1 IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES 2 - - - - - - - - - - - - x 3 MICHAEL RIVERA, : 4 Petitioner : : No. 07-9995 5 v. 6 ILLINOIS. : 7 - - - - - - - - - - - x 8 Washington, D.C. 9 Monday, February 23, 2009 10 The above-entitled matter came on for oral 11 12 argument before the Supreme Court of the United States 13 at 11:05 a.m. 14 APPEARANCES: JAMES K. LEVEN, ESQ., Chicago, Ill.; on behalf of the 15 16 Petitioner. 17 MICHAEL A. SCODRO, ESQ., Solicitor General, Chicago, 18 Ill.; on behalf of the Respondent. 19 MATTHEW D. ROBERTS, ESQ., Assistant to the Solicitor 20 General, Department of Justice, Washington, 21 D.C.; on behalf of the United States, as amicus curiae, supporting the Respondent. 22 23 24 25

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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:05 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We will hear
4	argument next in Case 07-9995, Rivera v. Illinois.
5	Mr. Leven.
б	ORAL ARGUMENT OF JAMES K. LEVEN
7	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
8	MR. LEVEN: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
9	please the Court:
10	The Petitioner lawfully exercised a
11	peremptory challenge on juror Delores Gomez. As a
12	result of the erroneous denial of that challenge, Ms.
13	Gomez wrongfully sat on the jury and lacked authority to
14	render a judgment. Petitioner's conviction should be
15	reversed automatically for three separate and
16	independent reasons.
17	First, the trial before an unlawful
18	adjudicator is structural error. Two, the wrongful
19	seating of a juror is structural error, because the
20	effect of the error is impossible to determine
21	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Are you putting are
22	you equating this with a biased judge? The the
23	category of structural error has been kept very narrow
24	by this Court. And it seems to me that a juror who is
25	perfectly qualified, who is conceded it is conceded

1 could not have been dismissed for cause, is quite a 2 different matter than a judge who -- who has taken a 3 bribe or who has a monetary stake in the case. 4 It -- it seems quite a stretch to apply those 5 decisions to -- to the case of a juror who was qualified, and it was just a judge who was overexuberant б 7 in denying a peremptory challenge. 8 MR. LEVEN: Well, our unlawful adjudicator 9 claim is not dependent on a finding or showing of bias. 10 A -- a juror who is illegally on the jury, who does not 11 have the authority to serve, would render the jury improperly constituted. Therefore, there would be 12 13 structural error for a jury illegally constituted to 14 render a judgment irrespective of bias. 15 JUSTICE SOUTER: Okay. But your whole 16 argument that the -- that the juror was illegally 17 sitting and the jury was illegally constituted is a --18 in effect a statement of the effect of State law. And 19 the State supreme court doesn't think that's the effect 20 under State law. 21 So it seems to me that the -- the whole 22 premise of your argument that there is something 23 inherently unlawful about the seating of that juror is 24 simply in -- in effect denied by the State supreme 25 court. And we take our law from them.

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1	MR. LEVEN: Well, Your Honor, there are
2	State law and Federal law components to this issue.
3	Petitioner had a lawful right to excuse juror Gomez
4	under Illinois Supreme Court Rule 434.
5	JUSTICE GINSBURG: But no no
б	constitutional right, no constitutional right to the
7	peremptory challenge.
8	MR. LEVEN: Well, there is a constitutional
9	right to due process involved that
10	JUSTICE SOUTER: But you you in effect
11	are saying that any violation of State law with respect,
12	let's say, to criminal trial procedure becomes, if not
13	remedied, a due process violation under Federal law.
14	That's that's your your unstated premise, isn't
15	it?
16	MR. LEVEN: No, Your Honor. The our
17	argument is very narrow in scope: That if a a juror
18	that is illegally constituted renders a verdict of
19	guilty, then that jury is an unlawful adjudicator. The
20	unlawful adjudicator claim is what triggers the right to
21	due process.
22	JUSTICE BREYER: There could be a thousand
23	reasons why under State law a particular jury is
24	improperly constituted. So you are saying whenever the
25	State under whatever State laws it has says that the

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judge made a mistake about who to put on the jury, that
 that violates the Federal Constitution.

3 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Just as an example, to 4 follow up on Justice Breyer's question -- and then can 5 you answer his question -- many States have rules that you have to be a resident of the county to serve on that б 7 jury. And suppose a juror thinks he or she is a 8 resident and gets the county line wrong or doesn't know what the residency requirement. Under your rule -- what 9 10 is your term, an "unlawful adjudicator." And then we 11 have a -- we have a -- a Federal constitutional standard 12 that requires structural error for any State -- for any 13 violation of any State -- State rule. That is 14 Justice Breyer's question.

15 MR. LEVEN: Well, with respect to jury 16 qualifications such as age and citizenship, there is a 17 very delicate screening process that goes into effect. 18 So the problem of an unlawful adjudicator with respect 19 to, say, age would be a very, very rare phenomenon and 20 would rarely occur, because jurors who are too young to 21 serve, perhaps under 18 years old, would never make 22 their way to the jury pool in the first place. So it 23 would really be a very rare situation --

JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, you are -- you are avoiding the question by saying, oh, don't worry, there

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1 are not going to be many violations of this sort, and 2 then you pick out age. But Justice Breyer began -- the 3 preface to his question was -- was that there are -- are 4 manifold requirements varying from State to State. 5 MR. LEVEN: Well, I think -б JUSTICE KENNEDY: What you are giving us is 7 a sweeping proposition, A, for the constitutional 8 principles that you are setting forth; B, for the supervision and intrusion it would cause Federal courts 9 10 on the State system. Well, if we take the juror's 11 MR. LEVEN: 12 qualifications that were discussed in the State's brief, 13 it would appear that all the qualifications that are 14 discussed there would -- as I said, it would be a very rare situation, indeed, for a --15 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, why? One 16 17 qualification is a jury -- a juror can't be prejudiced. 18 All right. I think it's a very common thing for 19 prosecutors and defense lawyers to get into arguments 20 about whether a particular juror is or is not 21 prejudiced. Okay. 22 So sometimes the judge excuses them, maybe 23 five million times a year; and probably in a certain percentage, maybe 5,000 or 500 or 50,000, the judge is 24 wrong. All right. 25

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1	So the State appellate court says he's
2	wrong. So the jury wasn't made up properly.
3	Now you are saying in every one of those
4	cases that violates the Federal Constitution. I have
5	never heard of this before. It may be there is some
б	precedent for it. I don't know. That's why I am
7	asking.
8	MR. LEVEN: Well, Gomez v. United States set
9	forth the principle equating the right to an adjudicator
10	with lawful authority to preside at every critical stage
11	of the proceeding
12	JUSTICE BREYER: So that means that held
13	we have held in that case I had better look at it
14	that in any instance where excusing a juror violates
15	State law that that is a violation of the Federal
16	Constitution? Which is the case that says that?
17	MR. LEVEN: Well, that that case did not
18	involve jurors, Your Honor, but it did involve a
19	magistrate who lacked the authority to preside over voir
20	dire. And the court held under a general principle of
21	law equating the right of the lawful-authority right
22	to the right to an impartial jury and used the phrase "a
23	basic fair trial right," meaning that the right to a
24	lawful adjudicator is a basic fair trial right. And
25	also in addition

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1	JUSTICE GINSBURG: But you are not you're
2	not suggesting, because you conceded there was no basis
3	for a for-cause challenge, you are not you are not
4	saying that Gomez was unqualified or that she was
5	biased. If she was biased, you had a basis for that;
6	she could be excused for cause.
7	MR. LEVEN: Well, there is a reasonable
8	possibility of bias with respect to Gomez because of her
9	extensive contacts with gunshot victims at Cook County
10	Hospital
11	JUSTICE GINSBURG: But she was an
12	administrator. She wasn't a nurse. She didn't deal
13	with people who had gunshot wounds.
14	MR. LEVEN: Well, the Illinois Supreme Court
15	held that defense counsel's strike of Gomez was a valid
16	reason to have her removed from the jury. She could
17	have, even though she said even though she was not
18	challengeable for cause, the peremptory challenge is
19	there for a purpose, and that is
20	JUSTICE SCALIA: You don't need a good
21	reason for a peremptory challenge.
22	MR. LEVEN: The peremptory if I
23	understand.
24	JUSTICE SCALIA: That's the whole fun of a
25	peremptory challenge: You don't need a good reason.

1	MR. LEVEN: Well, the purpose of the
2	peremptory challenge is to help to create a fair and
3	impartial jury.
4	JUSTICE SCALIA: Exactly. And for some
5	reason, I just think this person is not going to vote
6	for me. I don't know why. I just don't think so. I
7	don't want this person sitting on the jury. That's all
8	the reason you need.
9	MR. LEVEN: That's right. Under Swain v.
10	Alabama, a peremptory challenge can be exercised without
11	having to state a reason.
12	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, but our footnote in
13	our later case authored by Justice Scalia indicates
14	considerable doubt as to the viability and to the to
15	the correctness of that formulation in Swain.
16	MR. LEVEN: Well, with
17	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Salazar, I think, is
18	the
19	MR. LEVEN: Yes, Martinez-Salazar in its
20	footnote 4 determined that the automatic reversal rule
21	in Swain was subject to reconsideration due to the
22	advent of harmless error analysis.
23	But I was citing Swain for a different
24	purpose. I was citing Swain that for the purpose
25	that a peremptory challenge can be exercised without

1 having to state a reason, and that's a fundamental --2 JUSTICE KENNEDY: No. No. I thought you 3 were citing Swain -- and I think you are going to have 4 to establish -- that peremptory -- in this case, to win 5 your case, that there is a constitutional basis, a constitutional right to exercise a peremptory challenge, б 7 at least -- then you can have a subset of that, when the State gives it to you. But I think Swain no longer 8 9 stands for that proposition.

10 MR. LEVEN: I wasn't citing it for that 11 proposition, Your Honor. We have the case of Evitts v. 12 Lucey, for example, where the Court was analyzing the 13 right to an appeal. And the Court found that the right 14 to an appeal was not of constitutional origin, but once 15 the State had created a right to an appeal it had the 16 obligation to administer that right consistently with 17 fundamental fairness and due process.

So here we have a peremptory right that the State of Illinois wasn't obligated to create. But once it adopted that peremptory right, it was in effect adopting the long venerable tradition of peremptory challenges that has existed in this country since the founding.

JUSTICE GINSBURG: But the -- well, first,
 how many peremptories does Illinois law allow?

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1	MR. LEVEN: For non-capital cases, it's
2	seven, Your Honor.
3	JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, suppose a State
4	allowed only three peremptory challenges. There would
5	be nothing in the least unconstitutional about that,
б	right?
7	MR. LEVEN: Well, under Ross v. Oklahoma,
8	the State has the authority to regulate peremptory
9	challenges.
10	JUSTICE GINSBURG: This was number four, was
11	it?
12	MR. LEVEN: I'm sorry?
13	JUSTICE GINSBURG: The challenge to Gomez
14	was the number four peremptory?
15	MR. LEVEN: Yes, Your Honor.
16	JUSTICE GINSBURG: And so if the State had
17	only three which it could do, there would be would be
18	no basis for removing Gomez from the array. That is,
19	the the defense would have already exercised three
20	peremptory challenges; she's number four, too bad. That
21	would be the end of it, right? She would sit on the
22	jury.
23	MR. LEVEN: Well, as to our unlawful
24	adjudicator claim that would be correct, because if the
25	defense did not have a peremptory challenge to exercise

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1 in order to strike Gomez if the peremptories had run 2 out --

3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But there's just 4 something unseemly about saying because the State is 5 generous in its peremptories, you have a grand constitutional argument to make, even though there is no б 7 constitutional right to any peremptory challenge? 8 MR. LEVEN: Well, the State is obligated, consistent with due process, to provide that which it 9 10 promised. And the problem --11 JUSTICE SOUTER: That goes back to the point

which you rejected when I suggested -- I suggested 12 13 earlier that you were in effect arguing that every 14 violation of a State statute in this criminal context 15 amounted to a due process violation. And you say, no, 16 that's not what I am arguing. It seems to me that that 17 is exactly what you just said to Justice Ginsburg. 18 MR. LEVEN: Well, what makes the peremptory 19 challenge unique is its venerable tradition since the 20 time --

JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, we were talking about peremptory challenges before and we are talking about peremptory challenges now. Have you changed your position from -- from the position you stated in answer to my question?

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1	MR. LEVEN: Well, if I understand correctly,
2	Your Honor, the case involves peremptory challenges.
3	JUSTICE SOUTER: Look, the question that I
4	thought I was asking and I thought you were answering
5	was this: Do you claim that every violation of State
6	law in the we'll say in the selection of jurors is
7	is automatically, if not remedied by the State, a
8	Federal due process violation? And you said, if I
9	recall correctly, no.
10	It seemed to me that in answering
11	Justice Ginsburg's question just now you were saying
12	yes. You said the State has to act consistently with
13	due process.
14	MR. LEVEN: Yes.
15	JUSTICE SOUTER: So so, do you stand by
16	the answer you gave me or is it in fact now your
17	position that every violation of State law that goes
18	unremedied becomes a Federal due process violation?
19	MR. LEVEN: No, I'm not saying that every
20	violation of State law, if unremedied
21	JUSTICE SOUTER: All right. Then why does
22	this one become a due process violation if it's
23	unremedied.
24	MR. LEVEN: Because this one involves a
25	State violation that resulted in an unlawful

1 adjudicator. Let's take --

JUSTICE SOUTER: No, but that -- that then goes back to an earlier question. It's an unlawful adjudicator if State law says so. Federal law says you don't even have to have peremptory challenges, you don't even have to have a process for winnowing out the Gomez jurors.

8 So, in effect, if you are saying that there 9 is something unlawful about the seating of the juror, 10 you are making a statement of State law, and the State 11 Supreme Court disagrees with you, which seems to me to 12 foreclose your argument.

MR. LEVEN: Well, the State disagreed with our position as to the Federal automatic reversal law. The court applied, and we would argue misapplied --

16 JUSTICE SOUTER: No, but the court -- the 17 Supreme Court of Illinois did not find anything unlawful 18 about the juror sitting. They said, yeah, the perempt 19 should have been -- the peremptory challenge should have 20 been respected. But they did not say, and it seems to 21 me they clearly rejected the notion, that there was 22 something unlawful about the jury and unlawful about 23 that juror's participating in reaching a verdict; isn't 24 that correct?

MR. LEVEN: I would read the Illinois

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1 Supreme Court opinion -- specifically what they did 2 state is that the trial court was incorrect in denying 3 the peremptory challenge, therefore that juror should 4 not have sat on the jury, that juror was wrongfully on 5 the jury. б JUSTICE SOUTER: No, no. The -- the 7 peremptory challenge should have been respected. But 8 the Illinois Supreme Court did not say, as I understand it, that by allowing the juror to sit the juror was 9 10 acting in an unlawful capacity or that there was 11 something unlawful under State law about the jury's action and the jury's verdict. 12 13 Am I not correct about that? 14 MR. LEVEN: Well, the Illinois Supreme Court 15 made one statement, that the peremptory was wrongfully

16 denied. Now, as far as elaborating on its reasoning --JUSTICE SOUTER: Well, if they thought that 18 tainted everything that happened afterwards, it seems to 19 me they would have said, therefore, the verdict is no 20 good.

21 MR. LEVEN: No, because the court misapplied 22 this Court's precedent in Neder and Martinez-Salazar. 23 That's the basis for the court affirming the conviction. 24 It had nothing to do with the issue of whether or not --25 JUSTICE SOUTER: Yes, but it had everything

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to do, it seems to me, with the issue of State law.
Regardless of whether they applied or misapplied a
precedent of ours respect -- with respect to Federal
constitutional law, it seems to me that the Illinois
Supreme Court has to have meant it was okay so far as
the validity of the verdict is concerned for this person
to participate.

8 MR. LEVEN: The Illinois Supreme Court found 9 that the verdict was valid because they thought that the 10 error was subject to harmless error review, in relying 11 on Neder and Martinez-Salazar.

JUSTICE SOUTER: So ultimately, there was -there was no error under State law that needed to be corrected?

MR. LEVEN: Well, there is an error in terms of the adjudicator, Ms. Gomez, being seated on the jury and under Rule 434 Petitioner had the right to a juror that -- that was not subject to a peremptory challenge. Gomez was wrongfully seated on that jury.

JUSTICE SOUTER: But so far as the ultimate jury verdict was concerned, the Illinois Supreme Court, I understand it to have said, was there is no error that needs to be corrected under State law.

24 MR. LEVEN: I don't read the opinion that 25 way. I read --

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1 JUSTICE SOUTER: Then why didn't they
2 correct it?

3 MR. LEVEN: Because they thought that the 4 error was subject to harmless error review under Federal 5 law. And we would argue the two positions.

6 JUSTICE SOUTER: You mean -- in other words, 7 you read the -- the -- the Illinois Supreme Court as to say, this is a violation of our statutes and 8 constitution, a violation that would -- would entitle 9 10 this person to have the -- the verdict set aside and a 11 new trial, but because the Federal practice, applying Federal constitutional law, is to engage in harmless 12 13 error analysis, we won't correct our State law error as 14 a matter of State law, and -- and we will in fact apply 15 a harmless error analysis that otherwise wouldn't apply 16 because it's Federal, and on that ground we will let the 17 verdict stand. Is that the way you read the Illinois 18 Supreme Court?

MR. LEVEN: No. The court declined to determine whether a constitutional right had been violated, but the court applied this Court's precedent under Martinez-Salazar and Neder, the Federal harmless error automatically reversal law that this Court has, and used that to find that the error was subject to harmless error review. The court did not --

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1	JUSTICE KENNEDY: But but how how	
2	could it do that if there were not some underlying	
3	Federal constitutional right? I say "how could it do	
4	that." It's obvious that they did it. What what	
5	would be the principled basis for that analysis? What	
6	would be the analytic framework that would lead it to	
7	look to the Federal decisions? This is a State issue.	
8	MR. LEVEN: Well, the court did not specify	
9	why it did so, but it did rely on Neder and	
10	Martinez-Salazar. And therefore	
11	JUSTICE KENNEDY: But we are asking you what	
12	the analytic justification for that course of reasoning	
13	is if that is indeed its course of reasoning.	
14	MR. LEVEN: Well, it's hard for me to	
15	speculate on the thinking of the Illinois Supreme Court.	
16	But	
17	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, but you have to give	
18	us a sustainable analytic framework if if we are	
19	going to reverse their decision.	
20	MR. LEVEN: Well, we argued at the Illinois	
21	Supreme Court level that due process was violated; but	
22	the Illinois Supreme Court declined to consider whether	
23	a constitutional right had been violated and moved	
24	accordingly to the question of whether or not automatic	
25	reversal would apply or whether the error would be	

1 subject to harmless error review.

2 But the Illinois Supreme Court did not say 3 anything about whether a constitutional right had been 4 violated except it declined to consider that issue, even 5 though it was argued at that level by -- by Petitioner. 6 Not only do we have a constitutional basis 7 for this Court to have access to its automatic reversal 8 law; the fact that the court did rely on -- the Illinois Supreme Court relied on Neder and Martinez-Salazar gives 9 10 this Court authority to reach the issue of whether or 11 not to apply automatic reversal law under -- under its 12 authority to correct --

13 JUSTICE STEVENS: Of course, the Illinois 14 Supreme Court was assuming a Federal violation when it 15 decided what the reversal rule would be. But your 16 Federal violation determines -- is bottomed on the 17 notion that there was an unlawful adjudicator on the 18 jury. Would that reasoning apply, in regard to one of 19 the earlier questions, if you have a Cook County jury 20 and they had a juror from DuPage County and the law says 21 no, you have got to have a local juror, and it turns out 22 that they had wrongly seated such a juror? Would that be an unlawful adjudicator. 23

24 MR. LEVEN: Yes, it would appear so if it --25 if a State law stated that a juror qualification

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1	requirement is that the juror who presides in Cook
2	County must be a resident of the county.
3	JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, if you I'm sorry.
4	JUSTICE STEVENS: I just have one more
5	thought.
б	And if it is such an unlawful adjudicator,
7	it would definitely be Federal constitutional error?
8	MR. LEVEN: Yes, because it would implicate
9	the due process clause.
10	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But would it have to
11	be would it have to be structural error? I I
12	don't know why you don't argue that it's structural
13	error when the error is a wrongful denial of a
14	peremptory challenge, because it is impossible for you
15	to establish the harmfulness of error because, as
16	Justice Scalia pointed out, a peremptory challenge is
17	just a hunch on your part; you don't need any more. But
18	if it's something like he was in DuPage County rather
19	than Cook County, maybe that's something where it's fair
20	to put the burden of showing harmfulness on the
21	defendant.
22	MR. LEVEN: Well, Your Honor, the the
23	State under Chapman would be required to prove
24	harmlessness, and I think it would be impossible to
25	determine whether this this error would be harmful

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1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, maybe that's
2	true. My point is that may be true with respect to a
3	peremptory challenge, but it doesn't seem to me to be
4	terribly difficult to say, well, he lives in DuPage
5	County and not Cook County, so what's the big deal?
6	MR. LEVEN: Well, under harmless error
7	review, the appellate court envisions the actual jury
8	that rendered the verdict, whether or not the error
9	would have rendered the verdict different had it been
10	had it not occurred. And in this case we have a we
11	can't analyze it from the perspective of whether this
12	jury would have rendered the same verdict absent the
13	error, because this jury that rendered the verdict is
14	illegally composed, it's illegitimate.
15	So what the Illinois Supreme Court did in
16	analyzing harmless error review is it substituted its
17	judgment for for the reviewing court, it substituted
18	its judgment for the for the jury. The
19	JUSTICE GINSBURG: But we had an actual
20	jury. It's not as though you had no jury verdict and
21	then the court would say the court would say, we
22	think that this defendant was as guilty as they come;
23	but you had a jury with jurors who met all the State law
24	qualifications, already made the determination of guilt.
25	So that's a little different from the case where, say, a

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judge would attempt the equivalent of a directed
 verdict.

MR. LEVEN: Well, in this case I don't think 3 4 we can look at it from the perspective that the Court 5 normally looks at it from when it reviews -- adopts harmless error review. In the normal situation the 6 7 Court looks at whether or not the error contributed to 8 the verdict and whether or not the actual jury that rendered the verdict would have rendered the same 9 10 verdict absent the error. 11 But we don't have -- we can't do it from the 12 perspective of the actual jury in this case, because the 13 actual jury here is illegal. 14 JUSTICE ALITO: Do you think the 15 Constitution prohibits the State from going further than

17 challenges for discriminatory purposes? Specifically, 18 is there any reason why a State could not provide that 19 whenever -- that a trial judge always has the authority, 20 when the judge has any suspicion of discrimination, to 21 ask for an explanation from counsel as to the reason, 22 without having to establish -- without there having to 23 be a prima facie case?

Batson to protect against the use of peremptory

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24 MR. LEVEN: Well, that's our position, Your 25 Honor, because what the trial judge did in this case is

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asked for a reason without having established any prima
 facie case.

JUSTICE SOUTER: Yes, well, that's what Batson says has to be done in order to justify the strike. When -- but is there any reason why a State couldn't go further to guard against discrimination in the use of peremptories?

8 MR. LEVEN: I apologize, Your Honor; I'm not sure I understand about going further than. Under 9 10 Batson there is a three-step process, and the State must 11 establish a prima facie case of discrimination before 12 the judge is entitled to ask for any kind of 13 explanation. And here there wasn't any kind of gender 14 discrimination of any kind, according to the Illinois 15 Supreme Court. Therefore, the -- the judge in this case 16 was not authorized to even ask for an explanation. But 17 the explanation given by defense counsel is pretty good. 18 JUSTICE STEVENS: Yes, but Justice Alito's 19 question is could the State say as a matter of State law 20 whenever the trial judge has a hunch that there might 21 have been discriminatory purpose involved, may he refuse 22 to allow the preemptory challenge? 23 MR. LEVEN: Well, we argue that the judge doesn't have sua sponte authority to --24

25 JUSTICE STEVENS: No, but I -- if the State

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1 explicitly gave the trial judge that authority, would 2 that be constitutional? MR. LEVEN: Well, the -- the State has the 3 4 authority to have some regulation of preemptory 5 challenge rights. 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: It has the authority to 7 abolish peremptory challenge rights entirely, right? 8 MR. LEVEN: Yes. 9 JUSTICE SCALIA: So this is not a hard 10 question. 11 MR. LEVEN: Yes, the State can abolish 12 peremptory challenges if it wishes. 13 JUSTICE SCALIA: And, therefore, it could 14 take the much lesser step of allowing the trial judge, 15 if he has any suspicion that a peremptory-challenge 16 right is being used in violation of Batson, to disallow 17 it. What is wrong with that? 18 MR. LEVEN: In this case, though, we do have 19 peremptory challenges created by the State. And, Your 20 Honor, I request that I -- to reserve the remaining time 21 for my rebuttal. 2.2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel. Mr. Scodro. 23 24 ORAL ARGUMENT OF MICHAEL A. SCODRO 25 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT

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MR. SCODRO: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
 please the Court:

There is no due process violation here and that takes care of this case at the threshold.

5 JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, does it really? 6 Suppose I agree with you that there is -- there is no 7 Federal constitutional violation. But I also think that 8 in assessing the consequence of a State law violation 9 the Illinois court here was looking to Federal law and 10 was trying to apply the Federal law of harmless error.

11 If that's the situation, would we not have 12 the obligation to determine, or would we have the 13 obligation to determine, whether it was properly 14 applying the Federal law of harmless error? Even though 15 it didn't have to, it chose to use the Federal law of 16 harmless error to -- to apply to this State violation.

MR. SCODRO: Justice Scalia, the briefs before the Illinois Supreme Court raise two independent grounds for automatic reversal by Petitioner. One was a pure State law automatic reversal rule. The other was a due process violation that would then trigger Federal automatic reversal requirements.

23 What the Illinois Supreme Court did 24 explicitly is say, even if there were a due process 25 violation here, we believe as a matter of Federal law

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1 that would not trigger automatic reversal.

2 What's certainly implied, because several of 3 the questions today have suggested, what is implied is 4 that if the court had believed that as a matter of 5 Illinois law there were an automatic reversal rule required, that this was an unlawful juror to the 6 7 extended so profound that it voided the judgment and 8 required a new trial, under those circumstances the court would never have had to reach that assumption, 9 10 much less go into any of the analysis it did. 11 So here the court was faced with both 12 claims, rejected both, but to reach the Federal claim 13 they must first show a due process violation. And 14 that's what they failed to do here. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So your answer to 15 16 Justice Scalia's question is what? 17 MR. SCODRO: The answer, Your Honor, is that 18 if the court had said, we are going to lockstep our Federal -- or, rather, our State harmless error analysis 19 20 with the Federal question, Federal analysis, and 21 whatever they say goes, then I would agree that under those circumstances this Court could review that and 2.2 23 say, you got that wrong. 24 JUSTICE KENNEDY: What -- what case would 25 you cite for that proposition? And you can't say

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1 Michigan v. Long. 2 MR. SCODRO: I can't say Michigan v. Long. 3 Excellent question, Your Honor. I mean, I think that --4 let me -- let me --5 JUSTICE BREYER: Why did they get it wrong? 6 MR. SCODRO: I'm sorry, Your Honor? 7 JUSTICE BREYER: Why do you say they got it 8 wrong? MR. SCODRO: Oh, I don't think they did. I 9 10 was suggesting --11 JUSTICE BREYER: Does that mean even if it 12 were Federal? I don't know. I'm asking. Again, I 13 don't know. 14 MR. SCODRO: We think they analyzed it absolutely correctly, as a matter of fact, Your Honor. 15 16 JUSTICE KENNEDY: Isn't this Johnson v. 17 Standard Oil and that -- that sort of thing? 18 MR. SCODRO: Right. I should say if the 19 court -- if the -- if the Illinois court wanted to back 20 away from Federal law at any point, they could certainly do so. And so even if this Court were to say, you got 21 22 it wrong federally, they could of course at that point 23 say, no, we -- as a matter of State law, we are going to 24 apply a Brack standard or a Chapman standard. 25 JUSTICE BREYER: Is that clear as a matter

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1	I don't know. Again, I'm asking. Is it clear as a
2	matter of Federal law that we have lots of Federal
3	trials, and in a Federal trial where a district judge
4	makes an error in excusing a juror he shouldn't have
5	excused the juror, there are many, many reasons for
6	doing it, so the jury is not properly as the defense
7	lawyer had the right to have it that that requires
8	automatically a new trial? Is that clear as a matter of
9	Federal law or not? And I
10	MR. SCODRO: That is not
11	JUSTICE BREYER: I don't know the answer.
12	MR. SCODRO: It is not clear, Your Honor.
13	In response to an earlier question, they cited Gomez.
14	And they and there is a line of cases including Gomez
15	that are cited in their brief. Those are Federal
16	supervisory authority cases in which the Court has said,
17	not as a matter of due process, interpreting the Federal
18	statute, in that case the Magistrate's Act, to conclude
19	that
20	JUSTICE BREYER: I am not talking about
21	magistrates, and I'm not talking about due process.
22	MR. SCODRO: Correct.
23	JUSTICE BREYER: I am asking the question,
24	just what I asked. Now, you heard what I asked. It's
25	about jurors.

1	MR. SCODRO: Right.
2	JUSTICE BREYER: All right. What is the
3	answer?
4	MR. SCODRO: It is not that is not a due
5	process violation.
б	JUSTICE BREYER: I know. I'm not asking
7	that question. I am asking, when a lawyer when a
8	when a judge makes a mistake and excuses a juror whom he
9	shouldn't have excused because he thought the juror was
10	prejudiced, say, and he wasn't, the appeals court says,
11	you are wrong about excusing him, does under Federal law
12	the defendant become entitled to a new trial? Not under
13	the Constitution; under whatever you want.
14	MR. SCODRO: I don't believe
15	JUSTICE BREYER: Yes or no?
16	MR. SCODRO: I don't believe so, Your Honor.
17	JUSTICE BREYER: You think the answer is no,
18	okay.
19	JUSTICE STEVENS: Going back to
20	Justice Scalia's question, do you think we would have
21	jurisdiction of this certiorari petition if we were
22	convinced there was no Federal constitutional error;
23	they were merely trying to decide whether the State
24	court applied the correct constitutional standard in
25	correcting what it thought was a Federal constitutional

1 error?

2 MR. SCODRO: I don't, Your Honor. I think 3 the Federal question, if there is one presented, is 4 whether or not there is a threshold due process 5 violation. 6 JUSTICE STEVENS: And if there is none 7 there, we don't have jurisdiction to answer and give an advisory opinion on how the Illinois Supreme Court 8 9 should run its shop. MR. SCODRO: That is correct, Your Honor. 10

JUSTICE SCALIA: So the Illinois Supreme Court can happily go along blaming everything on us, so when it stands for reelection it can say, well, we are just applying Federal law. Right?

MR. SCODRO: Your Honor, I think in this case what the Illinois Supreme Court did is they concluded --

18 JUSTICE SCALIA: No, but that's the 19 consequence of your answer to that question. It seems 20 to me there is much to be said for the disposition that 21 where a State court, even in resolving a State law 22 question, uses a Federal principle, adverts specifically 23 to Federal law, cites Federal cases, it would cover you. 24 MR. SCODRO: Your Honor, let me be clear. 25 What they did here is they assumed the Federal

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1 constitutional violation because they recognized that 2 there was no State entitlement to a new trial under 3 these circumstances. So they then said, well --4 JUSTICE STEVENS: You -- they did make that 5 assumption, but you think the assumption is wrong. And if we think the assumption is wrong, you would agree 6 7 with Justice Scalia that we can go ahead and say, well, 8 you are running for reelection, so we are going to 9 correct your errors on Federal law. 10 MR. SCODRO: Obviously, Your Honor, I think 11 that if the Court were to conclude there is no due 12 process violation, it would be an artificial exercise to 13 then embark on an analysis of a proper harmless errors. 14 This Court has said time and again that 15 there is a close link between the alleged due process or 16 Sixth Amendment violation and the manner in which the 17 due process -- the harmless error analysis is conducted. 18 In Gonzalez-Lopez that was the gist of much 19 of the debate between the majority of the --20 JUSTICE SCALIA: I would certainly agree 21 that if the only reason the Illinois Supreme Court used the Federal harmless error rule was because it was 22 23 assuming a Federal constitutional violation, once we reject that assumption, the whole thing drops out. But 24 25 is that entirely clear from the opinion?

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1	MR. SCODRO: I
2	JUSTICE SCALIA: Is it clear that the
3	Illinois Supreme Court wouldn't have used the same test
4	under simply Illinois law?
5	MR. SCODRO: Well, two points, Your Honor.
6	First, in context with the briefs, which independently
7	sought both State and Federal remand, and page 171 of
8	the joint appendix, where the court makes clear that we
9	are simply not going to resolve the question of whether
10	there is a Federal due process violation, I think in
11	context it does become clear what the court has done
12	here is it has certainly concluded there is not a State
13	right. So it's proceeded to say, well, what if there is
14	a Federal due process entitlement? If that is the case,
15	let's proceed and decide, well, it's harmless anyway.
16	We don't need to then reverse this conviction.
17	Now, I will say that if the Court harbors concerns
18	if the Court were to conclude there is no due process
19	violation here, but harbors concerns that the Illinois
20	Supreme Court feels itself duty-bound to follow this
21	Court's jurisprudence on the question of harmlessness,
22	that at that point the Court could simply make the due
23	process ruling and remand and allow the Illinois Supreme
24	Court to make clear what I think is already clear, but
25	make crystal clear, that they would apply a a

harmless error standard to this sort -- this sort of
 deprivation.

JUSTICE SCALIA: The problem is the -- the only reason the Illinois Supreme Court found that there was no error of constitutional dimension, meaning Federal constitutional dimension, the only reason it -it found that is because it found that the error was harmless beyond a reasonable doubt.

9 MR. SCODRO: Your Honor, I think that what 10 they have done is they've just put the statement --11 JUSTICE SCALIA: It is the cart before the

12 horse.

13 MR. SCODRO: They have run the analysis, and 14 what they have done, Your Honor, is said, look, any 15 error here of constitutional dimension would be 16 harmless. Therefore, we inform the reader on page 171, 17 we simply haven't reached the question. Please don't 18 read the foregoing analysis to suggest that we have made 19 a prior conclusion that there is indeed a due process violation here. 20

Indeed, the court suggests there probably isn't by early on in the opinion pointing out that this Court has long held since -- since Stilson in 1919, has long held that there is no due process entitlement to a peremptory challenge. So I think in context it is quite

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1 clear that what the court has done is it said, there is 2 nothing in here for you under Illinois law; under 3 Federal law, even if there were a due process violation, 4 it is simply not -- it is simply harmless error. JUSTICE GINSBURG: Then -- then you would 5 have no objection to a remand that says, Illinois б 7 Supreme Court, you can't blame it on Federal law. It's up to you as a matter of State law. And now answer the 8 question that you didn't answer; that is, what is the 9 consequence under State law of an erroneous denial of a 10 11 peremptory? You would have no objection to such a 12 remand?

13 MR. SCODRO: Your Honor, we would have no 14 objection to that procedure, but I would caution that it 15 seems unnecessary in light of the fact that the parties 16 so clearly sought relief under both State and Federal 17 law and the fact that the supreme court -- the Illinois 18 Supreme Court concludes it doesn't need to reach, the 19 way it analyzes the -- the constitutional question. 20 I think that -- and the underlying 21 assumption that judges understand, I think it's fair to 22 assume that the Illinois justices understood that they 23 could go further as a matter of State law than Federal, 24 but not -- they couldn't provide fewer protections. 25

JUSTICE KENNEDY: For the reasons that have

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1 been discussed, it may be that we won't get to the 2 merits of the Petitioner's argument. But assuming we 3 do, the Petitioner talks about the -- I don't have --4 the "unlawfully constituted jury." Is -- is -- what is 5 the distinction between the hypothetical case of the juror who isn't a resident of the county and the State б 7 says you have to be a resident of the county, what is 8 the distinction between that and, say, a non-Article III judge sitting on a court of appeals panel? Why is one 9 10 structural and the other not? 11 MR. SCODRO: Well --12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And this would -- this 13 would be a little different than the juror who might be 14 biased or might not be biased, because this goes to a 15 hard qualification. It's just a hypothetical in the 16 case, but it's a -- it's a linchpin to the Petitioner's 17 argument. 18 MR. SCODRO: I should begin by saying that 19 the Gomez and Wingo and Nguyen decisions and others they 20 cite in that line for the non-Article III judge 21 proposition are themselves not due process decisions, 22 but are conclusions as a matter of State -- of Federal 23 law, rather, the idea being that Congress simply hadn't

24 delegated the authority properly in those cases. They

25 are not due process cases.

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1	But if one were to assume that those would
2	also be due process violations, to have a non-Article
3	III judge sit, I would distinguish those cases at that
4	point hypothetically by saying there is a profound,
5	profound difference between someone who lacks any and
6	all mantle of State authority, on the one hand, and a
7	juror who is properly sworn and who satisfies all the
8	statutory requirements for sitting as a matter of
9	Illinois law.
10	And I should note, in the reply brief
11	there's a point at which they contend
12	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well but the
13	hypothetical is it doesn't the juror doesn't satisfy
14	the requirement because he or she is from the wrong
15	county.
16	MR. SCODRO: Again, Your Honor, the
17	fundamental the lodestar analysis here in the due
18	process in Butte v. Illinois, the Court said they've
19	not defined it with precision, but it has always been
20	fundamental fairness, a community sense of fair play and
21	decency.
22	It seems to me that, as you move into a
23	judge with absolutely no mantle of State authority or
24	and whatsoever, versus a juror who is properly sworn,
25	properly instructed, but who nevertheless sits from a

different neighboring jurisdiction -- and I should note that in Cook County there are three jury jurisdictions, so the errors could be legion just within Cook County in terms of being from the wrong part of the county. It seems to me that that sort of error simply doesn't come anywhere close to the fundamental fairness --

7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well -- but how do 8 you -- there is no way to tell. I mean, presumably the 9 State has a reason for restricting the jury pool to the 10 neighborhood. I mean, and that type of limitation does 11 go back to Blackstone, the vicinage of the -- of the 12 crime. So -- and there's no way to tell. There's no 13 way to tell whether the juror from DuPage County is 14 going to have a different view or a different 15 perspective or affected it in a -- or that it affected 16 the verdict in a particular case.

17 MR. SCODRO: This is true, Your Honor, but 18 in those contexts, the very State law that has created 19 those divisions, for whatever reason they have seen fit 20 to do so, is the proper authority to conclude whether or 21 not the error is so profound by having that person sit 22 that it ought not be a violation of due process -- that 23 it ought not be -- that it oughtn't be a void judgment. 24 Indeed, that's how these Federal cases, Gomez and the 25 others --

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1	JUSTICE BREYER: Did that's exactly what
2	I can't figure out. I'm trying forget due process.
3	All right? Keep that out of your mind. We have
4	approximately 50 State jurisdictions, the District of
5	Columbia, a bunch of Federal jurisdictions. All right?
б	In those jurisdictions, to your knowledge you may not
7	know this, you may not have looked it up but what
8	happens in the situation where a juror where a juror
9	should have been excused? I guess there's a new trial.
10	The juror should have been excused, but wasn't. I guess
11	there's a new trial normally; is that right?
12	MR. SCODRO: If the juror is biased, yes,
13	but not if the juror is unbiased.
14	JUSTICE BREYER: If the juror is biased,
15	yes. Okay.
16	Now, suppose it's the defendant who wanted
17	the juror and he was he was wrongly excused. All
18	right, so that's what the appeals court holds. What's
19	the rule? Again, do they go back and look and see if
20	it's biased? If the juror if the defendant didn't
21	get the juror he wanted, somebody else took his place,
22	so they look to see if that person was biased, and if
23	not, say: Too bad, defendant; you may have been right,
24	but you lost the jury that you want, no remedy? What
25	happens?

1 MR. SCODRO: It's my understanding -- I 2 don't believe -- I don't have cases to cite on this. 3 But I don't believe there would be a remedy because this 4 Court has said time and again that the preemptory right 5 and those surrounding it do not create a right to any particular juror. б 7 JUSTICE BREYER: So, at least in the case of 8 where he failed to get a peremptory, whether it's Federal or whether it's State, the Federal law and most 9 10 State law is: You lost your right to a peremptory, one 11 of them. You should have had it, but you are out of 12 luck, if -- if the juror who replaced, the replacement, 13 the juror who was there, you know, who otherwise 14 wouldn't have been, is a fair juror. 15 MR. SCODRO: Your Honor, I thought you were 16 asking what happens if a particular juror the defendant 17 wanted did not sit, and under those circumstances I 18 would say that because this Court has held --19 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, what about the last 20 situation? 21 MR. SCODRO: If your question -- that 22 indicates really the split in this case, Your Honor, and 23 the indirect split that was -- all of which was laid out 24 in the cert petition. There is -- there is 25 disagreement, though we would note that much of the

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1	disagreement some of it is pre-Martinez-Salazar
2	and footnote 4 with its remarks about Swain. Some of it
3	is Federal, and therefore you don't have the same
4	concern about a threshold due process violation.
5	I will say, to answer your original
6	question, though, as well about jurors who should not
7	have sat, but are not deemed biased, Illinois certainly
8	has a history of cases to that effect, and the court
9	the Illinois court has handled them as a matter of
10	Illinois law. In the case in 1886, an alien sat and the
11	court concluded there was no timely objection. That was
12	part of its analysis, but it certainly was not a
13	"nullity," in the court's words, under those
14	circumstances.
15	JUSTICE KENNEDY: What was that case?
16	MR. SCODRO: This is not cited in the
17	briefs, so I'm only citing it in response to a question.
18	It's a case called Chase from the Illinois Supreme Court
19	
20	JUSTICE KENNEDY: Oh, an Illinois case.
21	MR SCODRO: in 1886. And it's a case in
22	which an alien sat on the jury, and there was, I
23	believe, as part of the court's analysis a failure to
24	make contemporaneous objection. But they said it was
25	not a "nullity," to use the court's words, to seat this

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improper juror and, again, made as a determination of Illinois law, just as the question here as to what remedy should be in effect is purely a question of Illinois law.

5 Again, they have simply failed to establish a due process violation. This Court has said time and б 7 again that there is no due process entitlement to 8 peremptory challenges. Much of what we accept as given 9 these days depends, hinges, upon that presumption, 10 including the Batson line, as the concurrence in 11 Miller-El pointed out in 2005, numerous restrictions on 12 peremptories that have been upheld since the 19th 13 century, which are laid out in the government's brief. 14 And indeed, the remarkable variety amongst States, some 15 of which has been touched upon today, where States, 16 State by State, provide very different numbers of 17 peremptory challenges and they provide very different 18 limits thereon as well.

JUSTICE ALITO: If the judge who sat on a State trial was not authorized under State law to hear that particular matter, would that be a due process violation?

23 MR. SCODRO: I think the answer to that is 24 no, Your Honor. And indeed, as we point out in our 25 brief, Cook County has several substantive divisions, so

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1	that, for example, a criminal law division judge is not
2	authorized to sit on a family law matter, for example.
3	And yet Illinois law has made clear that if there's an
4	error, if you go to the wrong court and that is
5	unlikely to happen in the scenario I put forth, but it
б	could easily happen between law and chancery for
7	example, and does indeed happen. If that were be the
8	case, the any error in going to the wrong court and
9	having the wrong court resolve your issue does not void
10	the judgment as a matter of law. And I certainly don't
11	think that would implicate due process concerns as well.
12	If the Court has no further questions, we
13	would ask that you affirm the judgment below.
14	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
15	Mr. Roberts.
16	ORAL ARGUMENT OF MATTHEW D. ROBERTS
17	ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES,
18	AS AMICUS CURIAE,
19	SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENT
20	MR. ROBERTS: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
21	please the Court:
22	Federal law does not require automatic
23	reversal of Petitioner's conviction because the denial
24	of a peremptory challenge at most violated only his
25	State law rights. And even if his Federal

1 constitutional rights had been violated, harmless error 2 review would apply. The Constitution does not give 3 criminal defendants the right to peremptory challenges. 4 Therefore, a -- the right of a State defendant like 5 Petitioner to exercise peremptory challenges derives entirely from State law, and when the erroneous denial б 7 of a peremptory challenge deprives him only of State law 8 right, and when the State law rights alone have been violated, State law, not Federal law, dictates whether 9 10 harmless error review applies. 11 The violation of a State law right doesn't 12 rise to a due process -- Federal due process violation 13 unless it deprives the defendant of a fair trial. 14 And this Court has repeatedly held that States can withhold peremptory challenges entirely 15 16 without impairing the right to an impartial jury or a 17 fair trial. It therefore follows that the erroneous 18 denial of a single peremptory challenge does not render 19 a trial fundamentally unfair. JUSTICE ALITO: What if it's not a single 20 challenge? What if, let's say, each side has six, and 21 22 the trial judge just arbitrarily refuses to allow a 23 defendant to exercise any peremptory challenge, but the

24 jury -- the jury that's ultimately selected, there is no 25 reason to think it's not a fair jury?

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1	MR. ROBERTS: We'd still think that that
2	would not be a Federal constitutional violation and,
3	even if it were some kind of a Federal violation, that
4	it would be subject to review for harmlessness. If
5	the trial court could violate due process, if its
6	actions so skewed the balance of power over the
7	selection of the jury in favor of the government that it
8	resulted in a fundamentally unfair trial, but even the
9	denial of multiple peremptory challenges wouldn't rise
10	to that level, and certainly the denial of a single one
11	
12	JUSTICE STEVENS: But supposing supposing
13	Illinois had a statute that said the prosecution gets
14	ten peremptories and the defendants get one. Would that
15	raise a Federal question?
16	MR. ROBERTS: The question there would be
17	whether that so skews the test that I said before. I
18	think the question would be does that so skew the
19	balance
20	JUSTICE STEVENS: Isn't the answer pretty
21	clear that that would be unfair?
22	MR. ROBERTS: I don't I don't think that
23	the answer is clear at all. The State might rationally
24	conclude that, because the government has to prove its
25	case beyond a reasonable doubt, because it has to

convince the jurors unanimously to rule in its favor, and because it has no right to appeal an unfavorable determination by the jury, that the prosecution should be entitled to more peremptory challenges. Of course, this case doesn't --JUSTICE KENNEDY: I will use that as an

7 examination question, but let's hope that it doesn't 8 come up.

9 MR. ROBERTS: It's unlikely to, but --10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But what about the --11 JUSTICE STEVENS: The reason it's unlikely 12 is it's so clearly unconstitutional.

MR. ROBERTS: Well, we don't think that it's unconstitutional at all, Your Honor, but it is contrary to what the common practice and the way things have been approached in both Federal and State courts.

17 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Mr. Roberts, if you do 18 get to harmless error, how do you deal with the question 19 that was raised by the Chief Justice? That is, there is 20 no way in the world that you can tell whether this was 21 harmless or not? You have to imagine another juror 22 being on the panel, that juror could have swung the 23 case, could have had no influence. There's just no way 24 of knowing what would have happened.

MR. ROBERTS: Well, I think that rests on

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1	the mistaken premise that harmless error analysis turns
2	on the predilections of the particular decisionmaker or
3	on speculation about what one juror, what one particular
4	juror would have done differently than another. In
5	fact, harmless error the harmless error inquiry looks
б	at the hypothetical objective rational juror. And so,
7	that's what you look at and the difference between
8	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, but maybe
9	maybe you have an you know, the irrational juror, you
10	know, the holdout is not going to convict for any
11	reason.
12	MR. ROBERTS: But but that is not an
13	appropriate part of of harmless error analysis, just
14	like the fact that the jury might engage in
15	nullification isn't an appropriate part of the harmless
16	error analysis.
17	If and Strickland is the best case to, I
18	think, to explain how that is irrelevant to the inquiry,
19	even though it's part of the constitutional there
20	analysis there. The Court very clearly explains that
21	you don't look at the particular decisionmaker, you
22	don't speculate about nullification, about arbitrary
23	action and the like; it's sort of transferable over.
24	That's just not an appropriate part of harmless error
25	analysis.

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1 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I mean, you 2 get -- well, even assuming your -- your premise, isn't 3 it pretty difficult to know what a rational juror would 4 have done? 5 MR. ROBERTS: Well, we think that the correct inquiry in this circumstance, given the nature б 7 of the right, is to ask whether the error resulted in 8 the seating of a juror that was not impartial. And then you look at the record in the case, the voir dire 9 10 record, and you make that determination, and the 11 government bears the -- bears the burden of proof. 12 So we don't think that that would be 13 difficult to do, Your Honor. 14 JUSTICE STEVENS: But that is almost the 15 same, at least in some States, as getting a new trial 16 anyway. If we find out after the fact that the juror 17 was biased, then in some States that's -- that's a 18 reason for a new trial in the discretion of the trial 19 court, anyway. 20 MR. ROBERTS: That -- that -- that could be, 21 but --22 JUSTICE STEVENS: The point is you are not giving much substance to the rule. 23 24 MR. ROBERTS: Well, I think we are 25 respecting its fundamental -- its fundamental purpose,

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Your Honor, which is to assist to help achieve the goal
 of selecting an impartial juror.

3 JUSTICE BREYER: What is the law there? 4 That's what I have been trying to get at. I mean, my 5 initial instinct would be that if a defendant doesn't get the jury that the law entitles him to, that's an б 7 error. And you'd normally think it was harmful, because you can't say, in honesty, that it was harmless; it's 8 9 the jury that was supposed to decide. I expect it would 10 work out that way. I have never looked into it. How 11 has it worked out? 12 MR. ROBERTS: Generally for errors like the 13 error you described before, where the judge 14 erroneously -- mistakenly excuses a juror in the belief 15 that the juror is disqualified for cause, where the 16 judge mistakenly substitutes a qualified alternate for 17 one of the jurors, or the judge places one alternate on 18 the jury instead of another, the courts have generally 19 looked at that for harmlessness and not required 20 automatic reversal. 21 Indeed, even in the case of jurors that 22 don't satisfy --

JUSTICE BREYER: But -- all right. So in other words, they have often said you don't get a new trial?

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1 MR. ROBERTS: Yes. 2 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. 3 MR. ROBERTS: Yes. And even in the case of 4 jurors that don't meet the statutory requirements, the 5 Federal courts of appeals have held that unless a biased juror sits a new trial is not required. б 7 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But don't some of those 8 courts, rather than focusing on the qualifications of the particular juror, look to the -- how close the case 9 10 was? 11 MR. ROBERTS: The harmless error analysis, 12 there are sort of a lot of different scenarios of types 13 of violations, and the standard that they use is not 14 clear in all of them. In the ones that -- the cases 15 that I found that involve the seating of jurors that 16 don't meet the Federal statutory requirements, usually 17 they involve felons that didn't reveal that they were 18 felons, the courts have looked to the biased juror 19 standard. 20 Some courts have done that. Others have 21 looked to whether it affects the verdict. They haven't 22 been exactly clear how you -- how you determine that, but --23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, that's because 24 25 there is no way to tell.

1	MR. ROBERTS: Well, I I think that
2	that even if you had a standard that said to look to
3	whether there was an effect on the verdict, you could
4	tell precisely the way the Illinois Supreme Court
5	applied Neder here. If no rational jury could have
6	acquitted, then you know the substitution of one
7	rational, impartial juror for another didn't have an
8	effect on the outcome. And that doesn't violate the
9	Sixth Amendment to do that, Your Honor, because the
10	underlying right the underlying error doesn't violate
11	the Sixth Amendment.
12	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But a jury is a
13	fundamental protection of individual liberty, and in
14	your analysis you are having a judge decide what the
15	jury would do.
16	MR. ROBERTS: No, Your Honor. As
17	Justice Ginsburg pointed out before, the Petitioner here
18	got a determination of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt
19	on every element of the offense from a fair and
20	impartial jury that was properly instructed. So we are
21	not having a judge substitute that at all.
22	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The judge is making
23	the determination that a juror that should have been
24	seated would act like the juror who was seated instead.
25	MR. ROBERTS: That is true. But the Sixth

1 Amendment doesn't give the defendant the right to any 2 particular jury. It doesn't give the defendant the 3 right to a jury that has been selected in compliance 4 with every jot and tittle of State law. And therefore 5 if the underlying error, as the underlying error here where you get a denial of a peremptory, where a juror is 6 7 seated that, even though that violated State law 8 assumably here, that -- that that doesn't amount to a Sixth Amendment violation. 9

And if the -- if the defendant got his Sixth Amendment rights at trial, then the way you conduct harmless error review can't violate his Sixth Amendment rights. He already got them. And so it can be done and it doesn't violate the Sixth Amendment.

JUSTICE KENNEDY: There are any number of alternatives that we can adopt in ruling for your position. If we were to rule for your position, what do you think is the most straightforward rationale?

MR. ROBERTS: Well, I -- we would obviously like to have sort of alternative rulings that do both, but I think the most logical way to approach the case is to decide whether there was a violation of the Constitution here and, because there wasn't one, to say that State law governs the harmless error analysis. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.

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1	Mr. Leven, you have two minutes remaining.				
2	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF JAMES K. LEVEN				
3	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER				
4	MR. LEVEN: Your Honor, the Hicks v.				
5	Oklahoma case is a very important case as far as the due				
6	process right to a lawful adjudicator, because there we				
7	had an unlawful sentencer. So, I would ask that the				
8	Court consider that. That's a State case involving an				
9	unlawful adjudicator. So we do have a due process				
10	violation under that case.				
11	As to the Sixth Amendment issue, the				
12	Illinois Supreme Court did act inconsistently with the				
13	Sixth Amendment as far as its manner of conducting				
14	harmless error review, because harmless error analysis				
15	is impossible to conduct in this situation, because in				
16	order to do that, we would have to examine what the				
17	particular jury would have done had it not been for the				
18	error; and the particular jury in this case must be out,				
19	because there the particular jury, the panel as a whole,				
20	is illegally constituted, and the and it's impossible				
21	to conduct your harmless error analysis.				
22	JUSTICE ALITO: Why is that any harder than				
23	harmless error analysis that is conducted all the time?				
24	For example, evidence is erroneously excluded from the				

25 trial and you ask, was that a harmless error? But you

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have to -- there has to be speculation about how this jury would have received the additional evidence. What -- what's the difference?

4 MR. LEVEN: Because in that situation, we 5 are looking at what the particular jury, how a 6 particular jury in that case would have resolved the 7 matter had the erroneously admitted evidence not been 8 admitted.

9 JUSTICE ALITO: But the court has no -- has 10 no inside information about the dynamics of that 11 particular jury. It's just -- it's deciding what a 12 rational jury would do, what a -- what a standard jury 13 would do.

MR. LEVEN: Whether that particular jury would have reached the same verdict, which we can't do in this case.

JUSTICE ALITO: No. But how does the Court know anything particular about the jury when it conducts that harmless error analysis? It doesn't.

20 MR. LEVEN: But it could look at the record 21 as a whole and determine whether or not the -- the 22 particular jury that rendered the verdict would have 23 done the same thing had the erroneously admitted 24 evidence not -- not been -- not been introduced. 25 And in this case, we have a very different

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1	situation. We have an illegal adjudicator and we can't
2	determine whether that adjudicator would have resolved
3	the case differently had it not been for the error,
4	because it's impossible to assess because of the the
5	particular adjudicator that resolved this case, in the
6	present case, was illegally composed.
7	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
8	The case is submitted.
9	(Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the case in the
10	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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