

REPORTING ON THE JANUARY 6 INVESTIGATION: EMPTYWHEEL BRINGS RECEIPTS

I spend a lot of time complaining about what “TV lawyers” claim on TV and Twitter. In response, people often say that Harvard professors or former AUSAs of course must know better than me what the investigation looks like.

So I thought I’d bring receipts. I just got my quarterly bill for PACER, the shitty system via which one obtains court records for \$.10 a page. Here’s what it looks like:



The image shows a screenshot of a PACER account statement. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the PACER logo (a blue cube with a white scale) and the text "PACER PUBLIC ACCESS TO COURT ELECTRONIC RECORDS" on the left, and the "UNITED STATES COURTS" logo on the right. Below the header is a light blue box containing account information:

Account Number:	[REDACTED]
Account Contact:	Marcy Wheeler
Balance Due:	\$890.60
Due Date:	02/10/2022

Below the table, there is a note: "This account is registered for automatic billing. The total amount due, \$890.60, will be charged to the credit card on file up to 7 days before the due date. Charges will appear on your credit card statement as: PACER 800-676-6856 IR."

The reason I’m posting it is not to ask for donations – though as a reminder, this is my day job and we rely entirely on reader support to pay the bills; if you’d like to chip in I would love the support.

It’s to provide a sense of how big the January 6 investigation is and how much journalistic labor it takes to understand it. While January 6 is not the only case I’m following closely, it obviously dwarfs everything else.

According to PACER I paid to download 8,906 pages in the last three months; I downloaded a ton more (for free) from RECAP. While there’s a lot of boilerplate in the January 6 filings, I

read most of them fairly closely, some of them very very closely. I did all that while also following a goodly number of the court hearings in the investigation (because of COVID protocols, I can do that from Ireland).

There are only a handful of journalists who are covering the investigation with this kind of attention – though I imagine Zoe Tillman, Seamus Hughes, Ryan Reilly, Politico collectively, and the rest of that handful have had huge PACER bills for the last year (Hughes *always* has huge PACER bills, because he spends hours extracting amazing stories from it, on all topics).

When TV lawyers tell you what there is or is not evidence in the January 6 investigation, you might ask them how many thousands of pages of court filings they read before they came to that conclusion. Because chances are very good they've read almost none of it.

Key January 6 posts

The Structure of the January 6 Assault: “I will settle with seeing [normies] smash some pigs to dust”

DOJ Is Treating January 6 as an Act of Terrorism, But Not All January 6 Defendants Are Terrorists

While TV Lawyers Wailed Impotently, DOJ Was Acquiring the Communications of Sidney Powell, Rudy Giuliani, and (Probably) Mark Meadows

Why to Delay a Mark Meadows Indictment: Bannon Is Using His Contempt Prosecution to Monitor the Ongoing January 6 Investigation

The Eight Trump Associates Whom DOJ Is Investigating

January 6 Is Unknowable

“I’m Just There to Open the Envelopes:” The Select Committee and DOJ Investigations Converge

at Mike Pence

Why It Would Be Counterproductive To Appoint a
Special Counsel to Investigate January 6

DOJ's Approximate January 6 Conspiracies

Easy Cases: Why Austin Sarat's Argument That
Trump Should Not Be Prosecuted Is Wrong

How a Trump Prosecution for January 6 Would Work

Judge Mehta's Ruling that Donald Trump May Have
Aided and Abetted Assaults on Cops Is More
Important Than His Conspiracy Decision

"Fill the Silence:" On Obstruction, Listen to
DOJ and Merrick Garland