SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

LΝ	THE SUPREME CO	JURT OF THE	E ONT.LED	STATES
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RYAN AUSTI	N COLLINS,)	
	Petitione	r,)	
	v.) No. 1	L6-1027
VIRGINIA,)	
	Respondent	Ξ.)	

Pages: 1 through 64

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: January 9, 2018

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1	IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
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3	RYAN AUSTIN COLLINS,)
4	Petitioner,)
5	v.) No. 16-1027
6	VIRGINIA,)
7	Respondent.)
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9	
10	Washington, D.C.
11	Tuesday, January 9, 2018
12	
13	The above-entitled matter came on for oral
14	argument before the Supreme Court of the United States
15	at 11:08 a.m.
16	
17	APPEARANCES:
18	MATTHEW A. FITZGERALD, Richmond, Virginia; on behalf
19	of the Petitioner.
20	TREVOR S. COX, Acting Solicitor General of Virginia,
21	Richmond, Virginia; on behalf of the Respondent.
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23	
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(11:08 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4	argument next in Case 16-1027, Collins versus
5	Virginia.
6	Mr. Fitzgerald.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF MATTHEW A. FITZGERALD
8	ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
9	MR. FITZGERALD: Thank you, Mr. Chief
10	Justice, and may it please the Court:
11	The warrant requirement for the home
12	and curtilage cannot be overthrown by the
13	automobile exception.
14	Under the Commonwealth's argument, on
15	probable cause alone, an officer may search a
16	vehicle anywhere that he finds it and may go
17	anywhere that he needs to in order to access
18	that vehicle.
19	That rule cannot survive foundational
20	Fourth Amendment principles. Searches of the
21	home and curtilage without a warrant are
22	presumptively unreasonable, as this Court has
23	often recognized.
24	So the rule we ask this Court to adopt
25	is that the automobile exception does not apply

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1 to a vehicle found in the curtilage of the
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- 2 home.
- 3 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Suppose the -- the
- 4 police have probable cause to believe that the
- 5 vehicle is stolen and they even get a warrant
- 6 to inspect the vehicle. But the vehicle is
- 7 parked in this port.
- 8 Do they need -- do they need a warrant
- 9 to go get the car for which they have a
- 10 warrant?
- MR. FITZGERALD: Well, Your Honor, the
- 12 -- the warrant would specify the place to be
- 13 searched for the car. And so, commonly, a
- 14 warrant would say, for instance, the dwelling
- and curtilage to look for this motorcycle. So
- 16 the warrant that authorizes the search of the
- 17 motorcycle would, by its terms, authorize the
- 18 intrusion into the curtilage to look for --
- 19 JUSTICE ALITO: But what if it didn't?
- 20 So they have a warrant here, let's say, to
- 21 search for -- they have probable cause to
- 22 search this thing covered by a -- a tarp. They
- 23 have a warrant to search this motorcycle
- 24 because it's been involved in criminal
- 25 activity. They want to get the vehicle

- 1 identification number from it. And they see
- 2 it. Let's say it's parked two feet from the
- 3 curb. But arguably -- or it's parked where it
- 4 is here, maybe in the curtilage, maybe not in
- 5 the curtilage.
- 6 The -- that warrant would be
- 7 insufficient?
- 8 MR. FITZGERALD: Well, Your Honor, the
- 9 Fourth Amendment, by its terms, requires a
- 10 warrant to specify the place to be searched.
- 11 So if they've seen the motorcycle in that spot
- and they get a warrant, the warrant would say
- 13 this house on Dellmead Avenue, may have
- included the picture, and it would, by its
- 15 terms, authorize the access to that.
- JUSTICE ALITO: And this is my
- 17 question about your argument based on the
- 18 curtilage. We -- we ask whether a search
- 19 within or outside the curtilage in order to
- 20 determine whether the Fourth Amendment applies
- 21 at all.
- But that's not really the question
- here because there is probable cause, and there
- is the motor vehicle exception to the warrant
- 25 requirement. So the issue is not whether there

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1 was a search. Yes, there was a search. And,
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- 2 yes, you know, if it -- if it was the
- 3 curtilage, then there was -- there -- there was
- 4 an intrusion on the protected area.
- 5 But the warrant -- the motor vehicle
- 6 exception to the warrant requirement, I take
- 7 it, is based on two things. One is the -- the
- 8 risk that the vehicle is going to be moved
- 9 during the time when the warrant is sought and,
- 10 second, is a consideration on the other side of
- 11 the risk that if there's not a warrant, the
- 12 police will be wrong about probable cause and
- 13 the degree of intrusion on property, on
- 14 legitimate property interests that occur in
- 15 that situation.
- It's a balancing. It's not a
- 17 consideration of whether it's on the curtilage
- or not. And it's hard to see why the balance
- is any different here than it would be if this
- 20 motorcycle had been parked on the street. The
- 21 -- the risk that it will be moved seems to be
- 22 almost exactly the same. And what -- what is
- 23 the additional invasion of privacy? The
- 24 invasion of privacy that's involved in walking
- a few feet up a driveway, and the home is not

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1 even Mr. Byrd's home. Why does the balance
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- 2 come out different here?
- 3 MR. FITZGERALD: Well, Your Honor, so
- 4 here's -- here's the way that I think about
- 5 that: If you're looking at the terms that
- 6 support the automobile exception, you have
- 7 ready mobility and you have the lessened
- 8 expectation of privacy.
- 9 But the curtilage and the home are
- 10 essentially more important concerns than that.
- 11 So, for instance, if I had a fistful of cocaine
- 12 and I'm out in public, cocaine is extremely
- readily mobile. There's nothing that is easier
- 14 to dispose of than a fistful of cocaine. If
- 15 I've got a sink, it can be gone in seconds. So
- it's extremely readily mobile. Nor in the
- 17 cocaine itself is there any expectation of
- 18 privacy. It's illegal to possess it already.
- 19 But if I'm standing in, say, my living
- 20 room or in my garage with a fistful of cocaine,
- 21 the Court would require a warrant for the
- 22 police to come to that address and look for
- 23 that and get me. So --
- JUSTICE ALITO: Yeah -- no, I think
- 25 the privacy interests would be quite different

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1 if this was in the house or if it was in the
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- 2 garage, but this is not in either of those
- 3 places. It's in a spot that's visible from the
- 4 street, right?
- 5 MR. FITZGERALD: It's visible from the
- 6 street from directly at the end of the
- 7 driveway, yes, Your Honor. It -- it is
- 8 obscured from any distance in either direction
- 9 by the brick walls that surround where this
- 10 motorcycle was on three sides, one side being
- 11 the house.
- 12 So the motorcycle here is five feet
- 13 from the side of the house. And -- and to the
- 14 extent that curtilage is at issue, curtilage
- 15 has been waived by the Commonwealth by not
- 16 arquing it below. And this is a clear case for
- 17 curtilage, given the distance from the house.
- 18 So --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: How much does your
- 20 argument depend on us viewing this as two
- 21 things: One, a trespass on private property,
- 22 the curtilage, and then a search within that
- 23 private space?
- Is your argument hinged on that
- 25 distinction?

- 1 MR. FITZGERALD: Well, I think we make
- 2 that distinction because it's important just to
- 3 make sense of the Fourth Amendment to think
- 4 about it step-by-step. And there are two
- 5 searches here.
- 6 The first is the intrusion into the
- 7 curtilage under Jardines, which is clearly a
- 8 search outside of any implied license, and the
- 9 second is the removal of the cover from the
- 10 motorcycle, which is similar to opening a
- 11 container to find a vehicle inside or perhaps
- opening the door to a car or removing a cover
- 13 from a car.
- 14 JUSTICE ALITO: So if this motorcycle
- were parked on the street and it was covered by
- 16 a tarp, you would say that the motor vehicle
- 17 exception doesn't apply because it's covered by
- 18 a tarp?
- 19 MR. FITZGERALD: No, Your Honor. If
- it were parked on the street, then the
- 21 automobile exception would apply.
- JUSTICE ALITO: So what's the
- 23 relevance of the tarp?
- 24 MR. FITZGERALD: The relevance of the
- 25 tarp is essentially that there is a -- there is

- 1 some expectation of privacy in a tarp,
- 2 particularly placed within the curtilage of the
- 3 home. So the location of the motorcycle is
- 4 very important here.
- 5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So what difference
- does it make that the tarp was there?
- 7 MR. FITZGERALD: The tarp perhaps
- 8 makes it particularly clear that the officer
- 9 was undergoing a search, not just, say, walking
- where he could have said, oh, this is almost on
- 11 the way --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, let's
- 13 change the hypothetical. Is there still a
- 14 violation under your theory of law if the
- 15 motorcycle was in plain view in the curtilage
- and he just walked on to the curtilage and what
- 17 -- I don't know where the VIN is on the
- 18 motorcycle, by the way. I don't -- you know,
- in a car, it's within the car, not outside the
- 20 car, so you --
- MR. FITZGERALD: Right.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- have to open
- 23 the car door. But let's assume that you have
- to move something on the motorcycle. I don't
- 25 know. Do you?

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1 MR. FITZGERALD: I don't think you
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- 2 would have to move something on the motorcycle.
- 3 And so --
- 4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Let's just assume
- 5 that. No -- no top on it.
- 6 MR. FITZGERALD: So if there --
- 7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Does your argument
- 8 still stand?
- 9 MR. FITZGERALD: Yes, Your Honor. So
- if the motorcycle is where the motorcycle is in
- 11 this case but there is no cover on it, there is
- 12 a Fourth Amendment violation, and that is --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, why? Because,
- I mean, suppose the policeman is standing on
- 15 the sidewalk. He -- the window of the house is
- 16 quite close, and there inside he sees a huge
- 17 pile of cocaine. Okay?
- I thought, but perhaps I've got it
- 19 mixed up, I thought that seeing something that
- 20 is an illegal substance that can be easily
- 21 disposed of in about three seconds would, in
- fact, justify, create an exigent circumstance
- 23 under which the policeman could enter? Am I
- 24 wrong about that?
- MR. FITZGERALD: Close, Your Honor.

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1 So if --
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- 2 JUSTICE BREYER: What is the law
- 3 there?
- 4 MR. FITZGERALD: If an officer
- 5 standing on the sidewalk looks into the window
- of a house and sees a pile of drugs through the
- 7 window --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah.
- 9 MR. FITZGERALD: -- that creates
- 10 probable cause that would permit the officer to
- get a warrant to go into the house.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, so he goes,
- gets a warrant, and they throw it all down the
- 14 sink --
- MR. FITZGERALD: Well, this --
- 16 JUSTICE BREYER: -- and, of course,
- 17 there is nothing by the time he comes back. I
- 18 mean, I thought that was an example of an
- 19 exigent circumstance --
- 20 MR. FITZGERALD: If --
- JUSTICE BREYER: -- but you know the
- 22 area of this law better than I do, I -- I
- 23 guess, and that isn't so.
- 24 MR. FITZGERALD: So it's not
- impossible that there would be an exigent

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1 circumstance there.
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- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, no, I've given
- 3 you the facts. The facts are there's a big
- 4 pile of cocaine right there and there's
- 5 somebody wandering around inside.
- And -- and can't he -- I don't know,
- 7 what is an exigent circumstance if it isn't
- 8 that?
- 9 MR. FITZGERALD: It's -- it's
- 10 particularly important to that hypothetical
- 11 that there's someone wandering around inside --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. Fine. Fine.
- MR. FITZGERALD: -- because the
- 14 introduction of the person is important --
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: He has reason to
- think there's somebody in the house.
- 17 MR. FITZGERALD: Right. So it's
- 18 certainly possible that --
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: Or no --
- 20 MR. FITZGERALD: -- an exigency could
- 21 be created, if there's a person who's wandering
- 22 --
- JUSTICE BREYER: All right. So that
- 24 -- yeah, if that's an exigent circumstance, and
- 25 you happen to see -- now changing the situation

- 1 -- you happen to see a motorcycle which is a
- 2 rather unusual shape and happens to look
- 3 identically like the one that you know was just
- 4 stolen, you can't go and -- go look at it? You
- 5 have to get a warrant? Of course, they drive
- 6 away in the meantime, but, nonetheless, you --
- 7 you're there by yourself, no other policemen.
- 8 It's in the window, okay, just like the
- 9 cocaine, or it's in the driveway. Why can't
- 10 you?
- 11 MR. FITZGERALD: So just to be clear,
- in this case, the Supreme Court of Virginia
- 13 steered away from exigency and said, no, we're
- 14 not going --
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: I know that. That's
- 16 why I thought the tarp made a difference. And
- 17 that's why I thought this was a case about a
- 18 tarp, oddly enough, and not a case about
- 19 whether you have an exigent circumstance.
- 20 MR. FITZGERALD: It -- it is not a
- 21 case about exigent circumstance.
- JUSTICE BREYER: But you just told me
- 23 I'm wrong.
- MR. FITZGERALD: This is not an
- 25 exigency case. And the Supreme Court of

- 1 Virginia specifically said that.
- JUSTICE BREYER: No, no, I know that.
- 3 What I'm trying to get at is I suddenly
- 4 thought: I don't understand this case because
- 5 you said the circumstance is the same without a
- 6 tarp. That's what confused me.
- 7 MR. FITZGERALD: So the --
- 8 JUSTICE BREYER: That's why I asked
- 9 the question.
- 10 MR. FITZGERALD: So the officer
- 11 testified that when he arrived at the property,
- there was no one home. And the exigency, the
- 13 relevant exigency, were there one here, would
- 14 be imminent destruction of evidence.
- 15 And he testified that no one was
- 16 there. The motorcycle is under a tarp. He has
- 17 a picture or a cover -- he has a picture of the
- 18 motorcycle in exactly the same place from
- 19 Facebook, which he knows -- which he must know
- 20 was taken at least a few hours earlier because
- 21 he's been with the person who he believes owns
- the motorcycle in the meantime.
- So there's no obvious exigency here so
- 24 much --
- 25 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Fitzgerald -- I'm

- 1 sorry, did you --
- 2 MR. FITZGERALD: There -- there's no
- 3 obvious exigency here and that would be an
- 4 issue for remand in this case.
- 5 JUSTICE KAGAN: Can I go back to the
- 6 exchange that you had with Justice Alito? When
- 7 you gave your hypothetical about the drugs and
- 8 he said, well, that would be different, it
- 9 would be -- it's very different in a home, but
- 10 here you have the motorcycle parked out in the
- open, on the driveway in this enclosure, where
- 12 you can see it from the street.
- 13 And I guess this is the question I
- 14 want to ask you. If -- if there is that
- difference, like in a home you better have a
- 16 warrant. But here it's out on the street but
- in the curtilage, in the curtilage, and that's
- 18 established.
- 19 MR. FITZGERALD: Yes.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: You know, it's not --
- 21 it's not disputed here. How far are we
- 22 committed by Jardines to treat the curtilage
- exactly as we would the home? That seems to me
- 24 to be important given the, I think, the -- the
- things that you and Justice Alito agreed on.

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1
               So how far do we say: Look, what
 2
      Jardines said or what we've said in other cases
      is we have to treat the curtilage exactly as we
 3
      would the home, even though you can actually
 4
      see the motorcycle on the curtilage.
 5
 6
               MR. FITZGERALD: Yes, Your Honor.
 7
      in Jardines, the Court said "the curtilage is
      protected as part of the home itself for Fourth
 8
 9
      Amendment purposes."
               And -- and even though the Court in
10
11
      Jardines -- and at the time, the Court was
12
      quoting Oliver, the 1984 case that recognized
      open fields and said the same thing.
13
14
               And the idea that curtilage is
      protected as part of the home itself is -- is
15
      important, and I think --
16
17
               JUSTICE GINSBURG:
                                  Isn't it a problem
18
               JUSTICE ALITO: But the --
19
               JUSTICE GINSBURG: -- whose -- whose
20
      curtilage it is? Here we're told that there
21
2.2
      was a close relationship between the defendant
23
      and the homeowner. But suppose there weren't
24
      that close relationship. Suppose it was a
      brand new girlfriend and he never stayed
25
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overnight, he was hopeful, but he hadn't.
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- 2 (Laughter.)
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: And it's the same
- 4 -- parked the same way.
- 5 MR. FITZGERALD: So -- so you may,
- 6 Your Honor, be -- it sounds like you are
- 7 describing a difficult case of Fourth Amendment
- 8 standing or right to object. This Court has
- 9 very clearly said in Minnesota versus Olson
- 10 that the overnight guest has the right to
- 11 object. And that's the status in this case at
- 12 minimum. I mean, really it's his family. It's
- the mother of his child, his child who lives
- there and she is the lessee. He spends several
- 15 nights a week there.
- 16 On the other end of the spectrum,
- 17 Minnesota versus Carter, being in a place for a
- 18 couple of hours just to do business would not
- 19 create a right to object. So to the extent
- that connection to the property -- connection
- 21 to the curtilage would be treated the same way
- 22 as connection to the house.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Did -- coming back to
- 24 Justice -- to the -- to the question, did we
- say in Jardines that the curtilage is to be

- 1 treated the same as the house for all Fourth
- 2 Amendment purposes? I thought the issue in
- 3 Jardines was whether -- was whether officers
- 4 who did not have probable cause were permitted
- 5 to walk up to the front of the house, at which
- 6 point they acquired probable cause.
- 7 MR. FITZGERALD: Well, yes, Your
- 8 Honor. So Jardines identified a search and it
- 9 identified a search of the home based on
- 10 actions taken exclusively in the curtilage of
- 11 the home. And it -- the majority essentially
- 12 said, as I read it, that the officers acted
- beyond the scope of the implied license when
- 14 they brought a drug dog and they spent a few
- minutes in the curtilage sniffing around.
- 16 That's not what there would be an implied
- 17 license to do, which essentially is just a
- 18 knock and talk.
- And so it's a search of the curtilage.
- 20 And the Court stopped there, this Court stopped
- 21 there, but, of course, it was affirming the
- 22 Florida Supreme Court, which had thrown out the
- 23 search for lack of a warrant based on the
- 24 protection of the curtilage.
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, we permit

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1 the police to seize items in plain view in a
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- 2 home. They get a search warrant for the home.
- 3 They see an item that they have probable cause
- 4 to believe is incriminating evidence. They can
- 5 seize it.
- 6 Justice Breyer said exigent
- 7 circumstances permit the police to seize items.
- 8 I think the assumption -- or not the assumption
- 9 -- the premise of all of those cases is that
- 10 the police are there legitimately. If you have
- 11 a warrant, you are permitted to be there.
- 12 In Jardines, you could -- couldn't
- seize the incriminating evidence wafting from
- the house because you didn't have a right to be
- in the curtilage.
- 16 And so isn't there a difference when
- 17 you are in the street, as these police officers
- 18 were, they have a right to be on the street,
- 19 they have a right to look at whatever is
- visible, and they could see the motorcycle from
- 21 there? So is this a plain view case? Is this
- 22 a exigent circumstance case?
- I -- that's why I thought that Justice
- 24 Breyer was asking whether the search of the
- 25 tarp was part of this because was this in plain

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1 view, in essence? As -- as I understood it,
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- they weren't sure it was the same motorcycle.
- 3 They thought the wheel was the same, but I'm
- 4 not sure why they -- they needed that if they
- 5 knew the motorcycle was stolen, or did they not
- 6 know yet that it was stolen? I don't remember
- 7 now.
- 8 MR. FITZGERALD: The -- the record is
- 9 unclear. And we would not -- we -- we don't
- 10 believe that the officer thought the motorcycle
- 11 was stolen. He was looking for the motorcycle
- 12 that he had --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But how do you --
- 14 MR. FITZGERALD: -- but -- but it's --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- address the way
- 16 I'm looking at this, which is --
- 17 MR. FITZGERALD: It's --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- the police are
- 19 standing there, they see something and have
- 20 probable cause to believe that it's
- 21 incriminating evidence. How is that different
- than being inside the home with a warrant?
- 23 And -- and, again, does -- I'm not
- 24 sure I see the difference, although the tarp is
- 25 a difference because they are lifting --

- 1 they're searching something else besides the
- 2 motorcycle.
- 3 MR. FITZGERALD: So, Your Honor, this
- 4 is not a plain view case, because in Horton
- 5 versus California, the Court said, in order for
- 6 plain view to apply to allow the seizure of the
- 7 thing, the officer must have a right of access
- 8 to the thing itself.
- 9 So there's no right of access.
- 10 There's no implied license to go into the
- 11 curtilage to look for evidence that you have
- 12 seen. And so seeing the motorcycle from the
- 13 street in this case is just like seeing the
- 14 motorcycle or seeing drugs through the window
- 15 of a house.
- 16 JUSTICE ALITO: Do you dispute the
- 17 fact that they had probable cause to believe
- 18 that the thing that they saw covered by the
- 19 tarp was the motorcycle they were looking for?
- MR. FITZGERALD: We do not dispute
- 21 that.
- JUSTICE ALITO: Okay.
- MR. FITZGERALD: And so, ultimately,
- here this is a fairly straightforward case, I
- 25 think. There -- the motorcycle is five feet --

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1 JUSTICE BREYER: But you -- you don't
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- dispute -- in other words, you -- in your view,
- 3 you agree that the policeman standing on the
- 4 sidewalk knows that that item covered by -- or
- 5 at least has probable cause to it -- covered by
- 6 the tarp is the possibly stolen motorcycle?
- 7 You agree with that?
- 8 MR. FITZGERALD: He -- he has probable
- 9 cause to believe that is the motorcycle that
- 10 eluded him in traffic, that he was looking for.
- 11 Of course, there could be other things under
- 12 the tarp as well as the motorcycle.
- 13 JUSTICE BREYER: So he didn't really
- 14 have to lift the tarp at all?
- MR. FITZGERALD: Well, he wanted to
- 16 lift the tarp to be sure.
- 17 JUSTICE BREYER: So that's his
- 18 decision; he didn't have to. I mean, in -- in
- 19 your view, he could have just grabbed the whole
- thing, tarp and all, if he'd had access?
- 21 MR. FITZGERALD: Well, he didn't have
- 22 access. And I think it would be --
- JUSTICE BREYER: No, I know that, but
- I'm saying if he'd had access to it. If they'd
- 25 said please come to my curtilage. All right?

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1 (Laughter.)
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- 2 JUSTICE BREYER: Now, if that had
- 3 given him access, he could have just grabbed
- 4 the whole thing, tarp and all. Is your view --
- 5 I'm just saying do you agree -- you -- I
- 6 thought from what you just said -- I -- I was
- 7 surprised, but I thought that now you do agree
- 8 that that is the case. He could just grab the
- 9 whole thing.
- 10 MR. FITZGERALD: Well --
- JUSTICE BREYER: Do you agree with
- that or don't you agree with that?
- MR. FITZGERALD: No, Your Honor. So
- 14 he is --
- JUSTICE BREYER: You don't agree with
- 16 that? Okay. Okay.
- 17 MR. FITZGERALD: He is investigating
- 18 the -- the crime of eluding him in traffic.
- 19 Ultimately, that is a crime committed by the
- 20 driver.
- 21 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Which is different
- from a stolen vehicle. I think we've gotten a
- 23 little confused about that. The police were
- looking for him because he eluded them by
- 25 speeding away.

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1 The evidence of the theft comes when
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- 2 they see the -- the number after they lift the
- 3 tarp.
- 4 MR. FITZGERALD: Yes, Your Honor. And
- 5 now, there is some disagreement in the record
- about that, but the officer testified he went
- 7 to the house solely to look for the motorcycle
- 8 that had eluded him. He was asked was the
- 9 motorcycle -- did you think the motorcycle was
- 10 contraband? And he said no. So he was looking
- into the eluding, and when he ran the VIN
- 12 number, he found that it was stolen.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Ahh, so --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- he didn't know
- this was stolen property yet? The VIN number
- 17 gave -- this is like Jardines. The VIN number
- 18 gave him that information?
- 19 MR. FITZGERALD: That is what he
- 20 stated, yes.
- 21 JUSTICE ALITO: No, it's not like
- 22 Jardines --
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But you could
- see under -- you could see under the tarp,
- 25 right, some identifying characteristics in the

- 1 extension of the wheel that allowed it to go
- 2 140 miles an hour and the color scheme and all
- 3 that?
- 4 MR. FITZGERALD: Well, you couldn't --
- 5 you couldn't see the color scheme, but you
- 6 could see the -- the basis for the probable
- 7 cause is he has the Facebook picture that
- 8 shows --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah. Okay.
- 10 MR. FITZGERALD: -- the motorcycle not
- 11 under a tarp. And then he gets to the house,
- and it's under a cover, but it's in the same
- 13 spot, it's the same ID. The extension of the
- 14 wheel is a matter of interest.
- 15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: This would be
- 16 --
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But it's probable
- 18 cause to arrest the driver. It's not probable
- 19 cause to arrest the motorcycle. It's the
- 20 driver that he was --
- 21 MR. FITZGERALD: So --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- charging with
- elusive driving or whatever, dangerous driving.
- MR. FITZGERALD: It is a police
- 25 investigation in which he's ultimately trying

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1 to find the driver, first by verifying that
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- 2 he's found the motorcycle.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: You can't --
- 4 you can't seize -- on this basis of the same
- 5 probable cause, you can't seize the motorcycle,
- 6 putting aside the curtilage question? You have
- 7 probable cause to believe that this person was
- 8 driving that type of motorcycle.
- 9 I -- it's an honest question. I don't
- 10 know the answer. Don't you have probable cause
- 11 to then seize the instrumentality of the crime?
- MR. FITZGERALD: I think that you do,
- 13 Your Honor, but the curtilage -- it's --
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: No, I know the
- 15 curtilage --
- MR. FITZGERALD: I quess we can't
- 17 really set that aside, but -- but --
- 18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yes, but maybe
- 19 -- and maybe this is the same question Justice
- 20 Breyer was asking, but let's say the motorcycle
- 21 was on the -- covered with a tarp on the side
- 22 -- not the sidewalk, the little path to go to
- the door, in other words, a place where he did
- have a license to go, right? He said I'm just
- 25 going to go knock and talk. And it's right

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1 there. Would he have --
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- 2 MR. FITZGERALD: No.
- 3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Would he -- he
- 4 couldn't seize that, even with probable cause?
- 5 MR. FITZGERALD: No, that -- that is
- 6 outside the implied license of his ability to
- 7 go and knock and talk at the door of that
- 8 residence, Your Honor. So he can't -- he can't
- 9 stop to perform additional searches or
- 10 seizures along the way.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's not an
- 12 additional search. In other words, you have a
- license to go to the door and knock, but you
- 14 can't look at anything in the way. You -- you
- 15 sort of have to block it off.
- MR. FITZGERALD: No, you have -- you
- have the right to use your eyes, but you don't
- have the right to go beyond what a reasonably
- 19 respectful person approaching the door would
- 20 do. And stopping to examine or seize a
- 21 motorcycle would be outside of that implied
- 22 license.
- Now, of course, here the motorcycle is
- 24 not even on the path to the front door. He's
- not going to the front door. He testified he

- 1 was not knocking and talking. He walked up
- 2 solely to take the cover off to see if this was
- 3 the motorcycle that he had probable cause to
- 4 think that it was.
- JUSTICE ALITO: He had probable cause
- 6 -- you -- I thought you admitted he had
- 7 probable cause to believe that the thing
- 8 covered by the tarp was the motorcycle that he
- 9 -- had eluded him by driving 140 miles an hour.
- 10 MR. FITZGERALD: Yes.
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: Right?
- MR. FITZGERALD: Yes.
- JUSTICE ALITO: So he has probable
- 14 cause to search that motorcycle, to find the --
- the vehicle identification number, which will
- tell him the owner of the motorcycle, which
- 17 will help him arrest the person who committed
- 18 this crime, right?
- 19 MR. FITZGERALD: Yes.
- 20 JUSTICE ALITO: So the case comes down
- 21 to this: If the motorcycle were parked on the
- 22 street or maybe further down the driveway, and,
- therefore, not in the curtilage, they wouldn't
- 24 need a warrant. They could search it. But
- 25 because it was parked a few feet further away,

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1 although in a spot that's visible from the
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- 2 street, they could search it in the first
- 3 instance because of the risk that the
- 4 motorcycle will be taken away, but in the
- 5 second instance, moved a few feet further up
- 6 the driveway, still visible from the street,
- 7 can't be -- they can't search it because of the
- 8 additional invasion of privacy that is involved
- 9 in walking those few feet up the driveway?
- MR. FITZGERALD: Yes, Your Honor --
- 11 JUSTICE ALITO: That's what the case
- 12 comes down to?
- MR. FITZGERALD: Yes. The protections
- of the -- the curtilage of the home, which the
- 15 curtilage, again, is protected as part of the
- 16 home itself. And for good reason.
- 17 Officers are prevented from going into
- 18 the curtilage of a home to prevent them from
- 19 being, say, in the backyard where there might
- 20 be a parking area where people are parking, to
- 21 avoid them -- keep them from going into garages
- 22 and things like that. The curtilage --
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Did the police have
- 24 an interest in seizing or securing this
- 25 motorcycle as soon as possible?

- 1 MR. FITZGERALD: No, Your Honor.
- 2 There -- there's no exigent circumstance in
- 3 this case.
- 4 JUSTICE KENNEDY: The police could
- 5 leave it sit there for a couple days and just
- 6 get around to it? Isn't this a -- A, a
- 7 dangerous item and it was used for a dangerous
- 8 purpose; and it's the instrumentality and
- 9 evidence of a crime?
- 10 MR. FITZGERALD: Your Honor, it's
- 11 exactly the same --
- 12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: And it's movable?
- 13 MR. FITZGERALD: It's exactly the same
- 14 as if he had seen something readily movable
- like drugs through the window of a house. He
- 16 would have to get a warrant for that. And it's
- 17 the same here.
- 18 And there -- there are 49 other states
- 19 and the federal government. The federal
- government has just been here and said the home
- is the core of the Fourth Amendment.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: It's the same as if
- 23 the car was --
- MR. FITZGERALD: No other state is
- 25 saying this would be --

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1 JUSTICE KENNEDY: -- it's the same as
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- 2 if the car -- there were a car but the car were
- 3 under repair, all the tires were off the car
- 4 and the hood was up and the engine was taken
- 5 out? The same, no difference?
- 6 MR. FITZGERALD: Well, Your Honor,
- 7 this Court has not -- you know, readily mobile
- 8 can include a car that's wrecked. I mean, at
- 9 some point, maybe it becomes, but readily
- 10 mobile is not something that's examined on a
- 11 case-by-case basis for a vehicle.
- 12 JUSTICE KENNEDY: So you think that's
- irrelevant, its mobility and its -- and its --
- 14 the ease of moving it is irrelevant to this
- 15 case? That's what you want us to say?
- 16 MR. FITZGERALD: It is -- it is not
- any more readily mobile than things that
- 18 require a warrant, such as illegal drugs.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: You want to say that
- 20 mobility is irrelevant to this case?
- MR. FITZGERALD: Yes, I will say that.
- 22 If I may reserve the balance of my
- 23 time.
- 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- counsel.

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1 Mr. Cox.
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- ORAL ARGUMENT OF TREVOR S. COX
- 3 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT
- 4 MR. COX: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
- 5 it please the Court:
- 6 Officer Rhodes's search of the
- 7 motorcycle should be upheld for three reasons.
- 8 First, the search occurred outside the firm,
- 9 bright-line of the house where the
- 10 justifications for the automobile exception
- 11 fully apply.
- 12 Second, Officer Rhodes had probable
- cause before he ever stepped foot on the
- 14 driveway.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: In your brief, you
- seem to say that you're not -- you don't seem
- 17 to say -- you say you're not taking a position
- on whether an officer can break into a garage
- or walk into a garage that's closed but not
- 20 locked.
- 21 So you -- you seem to be suggesting
- that the mobility of the automobile, wherever
- 23 it is, permits the police to enter. Is that --
- 24 by force or without force.
- 25 MR. COX: This -- this Court has never

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1 said that the mobility changes depending on
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- 2 where it is. To resolve this case --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Is that a yes to
- 4 my question? Are you -- are -- because that
- 5 seemed to be what the Virginia -- what the
- 6 court below is saying, which is the -- where
- 7 the item is located is irrelevant. If it's an
- 8 automobile, whether in a garage or the
- 9 motorcycle parked inside the living room --
- 10 some people park their bikes inside,
- 11 actually -- doesn't matter where it is, that
- 12 that gives the police the right to enter and
- 13 search.
- MR. COX: The Supreme Court of
- 15 Virginia did not impose that restriction. And
- 16 this Court has never done that either.
- 17 We think that it would make sense if
- 18 the Court were to draw a line here, although
- 19 it's not necessary. If it were to draw a line,
- 20 it would make sense to draw it at the firm --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, you're
- 22 saying it's not necessary because the facts
- don't support it, but does the logic of their
- 24 holding and your position require that outcome?
- 25 What -- what -- how do we -- and do we

- 1 basically say, contrary to our rule, that the
- 2 curtilage is not part of your home? We know it
- 3 is. That's what we've said in case after case.
- 4 So we -- do we say now the curtilage
- 5 is not part of the home for purposes of
- 6 automobiles? And then how do I fit in the
- 7 line?
- 8 MR. COX: Sure. There are a couple
- 9 things baked in, and let me try to answer them
- 10 in turn.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: All right.
- MR. COX: We don't -- we don't read
- 13 Jardines and the other court cases like Oliver
- 14 as saying that the curtilage and the home
- should be treated the same for all purposes.
- 16 For determining one's reasonable expectations
- of privacy, you might treat the curtilage and
- 18 the home the same. And that's what Jardines
- 19 seemed to suggest, but it cited to Oliver, you
- 20 know, one of the curtilage cases.
- 21 And then, in Footnote 11 of Oliver,
- 22 they say, we do not say that the curtilage and
- the home should be treated the same for all
- 24 purposes.
- 25 So while it might be true for

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determining the reasonable expectations of
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- 2 privacy, it's not binding on -- on courts to
- 3 say what's reasonable and what's not, based on
- 4 whether it's the curtilage or the home.
- Now, the Supreme Court of Virginia, as
- 6 I said, did not place a restriction on the
- 7 automobile exception applying in one -- one
- 8 place versus another because this Court
- 9 hasn't -- hasn't done that.
- 10 If the Court were to draw the line --
- and -- and I recognize that you're trying to
- decide a lot of cases here, not just this one
- 13 -- that would be a good place to do it because
- that is the firm bright-line that the Court has
- recognized in a lot of other cases as well.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: So under that rule,
- though, police could, as I understand your
- 18 position, search for cars in garages, closed
- 19 garages, carports, anywhere on a property, no
- 20 matter how closely attached, or even if firmly
- 21 attached to the house?
- 22 MR. COX: No, not everywhere on -- on
- 23 the premises, Your Honor. A -- the garage --
- 24 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Not in the house but
- 25 on the curtilage.

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1 MR. COX: Not in a house, but a garage
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- 2 is often considered part of the house.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. But if we say
- 4 that's curtilage, which a lot of cases in the
- 5 past, at least, have suggested, and we deem a
- 6 barn, a garage, curtilage, then the police can
- 7 without a warrant search for a car there under
- 8 your rule, right?
- 9 MR. COX: If it's not part of the
- 10 dwelling. If it is part of the dwelling, then,
- 11 no, they could not search it.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Not many people live
- in their garage. Some people do, some people
- do, and in barns, but usually they're reserved
- 15 for cars and for animals.
- And you're suggesting that in those
- 17 places the police can search without a warrant.
- MR. COX: Garages are commonly used --
- 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Correct?
- 20 MR. COX: -- Your Honor, for a lot of
- 21 residential purposes. They might have storage
- 22 out there, an extra refrigerator. Somebody
- 23 might be living out there, if the teenager gets
- too rambunctious, put them out in the garage.
- 25 (Laughter.)

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1 JUSTICE BREYER: So -- so look, I want
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- 2 to ask you two questions, and the first is just
- 3 to be sure I have the basics right.
- 4 MR. COX: Yes.
- 5 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay? The basics
- 6 question is a weird hypothetical, but I'm using
- 7 a weird hypothetical for illustration.
- 8 The mad art burglar has just stolen
- 9 The Thinker, Rodin's Thinker from the local
- 10 museum. It weighs 2,000 pounds. And with his
- 11 confederates, he's put it in his new glass
- 12 house. And the policeman stopping on the
- 13 sidewalk looks in the window and sees: My God,
- there it is, the thing he's just stolen.
- I thought the law is that that
- 16 policeman cannot go into the house until he
- 17 gets a warrant.
- 18 MR. COX: Yes.
- 19 JUSTICE BREYER: When he should --
- 20 that's the law.
- MR. COX: That's my understanding,
- 22 Your Honor, yes.
- JUSTICE BREYER: He told the
- 24 confederates, they're not going to -- The
- Thinker is not going to escape, it weighs 2,000

- 1 pounds, okay?
- 2 MR. COX: Unless there was some other
- 3 exigent circumstance to justify it --
- 4 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. All right.
- 5 Fine.
- 6 MR. COX: -- but under your
- 7 hypothetical, I don't see any.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. So, fine.
- 9 Okay. Now, the other Hornbook principle is
- 10 it's not The Thinker, it's a wisp, a wispy bit
- of very suspicious drug smoke.
- 12 (Laughter.)
- 13 JUSTICE BREYER: And there, if, soon
- 14 as the smoker, whom he sees in the window or he
- 15 believes he's off on the side, as soon as he
- 16 gets an inclination there's a policeman around,
- 17 I'll tell you where all that drug is going to
- 18 be, right down the sink, okay?
- In that case, he doesn't need a
- warrant, because there's exigent circumstance.
- 21 Is that right?
- MR. COX: That -- that's right.
- JUSTICE BREYER: All right.
- MR. COX: If the destruction is
- 25 imminent, then it might not --

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1 JUSTICE BREYER: And what we don't
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- 2 have in this case is we do not have the exigent
- 3 circumstance. By definition, you all have
- 4 ruled that out. Is that correct?
- 5 MR. COX: I think you do have exigent
- 6 circumstances.
- JUSTICE BREYER: Well, you might have
- 8 it, but that's not in front of us. That's not
- 9 why we took the case. That's not what this is
- 10 about. Right?
- 11 MR. COX: There is a categorical
- 12 exigency to automobiles.
- JUSTICE BREYER: But now -- wait,
- there are two differences between my example.
- One, it's curtilage, not house. And, two, it
- is a movable thing, like a police -- like a --
- 17 like a car, okay.
- 18 So the question is it's -- and,
- moreover, the policeman didn't know with any
- 20 certainty -- he certainly suspected, maybe had
- 21 probable cause -- but he didn't know that's the
- 22 right motorcycle.
- Now, if all those things are true
- 24 hypothetically, it's as if, though it's the
- 25 curtilage, he saw in the middle of the driveway

- 1 a box, and he thought inside that box there
- 2 might be a motorcycle or drugs or something.
- 3 And can he go up without a warrant and
- 4 without there being exigent circumstances to
- 5 open the box to look to see if inside there are
- 6 drugs or a motorcycle? I thought that was this
- 7 case.
- 8 And even though -- and I think you
- 9 want to say, yes, he can, if it's a motorcycle,
- 10 but not if it's a box.
- MR. COX: I -- I -- I think that's --
- 12 JUSTICE BREYER: If it's a big box and
- 13 carries a motorcycle --
- MR. COX: Right.
- 15 JUSTICE BREYER: -- like a tarp, you
- 16 can say yes -- you want to say yes, okay, and I
- 17 would just wonder why? Why?
- 18 MR. COX: Well, the court -- the court
- 19 has --
- 20 JUSTICE BREYER: I mean, it's on the
- 21 driveway. It's in part of his house. I know
- that the motorcycle is movable, but there is no
- 23 exigent circumstance.
- 24 He is search -- wants to look -- look
- into the box, open the tarp. Why? Does the

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1 Fourth Amendment permit that? Okay. That's a
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- long, long question. I just needed the basics,
- and now I've got to my point, and now I'd like
- 4 to hear your answer.
- 5 MR. COX: I'll -- I'll try to answer,
- 6 and I'm sure you'll correct me if I misstate
- 7 what the hypothetical says.
- 8 My understanding is that there was a
- 9 virtual certainty here that this was the same
- 10 motorcycle under the tarp. So there was not
- any uncertainty about what was under the box,
- 12 as it were.
- 13 The Court, to the second part, the
- 14 Court has also treated other closed containers
- 15 differently than vehicles. In the Ross case,
- in Acevedo, they have said containers are
- 17 different than automobiles because of the --
- the movability of them is just far greater than
- 19 the movability of other items.
- 20 And there was a debate, there were
- 21 some predecessors of yours on the Court who
- 22 wanted to suggest that closed containers should
- 23 be treated the same. There were a couple
- justices in Coolidge who thought that was the
- 25 case. They ended up in the dissent in Ross and

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1 -- and certainly in -- in the minority in
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- 2 Acevedo.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Cox, can --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I thought your
- 5 point was that -- that you understood on the
- 6 automobile exception for it to have -- include
- 7 a categorical exigency aspect.
- 8 In other words, while it's not the
- 9 case that you see the guy, you know, revving up
- 10 the motorcycle about to take off, which would
- 11 be an exigent circumstance, but you think
- 12 because -- you want to extend or apply the
- 13 automobile exception to stationary vehicles on
- 14 -- on -- within the curtilage because you think
- all the guy has to do is he sees the police
- officer, he runs out of the house, starts it up
- 17 and goes away.
- 18 MR. COX: Yes, Your -- Your Honor. I
- 19 think that's one of the least controversial
- 20 points in this case is that because this Court
- 21 has repeatedly held that a car doesn't actually
- 22 have to be moving or with somebody there with a
- 23 key, ready to jump on it.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, then that --
- 25 that goes back to my basic question, which is

- 1 how do I differentiate the -- the car in the
- 2 garage if -- if -- if -- or the car through a
- 3 window that you can see?
- 4 You would say that exigent
- 5 circumstance -- that's what Virginia Court
- 6 appeared to say, that it created an absolute
- 7 rule. The police can break into anything, go
- 8 anywhere where they see the car, whether
- 9 they're at that place legitimately or not.
- 10 MR. COX: Yes. This -- this Court has
- 11 treated it as an absolute rule. They've never
- 12 carved -- carved back on that.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And that's the
- 14 rule you want us to uphold?
- MR. COX: It -- it could. I mean, you
- 16 could just apply -- apply that rule to this
- 17 case --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, and --
- MR. COX: -- and not make any new law,
- if you wanted to.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- and then we
- should just go ahead and do the same thing for
- drugs and papers too, because -- and Entek, we
- 24 can overrule Entek while we're at it, going all
- 25 the way back to the founding because, you know,

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1 we can see somebody, they have a fireplace,
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- 2 they have a chimney, they could destroy the
- 3 papers that we see through the window or the
- 4 drugs. We know that they have indoor plumbing.
- 5 And so they can be readily destroyed
- 6 too. What's the difference between the
- 7 destruction of drugs and papers in a home and a
- 8 car in -- in the garage?
- 9 MR. COX: So this gets to Justice
- 10 Sotomayor's question as well. There is a
- 11 little bit less mobility inside the garage.
- 12 There's also more expectation of privacy in a
- 13 garage. Those are the two --
- 14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's a second.
- 15 The difference between opening a garage door
- and just walking out and getting into a car is
- 17 de minimis.
- 18 MR. COX: Right. Well --
- 19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You can -- you
- 20 can -- you know, it happens just as quickly.
- 21 MR. COX: Right. And what I just said
- isn't totally satisfactory because, in McNeely,
- you said you don't really look at the policy
- justifications behind a categorical exigency.
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So if it -- if it

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1 -- if the distinction -- and there is no real
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- 2 distinction -- why, as Justice Gorsuch
- 3 suggested, you're asking us to expand the
- 4 automobile exception dramatically and to
- 5 basically make an all-time exception forever?
- 6 Even if the driver -- even if the
- 7 police know that the driver of this car is away
- 8 on vacation and won't be returning for two
- 9 weeks, even if they know that, they're not
- 10 required to go to a magistrate and get a
- 11 warrant?
- 12 MR. COX: Your Honor, that's been this
- 13 Court's law for decades. And I wouldn't see it
- 14 as -- as expanding it as --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, counsel, when
- 16 I -- when I look at the automobile exception's
- 17 history and go back to Carroll, it was actually
- an originalist opinion that looked at cars and
- 19 -- and analogized them to ships and vessels,
- 20 going all the way back to 1790. And so that's
- 21 different than homes or curtilage. And -- and
- 22 -- and cars are like vessels on the open sea or
- in port.
- It never suggested that you can go
- look for one in a home. That was never the

- 1 basis. It was: You can search something that
- is on the open seas or in a -- in a harbor or
- on the streets, not that you can go into a home
- 4 to find one. That seems to me categorically --
- 5 a category mistake that you're making in your
- 6 argument. Can you help me with that?
- 7 MR. COX: Right. Well, I wouldn't --
- 8 I wouldn't say it's a mistake in my argument.
- 9 It would be a mistake maybe in the Supreme
- 10 Court's jurisprudence not to have limited it to
- 11 that extent previously, but --
- 12 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Well, I just cited
- the Supreme Court's jurisprudence in Carroll.
- MR. COX: Yes.
- 15 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So I'm not sure it's
- fair to point it, the arrow, in this direction,
- 17 counsel.
- 18 MR. COX: Well, Carroll did involve a
- 19 -- a car that was on the street, but there have
- 20 been many cases since then in the 90 years
- 21 since Carroll where it's been applied when the
- car is totally immobile and not on the open
- 23 road. And so it has been a trajectory of the
- 24 -- the vehicle exception ever --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Cox.

1	MR. COX: ever since then. Yes?
2	JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean, one of the
3	things you're saying is that we basically
4	should give we shouldn't pay attention to
5	the fact that this was on the curtilage, and
6	you said earlier to a different question,
7	you said, well, you're committed by Jardines to
8	treat the curtilage as the home for purposes of
9	expectation of privacy, but for other purposes,
10	you can make a distinction between the two.
11	And I'd like to know more about that.
12	For what other purposes can you make a
13	distinction between the two? And why can you
14	make a distinction between the two for those
15	purposes when you can't make a distinction
16	between the two for this fundamental question
17	of where you have an expectation of privacy?
18	MR. COX: Sure. Well, certainly,
19	Oliver opened the door to that that
20	argument, that we're the Court said we're
21	not saying it's the same for all purposes.
22	And one example that we cited in our
23	brief was the difference between Santana and
24	Payton, where you can have a warrantless arrest
25	outside the house, right, even if it's on the

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1 front steps, but you can't have one inside
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- because there's -- it's just beyond the pale.
- 3 It's beyond the threshold, beyond the firm,
- 4 bright-line that this Court has -- has drawn.
- 5 Another example --
- 6 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm sorry. You're --
- 7 I just want to get the answer to my question,
- 8 which is: For what purposes would you treat
- 9 the curtilage differently from the home and why
- 10 there but not for the -- for the reasonable
- 11 expectation of privacy question? So, for what
- 12 purposes first, and then why?
- MR. COX: So, you know, you cannot
- search inside the house without a warrant
- 15 unless there are exigent circumstances or if
- 16 there's consent. And that's a line that this
- 17 Court has drawn. And the automobile exception
- is also a -- a categorical rule. And so we
- 19 find them in -- in -- in friction. And so the
- 20 Court has to decide what's reasonable --
- JUSTICE KAGAN: It -- it's just -- Mr.
- 22 Cox, it's really a simple question. For what
- 23 purposes would you say that the curtilage is
- 24 not the house?
- MR. COX: For purposes of when you

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1 have probable cause to search and a warrant --
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- 2 a warrant exception applies, then you don't
- 3 treat them the same.
- 4 JUSTICE KAGAN: And -- and why is that
- 5 -- why would you treat -- why would you not
- 6 treat them the same for purposes of when you
- 7 need a warrant if you do treat them the same
- 8 for deciding whether there's a reasonable
- 9 expectation of privacy in them?
- 10 MR. COX: Well, the -- the Court said
- in Ross that when the automobile exception
- 12 applies, you are -- you're committed to the
- same search with the same scope as you would be
- if you had a warrant. So the only thing that's
- 15 different is having a warrant.
- And so, as long as the investigating
- officer sticks to that, as the officer did
- here, you're not going outside the scope of a
- 19 warrant.
- 20 JUSTICE KAGAN: You see, I don't know.
- 21 Just -- when I read Jardines, here's what I
- 22 take it to say: I take it to say the home is
- the most sacrosanct of places. And, actually,
- 24 we don't think that the home stops at the door;
- 25 we think that there are some areas like the

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1 porch and like the driveway or whatever, and we
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- 2 can argue about exactly what those areas are,
- 3 but there are some areas which are just as
- 4 sacrosanct as your living room. That's what I
- 5 take Jardines to say.
- 6 And in that case, I think you lose
- 7 here.
- 8 MR. COX: If -- if that's the case, we
- 9 have a much -- much harder case to make, but I
- 10 don't think -- I don't read Jardines as
- 11 overruling Santana. I don't read Jardines as
- 12 creating a knock-and-announce rule at the
- 13 curtilage.
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Can -- can you
- 15 remind me what you said about the enclosed
- 16 garage with the door? Would that be treated
- 17 like the home?
- MR. COX: Yes.
- 19 JUSTICE GINSBURG: Now, that there is
- 20 a real problem because you're making a
- 21 distinction between people who can buy houses
- 22 with garages and people who are less well
- 23 heeled and only have a port or a patio for the
- car instead of a garage. So that distinction
- seems to me really troublesome, between garage

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1 and carport.
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- 2 MR. COX: I guess what I would say is
- 3 that the Fourth Amendment protects the same
- 4 quality of privacy but maybe not the same
- 5 quantity of privacy for everyone. I mean, even
- 6 the Dunn factors realizes that -- the Dunn
- 7 factors incorporate that. If you have enough
- 8 money to -- to build a -- a huge wall, then
- 9 that's going to -- that's going to impact the
- 10 -- the analysis of whether that area is -- is
- 11 protected or not.
- JUSTICE ALITO: I mean, they're --
- 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I don't know
- 14 why you're --
- 15 JUSTICE ALITO: -- garages.
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I'm not sure
- 17 why you are arguing -- if I understand your
- 18 answers to -- to Justice Kagan, you seem to
- 19 say, okay, let's say the -- the probable cause
- is based on the -- the fact that you know that
- 21 the drugs are in -- you know, foot-by-foot
- 22 orange boxes and you see from -- in the
- carport, you know, foot-by-foot orange boxes.
- 24 And you -- you seem to be treating
- 25 that the same as the situation when you have

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1 the motorcycle or an automobile, but I thought
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- 2 part of your argument was that the automobiles
- 3 were inherently different because somebody
- 4 could just jump on the motorcycle and ride
- 5 away, while they wouldn't have the same
- 6 mobility issues with respect to the box, the
- 7 orange boxes.
- 8 Now, are you arguing -- do you -- does
- 9 your argument extend to immobile items in the
- 10 carport because it's curtilage rather than the
- 11 house, or is it limited to the mobility that's
- 12 characterized the automobile exception?
- MR. COX: Yes. The automobile
- 14 exception is just that. It's an exception on
- 15 very circumscribed terms --
- 16 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And then the
- 17 problem with that, of course, is, we've said,
- 18 the curtilage is like the house and -- maybe
- 19 you would. I mean, if you have an automobile
- in the house, which is not, you know, Jay
- Leno's house, right, where he's got dozens of
- 22 rare cars or -- or the Porsche in Ferris
- 23 Bueller. I mean, you -- you're saying that you
- 24 -- you don't --
- 25 (Laughter.)

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1
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- you don't
 2
      -- you can just go in because it's mobile and
      they got it in there somehow; they can get it
 3
      out? So you don't recognize a distinction
 4
      between the curtilage and the house for the
 5
      purposes of the vehicles that are mobile?
 6
 7
               MR. COX:
                         The Court has laid down a
      categorical exception. If you were to draw a
 8
 9
      line, we think the most sensible place to do it
      would be the bright-line of the house because
10
      it is used in other Fourth Amendment
11
12
      jurisprudence.
               It doesn't need to reach that here.
13
14
      There are arguments that the mobility stays the
15
      same and the other justifications for the
      automobile exception stay the same, whether
16
17
      it's inside the house or outside the house, but
      if you need to draw a line, that is a sensible
18
19
      place to do it, not at the curtilage.
20
               JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I'm sorry.
                                                I -- I
21
2.2
               JUSTICE ALITO: But, Mr. Cox, you know
23
      the -- the Fourth Amendment says the people
24
      have the right to be secure in their homes,
      papers, persons, and effects. So in the
25
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1 curtilage -- the curtilage issue goes to the
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- 2 question of whether it is a search of the home.
- 3 If it's not in the curtilage -- curtilage, then
- 4 it's not a search of the home, the Fourth
- 5 Amendment doesn't apply.
- But once you get beyond that, it is a
- 7 search of the home, the ultimate Fourth
- 8 Amendment question is always: Is it a
- 9 reasonable search? And that's where we are
- 10 here. Is it reasonable? It's a balancing of
- 11 interests. That's what reasonableness meant in
- 12 -- at the end of the 18th century; it's what it
- means today.
- 14 And so you have to grapple with the
- 15 real privacy interests that are involved in the
- 16 case versus the other considerations; namely,
- 17 the mobility of the automobile. And that, I
- 18 understand your argument to be, is why it's
- 19 reasonable to draw a distinction between an
- 20 enclosed place like the house or garage and an
- 21 open place like a driveway, even if it
- technically falls within the curtilage.
- MR. COX: That -- that's correct.
- JUSTICE BREYER: A porch is --
- 25 MR. COX: And the search that occurred

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1 here was very reasonable. It was limited in
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- 2 scope --
- 3 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You see the
- 4 problem I have is that the court below didn't
- 5 do this. It basically said -- the absolute
- 6 rule, not a balancing test. It said you can
- 7 search any place where a car is, because that's
- 8 what the automobile exception permits.
- 9 But that's a very broad statement that
- 10 would permit the search of the garage or the
- 11 automobile inside the house. You have a very
- 12 strong argument and so would the court below if
- it had said: Given the nature of this driver's
- 14 reckless elusion of the police previously,
- 15 exigent circumstances existed in this case, all
- 16 right? Or -- or something like we don't know
- where the owner is and he could come back
- immediately and get the car.
- 19 But that's not the analysis the court
- 20 made.
- MR. COX: That's true. The Court of
- 22 Appeals of Virginia did decide it on exigency
- grounds because Mr. Collins had been alerted to
- the police's interest in this vehicle.
- 25 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It didn't reach

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1 exigency. It said only the automobile
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- 2 exception permits the search of any car, no
- 3 matter where it is in the home.
- 4 MR. COX: The Supreme Court of
- 5 Virginia had found that. But the Court of
- 6 Appeals of Virginia below them had decided on
- 7 exigency grounds. The supreme court --
- 8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Yes, but the --
- 9 the supreme court --
- 10 MR. COX: That's right. And they
- 11 didn't make --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- which is the
- 13 court we're reviewing --
- MR. COX: -- they didn't make its own
- 15 exigency analysis. That is another ground on
- 16 which we win. We'd rather win on the
- 17 categorical exception, but we -- we clearly
- 18 think that there are exigent circumstances here
- 19 beyond the categorical exigency in the
- 20 automobile exception that --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: Well, that would be
- 22 a question for remand because it wasn't reached
- 23 by the Virginia Supreme Court.
- MR. COX: We would -- we would be
- 25 confident if -- if it were remanded that we

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1 would prevail on that, yes, Your Honor.
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- 2 Officer Rhodes had probable cause
- 3 before he ever stepped foot on the driveway to
- 4 know that this vehicle was stolen. The Supreme
- 5 Court of Virginia in its opinion, Pet. App 15,
- 6 said that Officer Rhodes had probable cause to
- 7 believe it was stolen and there was testimony
- 8 in the record by Officer Rhodes to support the
- 9 fact that he did know it was stolen.
- 10 And --
- JUSTICE GINSBURG: You say if there's
- 12 probable cause to get a warrant, then you don't
- 13 need a warrant, and that's the automobile
- 14 exception.
- 15 Are there -- is there any other
- 16 exception like that where the test of whether
- 17 you need -- if you have probable cause, forget
- 18 it, forget the warrant, that probable cause
- 19 alone is enough?
- 20 MR. COX: Well, I think under a plain
- view you'd have to have some -- some probable
- 22 cause to believe that what you were say --
- 23 seeing was contraband or otherwise evidence of
- 24 crime. So I think there -- there is some
- analysis that has to go into knowing that it's

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1 --
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- JUSTICE KENNEDY: Well, the -- the
- 3 fact that this motorcycle was in plain view,
- 4 subject to the tarp being on it, was a factor
- 5 in the decision by the Supreme Court of the
- 6 State of Virginia, was it not?
- 7 MR. COX: I -- I think --
- 8 JUSTICE KENNEDY: I -- I thought they
- 9 -- I thought they relied upon the fact that it
- 10 was in plain view with -- with the tarp on it.
- 11 MR. COX: I think that is
- mentioned, but I think the probable cause that
- 13 he -- that existed was formed, at least in
- part, by the comparison of the photograph on
- the Facebook page and when Officer Rhodes
- 16 walked up --
- 17 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But --
- 18 MR. COX: -- stood at the end of the
- 19 driveway and could see the same thing.
- 20 JUSTICE KENNEDY: But it was in plain
- 21 view?
- MR. COX: It was.
- JUSTICE KENNEDY: It's not as if there
- 24 was a closed garage and they went and opened
- 25 the garage?

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1 MR. COX: That's right. And he
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- 2 wouldn't -- he wouldn't be able to go up to the
- 3 edge of the garage, assuming there was
- 4 curtilage out there, and look in to see if it
- 5 was in there. The probable cause was formed
- 6 before he ever stepped foot on the driveway.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Cox, was there one
- 8 search here or were there two searches here?
- 9 MR. COX: We submit that there was --
- 10 there was one search.
- 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: The search of the
- 12 motorcycle?
- MR. COX: That's right.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: But why is that? Why
- isn't there the search of the motorcycle -- but
- there's really the search of the curtilage; it
- 17 happened to be for the motorcycle, but it's the
- 18 search of the curtilage, it's a different
- 19 search entirely.
- 20 MR. COX: We -- we look at it as one
- 21 search because it's the object of the search
- that you are entitled to search, whether it's
- 23 under a warrant or under a warrant exception.
- 24 And you look at it by -- you know, it's not a
- 25 separate search for each access point that you

- 1 -- you go to.
- 2 You wouldn't have gotten two warrants
- 3 if you had gone to a magistrate. You wouldn't
- 4 get a warrant to search the motorcycle and then
- 5 another warrant to actually cross the driveway
- 6 to get there.
- 7 So we see it as -- as one search for
- 8 that reason.
- 9 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, does -- does
- 10 that mean you, without a warrant, that you
- always have access to a place if there's a
- 12 reason that you can seize something that you
- 13 might find within the place?
- MR. COX: I'm hesitant to speak beyond
- 15 the automobile exception, but I think the
- 16 automobile exception would give you that, that
- 17 ability, unless there was some other rule that
- 18 prevented you from doing it, such as a rule
- 19 that the automobile exception doesn't apply in
- the house.
- 21 And I'll say that, to go back to
- Justice Gorsuch's questions about the original
- 23 understanding of this, all along the
- justifications for the vehicle exception have
- 25 been based in the contradistinction between

- 1 vehicles and houses or dwellings.
- 2 At first it was the difference in
- 3 mobility, but then later in -- in cases like
- 4 Cady and Cardwell and Carney, they also speak
- of the reduced expectations of privacy that you
- 6 have in a vehicle as compared to a fixed
- 7 dwelling or a building.
- 8 So, if the Court were to draw a line,
- 9 it would -- it would certainly have some --
- some healthy pedigree in the Court's previous
- 11 decisions.
- 12 Unless there are further questions,
- 13 thank you.
- 14 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, Mr.
- 15 Cox.
- Mr. Fitzgerald, four minutes
- 17 remaining.
- 18 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF MATTHEW A. FITZGERALD
- 19 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER
- MR. FITZGERALD: Thank you. Just a
- 21 few points in rebuttal here.
- 22 So the curtilage is protected as part
- of the home. And if we look back, historically
- speaking, the automobile exception is born at a
- 25 traffic stop in the 1920s.

1	The automobile exception, as it is			
2	created, makes sense in that context. But the			
3	automobile exception has grown. It's become a			
4	categorical exception. We no longer look for			
5	exigency on a case-by-case basis. And now the			
6	automobile exception is literally knocking at			
7	the door of the house.			
8	And the question is whether to apply			
9	this exception, created based on exigent			
10	circumstances in 1925, to a search of the			
11	curtilage of a home.			
12	And now, on the state's argument,			
13	even even their backup argument, even what			
14	they give up, there easily could have been			
15	probable cause to think that this motorcycle			
16	was at this residence if it were around behind			
17	the house, if the driveway went just a little			
18	bit farther.			
19	And it should not be that searching			
20	for an automobile, or what might be in an			
21	automobile, would get police around a house			
22	like that, around to the back door, where there			
23	might be, I mean, in this case, the side door,			
24	a sliding door, where if you're standing where			
25	this motorcycle is you can see directly into			

1 the side door of the house and you can see this 2 just a little bit at the petition appendix page 3 112. The curtilage is an area that is 4 intimately linked to the home. This Court said 5 in Jardines, as well as in Ciraolo, it's 6 7 intimately linked to the home, both physically and psychologically, and it's where 8 9 expectations of privacy are most heightened. We submit that the clear, bright-line 10 rule for officers, which is that when they go 11 to a known address to look for contraband, even 12 readily-mobile contraband, they bring a warrant 13 with them, should apply when they're going to a 14 15 known address to look for a vehicle as well. And if there are no further questions, 16 17 respectfully I ask this Court to reverse. CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you, 18 counsel. The case is submitted. 19 (Whereupon, at 12:03 p.m., the case 20

2.2

21

was submitted.)

23

24

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