



Read This Before February 20th

A \$133 Billion Court Ruling & The Epstein
Files That Could Reshape Crypto

Two stories that could move markets. Zero mainstream coverage.
A CoinPicks exclusive research report.



PART ONE

The \$133 Billion Supreme Court Case

\$133B

Tariffs At Stake

Feb 20th

First Possible Ruling

100 Days

Since Oral Arguments

There is a Supreme Court case sitting in front of the justices right now that could wipe out **\$133 billion in tariffs** overnight. The ruling could drop as early as **February 20th** — seven days from the date of this report.

Almost nobody in mainstream media is covering this. And once you understand what is actually happening behind the scenes — the signals from the justices, the contradictions in the government's own behavior, and the sheer scale of the money involved — you will understand why this is the single biggest variable in the economy that has not been priced into anything. Not stocks. Not crypto. Not your grocery bill.

THE LEGAL BACKGROUND

In 2025, President Trump used a 1977 emergency powers law called the **International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA)** to impose sweeping tariffs on nearly every country the United States trades with. This law was originally designed for one thing: economic sanctions. Freezing foreign assets. Blocking transactions with hostile nations. Every president since Carter used it exactly that way — sanctions on Iran, sanctions on Russia. That is what IEEPA was built for.

Trump is the **first president in history** to use IEEPA to impose tariffs. That is not an opinion. It is a fact. And the question the Supreme Court is now deciding is whether the law actually gives him the authority to do that.

Both lower courts already said no. **Unanimously**. The Court of International Trade struck the tariffs down. The Federal Circuit affirmed. Both said the same thing: *regulate importation* does not mean *tax importation*. When Congress wants to give the president tariff power, it uses specific language. IEEPA does not have that language.

WHAT THE ORAL ARGUMENTS REVEALED

The Court heard oral arguments on November 5th. What happened in that courtroom tells you almost everything you need to know.

Six to nine justices appeared skeptical of the government's position. Chief Justice Roberts drew a critical distinction between “episodic” emergency actions — like one-time sanctions against a hostile nation — and “systematic restructuring of trade policy,” which is what these tariffs actually are. The Court tends to give presidents deference on genuine emergencies, but far less when emergency powers are being used to do something that looks like permanent legislation.



Justice Barrett — a Trump appointee — questioned whether “regulate importation” was ever intended to mean tariff authority, noting there is zero legislative history supporting that interpretation. **Justice Gorsuch** pressed on the limiting principle: if “regulate” means you can impose tariffs, can a future president slap a 500% tariff on gas-powered cars by declaring a climate emergency? The government had no good answer.

Even Justice Alito, who appeared most sympathetic to the administration, only went so far as saying emergency powers are “often phrased in broad terms.” That is not a ringing endorsement.

READING THE SIGNALS

It has been **100 days** since oral arguments with no ruling. Expedited Supreme Court cases typically get resolved in 39 to 67 days. This case was fast-tracked because the Court acknowledged the urgency — importers are paying roughly **\$2 billion per day** in these tariffs while they wait. At 100 days, they have blown past every expedited timeline in modern history.

The delay tells us the justices are split and writing multiple opinions. This is not a clean 9-0. There are likely concurrences, partial dissents, and active negotiations over how broad or narrow the ruling should be.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson did something unusual — she went on television and said the justices are “diligently crafting” this decision. Supreme Court justices almost never comment on pending cases. That tells you two things: they know the public is watching, and the opinion is not done because there is genuine disagreement about how to write it — not necessarily about the outcome, but about the reasoning.

PUBLIC MESSAGING VS. LEGAL REALITY

This is where the story gets truly interesting. Watch what the administration says publicly, and then compare it to what their lawyers are actually doing in court.

Trump posted on Truth Social in January: *“If the Supreme Court rules against the United States of America on this National Security bonanza, WE’RE SCREWED!”* He said refunds would be “a complete mess” and “almost impossible for our Country to pay.” He said the total could be “many Hundreds of Billions of Dollars” and potentially “Trillions.”

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer went on CNBC on February 3rd and framed the delay as the Court being “careful” because the stakes are “enormous.” He said the challengers do not have “an open and shut case.”

That is the public messaging. Here is what the government’s actual lawyers did.



THE KEY SIGNAL

On January 14th, the DOJ formally stipulated in court filings that they **will not challenge the court's authority to order refunds** if the tariffs are struck down. They confirmed this applies to **all IEEPA tariffs** — not just the ones in the original case. That includes tariffs on India, Brazil, and everything else.

While Trump posts “WE’RE SCREWED” and Greer says “not an open and shut case,” the actual lawyers in the actual courtroom are quietly building the infrastructure for a loss.

The administration also has **replacement tariffs drafted and ready to deploy** under three different legal authorities: Section 122 of the Trade Act (15% across-the-board for 150 days), Section 301 (country-by-country investigations), and Section 232 (national security tariffs on specific sectors). Multiple sources have confirmed these executive orders are ready for immediate deployment.

You do not draft replacement tariffs under three different legal authorities if you think you are going to win.

THE ILLINOIS PRECEDENT

Last month, the Supreme Court ruled **6-3 against the Trump administration** in *Trump v. Illinois* — a case about whether the president could federalize a state's National Guard using emergency powers. The Court said no. The reasoning: the statute did not explicitly authorize what the president was doing, and you cannot stretch emergency powers beyond what Congress specifically granted.

That is the **exact same legal reasoning** at play in the tariff case. IEEPA does not explicitly mention tariffs. The government is stretching “regulate” to mean “tax.” And the Court just told them — in a 6-3 decision — that stretching emergency statutes beyond their explicit text is not going to fly. The Peterson Institute for International Economics called this ruling a potential “tell” — like a poker player giving away their hand.

THE FISCAL REALITY

\$124B

Tariff Revenue (Oct–Jan)

304%

Year-Over-Year Increase

\$1,300/yr

Cost Per Household

On February 11th, Treasury data showed that tariff revenue hit **\$124 billion** in just the first four months of fiscal year 2026 — a **304% increase** from the same period last year. Those tariffs shrank the budget deficit by 17%, from \$840 billion to \$697 billion. The government is now structurally dependent on this revenue.

The Congressional Budget Office projects tariff revenue would reduce federal deficits by **\$3 trillion over a decade** — if the tariffs stay in place. But even with that revenue, debt held by the public is projected to rise from 101% of GDP to 120%. The tariffs are not solving the fiscal problem. They are just making it slightly less catastrophic.



If the Court strikes these tariffs down, the government does not just lose future revenue. It has to **refund \$133 billion** it already collected and spent. Meanwhile, the Tax Foundation confirmed this week that tariffs are costing the average American household **\$1,300 per year** — more than what most families are saving from the Big Beautiful Bill tax cuts. The government gave a tax cut with one hand and took it back through higher prices with the other.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR MARKETS

If Tariffs Get Struck Down	If Tariffs Survive
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Functionally deflationary• Lower import costs, lower consumer prices• Less pressure on the Fed to keep rates high• Bullish for crypto, equities, and all risk assets• Replacement tariffs (Section 122) cap at 15% for 150 days — far below current rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any future president can impose unlimited tariffs via emergency declaration• No Congressional approval required• Permanent structural uncertainty priced into all markets• Bitcoin narrative as hedge against government overreach gets stronger

Crypto benefits regardless of the outcome. If tariffs get struck down, it is a risk-on environment across the board. If tariffs survive, Bitcoin's narrative as a hedge against government overreach and economic uncertainty only gets stronger. Either way, this ruling is a catalyst.

February 20th. That is when the Court comes back from recess. That is the first day a ruling can drop. Seven days.



PART TWO

Epstein's Crypto Connections

\$850K+

Donated to MIT

\$3M

Coinbase Investment

2011

Earliest Crypto Contact

The recently released Epstein files contain thousands of pages of emails, financial records, and communications. Most media coverage has focused on the names in Epstein's social circle. But buried in those documents is something that has received almost no attention: **Jeffrey Epstein had deep, documented connections to the cryptocurrency industry** — connections that stretch back to Bitcoin's earliest days.

What follows is not speculation. It is a summary of what the documents actually show.

FUNDING BITCOIN'S CORE DEVELOPMENT

After Satoshi Nakamoto disappeared and the Bitcoin Foundation ran out of funding, Bitcoin's core development migrated to **MIT's Digital Currency Initiative (DCI)** — a program housed within the MIT Media Lab. The DCI became the primary funding source for Bitcoin Core developers, directly paying the salaries of several of the people writing Bitcoin's code during a critical period in its development.

The director of the MIT Media Lab was **Joichi "Joi" Ito**. Documents show that Epstein helped Ito fund the DCI beginning in 2015. MIT publicly acknowledged that Epstein donated at least **\$850,000** to the institution, with \$525,000 going directly to the Media Lab — though investigative journalists have alleged the actual amount was significantly higher. Some of these MIT Media Lab gift funds linked to Epstein were used to support the DCI, which paid the salaries of several Bitcoin Core developers.

Epstein was in frequent contact with Ito throughout this period. The significance of this cannot be overstated: during a critical window in Bitcoin's early development, Epstein's money was flowing to the lab that housed Bitcoin's core developers and was paying their salaries.

THE JEREMY RUBIN EMAILS

Jeremy Rubin, an early Bitcoin Core developer working at the DCI, was in regular communication with Epstein — not just socially, but substantively. Documents show Rubin updating Epstein on Bitcoin's direction, asking for his advice on strategic decisions, and treating him as a trusted advisor during pivotal moments in Bitcoin's development.

The most significant exchange occurred on **November 12, 2015**. At that point, the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) was exactly one month away from deciding whether to approve Bitcoin options — a critical regulatory milestone. A developer named Bryan Bishop sent Rubin an email outlining a campaign to unite Bitcoin developers behind a single message: Bitcoin is a *currency*, not a database or "blockchain technology."



This was not a trivial distinction. At the time, there was a real debate about Bitcoin's identity. Some powerful voices — most notably **Jamie Dimon**, the CEO of JP Morgan Chase — were publicly arguing that the blockchain technology was the real innovation, not Bitcoin itself. The Bishop email was essentially a coordinated effort to reshape Bitcoin's narrative before a major regulatory decision.

When Rubin received this email, he forwarded it directly to **Jeffrey Epstein and Joi Ito**. He asked Epstein what he thought of the letter, asked whether there were advantages to Bitcoin staying unregulated, and then wrote something that stands out above everything else in these documents:

“Have you talked with Jamie about this stuff at all?”

— Jeremy Rubin to Jeffrey Epstein, November 12, 2015

That single line implies an existing relationship between Epstein and Jamie Dimon specifically around Bitcoin. You do not casually ask someone “have you talked with Jamie” unless those conversations were already happening.

Supporting this: a separate document — a February 26, 2010 email — shows one of Epstein's assistants preparing for a dinner between **Jeffrey Epstein, Jamie Dimon, Jes Staley** (a JP Morgan executive), and **Peter Mandelson** (a British government official). The Epstein-Dimon relationship was real and documented well before Bitcoin entered the picture.

THE INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

Beyond funding development, Epstein made direct financial investments across the crypto ecosystem. Here is what the documents show:

Asset / Company	Details	Notable Context
Coinbase	~\$3M investment (2014)	Alongside Brock Pierce, co-founder of USDT. Sold 50% stake in 2018 for \$15M.
Blockstream	\$50K–\$500K in \$18M seed round (2014)	Through a fund linked to Joi Ito. Blockstream is a major Bitcoin infrastructure company.
Zcash (ZEC)	Held an allocation	2018 emails discuss fork strategy for their Zcash position.
Stellar & Ripple (XRP)	Early investments	Blockstream co-founder Austin Hill called these “bad for the ecosystem.”

EARLY AWARENESS & DEVELOPER CONTACT



Epstein was aware of Bitcoin as early as **September 2012**, when emails reference “The Bitcoin guys.” Even earlier — in **June 2011** — he contacted **Gavin Andresen**, the developer to whom Satoshi Nakamoto personally entrusted Bitcoin’s open-source code before disappearing. From what the emails show, Andresen declined to engage.

In 2013, Epstein was forwarded an email sent to wealthy tech figures — including Bill Gates — that analyzed Bitcoin’s future potential. By 2016, Epstein was claiming to have “spoken to some of the founders of Bitcoin” when proposing a digital currency for the Middle East and a Sharia-compliant cryptocurrency.

THE PETER THIEL CONNECTION

Peter Thiel, co-founder of PayPal and Palantir Technologies, had a documented multi-year relationship with Epstein beginning around 2014. They exchanged numerous emails, arranged at least eight meetings and dinners by 2017, and discussed politics and financial topics including the Trump campaign.

Thiel personally solicited Epstein for **\$10–20 million** to invest in **Valar Ventures**, his venture capital fund. By 2015–2016, Epstein had become a significant limited partner — reports suggest at least an eight-figure commitment whose paper value later grew substantially. As late as **March 2019** — four months before Epstein’s arrest — his accountant was requesting updated valuations for his Valar stake. The relationship was still active.

The Thiel connection introduces another layer. Palantir, Thiel’s data analytics company, received early funding from **In-Q-Tel** — the CIA’s venture capital arm — which invested over \$2 million and helped embed Palantir engineers inside CIA and other intelligence agencies. Documents show Epstein and former Israeli Prime Minister **Ehud Barak** planning to pitch an Israeli surveillance technology firm called Carbyne to Valar. Thiel’s Founders Fund later invested in that same company. Additional documents suggest Epstein was also attempting to convince Barak to invest in Palantir directly.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Epstein’s connections to the technology sector extended well beyond cryptocurrency. In 2002, he hosted an AI symposium on his private island, bringing together prominent computer scientists including **Marvin Minsky** (founder of MIT’s AI lab) and researchers with NASA and DARPA ties. He donated **\$6.5 million to Harvard**, largely to a researcher named Martin Nowak whose work focused on evolutionary dynamics. He was in regular contact with Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page.

A dinner hosted by LinkedIn founder Reid Hoffman placed Epstein at a table with **Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, and Peter Thiel** — all of whom would go on to become major figures in cryptocurrency. Documents also indicate Epstein served as an intelligence source for multiple nations, and his connections spanned finance, technology, government, and intelligence communities — creating a web of relationships that is still being untangled as more files are released.



NOTE: The connections documented above are drawn directly from emails, financial records, and court filings contained in the Epstein files. This report presents the documented evidence as it exists. Readers should draw their own conclusions about the implications.

Why This Matters

Connecting the dots between two stories nobody is covering

This report covers two stories that mainstream financial media has largely ignored.

A Supreme Court ruling that could reshape the American economy — wiping out \$133 billion in tariffs, forcing the government to refund money it has already spent, and setting the precedent for presidential emergency powers for the next half century — is potentially days away from dropping.

At the same time, the largest document release of the decade reveals that one of the most notorious figures of our time had his hands in the earliest, most foundational stages of the cryptocurrency industry — from funding the developers who wrote Bitcoin's code, to investing in the companies that would become the backbone of the crypto ecosystem, to maintaining relationships with the most powerful people in technology and finance.

Separately, these are significant. Together, they paint a picture of an economic and technological landscape that is far more interconnected — and far more consequential — than most people realize.

THE BOTTOM LINE

February 20th is when the Supreme Court comes back from recess. That is the first day a ruling can drop on the biggest economic case of the decade.

The Epstein files are still being released, and the crypto connections documented here are just the beginning of what these documents reveal about the origins of the industry.

Pay attention. The next few weeks matter.

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