE SCALIA: Wait. What very narrow 7 exception? It didn't apply the exception. 8 MR. JAY: The Court was preserving, I think in dicta, because -- because the Court 9 10 ultimately denied the exception in that case and in each 11 case since, preserving the holding in Standard Nut and 12 Margarine, a case from the 1920s. Justice Breyer 13 alluded to this when he asked my friend, Ms. Millett, 14 about whether this exception is geared primarily to 15 factual issues or to legal issues. In Standard Nut and 16 Margarine the government had decided to attempt to 17 impose a tax meant for oleomargarine on a product made 18 entirely from nuts. And this Court, you know, without 19 construing the tax-injunction provision, simply referring to principles of equity, this Court held that 20 21 the government's theory of assessing the tax was simply 22 in the guise of a tax and it permitted the injunctive 23 claim to proceed.

In Williams Packing the government's -- the government had a colorable basis for assessing the tax,

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1	and so the taxpayer was remitted to the same remedy that
2	any taxpayer who wants to challenge a tax as having been
3	unlawfully assessed or collected is subject to; that is,
4	to pay the tax, file a refund claim, and if the refund
5	claim is upheld either by the IRS or subsequently in
б	court, to receive a full refund with interest.
7	JUSTICE SCALIA: Don't the two go together?
8	If you could bring an injunction action, surely you
9	don't have to pay the tax.
10	MR. JAY: Well, if you can satisfy the
11	requirements for injunctive relief and Williams
12	Packing, the taxpayer, couldn't; and in the cases since
13	the taxpayer couldn't then the court can enjoin the
14	collection of the taxes applied to you.
15	JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, that's what she is
16	saying she is saying that those conditions exist here.
17	That this is not not a plausible tax; and, therefore,
18	she could have gotten an injunction; and, therefore, by
19	parity of reasoning, she doesn't have to go through
20	the tax provisions.
21	MR. JAY: I think I have three responses to
22	that.
23	One is that we don't think that a an
24	exception to the to 7421 should carry over into
25	section 7422. But even in the circumstances of this

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1 case, this is a facially constitutional tax. The tax is 2 imposed on coal mined in the United States. And if no 3 -- if none of the coal that is subject to the tax is 4 ever in the stream of export when the tax is imposed, 5 then the tax is perfectly constitutional. And that is 6 why section 4121 remains on the books today. 7 The tax is unconstitutional only in certain narrow circumstances when the coal actually is in the 8 stream of export. As I explained --9 10 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, you could say the 11 same about the tax on oleomargarine. It is a perfectly 12 valid tax but not when you impose it on nuts. And here 13 the tax on coal is a perfectly valid tax, but not when 14 you impose it on coal that's in the stream of export. 15 MR. JAY: But if one of these coal companies 16 had sought to enjoin the tax, the government would have 17 pointed to the provision in Williams Packing that says 18 that whether the tax is defensible is to be determined 19 on the basis of the information available to the government at the time of suit until the taxpayer 20 21 demonstrates that the coal is actually in the stream of 22 export, which is precisely what's done during the refund 23 process that the taxpayers used in this case to show 24 that their coal was in the stream of export when they 25 obtained the refund. That's what -- that's how they

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1 obtained a full -- full relief.

2 But, in any event, the history of this litigation shows that this is not -- this is not a claim 3 4 about the facial unconstitutionality of the tax because 5 the tax continued to be collected without protest in the 6 case of the Respondents here for 21 consecutive years. 7 And by the time they filed for a refund this 8 Court had decided IBM. It had decided U.S. Shoe. The district court had decided Ranger Fuel, and the 9 10 government had announced that it would not appeal the 11 decision in Ranger Fuel striking down the coal tax. 12 But that doesn't mean that for that -- for 13 that entire time the government had no basis on which to 14 defend the tax. I mean the government had colorable 15 arguments to defend the tax at issue in U.S. Shoe in 1996 -- June of 1996. And it had colorable arguments to 16 17 defend the harbor maintenance tax in U.S. Shoe. I may 18 have misspoke. IBM in 1996, and U.S. Shoe in 1998. 19 So to say that during the period at issue in 20 this case, 1994 through 1996, the tax was so facially 21 invalid that the narrow Williams Packing exception to 22 another statutory provision justifies Respondents' 23 attempt to circumvent the tax-refund statute, we just 24 think is not correct.

In the case of a taxpayer who -- who can't

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1 satisfy the exception, you know, the Tax Code does, 2 indeed, put that taxpayer to the choice. It gives them 3 a fully effective postpayment refund remedy where they 4 can avoid any penalties and interest by paying the tax 5 and litigating for a full refund after the fact. 6 JUSTICE BREYER: Right. Is the government's 7 view that the money that they are seeking here, if you 8 look at 7422, that it falls within the language of "any 9 Internal Revenue tax alleged to be erroneously or 10 illegally assessed," or the language "any sum alleged to 11 have been in any manner wrongfully collected," or both? 12 MR. JAY: I don't think that we need to go 13 beyond the first clause, Your Honor. 14 JUSTICE BREYER: So when I decide this case, I should forget the words "any sum"? 15 16 MR. JAY: I mean the Court construed a 17 similar provision in Flora versus United States in 1960, 18 which explained that "any sum" is a cumulative 19 provision. So that if something is within the scope of 20 an "Internal Revenue tax alleged to have been erroneously 21 or illegally collected or assessed," that's as far as you 22 need to go. 23 JUSTICE BREYER: But it -- but if, in fact, it is not within the scope of the word "tax," then 24 25 it is not within "any sum"?

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1	MR. JAY: No. To the contrary, Your Honor.
2	I think that the holding in Flora is that if it's not
3	within the scope of the first provision, then you would
4	need to look at the second actually the third
5	provision, the "any sum" language.
6	JUSTICE BREYER: In Enochs she is quite
7	right, your opposing lawyer it says the exaction is
8	merely in the guise of a tax. And when it says it is
9	within the guise of a tax, then it doesn't fall within
10	the Tax Injunction Act.
11	And there it says if it is clear that under
12	no circumstances could the government ultimately
13	prevail, the central purpose of the Tax Injunction Act
14	is inapplicable. And then it's just in the guise of a
15	tax. And that, she says, is the test we should apply
16	here. So that's where I think Justice Ginsburg began.
17	What is your specific response to that?
18	MR. JAY: Well, my specific response, Your
19	Honor, first is that in this case the tax simply was not
20	in the guise of a tax. But even if, you know, today, if
21	the taxpayer were if a taxpayer were alleging that
22	the coal tax were in the guise of a tax and that it,
23	therefore, could bring a prepayment a prepayment
24	action, it does not then follow that the taxpayer could
25	still after the fact, if it opted not to bring that

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prepayment action, the taxpayer could then escape the three-year, nontollable, unusually emphatic limitation period that applies to a claim for a postpayment remedy, which is the exclusive means of obtaining a postpayment remedy.

6 And, you know, the courts recognized time 7 and again that taxing authorities have a strong interest 8 in fiscal stability, and it effectively closes the books 9 on a particular tax year. So that taxpayers, after the 10 tax is paid, if they want to protest the tax, they have 11 three years in which to put the government on notice. 12 That, you know, even if the claim is this tax is so 13 beyond the pale that it can't be defended, they have to 14 put the government on notice of that claim.

And if they do, then the IRS considers it; and if the IRS turns them down, then they can proceed to district court or to the Court of Federal Claims.

In addition, I think I just wanted to clarify one point about the availability of prepayment remedies in this case. Justice Ginsburg, my friend, Miss Millett, was correct about the fact that this excise tax does not -- is not susceptible to the deficiency proceeding in Tax Court.

And we have cited in footnote 7 of our reply brief, page 16, the possibility that there may be

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another route if the taxpayer feels strongly about the unconstitutionality of the tax and is willing to take the chance that if the taxpayer's position is rejected, that the taxpayer may be liable for penalties and interest for not paying the tax.

It means, of course, the general rule is that 6 7 the taxpayer is expected to pay the tax and proceed postpayment by putting the IRS on notice of the claim. 8 But Congress, in section 6330(c)(2)(B) of Title 26, has 9 10 provided some limited ability, if a taxpayer has not 11 previously been able to litigate the merits of the tax, the taxpayer has a limited opportunity to do so first 12 13 before the IRS, then in Tax Court, and then before the 14 court of appeals.

15 And, again, on Miss Millett's supposition 16 that this is a completely, clearly unconstitutional tax, 17 then the taxpayer would have the option of doing that. 18 Again, the refund scheme is set up so that if the 19 taxpayer doesn't want to take the chance that its 20 argument will not be accepted, the taxpayer has a 21 simple, open remedy: To file a refund claim at any 22 point within three years.

That's exactly what Respondents did not do for the 21 consecutive years that they paid this tax without complaint.

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1	If the Court has no further questions?
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
3	The case is submitted. We'll hear the third case
4	beginning this afternoon.
5	(Whereupon, at 11:38 a.m., the case in the
б	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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