

10 YEARS OF EMPTYWHEEL: KEY NON- SURVEILLANCE POSTS 2008-2010

Happy Birthday to me! To us! To the emptywheel community!

On December 3, 2007, emptywheel first posted as a distinct website. That makes us, me, we, ten today.

To celebrate, over the next few days, the emptywheel team will be sharing some of our favorite work from the last decade. I'll be doing probably 3 posts featuring some of my most important or – in my opinion – resilient non-surveillance posts, plus a separate post bringing together some of my most important surveillance work. I think everyone else is teeing up their favorites, too.

Putting together these posts has been a remarkable experience to see where we've been and the breadth of what we've covered, on top of mainstays like surveillance. I'm really proud of the work I've done, and proud of the community we've maintained over the years.

For years, we've done this content ad free, relying on donations and me doing freelance work for others to fund the stuff you read here. I would make far more if I worked for some free-standing outlet, but I wouldn't be able to do the weedy, iterative work that I do here, which would amount to not being able to do my best work.

If you've found this work valuable – if you'd like to ensure it remains available for the next ten years – please consider [supporting the site](#).

2008

[We Are All Flint, MI Now](#)

During the bailout, I did a post trying to imagine the worst that could happen if GM went bankrupt. One of my biggest worries – that China would start importing Buicks, making it far harder for US manufacturers to compete, has already happened.

This was, of course, before Republican mismanagement poisoned the entire city of Flint, MI. Perhaps the post is even more true now.

2009

[Khalid Sheikh Mohammed Was Waterboarded 183 Times in One Month](#)

While most of DC was busily engaged in both sides journalism on the impact of Obama's decision to release the torture memos in 2009, I (and readers here!) was reading closely. Which is how I noted the reference to the 183 waterboards CIA administered to KSM in one month.

[“Affordable” Health Care](#)

[Bill Supporters Still Can't Say “Affordable”](#)

In a series of posts at the end of 2009, I laid out how ObamaCare still required participants to spend too much of their income on health

insurance and care, which would lead to lots of people to not use it. That has turned out to be one of the biggest problems with ObamaCare (and one of the reason it wasn't all that popular until Trump tried to take it away). If Democrats ever wrest control from the Republicans again, this is a problem that still needs to be fixed.

2010

[Abu Zubaydah's Torturers Relied on July 13 Yoo Fax, not Bybee Memo](#)

I found a lot of things (including Gul Rahman's ID, but I waited on that to protect the identity of the CIA officer who oversaw his killing) in the Office of Professional Management report on John Yoo's torture memos released in 201. One that remains important – and poorly understood – is that the first torture actually operated under authorization from a freelance fax from Yoo issued weeks before the famous August 1 Bybee memo, rather than the full OLC memo itself.

[FDL Book Salon Welcomes Steven Rattner, Author of Overhaul](#)

There were two or three of Bev's badly missed book salons I hosted that I particularly enjoyed (Bob Woodward is another). But none was better than hosting Steven Rattner, for his very blinkered view of his own role in the auto bailout. The comment thread in it was epic, too, but sadly gone.

Hatfill and Wen Ho Lee and Plame and al-Awlaki and Assange

After a panel on the Scooter Libby case, I meditated on how those with the secrets increasingly use journalists as a stand in for due process. This is not a post I've returned to a lot, but particularly given everything that has transpired since, particularly given where Assange has gone since, it strikes a nerve.