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IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
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RIMINI STREET, INC., ET AL.,)
Petitioners,)
v.) No. 17-1625
ORACLE USA, INC., ET AL.,)
Respondents.)
- - - - -
Washington, D.C.
Monday, January 14, 2019

The above-entitled matter came on for oral argument before the Supreme Court of the United States at 11:08 a.m.

APPEARANCES:
MARK A. PERRY, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of the Petitioners.
ALLON KEDEM, Assistant to the Solicitor General, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.; for the United States, as amicus curiae, supporting the Petitioners.
PAUL D. CLEMENT, ESQ., Washington, D.C.; on behalf of the Respondents.

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (11:08 a.m.)

3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: We'll hear
4 argument next this morning in Case 17-1625,
5 Rimini Street, Incorporated versus Oracle USA.

6 Mr. Perry.

7 ORAL ARGUMENT OF MARK A. PERRY

8 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS

9 MR. PERRY: Thank you, Mr. Chief
10 Justice, and may it please the Court:

11 The term "costs" is a term of art in
12 federal law. This Court has held as much three
13 times: in Crawford Fitting, in Casey, and in
14 Murphy.

15 It is defined in Section 1920 of Title
16 28, and the Court also has held that three
17 times in those three same cases.

18 In the Taniguchi case, the Court's
19 most recent decision in this line, the Court
20 emphasized that "costs" in federal law does not
21 have its ordinary meaning but, rather, has this
22 specialized meaning.

23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, what
24 about full costs? I mean, that's the issue,
25 right?

1 MR. PERRY: Your Honor, it is.
2 Congress can, of course, override the default
3 definition, and when it does so, it must do it
4 explicitly. We have here two words, "full
5 costs."

6 We actually agree, my friend
7 Mr. Clement and I, on "full." It means all or
8 all that can be contained or complete or
9 something of that nature.

10 The dispute is on "costs" because just
11 as the full moon doesn't tell us anything about
12 Mars and Venus, "full costs," we submit,
13 doesn't tell the court anything about fees and
14 expenses.

15 And Congress has been careful in
16 separating out those concepts, and this Court
17 has been careful in separating them out.
18 Murphy, the case that involved costs under the
19 IDEA, specifically contrasted the word "costs"
20 with the word "expenses" and said "expenses" is
21 open-ended and might include travel expenses
22 and salaries and so forth, whereas costs, we
23 know, are these things under Section 1920.

24 And in Murphy, the Court told all of
25 us, the lower courts and the bar, and Congress,

1 what it takes to override that presumption.
2 The Court said, and this is a quote from page
3 301, "No statute will be construed as
4 authorizing the taxation of witness fees as
5 costs unless the statute refers explicitly to
6 witness fees."

7 So here, in Section 505, Your Honors,
8 we have a statute that does not refer
9 explicitly to witness fees and, under a plain
10 application of Murphy, cannot authorize witness
11 fees.

12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Perry, I -- I
13 understand all that case law. I think your
14 adversary would argue, number one, that full
15 costs in the Copyright Act predated -- predated
16 both the definitional inclusion of costs in the
17 federal statutes and that it had a history, a
18 meaning, independent of what happened later.

19 You haven't addressed how you get rid
20 of that independent meaning argument.

21 MR. PERRY: If I could address --

22 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Number two, I
23 think your adversary pointed us to three
24 statutes of many that have the word "full
25 costs." Give me a meaning to those three

1 statutes that would give effect to the word
2 "full."

3 MR. PERRY: Justice Sotomayor, if I
4 can take those in reverse order. Full costs,
5 we submit, means all costs. And let me
6 contrast that with section --

7 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: But it's
8 discretionary under both the Copyright Act now
9 and under the statute.

10 MR. PERRY: Yes, Your Honor, but in
11 Crawford Fitting, the Court said the discretion
12 is the on/off switch -- the question -- under
13 54(d), whether or not to give costs. That is
14 the discretion. And let me contrast it --

15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: The government
16 hasn't excepted that yet, though.

17 MR. PERRY: Well, Section 2412, which
18 this Court identified in the Baker Botts case
19 as the clearest example of a cost statute that
20 overrides the presumption, says that costs in a
21 government case can be awarded in whole or in
22 part -- Congress understands that concept --
23 whereas, in a copyright case, they're awarded
24 full costs. It means all costs.

25 And -- and we know from history that

1 that's what courts did. And we also know, to
2 go back to your first part of your question,
3 Your Honor, is that the courts did not award
4 any non-taxable expenditures. From 1831 to
5 1976, there are 858 copyright cases awarding
6 costs. Not one case has ever awarded any cost
7 not on a statutory schedule under either state
8 law or federal law.

9 That tells the Court that our
10 construction is correct historically and my
11 opponent's construction has no historical
12 support. There is not a single case that has
13 ever read the statute the way the Ninth Circuit
14 read it in the Twentieth Century Fox case. In
15 fact, that is the first case in the history of
16 the United States --

17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Could you point me
18 to where in your brief or an amici accounted
19 for those 800 cases?

20 MR. PERRY: Your Honor, we don't have
21 them all listed out. We pointed out in the
22 reply brief that my friends on the other side
23 and all of their amici had not cited a single
24 case on their point. And to confirm that we
25 were right, I went through and had my team read

1 every single one of them.

2 (Laughter.)

3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: The -- your --
4 your argument, though, would assume there are a
5 lot of cases where, although costs were
6 awarded, they weren't all costs. How many of
7 those do you have?

8 MR. PERRY: We don't have any of those
9 either, Your Honor. It appears that costs --

10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, then why
11 would Congress be worried about saying "full
12 costs"? Nobody's ever apparently ever awarded
13 fewer than few costs or less than few costs.

14 MR. PERRY: Your Honor, we think it
15 came out of the English copyright statute,
16 which says full costs. It's a -- it's an --
17 it's a historical artifact, if you will. We
18 went back through the history, though, and part
19 of the point of the historical analysis is to
20 see whether that phrase had some specialized
21 meaning, either in England or in the States, as
22 being beyond scheduled costs or fee bill costs.
23 And the answer is no. There's absolutely no
24 authority for that.

25 And so we have this -- this language

1 that is antiquated, but it has been carried
2 through. Our interpretation does give it
3 meaning. It is all costs, full costs, every
4 cost to which you're entitled under the
5 statutes. And that's all we typically ask of
6 language.

7 My friends, on the other hand --

8 JUSTICE KAGAN: If you're right, why
9 have the provision at all? Wouldn't 1920 do
10 the trick?

11 MR. PERRY: Well, Your Honor, there's
12 208 federal cost statutes; 207 of them don't
13 reference 1920 either. Congress, in other
14 words, makes cost provisions and expense
15 provisions and fee provisions and other things
16 in many, many statutes, which would all be in
17 one sense redundant of 1920.

18 This Court dealt with that in the Marx
19 case in the context of Rule 54(d) and said that
20 kind of redundancy is to be expected with
21 respect to cost statutes because Congress has
22 them here.

23 And there's a good reason for it, Your
24 Honor. When Congress wants to change what a
25 cost is -- for example, Taniguchi involved the

1 interpreters -- Congress can amend 1920 and add
2 interpreters, or it could take out e-discovery,
3 or it could do whatever it wants, and then that
4 propagates out through 208 statutes
5 automatically because what is a cost in -- in
6 1920 goes out through all the cost statutes.

7 Under the alternative construction, we
8 would -- Congress would have to go through 208
9 times and amend all of them. And, of course,
10 this Court would have to go through 208 times
11 and construe all of them to figure out what's a
12 cost or not a cost.

13 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, that's a good
14 reason for having 1920. It's not a good reason
15 for repeating yourself.

16 MR. PERRY: Well, it doesn't repeat
17 itself either, Your Honor. 1920 says a court
18 may tax as costs the following things. So it
19 defines the taxable costs and the power of a
20 federal court. 54(d) says a court should award
21 the prevailing party costs.

22 505 doesn't say either of those. 505
23 says the court may allow as a recovery costs,
24 full costs, to any party. Under 505, the court
25 can award costs to the non-prevailing party.

1 That's a total departure from 1920. That --
2 that is not authorized by 1920, in fact. So
3 Section 505 has much independent work to do.

4 The second sentence of 505 also
5 authorizes attorneys' fees. This, again, is a
6 textual, structural point that gives weight to
7 our side and not the other, because Congress
8 understood that full costs did not include
9 attorneys' fees, and when it explicitly
10 provided for it, that entire sentence is
11 rendered superfluous under Mr. Clement's
12 definition.

13 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, it says -- the
14 second sentence says that the -- the court may
15 award reasonable attorneys' fees as part of the
16 costs. So what does that do to your argument
17 that "costs" has a very narrow meaning that
18 can't include attorneys' fees?

19 MR. PERRY: It -- it confirms it,
20 Justice Alito. That was the exact same
21 formulation in Murphy and in Casey, as part of
22 the costs. So, when -- when this Court says
23 Congress can explicitly override 1920, it's by
24 adding additional things as costs.

25 To say a fee is a cost is to say it

1 wouldn't be in the absence of an express
2 congressional direction. And, here, we have in
3 the second sentence that very express
4 congressional direction that is required.

5 By calling the fees a cost for those
6 purposes, it's making clear, among other
7 things, that expert witness fees are not costs
8 because, otherwise, they would have to be
9 separately provided for as well.

10 In fact, Your Honor, there is no
11 statute in the U.S. code that provides all
12 expenses of litigation, and for good reason.
13 We have the American rule. We've had the
14 American rule since at least 1796 that says, in
15 general, each party bears its own fees, costs,
16 expenses, burdens.

17 It is -- it is -- the background
18 presumption is that costs are not shifted.
19 Fees are not shifted. Expenses are not
20 shifted. And this Court over and over again
21 has required an explicit statement, a clear
22 statement, an unmistakable statement from
23 Congress to invade that common law principle,
24 to invade the American rule, and to change the
25 background presumption.

1 We have here a phrase, "full costs,"
2 that is not explicit. The fact that we're here
3 today shows that it's not explicit. But it
4 does contain a word that this Court has
5 construed over and over and over again.

6 Given that approach, in other words,
7 not including fees, not including discovery,
8 not including travel, not including salaries,
9 unless Congress were to explicitly say so,
10 would be consistent with the way the Court has
11 construed every other statute.

12 JUSTICE BREYER: Is there a -- I read
13 in the briefs, and I don't fully -- I want to
14 be certain I grasped the argument, that there
15 was a period of time many, many, many years ago
16 when a court in awarding costs, a federal
17 court, would look to state statutes, and the
18 state statutes provided different amounts and
19 didn't just repeat what we have today.

20 MR. PERRY: Correct.

21 JUSTICE BREYER: And then I thought
22 that you had argued that, well, the word "full
23 costs" means don't just look -- there are other
24 things they don't look to the state statutes,
25 but if state statute A awarded 33 cents and

1 state statute B awarded \$4,000, it would mean
2 that you go and look to the actual cost.

3 MR. PERRY: Our argument is a little
4 different than that, Justice Breyer.

5 JUSTICE BREYER: What is that? That's
6 what I'm trying to find out.

7 MR. PERRY: In 1831, when state law
8 would have applied, many states had gradated
9 fee schedules. They had these very complicated
10 fee bills. And in New York, for example, you
11 could get half cost, double cost, costs and a
12 half, treble costs. And what full costs, we --
13 we think, one of the things it may have meant
14 -- and, again, this is -- we're interpreting
15 here -- was costs, right, full costs of the
16 action.

17 The second thing it likely was doing,
18 and what Congress told us in 1909 it was doing,
19 was to override the statutory threshold on cost
20 recoveries in federal court, established in the
21 Judiciary Act of 1789.

22 At that time, if the prevailing party
23 didn't win \$500, it didn't get its costs at
24 all.

25 And Congress said: No, in a copyright

1 case, if you win, you can get your full costs
2 pursuant to the state schedule. So those are
3 historical examples of what Congress may well
4 have been doing.

5 And, again, the English experience,
6 where full cost appears since the statute of
7 it --

8 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: When I read this
9 argument, the first prong by you, I thought
10 could it mean full costs, 1920, without the
11 limits of 1821?

12 MR. PERRY: Your Honor, it -- it
13 unlikely means that since 1920 and 1821 were
14 separated by the codifiers. If you look at the
15 -- you know, the enrolled bills, going back to
16 the fee bill of 1853, that was a unitary
17 schedule of the allowable costs and amounts.

18 As the -- as the statute has been
19 codified, they've been separated into different
20 sections, but I think they all perform the same
21 function.

22 Certainly, you know, in the -- in the
23 19th Century cases, applying the fee bill, The
24 Baltimore, for example, in Day versus
25 Woodworth, the Court looked at the -- at the --

1 at the fee schedule as a unitary fashion.

2 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: No, I -- I
3 understand that, but I still don't -- I'm still
4 trying to give meaning to "full."

5 MR. PERRY: Certainly, Your Honor.

6 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: And -- and so 1821
7 sets certain limits. If we read "full costs"
8 to not invoke those limits but just to permit
9 awards of what's specified in 1920, would that
10 take care of your problem?

11 MR. PERRY: I think that would give
12 meaning to the word "full." I think 1821 would
13 remain binding. I think the easier way to look
14 at it would be, say, for example, on witness
15 fees, 1821 says \$40 a day. Full cost means \$40
16 a day. In a normal case, a court could choose
17 to give \$20 or \$10 or \$5, but under a full cost
18 provision, it has to give the full \$40 because
19 that's the maximum Congress has specified.

20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But you -- you
21 haven't found a single case where that was an
22 issue?

23 MR. PERRY: Your Honor, it -- it
24 hasn't been litigated, in part because I think
25 cost bills generally are approved as a matter

1 of course. Remember, until just a few years
2 ago, they -- they were approved on one day's
3 notice by the clerk.

4 I mean, most of us don't even litigate
5 cost bills because the -- the -- the cost to
6 oppose them is greater than the cost bill
7 itself. It's only in a case like this one
8 where many tens of millions of dollars have
9 been added in for non-cost expenses that would
10 get to litigation of these points.

11 So there is not -- to directly answer
12 your question, Mr. Chief Justice, there's not a
13 great deal of litigation on either side of the
14 -- of the question. We can see --

15 JUSTICE BREYER: Could you help me
16 with just a fact, which may or may not be
17 relevant, but in the SG's brief, the costs that
18 you were searching was about \$5 million.
19 That's your view of what they're entitled to.

20 MR. PERRY: Three and a half million,
21 but yeah.

22 JUSTICE BREYER: Three and a half
23 million now? All right. Three and a half.
24 And what they want is 17 and a half million.
25 Does that 17 and a half million include

1 attorneys' fees?

2 MR. PERRY: No, Your Honor.

3 Attorneys' fees were dealt with. There's a 20
4 some million dollar attorneys' fees award
5 that's entirely separate from that.

6 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. So it's
7 20 million in attorneys' fees. It's three and
8 a half million in everybody concedes.

9 MR. PERRY: Taxable costs.

10 JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah, and then they
11 want an additional 17.6 million more?

12 MR. PERRY: And they were awarded
13 12.8 million because of some deductions.

14 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. So they
15 -- so it's 12.8 plus -- this is -- this is a
16 big amount here -- so it's about 32,
17 \$35 million in costs. And what was the damage
18 award?

19 MR. PERRY: Thirty-five million
20 dollars, Your Honor.

21 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So the entire
22 35 million goes to -- to cost? It cost 35
23 million to get 35 million?

24 MR. PERRY: The costs and -- and
25 expenses asserted by Oracle in this case were

1 greater than the damages awarded by the jury,
2 that is correct.

3 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. Now I
4 don't know if that's relevant, but it does seem
5 a problem, if not in this case. But what --
6 what -- what -- what -- what is this -- somehow
7 there's something odd about this, but -- but I
8 -- but I don't know what.

9 MR. PERRY: Your Honor, I will say the
10 only thing odd about it is that this award was
11 made. If we go back to the American rule and
12 the plain statement requirement, that
13 \$12.8 million should be taken off the ledger,
14 which would make the whole thing a little more
15 fair for everybody.

16 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, maybe. I mean,
17 they spent the money.

18 MR. PERRY: Your Honor, they were --

19 JUSTICE BREYER: They might have
20 gotten more.

21 MR. PERRY: They were seeking hundreds
22 and hundreds and hundreds of millions, and they
23 lost almost everything, is the answer, and then
24 they tried to externalize, to use Justice
25 Gorsuch's word, the -- the -- the -- all the

1 expenses they spent on unsuccessful claims,
2 they tried to shift that back to the party that
3 actually won. We won 25 of 26 claims asserted
4 in this case, and they're trying to make us pay
5 all the costs for all the things they lost.
6 That's what's really happening here.

7 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay.

8 MR. PERRY: Thank you, Your Honor.

9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
10 counsel.

11 Mr. Kedem.

12 ORAL ARGUMENT OF ALLON KEDEM FOR THE
13 UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
14 SUPPORTING THE PETITIONERS

15 MR. KEDEM: Mr. Chief Justice, and may
16 it please the Court:

17 This Court has treated "costs" as a
18 term of art defined by the list in
19 Section 1920. That formula helps courts and
20 litigants navigate more than 200 statutes that
21 use the term. It gives Congress a clear
22 baseline against which to legislate and
23 respects history because federal law has always
24 defined by statute the costs that could be
25 shifted between parties in cases at common law.

1 Let's start with the history. Justice
2 Sotomayor, you asked a question about the
3 priority of enactment, the fact that this
4 statute was originally enacted in 1831, even
5 though the current version of Section 1920 is
6 much more recent.

7 What this Court said in Crawford
8 Fitting is that the priority of enactment does
9 not matter. Section 1920 presumptively applies
10 in all civil cases, regardless of when those
11 provisions were adopted.

12 Going back to the original history,
13 what is it that the term "full costs" was
14 enacted in order to do? We think that it does
15 a couple things.

16 Five days after setting up the federal
17 judiciary, Congress enacted the Process Act,
18 telling federal courts to look to state fee
19 bills in order to determine which costs could
20 be shifted between litigants. That was the
21 regime that prevailed at the time that this
22 provision was added to the Copyright Act in
23 1831.

24 There were two general types of state
25 fee bill provisions that would have made the

1 word "full" in full costs necessary, and we
2 give a couple examples on page 17 of our brief,
3 Footnote 1.

4 The first type of case are statutes
5 that impose some sort of limitation on costs.
6 So an example would be the first statute, a
7 Kentucky statute providing "the plaintiff shall
8 recover his full costs although the damages do
9 not exceed 40 shillings." There were a number
10 of statutes that said, if your damages were not
11 above a certain threshold, you would get no
12 more cost than damages. Forty shillings was a
13 typical amount.

14 So this provision tells you that, even
15 if your damages are below that type of
16 threshold, nevertheless, you get your full
17 costs.

18 The second type of case is a case of a
19 statutory multiplier. So the Mississippi
20 statute, for instance, provided a landlord can
21 recover "double the value of rent in arrear and
22 distrained for with full costs of the suit."
23 So you get double damages along with your full
24 costs.

25 And that's actually the sense in which

1 we think the 1831 Copyright Act used the term
2 "full costs" because, remember, that for an
3 infringement, half of any forfeiture would go
4 to the government and the other half would go
5 to the plaintiff, along with their full costs.

6 So the word "full" in that phrase
7 tells you, even though the plaintiff is only
8 getting half of the recovery, nevertheless, the
9 plaintiff gets their full costs.

10 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, in 1831,
11 according to your argument, federal law didn't
12 really care -- didn't -- didn't have its own
13 definition of what a cost would be. It --
14 costs were whatever the states regarded as
15 costs, right?

16 MR. KEDEM: It wasn't a definitional
17 provision.

18 JUSTICE ALITO: Whatever it -- was in
19 the -- and so, if I looked at every single one
20 of the state fee schedules in 1831, what would
21 I find?

22 MR. KEDEM: So you would see --

23 JUSTICE ALITO: Would I find that they
24 all agree on what the concept of a cost is, or
25 would I find that some of them include maybe

1 the sort of things that were compensated here?

2 MR. KEDEM: So I think you'd find two
3 things that are significant.

4 First of all, you would not see any
5 discovery fees and you would certainly not see
6 any expert witness fees. As far as we're
7 aware, there is no fee bill from the
8 19th Century that awarded expert witness fees.

9 The other thing that you would see is
10 that they're comprehensive. They go on in
11 great detail and precisely spell out all of the
12 different rates for the various things that
13 could be taxed by the clerk of the court.

14 And that's significant because, in
15 1853, Congress passed its own federal fee bill,
16 which was also incredibly thorough. It goes on
17 for nine pages and spells out all of the
18 different compensable categories.

19 And what this Court said in Crawford
20 Fitting, the reason that it's treating
21 Section 1920 as a definitional provision, even
22 though, if you look at it, it's not
23 unambiguously written as a definitional
24 provision, is that Congress's intent was
25 apparently comprehensive and exhaustive. In

1 other words, Congress did not want to leave
2 anything undefined.

3 To buy Respondents' story, you would
4 have to believe that, in 1831, even though
5 Congress had never left things undefined
6 before, it created a new regime, different from
7 the one set up by the Process Act, of full
8 compensation, essentially forcing federal
9 courts to create their own copyright-specific
10 fee bills, and that it achieved that objective
11 simply by adding the word "full" in front of
12 "costs."

13 And it's not as if the term "full
14 costs" in Anglo-American law had some separate
15 understood definition. We point you to a
16 number of authorities interpreting statutes
17 under English law. Now some of the cases are
18 before 1831, some of them are after 1831, but
19 they're all interpreting statutes that are from
20 the 1600s and the 1700s, saying what those
21 statutes has always been understood to mean,
22 including in the context of the copyright case.

23 There is a statute called -- there's a
24 case called Avery, which interprets the
25 Copyright Act of -- I think it was 1842 or

1 something like that, and it says there is no
2 understood distinction between costs that can
3 be awarded in a statute that mentions full
4 costs and one that just mentions costs.

5 And that's true in the Copyright Act
6 going back to the statute of Anne in 1709,
7 which is the predecessor to all early American
8 copyright law.

9 Now, Justice Breyer, you made the
10 point that it's very expensive in many cases to
11 litigate these issues. You're going to need
12 experts; experts cost money.

13 And that is true. To some extent, the
14 baseline rule that Congress has created and
15 this Court has observed means that you're going
16 to undercompensate people because cost is
17 almost always a fraction of your total
18 litigation expenses.

19 The same argument was made in Murphy,
20 that, for instance, a parent who wants to sue
21 under the IDEA will have a lot of trouble
22 making their case unless they can hire an
23 expert, which is expensive. The same argument
24 was made in Casey about civil rights
25 plaintiffs. If it didn't carry the day in that

1 case and in those contexts, then certainly it
2 shouldn't win here in the copyright context.

3 But, you know, Congress can respond in
4 exactly the way that it did to this Court's
5 decision in Casey. In Casey, this Court said
6 you can't get your expert fees in certain civil
7 rights cases. And so Congress passed a statute
8 adding expert fees to the list of compensable
9 expenses under Section 1988, which governs
10 those civil -- same civil rights cases.

11 The benefit of the Crawford Fitting
12 formula is that it provides clear instructions
13 to Congress to tell them if you want to include
14 something that's not already listed in
15 Section 1920, here's how you do it. And as my
16 friend pointed out, it propagates all the way
17 through if you amend Section 1920 itself, or
18 you can create a specific provision.

19 Now you might think all of this
20 history is a bit of a muddle. Another benefit
21 of the Crawford Fitting rule is that you don't
22 have to perform a historical exegesis every
23 time you come across a new provision with
24 slightly different language. And remember that
25 cost provisions are incredibly variable. They

1 talk about costs, costs for the proceeding,
2 court costs, costs of the action, full costs,
3 all costs.

4 Justice Sotomayor, you brought up four
5 additional statutes enacted more recently than
6 this one which mention full costs, and you
7 asked: Why did they do that?

8 So, first of all, let's just say --
9 put the point that all of them deal with
10 intellectual property in some fashion, so
11 chances are they were just copied from
12 Section 505.

13 But they all also specifically mention
14 attorneys' fees, which is a big problem on
15 Respondents' side because, if full costs
16 already meant total compensation, there would
17 have been no point in expressly adding
18 attorneys' fees.

19 Now Respondents' response to that is,
20 well, in 1909, when the American rule wasn't
21 well established, it was necessary to clarify
22 that attorneys' fees were included in full
23 costs. That doesn't work even in 1909 because
24 the copyright statute as it was enacted then
25 made full costs mandatory but attorneys' fees

1 discretionary.

2 So, clearly, Congress wasn't just
3 clarifying that the latter was included in the
4 former.

5 JUSTICE ALITO: Well, Mr. Clement may
6 have a surplusage problem, but you have a
7 surplusage problem too, don't you?

8 MR. KEDEM: So we think that --

9 JUSTICE ALITO: "Full" -- it means
10 nothing.

11 MR. KEDEM: Yeah. So starting in 1976
12 when the provision was switched from
13 discretionary to mandatory, then there is some
14 redundancy with the authority that already
15 existed under Section 1920.

16 First of all, Congress generally
17 doesn't tinker with existing language unless
18 there was some reason to think that it was a
19 problem, and, as my friend said, it was not
20 until 2005 that the Copyright -- that anyone
21 thought that the Copyright Act included
22 something beyond what was already included in
23 Section 1920, so there was no reason at that
24 time for Congress to think there was a problem.

25 And, to be honest, had Congress taken

1 the word "full" out of the statute in 1976, no
2 doubt someone would have used that fact to
3 argue, well, clearly, Congress was displeased
4 with the broad copyright cost awards and,
5 therefore, would have used it to argue for a
6 narrower rule.

7 But I think the probably most
8 unsatisfying but most adequate answer --

9 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: How would -- how
10 would that have worked? That wouldn't have
11 worked.

12 MR. KEDEM: Well, I think you could
13 have argued in a case like this one that even
14 for the costs that are authorized in
15 Section 1920, you can't get the full amount of
16 it or you can't presumptively get the full
17 amount of it because Congress took the word
18 "full" out, so, clearly, it wanted to cut back
19 on the costs that were awardable. I'm not
20 saying it would have won, but that was an
21 argument that someone might have made. But I
22 think --

23 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: You didn't adopt
24 your adversary's on-and-off switch for the
25 meaning of "full."

1 MR. KEDEM: That -- that's correct.
2 That's the one place, I think, that we're
3 different.

4 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So explain --

5 MR. KEDEM: So -- yeah. It -- it's
6 not at issue here and it wasn't litigated, but,
7 you know, we think it is plausibly -- textually
8 plausible to adopt that reading, but probably,
9 if Congress wanted to put district courts to
10 the unnatural choice of all or nothing, then it
11 would have used clearer language. But the
12 problem doesn't go away on Respondents' side.
13 It gets worse because the costs are that much
14 greater.

15 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
16 counsel.

17 Mr. Clement.

18 ORAL ARGUMENT OF PAUL D. CLEMENT
19 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENTS

20 MR. CLEMENT: Mr. Chief Justice, and
21 may it please the Court:

22 The authorization in Section 505 of
23 the Copyright Act for the recovery of full
24 costs means what it says and authorizes the
25 recovery of full costs, not just a narrow

1 subset of costs set forth in Section 1920 as
2 limited by Section 1821.

3 The contrary reading not only renders
4 the word "full" completely superfluous, but it
5 also effectively renders the first sentence of
6 Section 505 without any meaning and renders
7 three other federal statutes that authorize the
8 discretionary award of full costs meaningless
9 the day they were enacted.

10 There is no reason to adopt a
11 construction that has those kind of
12 consequences in rendering other statutory
13 provisions superfluous. The better course is
14 to say that "full" means full, rather than
15 nothing at all.

16 Now I'd like to start with a response
17 to Justice Alito's question about what we can
18 tell that would have happened between 1831 and
19 1853.

20 Neither side here has a lot of case
21 law to talk about, and that's because in the
22 vast, vast majority of these, and both sides
23 have looked for it, the courts just awarded
24 costs and didn't say another word about it.
25 And sometimes they even awarded costs as part

1 of damages.

2 The -- probably the best case that
3 tells you something about what was going on, at
4 least between 1831 and 1853, is a case called
5 Ferrett against Atwill that's cited by my
6 friends in their brief, and this is Justice
7 Nelson riding on circuit.

8 The Court here -- the -- as -- as a
9 circuit justice, he actually says something
10 about costs because you have a case where,
11 essentially, there are 11 works at issue and
12 there were 11 suits. And the defendant who won
13 and resisted the claim in all 11 suits
14 basically tried to get kind of 11 of
15 everything. And so that required the courts to
16 sort of sort through that.

17 Now I think two things are telling
18 about this opinion. First, in deciding the
19 costs, and this cases arises in New York, the
20 judge -- Justice Nelson doesn't look
21 exclusively to New York law. He looks to New
22 York law for some things, but he also looks to
23 a then extant federal circuit rule to address
24 one of the other items of costs.

25 And so I think he's doing exactly what

1 you expect somebody to do when they have a
2 federal law requirement of full costs but not a
3 lot of other federal law. They look to what
4 little federal law there is, the circuit rule,
5 and then they also look to state practice.

6 But the second thing -- and this is
7 what I think is most directly responsive to
8 Justice Alito's question and I think most
9 important -- is the last item of costs that
10 Justice Nelson awards is "attorney and counsel
11 fees on argument are taxable in each case."

12 Now I assume but I don't know for sure
13 that it may be that under the New York
14 schedule, that those attorneys and counsel's
15 fee were taxable. The opinion doesn't tell us
16 that.

17 But the one thing it tells us
18 absolutely certainly is that Petitioners are
19 dead wrong when they say that between 1831 and
20 1853, full costs would have been well
21 understood by everybody to be limited to party
22 and party costs and not cover something like
23 attorneys and counsel fee for argument.

24 JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Clement --

25 MR. CLEMENT: Sure.

1 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- you agree that if
2 the word "full" wasn't in the statute you would
3 lose?

4 MR. CLEMENT: Absolutely, Your Honor.

5 JUSTICE KAGAN: Okay. So we -- we
6 decided a case earlier this year on the basis
7 of the legal proposition that adjectives modify
8 nouns. Why doesn't that kill you in this case?
9 In other words, "full" can only modify costs as
10 defined in 1920.

11 MR. CLEMENT: So I think that case
12 helps us because it shows that you look at both
13 the adjective and the noun, and I think what
14 the Court didn't have to say there but is
15 absolutely true is sometimes the adjective
16 tells you how the noun is being used.

17 Just to illustrate that the adjective
18 can make a big difference, if you think about
19 the Weyerhaeuser case, and the adjective wasn't
20 critical but was potential, potential habitat,
21 I mean, habitat would still have a meaning, but
22 I think the case would be very different.

23 But I think what's more telling here
24 is I think what the dispute here is we say that
25 Congress in 1831, in 1909, in 1976 used the

1 phrase "full costs" capaciously and used the
2 word "costs" in its ordinary meaning.

3 My friends on the other side say, no,
4 "cost" was being used in a term of art sense.
5 I think you look to the adjective in this case
6 to tell you which of us is right.

7 And I think there are --

8 JUSTICE KAGAN: But that's a strange
9 kind of thing, because you -- we started, you
10 said, if it just said cost, we would all
11 understand that it was the term of art in 1920
12 costs.

13 And then you say that by adding the
14 word "full," rather than to say, look, it
15 really is the full amount of the 1920 costs,
16 don't try slicing and dicing the 1920 costs,
17 rather, you want to use the word "full" to
18 suggest that it's not the 1920 costs we're
19 talking about at all. It's some different kind
20 of costs.

21 MR. CLEMENT: And I don't think that's
22 strange at all, because it's not like some
23 radically different kind of cost. It's the
24 ordinary meaning of costs. And imagine if
25 Congress had used the, I would have thought

1 until I got involved in this case, narrower
2 phrase, non-taxable costs.

3 Now, if Congress had expressly
4 provided for the recovery of non-taxable costs,
5 I would think to a moral certainty that would
6 tell you that Congress is using the word
7 "costs" not in the term of art sense of taxable
8 costs, because I can't imagine Congress meant
9 to say non-taxable taxable costs.

10 It would be a strong indication that
11 Congress used "cost" in its ordinary sense.

12 I think "full" does the exact same
13 thing. And I think, think about it this way:
14 what you're really talking about here is a
15 choice between an ordinary meaning that's
16 broader and a term of art meaning that's
17 narrower.

18 When Congress uses the phrase with the
19 modifier "full," I sure would have thought
20 that's an indication that Congress means to
21 adopt the broader reading and not the narrow
22 reading that is the term of art.

23 And I think if you look at this from
24 every relevant historical standpoint, which I
25 think is 1831, 1909, and 1976, it all points

1 you in favor of the ordinary meaning
2 construction of costs.

3 So, in 1831, the one thing we ought to
4 be able to agree on is Congress was not using
5 costs in 1831 in a narrow sense to refer to
6 some other federal statute that provided a
7 schedule of fees, because there wasn't one for
8 another 20 years.

9 So I assume, consistent with this
10 Court's cases, that when Congress used the term
11 "full costs" in 1831, it was using it in its
12 ordinary meaning, which would have covered all
13 of the costs of litigation, and my friend's
14 efforts to superimpose a narrow party-to-party
15 costs framing on that is simply not borne out
16 by the historical practice, as that Ferrett
17 case shows, and I know it's not a lot, but it's
18 all anybody has.

19 So I think it is clear that, between
20 1831 and 1853, ordinary costs was -- rather,
21 "full cost" was being construed in its ordinary
22 meaning way.

23 Then we get to 1909, a major revision
24 of the statute. Congress carries forward the
25 same term.

1 I understand this Court's basic rule
2 to be that when Congress carries forward the
3 same term, without making any change in it, it
4 still has its meaning from 1831. But Congress
5 does do something interesting in 1909.

6 It uses in the same statute the word
7 "taxable costs" and the word "full costs," or
8 the phrase "full costs." And I think it uses
9 them in contradistinction. Certainly, every
10 principle of statutory construction says that
11 when Congress uses different words in the same
12 statute, you try to find different meanings for
13 them.

14 And, here, I think that basic rule is
15 reinforced because Congress uses the phrase
16 "taxable costs" in a very narrow context for
17 the recovery of certain royalties, and then it
18 makes those taxable costs recovery
19 discretionary.

20 For every other claim under the
21 statute, tax recovery is mandatory and Congress
22 uses the term "full costs." So I think, if you
23 look at it in 1909, you would also give it an
24 ordinary meaning construction. You would also
25 think that Congress was using costs not as a

1 term of art but as a broad, ordinary
2 construction phrase.

3 And then we come to 1976, where my
4 friends in the SG's office have to admit that
5 by making cost recovery discretionary, full
6 cost recovery discretionary, then Congress was
7 essentially under their view rendering the word
8 "full" completely superfluous.

9 And it seems to me, again, if you -- I
10 think the first principle would be, since
11 they're using the same phrase, you go back to
12 the 1831 original public meaning. But even if
13 you look at 1976, I think what you would see
14 there is, in a choice between interpreting
15 costs in the ordinary meaning way and using
16 costs in a term of art way, it is precisely
17 because they want to use terms of -- cost in
18 the term of art sense that they render "full"
19 superfluous, where, if you continue as a
20 constant thread to say "cost" means the
21 ordinary meaning of costs, then "full" is not
22 superfluous.

23 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: They say that your
24 argument makes the second sentence of 505
25 superfluous. Your response?

1 MR. CLEMENT: So I have two basic
2 responses. One you've seen in the brief, which
3 is the argument that, given the American rule
4 and the fact that it took the kind of currency
5 it did, I think, a congressional staffer would
6 be well advised to tell their boss, I think you
7 ought to put in something specific about
8 attorneys' fees here.

9 But I have another argument which I
10 think at the end of the day for the textualists
11 ought to be more compelling, which is at no
12 time in history was the second sentence of the
13 Copyright Act fees provision, in fact,
14 superfluous.

15 So the first relevant period is 1909
16 to 1976, and as my friend from the SG's office
17 points out, in that period, full cost recovery
18 is mandatory, but attorneys' fee recovery is
19 discretionary. So there's no way for Congress
20 not to address attorneys' fees separately if
21 they want to accomplish the goal of keeping
22 attorneys' fees awards discretionary.

23 Then you come to the period 1976 to
24 the present, and then it is also true at that
25 point both awards become discretionary, but the

1 reason the second sentence still isn't
2 superfluous is the first couple of words in the
3 second sentence, "except as otherwise provided
4 by this title."

5 And those words are a signal and
6 respectfully a cross-reference to Section 412.
7 And I think last week you had a case about
8 registration of copyrights. And 412 basically
9 says that if you don't timely register your
10 copyright, you don't get certain remedies under
11 the Act, specifically statutory damages and
12 attorneys' fees, but you still get your full
13 costs.

14 So, even after 1976, Congress had a
15 very good reason to treat attorneys' fees
16 differently from costs. And so, under our
17 construction of the statute, not one word of
18 the statute is superfluous.

19 JUSTICE BREYER: What do you say to,
20 is there -- is there anything that will help
21 me, and I might be unique in this, but I -- I
22 often think that Congress when it uses these
23 words doesn't really think about it.

24 (Laughter.)

25 JUSTICE BREYER: They -- they go up to

1 the drafting section, there is a drafting
2 section, and you'll get a young man or woman
3 there who has to write a very complicated
4 statute, and -- and they might use words they
5 don't really think about.

6 And so I look to a lot of other
7 things, as in Murphy. All right.

8 Now the Copyright Act of '76 has an
9 enormous history, volume after volume, and my
10 guess is you looked through that, or you had
11 somebody look through it. And is there
12 anything that helps you, or that hurts you if
13 you want to say, in -- in that long, long
14 history of the '76 reform?

15 MR. CLEMENT: So, Justice Breyer, I
16 didn't see anything there that I found
17 particularly helpful. I do want to talk about
18 some of the 1984 legislative history.

19 JUSTICE BREYER: But I'm more -- I --
20 I mean, all right. The '84 year is in your
21 brief, I think.

22 MR. CLEMENT: Yeah, and it's really
23 quite terrific, I think, for those that look at
24 that sort of thing.

25 JUSTICE BREYER: Okay. All right.

1 I'll look at that. I'll look at that.

2 (Laughter.)

3 MR. CLEMENT: No, no, because -- and
4 -- and -- and so let me say two things about
5 that.

6 JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah.

7 MR. CLEMENT: I -- I'll just explain
8 to you, Justice Breyer, why I -- I confirm that
9 there was nothing particularly helpful.

10 So the 1976 act is a soup-to-nuts
11 reform of the Copyright Act.

12 JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah.

13 MR. CLEMENT: And there's not a lot of
14 focus on what became Section 505 as to either
15 attorneys' fees or costs. And the only time
16 anybody's thinking really any deep thoughts
17 about Section 505, it's the fact that you're
18 sort of moving from mandatory fees --

19 JUSTICE BREYER: Uh-huh.

20 MR. CLEMENT: -- to discretionary
21 fees, but mostly they're talking about the
22 attorneys' fees. So there's just really very
23 little focus at all on the question of fees,
24 which is why I think, especially for the
25 textualists, you would think that what happens

1 in 1976 is they use the same terms and you
2 continue to go back to the 1831 original public
3 meaning, which couldn't possibly be a
4 cross-reference to a fee act that doesn't exist
5 for 22 years.

6 But, as to the 1984 legislative
7 history, the reason I think this is compelling
8 even to those that don't generally look at
9 legislative history is because think about what
10 the senator there is doing in expressing the
11 views of the committee.

12 The committee, if you believe
13 legislative history at all, very much wants to
14 provide for the recovery of "investigatory
15 fees," is the term he uses. Now they want to
16 make sure that those are shifted to the
17 prevailing party, and they think to themselves:
18 Are they covered by the language we've used?
19 And the language they've used is "full costs."
20 And the senator concludes, duh, of course
21 they're covered. We're using "full costs."
22 How can they possibly not be covered?

23 Now I suppose the senator could have
24 said: Well, I don't know, maybe somebody's
25 going to come up with this crazy idea that it's

1 a term of art and it doesn't provide for this.

2 So to make sure they're provided --

3 JUSTICE BREYER: Yeah.

4 MR. CLEMENT: -- I'm going to use a
5 much narrower term, "investigatory costs."

6 JUSTICE BREYER: All right. Well,
7 I'll look at that. But suppose you're right.
8 Suppose I think -- now I think -- I read that
9 and I say yeah, good point. All right.

10 I made that kind of point in Murphy,
11 and I -- I said let's look at what Congress
12 wanted. And I had a -- I thought fabulous.
13 But, unfortunately, it wasn't fabulous enough
14 because I was writing a dissent.

15 (Laughter.)

16 JUSTICE BREYER: All right? Now
17 suppose -- and, after all, Murphy involved
18 getting expert fees for the parents of
19 handicapped children when, in fact, they,
20 through the hiring of necessary experts, win.
21 But the majority said in that case: No, they
22 don't get their attorneys' fees.

23 So am I stuck with that? You say no?
24 Well, well, well, this is a general problem, go
25 back to your lengthy career. When do I say,

1 well, I lost; I lost in the consideration of
2 the -- of that, so how long do I keep -- what
3 rule do I follow? What approach do I take?
4 And how long do I keep referring to a
5 dissenting approach or view when others think
6 the contrary?

7 MR. CLEMENT: Well, Justice Breyer,
8 far be it from me to give you career advice --
9 (Laughter.)

10 MR. CLEMENT: -- but I would think --

11 JUSTICE BREYER: No, no, that's what
12 I'm asking for.

13 MR. CLEMENT: I would think that the
14 one thing you never -- you never abandon, just
15 because you're in the dissent, is your basic
16 approach to statutory construction. I mean,
17 Justice Scalia, God rest his soul, was in
18 dissent in a lot of cases, insisting on the
19 plain meaning. He never turned around and
20 said, well, I'm tired; I'm going to look at the
21 legislative history this time around.

22 So that would be my -- my sort of --

23 JUSTICE BREYER: Pity.

24 (Laughter.)

25 MR. CLEMENT: And that would be --

1 that would be my -- that would be my career
2 advice on that, but I would -- I would say I
3 don't think you're bound for at least two very
4 important reasons.

5 I mean, one is that -- and -- and
6 Justice Ginsburg separately wrote a concurrence
7 in the judgment to express her disagreement
8 with this point, but the Court in Murphy, in
9 agreement with the brief of the Solicitor
10 General, applied a clear statement rule because
11 it was a spending power case.

12 And this is not a spending power case.
13 So, if you were inclined to find a distinction
14 from Murphy, I think most of your textualist
15 colleagues would say: Legislative history is
16 never going to overcome a clear statement test,
17 ever.

18 But, you know, some of them, not all
19 of them, but some of them will take a peek at
20 the legislative history when you're not dealing
21 with a clear statement rule; you're just trying
22 to get the best meaning of the statute,
23 particularly when the legislative history
24 supports a ruling or a reading of the statute
25 that avoids rendering an important part of it

1 superfluous.

2 So I think you could distinguish
3 Murphy on that ground, but I also want to say
4 that we don't take issue with Murphy when it's
5 dealing with the word "costs" unmodified, and
6 that is a very familiar formulation. We've
7 only found five statutes that use "costs"
8 modified by "full," and we think, in those
9 statutes, it would be against all your basic
10 principles of statutory construction to not at
11 least look at the word "full" long enough to
12 look at whether it tells you something about
13 whether Congress is using "costs" in a
14 term-of-art way or an ordinary meaning way.

15 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Clement, I --

16 MR. CLEMENT: And we think it
17 powerfully suggests that it's using it in an
18 ordinary meaning way.

19 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: I look at history
20 completely, which means I look at how court of
21 appeals and district courts have been using
22 those terms now for decades.

23 So the question is, where does that go
24 into your analysis? Because it's contrary --
25 up until the Ninth Circuit, it's basically

1 contrary to your point.

2 MR. CLEMENT: Well, I -- I don't think
3 so, Justice Sotomayor. I mean, as I say, I
4 think it would be really helpful if there were
5 like an 18th Century or a 19th Century case
6 that involved an application for ye olde
7 expert's expert fees and we had a case that
8 specifically said, yes, it's in or, no, it's
9 out.

10 But we don't have that case. Nobody
11 has that case. I think the single most
12 informative case we have is Ferrett. And
13 Ferrett --

14 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's not because
15 you told me you don't know what the New York
16 statute permitted or didn't. So it's, in my
17 mind, a wash.

18 MR. CLEMENT: No, I don't think it's a
19 wash, and I think it's not a wash for two
20 reasons. It's not a wash because we do know
21 that, at bare minimum, Justice Nelson consulted
22 Circuit Rule 27, which is a federal circuit
23 rule. So it was not the case that he looked
24 only to state law.

25 And that conclusion is reinforced, of

1 course, by the fact that Congress, both before
2 1831 and after, knew how to tell federal courts
3 to look exclusively to the state law rule, and
4 it didn't use that formulation in the Copyright
5 Act.

6 But here's the second reason it's not
7 a wash --

8 JUSTICE ALITO: What did the -- what
9 did the circuit rule say?

10 MR. CLEMENT: The circuit rule said --
11 I think it was a provision that was relevant to
12 this 11 versus 1 issue. So it didn't provide
13 like a lot of guidance to this question, but --
14 so it's -- it's mostly relevant because it
15 looked to federal law.

16 But the second point that I think is
17 why it's not a wash is my friends in their
18 brief make a big deal out of the fact that --
19 that "full costs" has never meant anything more
20 than party-to-party costs.

21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, we know in
22 American history that attorneys' fees were
23 considered recoverable for a long time. It's a
24 modern phenomenon, the American rule now.

25 So I'm not sure what to do in that

1 in-between period, other than to look at what
2 more recent courts are doing or not doing.

3 MR. CLEMENT: Well, but -- but
4 there --

5 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Was it 1976 --
6 what were the courts doing in 1976?

7 MR. CLEMENT: Well, 1976 -- you know,
8 it's -- it's really a couple years after the
9 '70 -- I don't think we have any good history
10 in 1974 and 1975. Like I said, we don't have a
11 case where they said definitely expert fees or
12 e-discovery, which they didn't have in 1974.

13 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Then let me -- let
14 me --

15 MR. CLEMENT: But they don't have the
16 other case.

17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- get to my
18 problem with your interpretation. It's
19 open-ended, so open-ended that I don't have a
20 way for judges to exercise their discretion in
21 a reasonable manner because, under your
22 definition of "full costs," I'm assuming the
23 babysitter for the witness who has to come to
24 court is covered. I'm assuming experts, which
25 could include experts like a body language

1 reader.

2 What -- what would limit -- there's
3 nothing statutorily or otherwise that would
4 limit a judge's discretion of awarding costs.
5 If they were caused by the suit, then,
6 presumably, they're recoverable. But that's
7 not how we generally deal with costs.

8 MR. CLEMENT: Well, Justice Sotomayor,
9 that's not a problem that's unique to my
10 construction. And I think courts have been
11 able to deal with that problem under statutory
12 provisions. There are statutory provisions,
13 for example, that provide for all expenses of
14 the litigation. So the courts are going to
15 have to, in interpreting "all expenses," make a
16 determination about whether you need receipts
17 and things like that in order to get your
18 expenses recovered.

19 Rule 23(h) of the Federal Rules of
20 Civil Procedure expressly provides for the
21 recovery of non-taxable costs in the class
22 action context. And courts have had to come up
23 with rules about what counts as a non-taxable
24 cost. And in that context, they have been able
25 to come up with workable rules, and it hasn't

1 proven too much of a problem. And --

2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, what if
3 the -- what if the objection is that the
4 attorneys' fees were outrageous considering how
5 much was at stake in the case? Can the judge,
6 when he's dealing with a provision about full
7 costs, say, well, but that's just -- these fees
8 are outrageous; I'm only going to give you half
9 of your attorneys' fees?

10 MR. CLEMENT: Absolutely, Your Honor,
11 and that's where discretion comes in. So that
12 may have not have been a possibility before
13 1976, but now that you have discretionary
14 awards for full costs, the judge's discretion
15 can take care of all of those things, and they
16 can make that judgment either based on the fact
17 that I think this was too expensive in the
18 context of this case, I don't think that was
19 really necessary, I don't think you've
20 documented that enough.

21 And in this case in particular, you
22 see that in action where the district court
23 judge -- although I think he was quite
24 sympathetic for the fact that the litigation
25 conduct on the other side had caused our

1 expenses to balloon, nonetheless, the district
2 court judge said, well, I'm going to give you
3 75 percent of your non-taxable costs.

4 So I think that discretion is another
5 part of this administrability answer, but I
6 also think it's important to recognize that
7 there are statutes that say things like all
8 expenses or non-taxable costs, so courts are
9 going to have to figure out rules to deal with
10 that.

11 There's, in fact --

12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I guess
13 I'm not following. So "full costs" doesn't
14 really mean "full costs"?

15 MR. CLEMENT: No, I think that the --
16 that what I would say is I think the district
17 court judge starts with the universe of full
18 costs, and then can use their discretion to
19 sort of carve that back if they think that
20 that's appropriate.

21 I also think that even in the ordinary
22 meaning of costs, I think it would be perfectly
23 appropriate for a court to say: Look, if you
24 can't even document this thing, I'm not going
25 to treat that as a cost for purposes of this.

1 Whether they do it under a definition of costs
2 under its ordinary meaning or as an exercise of
3 discretion, I don't think it makes a great deal
4 of difference.

5 Now there's another provision out
6 there I alluded to that involves all expenses
7 and it says all expenses of the proceedings can
8 be recovered. Interestingly enough, the United
9 States Government is filing a cert petition in
10 a case involving that statute called NantKwest.

11 And in that cert petition, here's what
12 they have to say about the modifier "all."
13 They say, "The modifier "all" in Section 145
14 refutes any inference that Congress intended
15 Section 145 plaintiffs to be liable only for a
16 subset of the agency's expenses."

17 Now I couldn't agree more. I don't
18 know why they're not on our side of this case.
19 But I couldn't agree more that a word like
20 "all" or a word like "full" is a clear textual
21 indicator that Congress does not want you to
22 look to a subset of costs or expenses, whatever
23 the case may be.

24 And I think, in an odd way, the fact
25 that we all understand that taxable costs are

1 just a subset of the ordinary meaning of costs
2 actually helps reinforce the idea that full
3 costs means something more than the subset.

4 I mean, I think if you think of a word
5 like full membership, well, full membership
6 probably means full membership, but if it's
7 used in contradistinction to observer status or
8 provisional membership, you absolutely know you
9 mean the whole thing.

10 In the same way, the reference to
11 "full cost," precisely because there is a
12 universe of taxable costs out there, is a
13 reference to both taxable and non-taxable
14 costs.

15 I mean, another way of thinking about
16 this is we all refer to 1920 as taxable costs,
17 but we could equally and accurately refer to it
18 as partial costs. Nobody thinks, as a normal
19 matter, a default matter under 1920 you get
20 your full costs.

21 But, when Congress in its particular
22 context and then in four subsequent statutes
23 says "full costs," you think, ahh, you get more
24 than your partial costs under Section 1920.
25 Seems like a logical way to interpret the

1 statute that renders no word in the statute
2 superfluous.

3 And I do think the superfluity problem
4 here is really quite extraordinary. I'm not
5 sure I've come across one where the contrary
6 interpretation would render more things
7 superfluous. It's not just the word "full."
8 It really is the whole first sentence of
9 Section 505.

10 It would have -- you'd have the same
11 cost recovery rule if the first sentence of
12 Section 505 weren't there, with the only
13 possible exception, ironically being enough,
14 that you might -- if Section 505 was not there,
15 you might be able to get costs against the
16 government, which you can't get under the terms
17 of Section 505.

18 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, haven't we said
19 we expect redundancy in these kind of statutes?

20 MR. CLEMENT: I -- I don't think that
21 you have said that. I think what you have said
22 is that, you know, that when there's a variety
23 of formulations, and we expect a certain amount
24 of sort of, we're going to kind of construe
25 them to be more or less the same.

1 But I don't think you've ever
2 confronted a statute like this where "cost" was
3 modified by something like "full" and the
4 consequence would be that you would render that
5 term absolutely superfluous.

6 And I think the costs for the basic
7 process of statutory interpretation and what
8 Congress is supposed to do in light of these
9 courts' cases would really suffer as a result.

10 I mean, you go back to the plight of
11 Congress in 1984. They're trying to provide
12 for the recovery of investigatory costs. They
13 look at the ordinary meaning of the English
14 language and they say, have we done it with
15 "full costs"?

16 I don't think anybody would tell them,
17 unless they really had this embedded term of
18 art meaning that overcame everything, including
19 words that are superfluous, would say: No, you
20 know, I don't think full costs does it for
21 investigatory costs.

22 And, of course, the oddity would be
23 that if the committee in 1984 instead of using
24 the term "full costs" had used the term
25 "investigatory costs," then the investigatory

1 costs would be recoverable, even though they
2 wouldn't be recoverable under full.

3 In other words, you'd be telling
4 Congress: If you use a narrower term, you can
5 authorize broader cost recovery. But if you
6 use a --

7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: You still have --
8 -- you still have the superfluity in the second
9 sentence. And you -- and you said that, well,
10 maybe a staffer would say let's put that in
11 there just to be sure.

12 But that's still redundant under your
13 interpretation, right, the second sentence, in
14 part?

15 MR. CLEMENT: No, it's not, Your
16 Honor, because I don't see how you don't have
17 that second sentence if you want -- if what you
18 want to do is indicate that the authorization
19 for discretionary attorneys' fees in the second
20 sentence doesn't trump Section 412's provision
21 that says if you don't timely register, then
22 you don't get your attorneys' fees.

23 And, of course, 412 treats costs
24 differently, so they needed two sentences. And
25 so I don't think under our view anything is

1 rendered superfluous, but in their view, it's
2 the word "full," it's the first full sentence
3 of Section 505, and it's three of the four
4 statutes that use "full cost" and use it in a
5 discretionary sense.

6 That's a lot of wreckage and carnage
7 for ignoring the plain meaning of a statute.
8 And I think the far better course is --

9 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: There's a lot of
10 redundancy, as you well know, in the U.S. Code,
11 though. And when Congress -- to Justice
12 Breyer's point, when Congress is drafting
13 statutes, there is a lot of redundancy because
14 people speak redundantly or sometimes because
15 Congress just wants to make doubly sure.

16 MR. CLEMENT: Yeah, but, Justice
17 Kavanaugh, there's a difference. When Congress
18 uses --

19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: So I don't know
20 that it's carnage. It's just --

21 MR. CLEMENT: But, no, but here's
22 where there is --

23 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Yeah.

24 MR. CLEMENT: This is the difference.
25 And this is what makes it carnage. When --

1 when Congress uses -- you know, the common
2 place for redundancy is when Congress uses a
3 phrase like a series of phrases and they're
4 covering things that are clearly duplicative.

5 And I suppose in an ordinary meaning
6 way, costs and expenses might be an example of
7 that. Now I think, when you run across a
8 phrase like costs and expenses, you'd still
9 want to struggle against rendering them
10 completely superfluous. And one of the things
11 you do is you'd say, oh, the neighboring word
12 "expenses" tells me that "cost" there is being
13 used as a term of art.

14 But I think it's very different. And
15 Justice Scalia makes exactly this point in his
16 book on reading law about the rule against
17 superfluity where it's really -- there really
18 is carnage is when there's an important word
19 that's in the statute that is a modifier that's
20 just inconvenient for the judges.

21 And they just ignore that word, even
22 though it's there. And that's what I think is
23 carnage. And you see this again in real -- in
24 real life when a Senate committee is
25 confronting a very specific question about

1 whether they have to do anything more to
2 authorize the shifting of investigatory costs,
3 and they look at the English language, they
4 look at the word "full costs," and they think
5 we have this covered.

6 And, again, I think sending the
7 message that the only way they could have
8 gotten broader cost recovery is by using a
9 narrower term is really to put us way down the
10 rabbit hole and to confuse Congress and give
11 them the wrong lessons.

12 Last thing I want to say before I sit
13 down, if I may, is my friends on the other side
14 at various points said, you know, Murphy was a
15 clear signal to Congress that you have to use
16 magic words. I think it's pretty tough luck to
17 tell Congress in 1831 that they had to
18 anticipate the Murphy decision.

19 And I do think at the end of the day
20 the original public meaning of "full costs" is
21 consistent with its ordinary meaning. Thank
22 you.

23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
24 counsel.

25 Four minutes, Mr. Perry.

1 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF MARK A. PERRY
2 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONERS

3 MR. PERRY: Thank you, Your Honor.
4 Three points.

5 Under the construction just proposed,
6 expert witness fees were mandatory in every
7 copyright case from 1831 to 1976. Expert
8 witness fees were actually awarded in zero
9 copyright cases from 1831 to 1976. I will
10 leave the Court to draw its own conclusion from
11 that fact.

12 Second, when we get to 1976, Justice
13 Breyer, you asked about the legislative history
14 of this statute. My friend talked a lot about
15 some other statute, but this statute, there is
16 legislative history.

17 It's quoted in the government's brief
18 at page 27. It's from the registrar of
19 copyrights submission on costs, which said
20 costs in copyright cases are relatively small
21 because, of course, they don't include expert
22 witness fees or e-discovery costs or anything
23 else.

24 And the court -- and the Congress
25 accepted the copyright registrar's

1 recommendation to make them discretionary
2 rather than mandatory.

3 And that date, 1976, is critical
4 because 1975 was a watershed moment in the --
5 in the area we're talking about. That was the
6 Alyeska decision, Your Honor, where this Court
7 dealt with fees and costs and expenses and said
8 we, the Supreme Court, are going to get out of
9 the business of -- of rewriting the rules in
10 every case.

11 We're going to get out of the business
12 of tinkering around, and we're going to adopt a
13 clear statement rule and make Congress do it in
14 case after case. And that was 1975 in Alyeska.

15 And in 1976, the same day that
16 Section 505 was enacted, Congress enacted four
17 other statutes that expressly authorized expert
18 witness fees. So it knows how to put them in.

19 And that's cited, by the way, in the
20 Casey case at page 88, goes through all of that
21 history. And -- and Casey and Murphy and --
22 and Crawford Fitting, my friend said it's a
23 crazy idea to have a -- have a -- have a term
24 of art. Well, this Court has said it's a term
25 of art.

1 If it's a crazy idea, it's the
2 majority opinion.

3 What we just heard is a full half
4 hour -- and I use that word advisedly --
5 (Laughter.)

6 MR. PERRY: -- of -- of -- of a
7 dramatic reading of the dissents from Justice
8 Marshall in *Alyeska*, from Justice Marshall in
9 *Crawford Fitting*, from Justice Stevens in
10 *Casey*, and with all respect to Justice Breyer's
11 career aspirations, Justice Breyer in -- in
12 *Murphy*.

13 But the majority in every one of those
14 cases said cost is a term of art, and there is
15 a clear statement rule. And Congress can
16 override it by stating explicitly.

17 JUSTICE ALITO: Mr. -- Mr. Clement
18 gave us a -- a fuller reading of the *Ferrett*
19 case. And do you have -- do you have an
20 explanation --

21 MR. PERRY: I do.

22 JUSTICE ALITO: -- for how Justice
23 Nelson awarded attorneys' fees there?

24 MR. PERRY: I do -- I do, Your Honor.
25 The *Ferrett* case was decided under New York

1 law, and certain attorneys' fees were on the
2 New York fee schedule, as we point out in our
3 brief. I believe it's Section 25 of the
4 revised statute, but we cite that in our brief.

5 And our point has not been that
6 attorneys' fees were never awarded. It's that
7 non-scheduled fees were never included in full
8 costs. Full costs included during the state
9 period those scheduled fees under state fee
10 bills, which occasionally awarded small
11 attorneys' fees, for example, \$2.50 for a
12 deposition.

13 And that's what the Ferrett case
14 involved, was New York scheduled attorneys'
15 fees.

16 What no schedule, as Mr. Kedem pointed
17 out --

18 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Why did they use
19 -- why did they use the federal rule?

20 MR. PERRY: Your Honor, I don't know
21 either. I -- I -- I think it had -- did have
22 something to do with this 11 versus 1 and
23 whether it was a multiplicity thing. It had
24 nothing to do, I don't believe, with the
25 question in this case, which is the measure of

1 the costs was made by the New York fee bill.

2 And then, in 1853, of course, we had
3 the U.S. fee bill. It wiped out all of that.
4 It said the courts of the United States are
5 only authorized to award the federal schedule.

6 So we had a reset in 1853. Then we
7 had another reset in 1976, or '75, with -- with
8 Alyeska. And I will leave the Court, if I may,
9 with a quote from Alyeska because it speaks to
10 this case dramatically.

11 421 U.S. at 271. "It is not for this
12 Court to invade the legislature's province by
13 redistributing litigation costs in the manner
14 suggested by Respondents and followed by the
15 court of appeals."

16 This judgment should be reversed, and
17 we can move on. Thank you, Your Honors.

18 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
19 counsel. The case is submitted.

20 (Whereupon, at 12:09 p.m., the case
21 was submitted.)

22

23

24

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