1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
2	x
3	RADLAX GATEWAY HOTEL, LLC, ET AL.,:
4	Petitioners : No. 11-166
5	v. :
6	AMALGAMATED BANK :
7	x
8	Washington, D.C.
9	Monday, April 23, 2012
10	
11	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
12	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
13	at 10:02 a.m.
14	APPEARANCES:
15	DAVID M. NEFF, ESQ., Chicago, Illinois; on behalf of
16	Petitioners.
17	DEANNE E. MAYNARD, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of
18	Respondent.
19	SARAH E. HARRINGTON, ESQ., Assistant to the Solicitor
20	General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; for
21	United States, as amicus curiae, supporting
22	Respondent.
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Τ	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:02 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear argument
4	first this morning in Case 11-166, RadLAX Gateway
5	Hotel v. Amalgamated Bank.
6	Mr. Neff.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID M. NEFF
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
9	MR. NEFF: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
10	please the Court:
11	The question presented in this case is
12	whether a secured creditor must be allowed to credit bid
13	when its collateral is being sold under a Chapter 11
L4	plan. The relevant section of the Bankruptcy Code
15	plainly says no.
16	Section 1129(b)(2)(A) provides that a
L7	Chapter 11 plan must be fair and equitable to a secured
18	creditor that objects to it.
19	It then provides three alternatives that the
20	debtor can pursue to satisfy that test. Any one of
21	these three alternatives can be used when assets are
22	being sold, but only one of them requires the right to
23	credit bid.
24	Under subsection (i), the plan must allow
25	the graditor to retain its lien and receive payments

- 1 over time, with the present value equal to the value of
- 2 its collateral.
- 3 Under subsection (ii), the plan must allow
- 4 the creditor to credit bid when its asset is being sold
- 5 free of its lien.
- 6 But under subsection (iii), the plan must
- 7 provide the creditor with the indubitable equivalent of
- 8 its secured claim.
- 9 The debtors have chosen to pursue a plan --
- 10 a plan sale without credit bidding under subsection
- 11 (iii).
- The plain language of the statute permits
- 13 that result.
- 14 JUSTICE GINSBURG: But how does one
- 15 determine what is the indubitable equivalent of the
- 16 creditor's claim?
- 17 MR. NEFF: The indubitable equivalent will
- 18 be determined at the time of plan confirmation, in our
- 19 case, after the sale has been conducted, although not
- 20 yet approved by the court. So the court will have --
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: The -- the sale --
- 22 something -- the sale can't go on without the court's
- 23 approval. I mean, the -- the auction has to have the
- 24 court's approval, right?
- MR. NEFF: Well, here's what happens

- 1 typically: The debtor files a motion, as we did in this
- 2 case, to approve bid procedures. The court then
- 3 determines whether those bid procedures are appropriate
- 4 for the sale.
- 5 The sale is then conducted. Then the debtor
- 6 goes to plan confirmation; and, at the plan confirmation
- 7 hearing, aside from establishing the 16 requirements of
- 8 Section 1129 for a plan to be confirmed, the debtor also
- 9 seeks to confirm the results of the sale.
- 10 JUSTICE GINSBURG: And so what qualifies as
- 11 indubitably equivalent?
- MR. NEFF: The indubitable equivalent must
- 13 be an amount that is at least equal to the amount of the
- 14 secured claim. In essence, it's going to be determined
- 15 by what the assets sold for, provided that the sale has
- 16 generated the best possible price for the asset.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Suppose the -- suppose
- 18 the creditor thinks that the -- the sale was --
- 19 undervalued the assets, that it -- it wasn't the
- 20 equivalent?
- 21 MR. NEFF: The creditor has an opportunity,
- 22 at the plan confirmation hearing, to raise any issue
- 23 with regard to the sale process, with regard to the
- 24 auction that occurred. Has the opportunity to raise any
- 25 other issue that may bear on the price that is received

- 1 at the sale that occurs.
- For instance, it could say, well, they
- 3 conducted this auction, but I have an appraisal here
- 4 that says the property is worth much more. So this
- 5 can't possibly be -- my --
- 6 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, isn't the -- isn't the
- 7 issue who is going to decide whether something is really
- 8 the indubitable equivalent? Is it going to be the
- 9 judge, which is what you would like? Or is it going to
- 10 be determined through a particular bidding procedure --
- MR. NEFF: Well, it's --
- 12 JUSTICE ALITO: -- namely, where there can
- 13 be credit bidding, which is what the -- which is what
- 14 the Respondent would like.
- 15 MR. NEFF: It's going to be the judge, after
- 16 reviewing what happens at the sale. The problem with
- 17 allowing a creditor the right to credit bid under all
- 18 circumstances is, in a case like ours, we don't believe
- 19 we will ever get to an auction because no one else will
- 20 show up.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Well, if the Respondent
- 22 thought that what the judge would determine would
- 23 indubitably provide the indubitable equivalent, then
- there wouldn't be an issue here, right?
- The reason why there's an issue is because

- 1 they don't think that what the judge will decide will
- 2 indubitably provide the indubitable equivalent.
- 3 MR. NEFF: In this particular instance, I
- 4 would suggest that the -- the creditor simply does not
- 5 want the asset sold. It would rather take the asset
- 6 back and hold it for some time period. So it's not --
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, isn't that --
- 8 isn't that pretty much what he bargained for when he
- 9 insisted upon security before giving the loan?
- 10 MR. NEFF: Well, what they bargained for was
- 11 that the asset be liquidated and all of the proceeds
- 12 applied to their loan. And that's exactly what we
- 13 propose to do under our sale procedure.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, you're
- 15 depriving the secured creditor of the opportunity to
- 16 hold on to the asset because he thinks it is, for
- 17 perhaps a short period, unreasonably devalued. Right?
- 18 MR. NEFF: Well, he -- he is denied that
- 19 right under subsection (i), which is our traditional
- 20 reorganization -- internal reorganization provision of
- 21 Section 1129(b)(2)(A).
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Did -- did I cut off
- 23 your answer to Justice Alito?
- MR. NEFF: Well, with regard to the
- 25 indubitable equivalence, clearly, the judge is going to

- 1 make that determination. But that's no different than
- 2 the judge making a determination under subsection (i) as
- 3 to what the fair market value of the collateral is for
- 4 purposes of determining the note that the creditor is
- 5 going to receive and be paid off over time.
- 6 JUSTICE SCALIA: Could the -- could the
- 7 judge say, when the proposal is made to him, the only
- 8 way I can be sure that it is the indubitable equivalent
- 9 is to have the sale open to credit bidding, which is
- 10 what we always do? Can the judge say that?
- 11 MR. NEFF: If there is testimony provided to
- 12 the judge that that is the way that will maximize the
- 13 sale proceeds and that, in fact, you can't get
- 14 indubitable equivalence unless you allow credit bidding,
- 15 it would seem to me, under that circumstance, the judge
- 16 would have that discretion.
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Now, you're, you're --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It makes no sense to me
- 19 what you are saying because, under all circumstances,
- 20 the credit bid, unless the property is valued higher
- 21 than the credit bid amount, but then another bidder
- 22 could do -- could make -- could enter that bid.
- 23 MR. NEFF: Well, the problem is when --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The maximum value always
- 25 has to be the value of the credit.

1	MR. NEFF: Well, I
2	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: If the if the if
3	the creditor is willing to put it at risk that way.
4	MR. NEFF: Your Honor, I would disagree. I
5	think, in a situation like ours, no one else is going to
6	come to bid because creditors who are or potential
7	purchasers who are looking to buy a hotel have multiple
8	opportunities to buy other hotels.
9	So if they know that they are going to show
10	up at a sale, where a creditor is owed substantially in
11	excess of what the property is likely to sell for, they
12	are not going to spend their time and effort doing the
13	due diligence that is required to acquire or make a bid
14	on an asset like a hotel.
15	JUSTICE BREYER: What's wrong with that? I
16	mean, a creditor loaned you a million dollars. For the
L7	million dollars, he got an interest a secured
18	interest in a piece of property. And that property is
19	worth whatever it was whatever it's worth less
20	than a million, and he says that's the deal.
21	I I have a secured interest in this; I
22	want the property. Now, you are better off because you
23	can stretch out the payments over time, and maybe you
24	don't have to give it to him immediately, but I don't
25	see anything unfair about saying, give him the property 9

- 1 if he wants it.
- 2 MR. NEFF: That, in essence, would be
- 3 denying Chapter 11 relief to a host of debtors where
- 4 their collateral is worth --
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, in accordance with
- 6 (i), (ii) and (iii). I mean, I'm not saying skip those.
- 7 MR. NEFF: What -- the problem is you are
- 8 cutting off the bankruptcy process, really, before it
- 9 has --
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: I don't understand that. I
- 11 mean, as I read it, to put it out on the table, I read
- 12 this makes perfect sense. What they are trying to do is
- 13 help the debtor a little, without mucking up the secured
- 14 creditor's collateral. Choice (i) gives the secured
- 15 creditor his collateral, and there is still a lien on
- 16 it. He has what he had before, and the debtor is better
- 17 off because he can stretch the payments out over time,
- 18 and that's one and two.
- 19 Choice (ii), we give the creditor some new
- 20 collateral. Hmm, that's a little risky, but to be sure
- 21 it's fair, we are absolutely certain, with a few
- 22 exceptions not relevant, that the creditor can credit
- 23 bid. So he has it within his control.
- Choice (iii), something else which comes up
- 25 in different situations, for example, a creditor who is

- 1 over-secured, see, and -- and they want to sell the
- 2 piece of property. And he says, sure, I will let you
- 3 sell it, but I want something that's the equivalent,
- 4 give me this other property over here that you own, that
- 5 has no liens at all. And the judge can look at that and
- 6 say that's fair. That's what (iii) is basically about,
- 7 as far as I could understand it.
- 8 So it all makes sense to me. And I don't
- 9 understand why you would want to have a rule saying that
- 10 (iii) trumps (i) and (ii) and stops credit bidding.
- 11 MR. NEFF: Your Honor --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: So that's the whole thing,
- 13 as I am seeing it at this moment. So I'll give you a
- 14 chance to reply.
- 15 MR. NEFF: Thank you. Your Honor, I don't
- 16 see subsection (iii) as having the limiting language
- 17 that it should have if, in fact, it was meant to be
- 18 something other than what is in subsection (i) or
- 19 subsection (ii). There is no language that says, except
- 20 as provided for in subsection (i) or (ii), relief other
- 21 than --
- JUSTICE BREYER: No, it doesn't have the
- 23 language, which is why we have a case. But, I mean,
- 24 trying to interpret it in a way that makes sense, what
- 25 is wrong with what I said as a way that makes sense? I

- 1 mean, why, since we are trying to give the -- the
- 2 creditor the indubitable value, at the very least -- the
- 3 best way to do that would be let the creditor credit
- 4 bid.
- 5 MR. NEFF: Well --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: So why not? And you can
- 7 read it. You don't have to read it the way that -- that
- 8 you want. You could read it the opposite way, too.
- 9 MR. NEFF: If you are looking at it from the
- 10 perspective of the creditor saying well, this -- -
- JUSTICE BREYER: No, I'm looking at it from
- 12 the perspective of a bankruptcy system --
- MR. NEFF: Okay.
- JUSTICE BREYER: -- that is trying to get
- 15 secured creditors what they have their security in,
- 16 while giving the debtor the advantage here of being able
- 17 to stretch out his payments.
- 18 MR. NEFF: I agree. And there are other
- 19 parties and interests in -- in a bankruptcy case,
- 20 including, obviously, unsecured creditors, that get
- 21 nothing, if the result is all the creditor gets is the
- 22 relief from the automatic stay to foreclose on the
- 23 collateral, when you have this great discrepancy between
- 24 what --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, how would they get 12

- 1 anything, anyway? I mean, your brief suggests that,
- 2 somehow, there are these unsecured creditors in the mix
- 3 who are going to receive some benefit if your
- 4 understanding of this statute goes forward.
- 5 But, you know, in a circumstance like this,
- 6 doesn't the secured creditor either get the property or
- 7 get the money from the property, and the unsecured
- 8 creditors are out of the mix regardless?
- 9 MR. NEFF: Well, in our particular instance,
- 10 obviously, there are some senior liens that would be
- 11 paid, including things like mechanic's liens and real
- 12 estate taxes. There are other costs that --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: But those are -- those
- 14 continue forward. So even if the secured creditor got
- 15 the property, there would be mechanic's liens on the
- 16 property, isn't that right?
- 17 MR. NEFF: That's true, although resolving
- 18 them pursuant to a plan is usually a better resolution
- 19 for them, by providing more certainty and -- with regard
- 20 to the result, and a more quicker resolution, usually,
- 21 as opposed to being relegated only to State court to
- 22 fight them. In our --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. -- Mr. Neff, can -- are
- 24 you done? I'm sorry. I didn't want to stop your
- answer.

1 MR. NEFF: I was only going to say that, in our particular instance, the stalking horse had agreed 2 3 over a future time, after it obtains the property, to provide for recovery to general unsecured creditors. 4 5 JUSTICE SCALIA: Can I -- let's look at the 6 text. Little (ii) provides for exactly what you want to 7 do here. What you want to do under (iii) is precisely what (ii) says, except you want to eliminate, subject to 8 9 Section 363(k) of this title, right? 10 Does it -- does it make much sense for a 11 provision to say you can do it three ways: number (i); 12 number (ii), you can have this sale subject to credit bidding; and number (iii), after -- after saying that, 13 14 specifically, oh, you can have this sale, not subject to credit bidding? 15 16 That's -- that's not a very sensible 17 statute. Why -- why go through that -- that problem of -- of saying number (ii), if you could have left it 18 19 to number (iii) anyway? 20 MR. NEFF: Subsection (ii) provides that, if you allow credit bidding, regardless of the price that's 21 22 achieved, that that is deemed to be fair and equitable 23 treatment of the secured creditor's claim. 24 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But that's just not true from what you just said, meaning what you just said is 25

- 1 that the buyer, obviously, is paying other things off,
- 2 and by definition, he's deducting that from the purchase
- 3 price. No one gives a purchase price for a piece of
- 4 property and agrees to pay something else and gives the
- 5 highest price for the property once they've done that.
- 6 So what you're asking for is permission for
- 7 the debtor to use this property to pay other debts, and
- 8 that's what I thought a secured interest prevented.
- 9 MR. NEFF: With regard to Justice Scalia's
- 10 question, all I was trying to point out is that, in
- 11 subsection (ii), regardless of the -- the price that is
- 12 achieved as long, as you allow the secured creditor the
- 13 right to credit bid --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So why doesn't he get --
- 15 MR. NEFF: -- that's the fair and
- 16 equitable --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why doesn't he get
- 18 everything that the buyer is promising to everyone else?
- 19 For that, indubitably, is part of the price because he
- 20 is giving out money to others. That's part of the value
- 21 of this property. So why isn't the creditor -- the
- 22 secured creditor, entitled to all of the proceeds from
- 23 the property?
- MR. NEFF: The secured creditor will get all
- 25 the proceeds from the property.

	JUSTICE SOTOMATOR: NOC WICH WICH
2	sales price, but not from all the payments.
3	MR. NEFF: With right. With regard to
4	the pavements that are in the future, those are after
5	the the sale would be consummated to the stalking
6	horse bidder.
7	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You still haven't
8	answered my
9	MR. NEFF: There are other benefits that the
10	secured creditor that will get, that will increase
11	the the price that is received by having sold the
12	property in bankruptcy. For instance, when you sell
13	through a plan, you avoid the payment of transfer taxes.
14	JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes.
15	MR. NEFF: So, clearly, to the extent that
16	the transfer taxes being saved are in an amount that
17	exceeds what ultimately goes to the unsecured creditors,
18	these
19	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You still haven't
20	answered my question. If the buyer had money that he's
21	willing to give up to others, why isn't he putting it in
22	the purchase price? Why isn't that part of the price?
23	MR. NEFF: It would be our obligation to
24	show at confirmation that the creditor is paying the top
25	dollar for the asset. If the creditor desires to pay a 16

- 1 bonus or a premium on top of that, we would have to show
- 2 that, nonetheless, that the secured creditor is
- 3 receiving the indubitable equivalent and either have to
- 4 show by argument that -- a savings on the transfer tax
- 5 or some other way that this is not causing the secured
- 6 creditor to not receive the indubitable equivalent.
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Could -- could you
- 8 explain what the reasoning is for requiring a credit
- 9 bid, if property is sold during the plan, but not
- 10 permitting it when it's sold at the plan's --
- MR. NEFF: Sure.
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Doesn't that delay the
- 13 bankruptcy in every situation? I can't actually
- 14 understand what benefit, other than delay of the
- 15 bankruptcy process, that would occasion.
- 16 MR. NEFF: Is your question why we always
- 17 have it under Section 363, but not under the plan?
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Uh-hmm.
- 19 MR. NEFF: Section 363 allows the sale of
- 20 property outside the ordinary course of business during
- 21 a bankruptcy case. It can be done as quickly as on
- 22 21 days' notice. So it can be done on a very truncated
- 23 basis, or even more quickly if the debtor can show that
- there is cause, some reason to have an even faster sale.
- 25 There is no requirement that you show that any of the

1	plan requirements in Section 1129 must be met.
2	So there are good reasons to have this
3	protection for the secured creditor when you are selling
4	under Section 363 outside of a plan context that don't
5	necessarily exist when you are selling in the course of
6	a plan because a plan takes a much longer time period,
7	usually at least 2 months' notice, if not much longer
8	JUSTICE SCALIA: Mr. Neff, don't you feel
9	sorry for the United States? The United States is often
10	in the creditor situation, and the United States cannot
11	come up with cash.
12	Are they going to run to Congress and get an
13	appropriation for each each security case it has?
14	What what do you propose we do with the United
15	States? The United States just can't take any security
16	interests anymore or what?
17	MR. NEFF: Well, no, I don't think that that
18	is the case. And I did see that in their brief, and I
19	don't know the extent that, in practice, that actually
20	occurs because, for instance, they pointed out the SBA
21	loans. Those are typically guaranteed loans. So there
22	would be a motivation, at least by the principals of the
23	debtor, to maximize the return to the SBA.

25 credit bid, there are -- they have the opportunity to 18

24

But as far as them not being allowed to

- 1 have a greater voice in the sale process. They can
- 2 seek --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I -- I don't understand.
- 4 MR. NEFF: Well, they can seek from the
- 5 Bankruptcy Court a greater role when the asset is being
- 6 marketed for sale to ensure that they are receiving top
- 7 dollar on their claim.
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: They don't have that
- 9 right now? They don't have that right now?
- MR. NEFF: Well, when we sell assets, the
- 11 debtor typically has the control over how it's going to
- 12 be marketed and sold. They may give some input rights
- 13 to the secured creditor, but they're usually not going
- 14 to give the secured creditor the veto power over how to
- 15 conduct the sale.
- 16 But I -- I would suggest that, when you have
- 17 a situation with a creditor that truly cannot bid cash,
- 18 that -- that there would be an opportunity to impress
- 19 upon the judge that they need to have a greater role
- 20 when you are actually marketing and selling the
- 21 property.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Neff, can I understand
- 23 how your system would actually work in practice?
- 24 Suppose you have an -- an auction, and there is -- the
- 25 top value was \$500. And then you have the secured

- 1 creditor, let's say, is in the position of the United
- 2 States and comes in and says, we couldn't credit bid,
- 3 but we -- excuse me -- we couldn't pay cash, but we
- 4 think it's \$750.
- 5 MR. NEFF: Right.
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: And, now, the court has to
- 7 decide whether it's \$500 or \$750, after the auction has
- 8 gone forward. What happens?
- 9 MR. NEFF: The court is going to review the
- 10 process to actually sell the asset -- you know, who
- 11 was -- where was it marketed, who knew about it, who
- 12 showed up at the auction, how many bids were made --
- 13 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, now, let's say the
- 14 court says, You know, I think that the government is
- 15 right; it's really \$750. But you've already had a sale.
- MR. NEFF: Right.
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: And -- and you've sold it
- 18 for \$500.
- 19 MR. NEFF: There has been no closing. The
- 20 closing doesn't occur until the plan confirmation
- 21 actually occurs. And, in fact, that's how you would do
- 22 it after this Court's ruling in 2008.
- 23 JUSTICE SCALIA: But wouldn't the court
- 24 always say, when -- when it's confronted with this
- 25 situation, the government comes in, and the court says,

- 1 yes, well, you know, I -- I guess that that price is
- 2 probably so low because nobody could credit bid. I
- 3 mean, wouldn't that always be a -- a frailty of
- 4 whatever -- whatever price it sold for? Wouldn't it
- 5 always be?
- 6 MR. NEFF: No, because you are going to have
- 7 situations where creditors -- secured creditors will
- 8 credit bid amounts that have no relationship to the fair
- 9 market value, what we call, for instance, loan-to-own
- 10 lenders, where their only interest is actually getting
- 11 the title to the property. So you are going to have
- 12 situations that -- where the credit bid does not equate
- 13 to market --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: Well, that might be, but --
- 15 you know, it doesn't -- it doesn't take a genius to
- 16 figure out that if you allow people to bid for cash or
- 17 for credit, you are going to get more bids and higher
- 18 bids than -- than if you allow them to bid for cash
- 19 only.
- MR. NEFF: The problem is, when you are
- 21 dealing with larger assets, like what we are dealing
- 22 with, you are not going to get a sophisticated buyer to
- 23 come in to bid against a lender that can credit bid,
- 24 particularly in a situation like our case, where the
- lender has said, I simply want the property back.

- 1 JUSTICE SCALIA: That just means that you
- 2 can't find a buyer who is willing to pay that much.
- 3 MR. NEFF: Well, we believe that -- that
- 4 subsection (iii) allows us to show that the -- the
- 5 secured creditors receiving the --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: Look, in subsection (iii),
- 7 if it applies here -- I assume there's -- suppose it
- 8 doesn't apply here. There is a safeguard against having
- 9 no bidder.
- 10 Bidders who would bid more than what the
- 11 creditor thinks it's worth, the creditor will want them
- 12 in this. And if they -- he doesn't want it in, it's
- 13 because he thinks it's worth more in his own hands. So
- 14 what's the problem?
- 15 But there is a problem the other way. The
- 16 problem the other way -- and I'm not saying it's this
- 17 case, but there are -- is that the insiders say to the
- 18 stalking horse, we would like you to put this up at a
- 19 low price and give us a job. And if they keep the
- 20 creditor out, well, that's a big incentive.
- 21 And they are the ones who know what a hotel
- is worth, the judge doesn't know, and there is always
- 23 leeway. And so that -- that was worrying me about this
- 24 fact pattern. You want -- you want to get rid of my
- worry?

1	MR. NEFF: Yes, I do.
2	JUSTICE BREYER: Good.
3	MR. NEFF: The bankruptcy judge sees this in
4	a variety of cases, just the natural tension that you
5	have in a bankruptcy, individuals who may be
6	self-interested, yet they are supposed to be fiduciaries
7	for the estate. It's part of our roles as lawyers to be
8	the fiduciaries as well.
9	Our particular instance, it's not a concern
-0	because the property is being marketed to a wide array
.1	of people. There's no requirement that they keep the
_2	management company, and there's every opportunity for
_3	any other hotel company to come in or any other
4	strategic buyer
_5	JUSTICE BREYER: But the concern was I
_6	gather there is no other bidder, you have said. You've
_7	just found the stalking horse. You agree to pay the
8_	stalking horse a million and a half dollars, in case he
_9	doesn't get it. And then the people from the inside are
20	being hired by the stalking horse, if he wins.
21	MR. NEFF: Right.
22	JUSTICE BREYER: Now, I'm not I'm sure
23	they are acting very honestly. But you would have to
24	say, in such a situation, that there is an incentive to
25	try to value everything on the low side by the debtor to 23

- 1 make sure that stalking horse gets the property. And
- 2 that incentive is destroyed -- or at least doesn't work,
- 3 if you allow the creditor bid.
- 4 MR. NEFF: Interestingly, the process
- 5 actually works a little different than that.
- 6 You -- Debtors will go out -- and their
- 7 financial advisers will actually go out and try to
- 8 market the ability to be the stalking horse, to actually
- 9 try to get the best stalking horse bid.
- In this particular instance, what we got was
- 11 the -- ultimately, the \$55 million. We are confident
- 12 the property, ultimately, will sell for more.
- 13 JUSTICE ALITO: When this procedure is
- 14 followed, how often does a buyer, other than the
- 15 stalking horse, obtain the property?
- 16 MR. NEFF: I don't know from a statistical
- 17 basis -- and, you know, a stalking horse, if they have
- 18 the -- the -- a break-up fee, they have that built-in
- 19 cushion. And in our case, I would point out the judge
- 20 had not yet approved the break-up fee, but it was a
- 21 standard 3 percent of the -- of the bid price. So I
- 22 don't know what -- what percentage it is, and -- you
- 23 know, from my own experience --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I didn't realize the judge
- 25 had to approve --

1 MR. NEFF: The stalking horse? JUSTICE SCALIA: Yes. 2 3 MR. NEFF: Yes. 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: The judge has to approve 5 the stalking horse? 6 MR. NEFF: That's part of the bid 7 procedures. And buyers -- more sophisticated buyers --8 9 and when you deal with bigger assets, they're used to the process being this way, that there is going to be a 10 11 stalking horse and that there is going to be some sort 12 of protection. 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The vast majority of 14 bankruptcy courts have permitted credit bidding in these situations. So if the vast majority of bankruptcies 15 16 have stalking horses, then the norm is working, without 17 us having to rule in your favor. 18 MR. NEFF: I would say the vast majority of cases occur under Section 363, where there is no 19 question, because of 363(k), that there is the right --20 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And stalking horses 22 still come in. So it's not as if the 363(k) procedure is failing in maximizing prices. 23 24 MR. NEFF: The -- the major -- that is true. The major difference is that a sale, under Section 25

- 1 363(k), almost invariably, the secured creditor
- 2 supports, so there is no question, but that there is
- 3 going to be a transaction occurring, whereas --
- 4 JUSTICE SCALIA: I -- say it again? I
- 5 didn't -- I didn't understand that.
- 6 MR. NEFF: When you are selling under
- 7 Section 363, because of 363(k), there must be a right to
- 8 credit bid; and, in most situations, the secured
- 9 creditor wants the assets sold when you are doing a
- 10 Section 363 sale. So there is no question, in the minds
- 11 of a buyer, but that there is going to be a transaction.
- 12 And there is a reason to spend your time and effort
- 13 learning more and doing due diligence about the asset.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well -- Well, this
- is a case, though, where you would not want the asset
- 16 sold. In other words, looking at it, he thinks, for
- 17 particular, unusual situations, this is vastly
- 18 undervalued; I am holding an asset that is going to
- 19 appreciate if I hold onto it. So he doesn't want the
- 20 asset sold.
- 21 MR. NEFF: That's correct. And -- and it's
- 22 our belief that the Bankruptcy Code provides the
- 23 ability, in subsection (iii), to conduct the sale and
- 24 pay the secured creditor the indubitable equivalence of
- 25 its claim.

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And what what is
2	the doubtless equivalent of his claim? Measured by the
3	current market conditions? Or does that include some
4	premium, based on the assumption that it's going to
5	increase in value over some period?
6	MR. NEFF: It's going to be measured by the
7	current market conditions, but to the extent that the
8	secured creditor brings in an appraisal, that will
9	invariably be based on what the projections are going to
10	be and and take that into account.
11	So if I could reserve the remainder of my
12	time?
13	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
14	Ms. Maynard?
15	ORAL ARGUMENT OF DEANNE E. MAYNARD
16	ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
17	MS. MAYNARD: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it
18	please the Court:
19	Secured creditors bargain for the right to
20	be repaid in full or, if not, to foreclose and take the
21	collateral that secures their loan.
22	When a Chapter 11 bankruptcy plan is going
23	to cram down a plan over the objection of a secured
24	creditor, Section 1129(b)(2)(A) gives the secured
25	creditor the ability to protect those rights, regardless

- 1 of the proposed treatment of its collateral.
- 2 Specifically, when the plan proposes, as
- 3 here, to sell the collateral, free and clear of the
- 4 secured creditor's liens, and give the secured creditor
- 5 nothing but the proceeds from that sale, clause (ii)
- 6 entitles the secured creditor to bid what it is owed in
- 7 the absence of cause to preclude it.
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Or -- or he is
- 9 entitled to realize the indubitable equivalent of his
- 10 claims. You really do just kind of elide the fact that
- 11 the statute says, "or."
- MS. MAYNARD: No, Your Honor. We give full
- 13 meaning to the "or." We don't dispute that these are
- 14 three alternative ways to cram down a plan. The
- 15 question here is or what? And the question is the scope
- 16 of the alternatives and in which circumstances they
- 17 apply.
- And, here, Congress turned its attention to
- 19 precisely the situation at hand and determined what the
- 20 requirements were, but not just the requirements for a
- 21 sale free and clear. It's not like clause (ii) says, if
- 22 you sell it free and clear and you allow credit bidding,
- 23 then that's one way to go. It's not just the
- 24 requirement of credit bidding. It also sets forth the
- only exception to credit bidding. And Petitioners'

- 1 reading would read clause (iii) to be a much bigger
- 2 exception.
- Now, Petitioners here tried and failed in
- 4 the Bankruptcy Court to prove cause, and they don't
- 5 appeal that. So they are trying to create a much bigger
- 6 exception to the exception Congress allowed --
- 7 JUSTICE SCALIA: They tried and failed to
- 8 prove what?
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: Cause.
- MS. MAYNARD: Your Honor, cause.
- 11 JUSTICE SCALIA: Cause.
- MS. MAYNARD: So under -- we reprint -- the
- 13 1129 clause (ii) is on 20a in the red brief at the back.
- 14 And it -- it provides: "For the sale, subject to
- 15 Section 363(k) of this title, of any property that is
- 16 subject to liens securing such claims free and clear of
- 17 such liens." And that refers you to 363(k), which is
- 18 also at the back of our brief.
- 19 And 363(k) provides that, "Unless the court
- 20 for cause orders otherwise, the holder of such claim may
- 21 bid at such sale; and if the holder of such claim
- 22 purchases such property, such holder may offset such
- 23 claim against the purchase price of such property."
- So my point is clause (ii) is not just, if
- 25 you let them credit bid, then that's one way to go to

- 1 fair and equitable. It's you must let them credit bid,
- 2 unless cause is shown. And they tried in the Bankruptcy
- 3 Court, Justice Scalia, to prove cause. And the district
- 4 court found against them on that point, and they don't
- 5 appeal it. I --
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Your -- your friend
- 7 on the other side suggests that (ii) and (iii) address
- 8 different ways of protecting the secured creditor. (ii)
- 9 is procedural, right? You can go through these
- 10 procedures, and you can cram down, so long as you are
- 11 going through these procedures, which include credit
- 12 bidding.
- 13 Or you can cram down if you ensure that he
- 14 receives the indubitable equivalent, a substantive
- 15 protection. What is wrong with that reading?
- 16 MS. MAYNARD: I don't think that's a fair
- 17 characterization of the three clauses, Mr. Chief
- 18 Justice, because all three of the clauses have both
- 19 procedural and substantive components. And essentially,
- 20 what Petitioners seek to do here is exchange their
- 21 preferred procedure, which is a sale without allowing us
- 22 to credit bid, followed by a judicial determination of
- 23 whether whatever number that sale produces is high
- 24 enough to be our secured claim.
- 25 But the whole point is, if the secured 30

- 1 creditor is willing to bid one more dollar of what it's
- 2 owed at the sale, that is the value of our secured
- 3 claim. And --
- 4 JUSTICE ALITO: Is it correct that, really,
- 5 the heart of your argument is that the real value of
- 6 this property is greater than the value that you think
- 7 the Bankruptcy Court would assign to it, if this were
- 8 done under subsection (iii)?
- 9 MS. MAYNARD: That is definitely the fear,
- 10 Justice Alito.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Why? Why do you have that
- 12 fear?
- 13 MS. MAYNARD: Because valuations are
- 14 inherently uncertain, and Congress knew that. And in
- 15 this Bankruptcy Code, Congress tried to move away from
- 16 judicial valuations for precisely that reason.
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: But doesn't clause (i)
- 18 depend upon a judicial valuation? In clause (i), the
- 19 Court has to say, what is the present value of your
- 20 property, so that it knows what the right income stream
- 21 is.
- MS. MAYNARD: That's true, Justice Kagan.
- 23 But, if you proceed through clause (i), the code
- 24 provides a secured creditor with a different protection
- 25 against undervaluation. So the whole code structure is

- 1 set up to protect the secured creditor against the risk
 2 of undervaluation of its claim. And that's the Section
- 3 1111(b) election. So Section 1111(b) election allows
- 4 the secured creditor who is undersecured and is afraid
- 5 that the -- the value of their property will be
- 6 misvalued in a clause (i), to elect to have their entire
- 7 face value of their claim treated as secured.
- 8 So here, the lenders are owed more than
- 9 \$130 million. If they were to proceed under clause (i),
- 10 the lenders would have the option to have that whole
- 11 \$130 million treated as secured. And that would be the
- 12 value of the secured claim.
- And, under clause (i), yes, we would then be
- 14 subject to the judicial determination of the present
- 15 value of whatever a note paying out \$130 million would
- 16 be, but two protections we would have. They wouldn't be
- 17 determining the principal. The principal -- the face
- 18 value of the note would have to be \$130 million; and the
- 19 lien that we would retain would be \$130 million.
- 20 JUSTICE KAGAN: How about in subsection
- 21 (iii), where it talks about substitute collateral?
- 22 That's completely a judicial valuation, isn't it?
- 23 MS. MAYNARD: That would be true, but I
- 24 think, in that situation, we would also have the option
- 25 to make the 1111(b) election. And, therefore, they

- 1 would have to substitute collateral that would be up to
- 2 the \$130 million mark. So it's true -- and it's true
- 3 that Congress did leave this other, but it is an other.
- 4 And I think -- I think another way to --
- 5 another point to make that clear is the fact that clause
- 6 (ii) expressly has a role for clause (iii), and it
- 7 doesn't come into play until after the sale at which the
- 8 secured creditor gets to credit bid. And --
- 9 JUSTICE ALITO: What is it about the
- 10 auction -- what is it about the auction process that you
- 11 think is likely to produce or creates an -- an
- 12 unacceptable risk of producing a valuation that is --
- 13 that is too low? Is it because of this -- the use of
- 14 the stalking horse or -- or what is it about the
- 15 process?
- 16 MS. MAYNARD: If the secured creditors
- 17 aren't able to come in and bid their credit and if the
- 18 secured creditors can't, as is a real risk, raise enough
- 19 cash to bid the amount of their credit in cash -- and,
- 20 in some instances, as with the government, they -- they
- 21 can't -- they actually can't.
- But, in a lot of these complicated loans,
- 23 there is multiple lenders, and it would be very
- 24 difficult to come up with the money to put in. And they
- 25 are, therefore -- you are taking out of the marketplace

- 1 one of the most knowledgeable bidders about this
- 2 property. And there is no good reason to do that.
- 3 These -- it's not like they are bidding funny money.
- 4 They -- they have already put in \$142 million.
- 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but there is,
- of course, a good reason, which is consistent with the
- 7 policy of the Bankruptcy Code, which is you do want to
- 8 look out for the other creditors as well. And if the
- 9 secured creditor is getting, indubitably, the value of
- 10 this security, why don't you weigh in the balance at
- 11 least the interests of -- of the other creditors?
- MS. MAYNARD: There will be no cash for
- 13 anyone junior to these creditors, unless these creditors
- 14 are paid in full, regardless of whether everyone bids in
- 15 cash or we bid in credit. This property is well under
- 16 water. There -- there is no equity in it. The secured
- 17 lenders have lent them 142 million --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, maybe in this
- 19 particular case, but that's not going to be true in
- 20 every case, and we are asked to issue a ruling that is
- 21 going to apply in every case.
- MS. MAYNARD: In every case where the
- 23 property is under water, there will be -- in every case
- 24 in which the secured creditor has a lien on the
- 25 property, the secured creditor takes first. So until

- 1 the -- so underwater or not, until the secured creditor
- 2 is paid --
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I know, but
- 4 the whole premise of why this problem arises is that the
- 5 security is worth a lot less than -- than it was,
- 6 obviously, when it was -- was purchased. Or a lot less
- 7 than -- a lot less than the claim that it was meant to
- 8 secure.
- 9 MS. MAYNARD: Everyone agrees that the
- 10 property is under water, but it's important to note that
- 11 the valuations in this case that have been filed in the
- 12 district court, in conjunction with the relief from the
- 13 stay, the appraisals are different by tens of millions
- of dollars, what the property is worth.
- 15 And if you allow that to go to a judge, to
- 16 decide whether it's enough, that's an inherently
- 17 uncertain process. And -- you know, judicial valuation,
- 18 the -- the court -- tens of millions of dollars, the
- 19 judge could decide, and it might not be a fact that we
- 20 could overturn, if that goes to a fairly --
- 21 JUSTICE BREYER: What is -- I was just
- 22 guessing before, but, I mean, if you're right, what is
- 23 the (iii) -- the indubitable equivalent, what kind of
- 24 situation does that come up?
- I mean, I was guessing it would come up,

- 1 maybe an over secured creditor, they want to -- they
- 2 want to sell the property, and he still wants his
- 3 security, and they have to put in equivalent property
- 4 that wasn't mortgaged, but I was just guessing.
- 5 MS. MAYNARD: Well --
- 6 JUSTICE BREYER: So -- so what is it
- 7 really -- what is it really used for, in your opinion?
- 8 MS. MAYNARD: The legislative history,
- 9 Justice Breyer, suggests two meanings for it.
- 10 JUSTICE BREYER: What?
- 11 MS. MAYNARD: Two examples. And that's what
- 12 you see in the case. There aren't very many clause
- 13 (iii) cases. There will be many more, if this Court
- 14 holds that this is permissible.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yes, I'm sure.
- 16 MS. MAYNARD: But that -- there aren't very
- 17 many clause (iii) cases. And they abandon --
- 18 abandonment of the collateral. So, in other words, they
- 19 could decide just to turn all of the collateral over,
- 20 and that would be the indubitable -- that would be res
- 21 ipsa, our secured claim. I mean, that -- the -- we have
- 22 collateral in everything they own, the hotel, the
- 23 garage, all of the proceeds.
- Or, as Justice Kagan was suggesting, some of
- 25 the cases involve providing a substitute lien. But the

Τ	courts are
2	JUSTICE BREYER: That's what I was thinking.
3	MS. MAYNARD: courts are very hesitant to
4	do that. And it would have to be really because it
5	is you know, you are stripping our lien. You're
6	supposedly giving us an equal lien. So you know,
7	maybe if you can imagine maybe if these creditors
8	owned the airport at the Dulles you know, a hotel at
9	the Dulles Airport and a parking garage, and one could
0	say it's exactly the same risk factor and everything,
1	and we're going to swap that in for this. But
2	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Could you tell me what
_3	the what's the purpose if you permit credit
_4	bidding, why do you go through the sale at all, if it's
_5	always if the credit is always going to be higher
_6	than the value? Why don't you just turn over the
_7	property under (iii)? What why do you why do you
8_	go through the sham of a sale?
_9	MS. MAYNARD: It's not a sham,
20	Justice Sotomayor, because the creditor secured
21	creditors don't often want to run a hotel and parking
22	garage. They may not want the property. So what they
23	are interested in doing is maximizing the value, getting
24	back as much as they can of the money that they
25	JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So it is the stalking 37

- 1 horse dance? At what point do they credit bid until
- 2 they get the highest price from someone else and then
- 3 let that other person have it, is that it?
- 4 MS. MAYNARD: That's definitely one of the
- 5 strategies. And if they -- so they -- so what clause
- 6 (ii) allows a secured creditor -- it allows the secured
- 7 creditor to choose whether it takes its property, which
- 8 was the right it had prebankruptcy, or whether it's
- 9 enough. But if you leave it to their system -- and
- 10 he's -- I'm sorry --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: When do you think, under
- 12 363(k), what's good -- what would constitute or has
- 13 constituted in the case law good cause not to permit
- 14 credit bidding? What situations have arisen under
- 15 363(k), where a court has found good cause?
- 16 MS. MAYNARD: The cause cases include
- 17 malfeasance of the creditor in some way --
- 18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry. What --
- 19 MS. MAYNARD: Malfeasance of the creditor in
- 20 some way. Or whether there might be --
- 21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How does a creditor
- 22 commit malfeasance?
- MS. MAYNARD: I'm sorry. I can't remember
- 24 any specific examples.
- 25 But another instance -- and it's actually 38

- 1 one that -- that goes to something Justice Kagan asked
- 2 earlier, which is -- is -- when there's some dispute
- 3 about priority or whether there might be senior liens.
- So, in this case, the -- the bankruptcy
- 5 judge provided at 44(a) and 45(a) -- because there --
- 6 there are some real estate taxes that would be senior to
- 7 our liens, and there's a debate about whether the
- 8 mechanic's liens are senior or not.
- 9 And so the bankruptcy judge provided that --
- 10 that -- that, here, it would be appropriate for us to
- 11 either put up cash, in that amount, the amount of the
- 12 potentially senior liens, or to offer -- you know, some
- 13 security to cover those, in the event that they turn up.
- 14 And that is an example of cause. And that is --
- 15 clearly answers the concern that there may be others.
- 16 No one junior to these creditors is going to
- 17 take anything. And all making us cash bid would do,
- 18 assuming the secured creditors are able to come up with
- 19 the cash to bid in this amount, would be to endless --
- 20 just to pointlessly cycle money into the estate, and
- 21 then, if we're the winning bid, through the estate and
- 22 back to us, at the risk of their siphoning off the money
- 23 that really shouldn't go to anyone else because we
- 24 have -- the cash collateral is these secured
- 25 creditors' -- the hotel and the parking garage are all

- 1 these secured creditors' collateral.
- Now, the Petitioners say this is going to --
- 3 if you let the secured creditors bid, this is going to
- 4 chill credit bidding. Well, they tried to prove that in
- 5 the bankruptcy court, and the bankruptcy court, at pages
- 6 43(a) and 44(a), rejected that as a matter of fact.
- But, anyway, as a matter of theory, their
- 8 proposal -- who would bid in their proposal? Their
- 9 proposal is you do the due diligence, you have to prove
- 10 you have the money, you put up the bid, and then at the
- 11 back end, you know that the secured creditor is going to
- 12 be able to come in and tell the bankruptcy judge, I
- 13 would have bid more with my secured credit. So anyone
- 14 who bids knows that there's the potential that it's all
- 15 going to be a waste of time.
- 16 And then how do you do it over at that
- 17 point? Once everybody has shown their hand, put their
- 18 bids in, what, are you going to take a mulligan after
- 19 the -- after the bankruptcy court says, no, they're not
- 20 getting their indubitable equivalent because I find they
- 21 would have bid more in their security?
- Well, that's just -- that -- who's going to
- 23 bid in that situation?
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: How does it -- how
- 25 does it work in practice? Is this something that is 40

- 1 subject of extensive negotiation? The secured creditor
- 2 says, well, I'm interested in bidding in a credit bid,
- 3 but I appreciate that that's going to make it difficult
- 4 for you to get cash.
- 5 And you've got these unsecured creditors who
- 6 would want -- and so, what? I'm not going to credit
- 7 bid, so long as -- or I will only credit bid up to this
- 8 particular amount; or let's sit down and work out a
- 9 deal, negotiate over exactly how we're going to handle
- 10 my security. Is -- is that really how it happens? Or
- 11 is that not -- or not.
- MS. MAYNARD: I think all those things are
- 13 ways that it can happen, Mr. Chief Justice. And,
- 14 certainly, counsel was -- is distinguishing the --
- 15 during the plan sale requirement, where he concedes
- 16 that, if you do a 363(b) sale -- you know, 363(k)
- 17 applies, but he says it's not a problem because you can
- 18 negotiate.
- 19 There are actually many negotiations in a --
- 20 in a plan sale context. And it would be odd, I would --
- 21 I would suggest, that you can do a cramdown plan over
- the secured creditor's objection and have less credit
- 23 bidding rights than you can when you agree to do it.
- And so, in the end, there's nothing wrong
- 25 with the secured creditor coming in and bidding its

- 1 credit and taking the asset. After all, they already
- 2 put in \$142 million. They're owed \$130 million. The
- 3 debtors have no equity in -- in this process.
- 4 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Wouldn't that be a reason
- 5 for saying that there's no adequate -- there's nothing
- 6 under (iii) that would be the indubitable equivalent?
- 7 In other words, one thing is to say that, if
- 8 you -- if (ii) -- if you fit into (ii), that's it, you
- 9 don't go to (iii). Another is to say, well, you can go
- 10 to (iii), but it's most unlikely that there would be the
- indubitable equivalent of allowing credit bidding.
- MS. MAYNARD: I don't think that latter way
- 13 would be the better reading of the statute, Justice
- 14 Ginsburg, because Congress turned its attention to this
- 15 precise problem and decided that the best way to protect
- 16 the secured creditor against the risk of undervaluation
- 17 was to allow it to -- to bid. And I -- and I think, for
- 18 the reasons I said earlier, the system that they propose
- 19 is -- is not a workable system or a good system, and it
- 20 wouldn't be good to have there be uncertainty about the
- 21 auction -- about whether or not it was going to
- 22 ultimately -- you know, go through.
- 23 And as long as the secured creditor is
- 24 willing to bid at the -- at the auction its secured
- 25 credit, put its money where its mouth is, that is the

- 1 value of its -- of its secured claim, and so it could
- 2 never be the indubitable equivalent to go under (iii),
- 3 where it's not allowed to bid.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: The Petitioner suggests that
- 5 the usual rule that the specific governs, rather than
- 6 the general provision, doesn't apply in this case
- 7 because the specific is not a subset of the general.
- 8 What's -- what's -- what's your view about that?
- 9 MS. MAYNARD: Well, this Court's never
- 10 applied the rule in that way. And I think the Court --
- 11 it's -- it's always the case that, when the Court's
- 12 looking at these kinds of problems, that the general
- 13 provision could be read to encompass what the party
- 14 before the Court is seeking to do.
- 15 But the -- when Congress has set up a
- 16 precise scheme -- and, here, I think it's important to
- 17 realize it's not just the requirements, but also the
- 18 exception to the requirements -- and then, also, the way
- 19 that (ii) is -- refers to (iii), and (iii) doesn't kick
- 20 in until after the sale --
- JUSTICE SCALIA: I lost you. I lost you.
- MS. MAYNARD: Okay.
- 23 JUSTICE SCALIA: It's not just the
- 24 requirements, but the exceptions to the requirements.
- What are you referring to?

1	MS. MAYNARD: The for cause.
2	So by reading in 363(k), Justice Scalia,
3	it's not only the requirement of credit bidding, but
4	also the only exception.
5	But then also, if I could just elaborate
6	this the point about how it refers to clause (iii),
7	on 20(a) of our brief, we set forth the text. The final
8	clause of clause (ii) says that, once the sale goes
9	through, the liens attach to the proceeds of the sale.
10	And the treatment of those liens on the proceeds are
11	done under clause (i) or clause (iii) of this
12	subparagraph.
13	So clause (ii) contemplates that there will
14	be some judicial determination of indubitable
15	equivalence, but only after the amount of the
16	proceeds because after all, what we're trying to
17	determine here is the value of the secured claim.
18	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You said, earlier,
19	we have never said that the specific has to be a subset
20	of the general. How do how would it otherwise be
21	specific and the one general? It seems, if they are not
22	a subset, then they are alternatives. I don't see how
23	the whole doctrine makes any sense, if the specific is
24	not a subset of the general.
25	MS. MAYNARD: Well, maybe I misunderstood

- 1 Justice Kagan's question or I misunderstood their point.
- 2 I thought their point was looking specifically at the --
- 3 the facts of the -- the Speedy Trial Act case and saying
- 4 because it's a list and it says, "includes," and then
- 5 there are subsets under the list, that's how I
- 6 understood their argument.
- 7 Yes, it's certainly true -- like, take the
- 8 venue statute case -- you know, the general venue
- 9 provision clearly covered patent infringement suits.
- 10 But then there was a specific patent infringement venue
- 11 statute, and the -- the patent infringement statute
- 12 didn't say it was the exclusive patent venue statue, and
- 13 the general venue statute didn't say, "except as
- 14 otherwise provided in the code, " yet this Court said,
- 15 well, the patent -- Congress turned its attention to
- 16 patent infringement suits and created this venue. And
- 17 that's --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So when we say, our
- 19 doctrine says the specific controls over the general,
- 20 the specific is a subset of the general?
- MS. MAYNARD: Yes, to the extent that I
- 22 think it's always fair to say that what the party who's
- 23 claiming they fit within the general does could
- 24 definitionally possibly fit within the general. We --
- 25 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you.

1	MS. MAYNARD: Thank you.
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Ms. Harrington?
3	ORAL ARGUMENT OF SARAH E. HARRINGTON,
4	FOR THE UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
5	SUPPORTING THE RESPONDENT
6	MS. HARRINGTON: Thank you,
7	Mr. Chief Justice, and may it please
8	JUSTICE SCALIA: Big case for the
9	government, Ms. Harrington, isn't it?
10	MS. HARRINGTON: Pardon me?
11	JUSTICE SCALIA: It is a big case for the
12	government.
13	MS. HARRINGTON: It is a big case for the
14	government. As you suggest, the government is in the
15	position of that actually many secured creditors are
16	in these days, which is that we have constraints on our
17	ability to cash bid at the sale of our collateral
18	through a bankruptcy. And the detailed cramdown
19	provisions of Chapter 11 are designed to protect the
20	rights of secured creditors.
21	The essence of being a secured creditor, of
22	course, as the Court has suggested, is that the secured
23	creditor has bargained for the right either to get its
24	money back or to get the thing that secures its loan, to
25	get its collateral.

1	And the type of sale that is contemplated in
2	clause (ii) of Section 1129(b)(2)(A) is precisely
3	designed to guarantee that the creditor will get the
4	benefit of its bargain.
5	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You have got a whole
6	cadre of U.S. trustees that, presumably, can look out
7	for the interests of the poor United States.
8	MS. HARRINGTON: Well, in most Chapter
9	11 cases, the U.S. trustee doesn't play a role because
10	it's a debtor in possession. And so the trustee is not
11	in charge of the property of the estate. The debtor
12	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I thought we were
13	worried about the situation where it's a creditor.
14	MS. HARRINGTON: Where the where the
15	United States is a creditor. That that's true. But
16	if there's
17	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: In those cases, of
18	course, the trustee's there, right?
19	MS. HARRINGTON: The trustee is there. But,
20	if the debtor proposes a plan that wouldn't allow the
21	United States to credit bid at an auction that is
22	selling its collateral, then the United States is
23	usually out of luck because the Antideficiency Act
24	prevents us from bidding cash.
25	Now, I would like to respond to one one

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1	sort of assumption that has seemed to permeate the
2	conversation here, which is that a secured creditor will
3	always have an incentive to bid the full amount of its
4	claim at an auction of its assets, where the auction is
5	supposed to be free of liens. That is actually not
6	true.
7	As my friend Ms. Maynard suggested, unless a
8	bank is trying to get into the business of running a
9	hotel or running whatever business is the collateral,
10	the creditor will only want to take the property if it
11	thinks it can make a profit by then turning around and
12	selling the property.
13	So if there is an auction, where there is a
14	cash bid, and the creditor thinks that the value of
15	the amount of the cash bid is actually a fair valuation

of the property, the creditor has no incentive to bid 16 17 higher than that in credit because it has no expectation of getting more money than that when it then takes the 18 19 property and turns around and sells it.

So allowing the credit bidding won't have 20 the effect of serving as a veto on what would be a fair 21 22 sale price by a cash bidder. The -- the secured creditor's incentive is only to bid up to what it -- up 23 24 to what it views as the value of the property and not a penny more because it's not trying to take the property 25 Alderson Reporting Company

- 1 just for the property's sake. In most cases, it wants
- 2 to take the property and then sell the property.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, but, of
- 4 course, it could bid up if it thinks that there are
- 5 going to be other bidders, right? It has a lot more
- 6 flexibility than the other bidders to -- to the extent
- 7 of its security interest.
- 8 MS. HARRINGTON: I mean, it has more
- 9 flexibility because it has already put up its money.
- 10 But every bidder has that incentive that you suggest,
- 11 which is to try to make sure that it's -- to sort of
- 12 game the system a little bit and -- and -- and make
- 13 everybody put their money where their mouth is.
- 14 But Congress gave secured creditors a right
- 15 to have a role, where they get to put their money where
- 16 their mouth is, any time there is --
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: That just begs the
- 18 question, Congress gave them a right -- I mean, that's
- 19 what we are deciding, right?
- MS. HARRINGTON: Absolutely. And -- and
- 21 Petitioner is certainly correct, that the phrase
- 22 "indubitable equivalence," an unusual phrase in the
- 23 statute, that that phrase is broad enough to cover any
- 24 type of disposition of a secured creditor's claim,
- 25 including the sale of property free of liens.

1	But Congress also enacted two much more
2	specific provisions right next to clause (iii). And, in
3	those provisions, number (i), which governs governs
4	the retention of liens on on collateral, and number
5	(ii), which governs the sale of the sale of
6	collateral free of liens, there are very specific
7	protections written into clauses (i) and clause (ii).
8	And this Court's interpretive canon that a specific
9	provision will trump a more general provision, where
10	both could apply, would seem clearly to apply here.
11	If a plan proposes a disposition of a claim
12	that is addressed by a clause (i) or a clause (ii), it
13	doesn't make any sense to allow them to strip out
14	protections that are provided in those clauses by
15	purporting to go under the more general standard of
16	indubitable equivalence.
17	That is especially true because the type of
18	judicial valuation of the property that would take place
19	under Petitioners' type of scheme is not guaranteed to
20	make sure that the creditor gets what it bargained for,
21	which is either its money or its property, but that is
22	exactly what clause (ii), that type of auction, is
23	guaranteed to do.
24	JUSTICE GINSBURG: What is the reference?
25	In clause (ii), we were just told, the the last

- 1 clause refers to "under clause (i) or clause (iii)."
- 2 What -- what is the reference in (ii) to clause (iii)?
- 3 What does that mean?
- 4 MS. HARRINGTON: Well, the type of sale
- 5 contemplated in clause (ii) is, essentially, a
- 6 liquidation of the secured creditor's lien on a
- 7 property. And so you -- the sale would, essentially,
- 8 liquidate the lien. And then clause (ii) provides
- 9 that -- that there would need to be a replacement lien
- 10 on the proceeds of the sale. That replacement lien
- 11 would then have to be treated under clause (i) or clause
- 12 (iii).
- I think it's fair to say, in most
- 14 situations, what happens is that the proceeds of the
- 15 sale are handed over to the secured creditor, which is
- 16 essentially a clause (iii) treatment of the lien on the
- 17 proceeds, in the sense that, if the lien on the proceeds
- 18 is a lien on the pile of cash, if you hand over the pile
- 19 of cash, you're surrendering the collateral that is
- 20 securing that lien, which is the classic example of
- 21 indubitable equivalenc3. That is one of the examples
- 22 cited in the legislative history and in Judge Hand's
- 23 opinion in In re Murel.
- I think one of the assumptions that
- 25 permeates Petitioners' brief is that valuation -- that 51

- 1 the value of collateral is something we can all know and
- 2 agree upon.
- 3 But valuation is an inherently difficult
- 4 undertaking. And this Court has recognized that, when
- 5 Congress enacted the code in 1978, it shifted the
- 6 preference to move from judicial valuation towards
- 7 market valuations.
- And, here, Congress, in clause (ii),
- 9 expressed its view that -- that the type of market that
- 10 would value this property would include one of the most
- 11 interested market participants, who is -- which is the
- 12 secured creditor who has an interest in the property.
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Of course, valuing
- 14 property is what bankruptcy judges do all the time,
- 15 right?
- 16 MS. HARRINGTON: They -- they definitely do.
- 17 But I think, here, Congress provided that this would be
- 18 a situation where the secured creditor would have a role
- 19 in valuing the property, and even under -- as Justice
- 20 Kagan pointed out, even -- I think it was Justice
- 21 Kagan -- under clause (i), the judge has a role in
- 22 valuing the property because we have to determine the
- 23 present day value of the cash stream that the creditor
- 24 would be owed.
- 25 But as judge -- as my friend -- as Ms.

1	Maynard pointed out maybe she will be a judge some
2	day
3	(Laughter.)
4	MS. HARRINGTON: The creditor in that
5	situation has a role in in protecting itself against
6	undervaluation because it can make the 1111(b) election,
7	retain the full amount of its claim if it wants, and
8	and protect itself going forward.
9	I think one way that's important is that it
10	protects it prevents debtors from cashing out
11	creditors at a low value, at a point where the in the
12	market where the value of the property is low because
13	they retain the lien for the full amount.
14	The same thing is true here. If this is a
15	particularly low point in the market and the creditor is
16	trying to sell the property at auction I'm sorry
17	the debtor is trying to sell the property at auction,
18	the creditor can come in and take the property and
19	realize any any upside down the road.
20	If there are no further questions?
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel.
22	MS. HARRINGTON: Thank you.
23	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Neff, you have 4
24	minutes remaining.
25	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID M. NEFF

1	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS
2	MR. NEFF: With regard to the market
3	valuation, we are doing a market valuation, as this
4	Court instructed in the 203 North LaSalle case from
5	1999, by having an auction, and, after that auction,
6	still having to prove up that we've given the
7	indubitable equivalence by showing what occurred at that
8	auction. And, if the lenders would like to bring, at
9	that point, their appraisals and show that we didn't
-0	achieve that amount, then we are not going to be able to
.1	satisfy the indubitable equivalence standard.
2	Secondly, with regard to the role that
13	subsection (iii) plays in subsection (ii)
4	JUSTICE SCALIA: What you just said is, so
.5	long as they come in with some appraisals that are above
<u> </u>	what what the property sold at for cash, then it's
_7	not the indubitable equivalent?
-8	MR. NEFF: If they can
_9	JUSTICE SCALIA: Because you've got to have
20	at least one appraiser who says it's it's worth more.
21	Is that all it takes?
22	MR. NEFF: Right. The the question
23	it's a very high standard.
24	JUSTICE SCALIA: Indubitable is indubitable.
25	MR. NEFF: It's a very high standard. And 54

1 as long as --JUSTICE SCALIA: If you have one honest 2 3 appraiser who says --MR. NEFF: If it is a creditable appraisal 4 5 and we were unable to achieve that, then we will have a 6 very difficult time satisfying that standard, but the 7 process will have been allowed to play out, which is 8 extremely important because those of us who have done 9 debtor work know how many times a lender doesn't want to do something, and, ultimately, you have a sale or 10 11 otherwise some sort of disposition of assets, the price 12 gets high enough, and they are willing to go along with 13 it. 14 So with regard to the market test --15 JUSTICE SCALIA: What -- what happens if you 16 go to the judge and the judge says, there is one higher 17 bid, so I can't say it's indubitable? Then what 18 happens? 19 MR. NEFF: Then -- then you would have to provide additional consideration to the secured creditor 20 to get it to the level that the judge would find it to 21 22 be indubitable. 23 So it's no different than at any plan 24 confirmation hearing, if you say, judge, my plan is

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- 1 The judge says, well, I find it should be 6 percent.
- 2 You have to find a way to bridge that gap.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, that assumes that you
- 4 can just pull out a wad of cash from your back pocket,
- 5 but, mostly, the debtors are not in that position. So
- 6 it just seems like a gigantic waste of time.
- 7 MR. NEFF: It's -- it's more so that the --
- 8 the purchaser would have to come up with that -- would
- 9 have to come up with that or find some other way to
- 10 bridge that gap.
- It's not really a waste of time because,
- 12 again, you are allowing the process to -- to play itself
- 13 out. Too many times, we see, with secured creditors,
- 14 they're unwilling to deal with debtors because they have
- 15 gotten them in the particular situation. And then, when
- 16 you are able to actually have an auction, they are
- 17 surprised by how high the bidding gets because
- 18 bankruptcy auctions are very fulsome events and -- and
- 19 create -- can create quite a lot of bidding that can
- 20 really generate very high -- high value for the
- 21 property.
- 22 As far as the role that (iii) plays in (ii),
- 23 it's a bit convoluted; but, if you pursue a plan sale
- through subsection (ii), you don't have to show
- 25 indubitable equivalence, as long as they are allowed to 56

- 1 credit bid. But if, in fact, they don't credit bid or
- 2 they -- they are topped and you are able to raise cash,
- 3 that cash must be treated in an indubitable equivalence
- 4 way or in accordance with subsection (i).
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, I'm a person
- 6 who believes that, in the business world, the greatest
- 7 security is just knowledge of what courts will do. And
- 8 what the two courts who have agreed with you have done
- 9 is contrary to what the majority of courts have done
- 10 for -- for the longest time.
- 11 What's the value for us upsetting the norm?
- MR. NEFF: Okay.
- 13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: What's the business
- 14 value for upsetting the norm?
- 15 MR. NEFF: With regard to what courts have
- 16 done for a very long time -- for the 30 years that that
- 17 has been referenced have been primarily in section --
- 18 with regard to Section 363 sales, as opposed to plan
- 19 sales. What --
- 20 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: That it means, because
- 21 people didn't think they could do it in plan sales. So
- 22 why should we upset the expectation?
- 23 MR. NEFF: It's also difficult, in a
- 24 bankruptcy situation, to keep the case alive long enough
- 25 to get to plan confirmation, particularly if it's a --

- 1 if it's a business that's struggling financially because
- 2 the secured creditor has an ability to get relief from
- 3 the automatic stay. So that's why we would have more
- 4 Section 363 sales.
- 5 But, with regard to the benefit, you look at
- 6 a case like Philadelphia -- or a case like the Pacific
- 7 Lumber out of the Fifth Circuit, which allowed an entire
- 8 enterprise to be restructured out of a very positive
- 9 sale of the timberlands that would not have occurred if,
- 10 in fact, the Court had required credit bidding because
- 11 the lender simply would have taken back that one crucial
- 12 asset around which the entire enterprise was
- 13 restructured.
- So I think, from a debtor's perspective,
- 15 that is, obviously, of -- of great --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: They could have gone
- 17 under (i) and -- and given the secured lender what he's
- 18 entitled to, which is a future stream of payment.
- MR. NEFF: If --
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Please.
- 21 MR. NEFF: They could have gone under (i)
- 22 if, in fact, that -- that the lender would have been
- 23 precluded from making a Section 1111(b) election and
- 24 also precluded from credit bidding because credit
- 25 bidding's not required under subsection (i), and an

1	1111(b) election does not apply when there is a sale.
2	Thank you.
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, counsel
4	The case is submitted.
5	(Whereupon, at 11:01 a.m., the case in the
6	above-entitled matter was submitted.)
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