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SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

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GOODYEAR DUNLOP TIRES OPERATIONS, S. A.,
ET AL. v. BROWN ET UX., CO-ADMINISTRATORS OF
THE ESTATE OF BROWN, ET AL.

CERTIORARI TO THE COURT OF APPEALS OF NORTH CAROLINA

No. 10-76. Argued January 11, 2011 —Decided June 27, 2011

Respondents, North Carolina residents whose sons died in a bus accident outside Paris, France, filed a suit for wrongful-death damages in North Carolina state court. Alleging that the accident was caused by tire failure, they named as defendants Goodyear USA, an Ohio corporation, and petitioners, three Goodyear USA subsidiaries, organized and operating, respectively, in Luxembourg, Turkey, and France. Petitioners' tires are manufactured primarily for European and Asian markets and differ in size and construction from tires ordinarily sold in the United States. Petitioners are not registered to do business in North Carolina; have no place of business, employees, or bank accounts in the State; do not design, manufacture, or advertise their products in the State; and do not solicit business in the State or sell or ship tires to North Carolina customers. Even so, a small percentage of their tires were distributed in North Carolina by other Goodyear USA affiliates. The trial court denied petitioners' motion to dismiss the claims against them for want of personal jurisdiction. The North Carolina Court of Appeals affirmed, concluding that the North Carolina courts had general jurisdiction over petitioners, whose tires had reached the State through "the stream of commerce."

Held: Petitioners were not amenable to suit in North Carolina on claims unrelated to any activity of petitioners in the forum State. Pp. 6–14.

(a) The Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause sets the outer boundaries of a state tribunal's authority to proceed against a defendant. The pathmarking decision of *International Shoe Co. v. Washington*, 326 U. S. 310, provides that state courts may exercise

personal jurisdiction over an out-of-state defendant who has “certain minimum contacts with [the State] such that the maintenance of the suit does not offend ‘traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice.’” *Id.*, at 316. Endeavoring to give specific content to the “fair play and substantial justice” concept, the Court in *International Shoe* classified cases involving out-of-state corporate defendants. First, the Court recognized that jurisdiction could be asserted where the corporation’s in-state activity is “continuous and systematic” and gave rise to the episode-in-suit. *Id.*, at 317. It also observed that the commission of “single or occasional acts” in a State may be sufficient to render a corporation answerable in that State with respect to those acts, though not with respect to matters unrelated to the forum connections. *Id.*, at 318. These two categories compose what is now known as “specific jurisdiction.” *Helicopteros Nacionales de Colombia, S. A. v. Hall*, 466 U. S. 408, 414, n. 8. *International Shoe* distinguished from cases that fit within the “specific jurisdiction” categories, “instances in which the continuous corporate operations within a state [are] so substantial and of such a nature as to justify suit against it on causes of action arising from dealings entirely distinct from those activities.” 326 U. S., at 318. Adjudicatory authority so grounded is now called “general jurisdiction.” *Helicopteros*, 466 U. S., at 414, n. 9. Since *International Shoe*, this Court’s decisions have elaborated primarily on circumstances that warrant the exercise of specific jurisdiction. In only two decisions postdating *International Shoe* has this Court considered whether an out-of-state corporate defendant’s in-state contacts were sufficiently “continuous and systematic” to justify the exercise of general jurisdiction over claims unrelated to those contacts: *Perkins v. Benguet Consol. Mining Co.*, 342 U. S. 437; and *Helicopteros*, 466 U. S. 408. Pp. 6–9.

(b) Petitioners lack “the kind of continuous and systematic general business contacts” necessary to allow North Carolina to entertain a suit against them unrelated to anything that connects them to the State. *Helicopteros*, 466 U. S., at 416. The stream-of-commerce cases on which the North Carolina court relied relate to exercises of specific jurisdiction in products liability actions, in which a nonresident defendant, acting *outside* the forum, places in the stream of commerce a product that ultimately causes harm *inside* the forum. Many state long-arm statutes authorize courts to exercise specific jurisdiction over manufacturers when the events in suit, or some of them, occurred within the forum State. The North Carolina court’s stream-of-commerce analysis elided the essential difference between case-specific and general jurisdiction. Flow of a manufacturer’s products into the forum may bolster an affiliation germane to *specific jurisdiction*, see, e.g., *World-Wide Volkswagen Corp. v. Woodson*, 444 U. S.

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286, 297; but ties serving to bolster the exercise of specific jurisdiction do not warrant a determination that, based on those ties, the forum has general jurisdiction over a defendant. A corporation’s “continuous activity of some sorts within a state,” *International Shoe* instructed, “is not enough to support the demand that the corporation be amenable to suits unrelated to that activity.” 326 U. S., at 318.

Measured against *Helicopteros* and *Perkins*, North Carolina is not a forum in which it would be permissible to subject petitioners to general jurisdiction. In the 1952 *Perkins* case, general jurisdiction was appropriately exercised over a Philippine corporation sued in Ohio, where the company’s affairs were overseen during World War II. In *Helicopteros*, however, the survivors of U. S. citizens killed when a helicopter owned by a Colombian corporation crashed in Peru could not maintain wrongful-death actions against that corporation in Texas, where the company’s contacts “consisted of sending its chief executive officer to Houston for a contract-negotiation session; accepting into its New York bank account checks drawn on a Houston bank; purchasing helicopters, equipment, and training services from [a Texas enterprise]; and sending personnel to [Texas] for training.” 466 U. S., at 416. These links to Texas did not “constitute the kind of continuous and systematic general business contacts . . . found to exist in *Perkins*,” and were insufficient to support the exercise of jurisdiction over a claim that neither “ar[o]se out of . . . no[r] related to” the defendant’s activities in Texas. *Id.*, at 415–416. This Court sees no reason to differentiate from the ties to Texas held insufficient in *Helicopteros*, the sales of petitioners’ tires sporadically made in North Carolina through intermediaries. Pp. 9–13.

(c) Neither below nor in their brief in opposition to the petition for certiorari did respondents urge disregard of petitioners’ discrete status as subsidiaries and treatment of all Goodyear entities as a “unitary business,” so that jurisdiction over the parent would draw in the subsidiaries as well. Respondents have therefore forfeited this contention. Pp. 13–14.

199 N. C. App. 50, 681 S. E. 2d 382, reversed.

GINSBURG, J., delivered the opinion for a unanimous Court.