

Jan. 6 Committee Follows The Pattern Of The Evil John Doe Investigation

Fifteen months after Congress certified the 2020 election, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's hand-picked Jan. 6 commission is still forging ahead with partisan theater.

The committee has [seized bank records](#) of peaceful protesters, [routinely made up evidence](#) to tarnish Republican leaders, [spied on federal lawmakers'](#) phone records, [threatened press freedom](#), and is now admittedly [trying to criminalize](#) GOP's fundraising on the issue of election security, as The Federalist's Editor-in-Chief Mollie Hemingway [reported](#) last month.

The unserious committee has been exploiting the Capitol riot for political ends since it happened, but as time passes, Democrats' abuses of power become more brazen — and they call to mind some of the most egregious instances of neglect of the rule of law and civil liberties in our country's recent history.

The yearslong and still ongoing Russia collusion hoax comes to mind. The committee's conduct has [drawn parallels to Watergate](#) as well, most recently with its attempts to subpoena opposition records, which would include financial records from the Salesforce database as well as personal, sensitive information about Republican donors and other party supporters.

As the National Republican Senate Committee wrote in an [amicus brief](#),

“What the Salesforce subpoena demands is for the company to hand over the ‘Holy Grail’ of the RNC’s internal digital playbook.”

But there’s another comparison — one that carried massive implications for national politics and the rule of law: Wisconsin’s infamous [John Doe investigation](#) of former Gov. Scott Walker and his supporters.

The John Doe Investigation

It all started back in 2010, when Walker was still county executive of Milwaukee and running for governor. Based on a report that public funds had been stolen from an annual military event, Walker opened an investigation, which came to be known as John Doe I.

Wisconsin has a provision for these legal proceedings, called John Doe investigations. Like grand juries, they’re intended to determine whether a crime has been committed and, if so, who committed it.

Unlike grand juries, however, these are not conclusions drawn not by a jury of peers but investigations helmed by a single judge. Not only can law enforcement subpoena witnesses, but they can issue gag orders that prevent those witnesses from saying anything publicly about the investigation, granting an inordinate amount of secrecy to those overseeing it.

Six people were convicted as a result of John Doe I. By this point, Walker had secured the governorship and by 2012 was facing a union-fueled recall effort, which he weathered and won.

After Walker won the recall election, however, a judge gave the overseeing district attorney the green light to grow the scope of the

John Doe investigation — except this time it targeted Walker himself for supposedly breaking campaign finance laws. The DA was John Chisholm, the same DA [who became infamous](#) in November 2021 when a criminal he let off with exceptional leniency murdered six people and injured more than 62 others when he [plowed an SUV](#) through an annual Christmas parade.

The overreaches of the investigation were extreme and chilling. Prosecutors targeted not only Walker and conservative organizations in the state but also his supporters. For instance, as Kimberley Strassel documented in her book "[The Intimidation Game](#)," a 2013 subpoena going after one target, Ed O'Keefe, who directed the conservative Wisconsin Club for Growth that helped with Walker's recall election victory, shows the insane breadth of the investigation:

The subpoena's sweeping demands included all of O'Keefe's correspondence going back to April 2009 with dozens of people — whose own names were listed on its first page. ... Among several visible political figures were also listed lots of small vendors to, and fund-raisers for, the club. The government would have been hard pressed to know the club had such associations. 'That's when I realized they had been spying on us for some time. There was no way they could have had those names otherwise,' he says. He'd only later find out that prosecutors had already gone to all his Internet service providers and subpoenaed every conversation he'd ever had. They'd done the same to at least seventeen other people.

The subpoena's demands were shocking. Not only did they expose spying and cover a grand scope — O'Keefe would later learn that in a single day, prosecutors had subpoenaed 29 different conservative organizations in Wisconsin — but they also included gag orders that

prevented the recipients from telling anyone except their attorney what was in the search warrant or even that they had received it.

The gag order would have been bad enough for people like O'Keefe, but he wasn't the only one whose communications were summoned. Others had them seized in the form of pre-dawn raids.

One of these raids occurred at the home of political consultant R.J. Johnson — except Johnson and his wife weren't home, according to Strassel's account. The only person home in the still-dark hours of the early morning was their 16-year-old son, who was prevented by a "troop of armed law enforcement" from calling his parents, his grandparents who lived less than a mile away, or even a lawyer. The son was told that he was also under the gag order and could be hauled off to jail if he told anyone what had happened.

A similar thing happened to Johnson's business partner Deborah Jordahl when an armed deputy sheriff showed up at her door at 6:00 a.m. with a search warrant. Here's how Strassel tells it:

Jordahl asked for permission to wake her children on her own so they wouldn't be scared. Permission denied. The deputy sheriff accompanied her into each room. Jordahl would later find out that her son, upon waking and seeing a police officer, thought for several minutes that his father was dead.

The deputy herded them all into the family room and read the warrant, including the gag order. Jordahl's fifteen-year-old daughter sat on the sofa, weeping, as the deputy explained that the kids were also subject to consequences if they spoke.

Just like the Johnsons, the Jordahl children were also subject to the

gag order, and Deborah Jordahl was prevented from calling her lawyer. As Strassel put it, Jordahl would have had a tough time making a call anyway because "After going through every closet and drawer and combing through the basement and the family vehicles, the police department left with her phone, her husband's phone, both their computers, the kids' computers, hard drives, iPods, an e-reader, a voice recorder, pocket calendars, and her files."

"Jordahl later found out that most of this was unnecessary," Strassel recounted. "It was simple harassment."

Just Like J6

The harassment carried consequences, both personal and professional, for the targets. O'Keefe, Johnson, and Jordahl all experienced hits to their business due to the "cloud of suspicion" and the loss of their records and digital assets. Clients stopped answering calls, and potential business opportunities were lost.

"Even if they hadn't heard about the Doe" Johnson [told](#) the Wall Street Journal, "it would have been unethical for me to bring them in blind. So I had to turn down business on that account."

On top of it all, they carried the weight of the knowledge that they could go to jail.

The investigation also had consequences for the state's entire conservative movement. As Strassel explained:

The John Doe got shut down, but not before the left accomplished many of its goals. It harassed and put in suspended animation most of Wisconsin's conservative movement during a crucial election

period. It disclosed donors and pertinent information that could be used to attack and silence the right. It required its victims to spend, collectively, millions of dollars on legal defense — money diverted from advocacy. It subjected individuals to the terror of personal prosecution, wreaking havoc on their livelihoods, their families, their ability to sleep at night. It made them think twice about taking part in the electoral system. This is what intimidation is all about.

Through similar intimidation tactics, the Jan. 6 committee has the same effect. Following what was the most problematic election in our country's history — thanks to Big Tech's censorship of conservative leaders and information that might harm Democrats in the run-up to the election, states breaking or changing voting laws last-minute to accommodate mass mail-in voting, the press propagandizing 24/7 for Democrats and against Republicans, and Mark Zuckerberg dumping massive funds into left-wing groups to take over government elections offices — the J6 committee is squashing election-security efforts by threatening those who question that 2020 was 100 percent free and fair.

As Hemingway [outlined](#), Democrats are presently trying to criminalize Republican fundraising — which, by the way, utilizes the exact same methods Democrats use — by claiming that when the GOP does it, it's wire fraud. When political donations can play such an outsized role in election outcomes, Pelosi's underhanded tricks seek to have the same effect as the John Doe circus: to hamstring political enemies by cutting off their donors and creating a cloud of suspicion over perfectly legal and ethical activities.

The RNC has filed a lawsuit against Pelosi's committee for its sprawling subpoena that demands highly sensitive information about Republican

supporters, and the details bear a frightening resemblance to the John Doe intimidation.

As The Federalist's Tristan Justice [reported](#): "While the Jan. 6 Committee claimed in its [opposition memo](#) the subpoena is 'narrowly tailored,' its compliance would require the Republican Party to reveal its digital strategy and identification of its supporters to ideological state actors running the partisan probe with an explicit vengeance. The committee has already [selectively leaked](#) private communications obtained through its subpoenas to smear dissidents to friendly media while [manipulating](#) other texts to promote a political narrative."

Worse than what happened in John Doe, when 29 conservative organizations were subpoenaed on the same day as noted above, the Jan. 6 committee has [officially subpoenaed](#) a whopping 99 people or entities and requested the voluntary compliance of others, according to a Federalist analysis. Of the subpoenas, only about 8 percent were related to the Capitol riot.

The Jan. 6 committee has also investigated and harassed Americans who attended Donald Trump's rally in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6, even those who engaged only in constitutionally protected peaceful protest. It went so low as to weaponize the private sector and personal bank records when it asked Bank of America, which had [snooped](#) through countless accounts of innocent Americans, to hand over a list of people who made transactions in D.C. on Jan. 5 and 6 or stayed in an Airbnb. It's all about punishing political enemies and intimidating opponents.

That brings us back to Wisconsin's John Doe investigation. "I've been in or around politics for two decades and I would have thought this happens in other countries but not the U.S., and not in Wisconsin," [said](#)

Kurt Bauer, president of the group Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, which was hit so hard with subpoenas during John Doe that it reportedly brought on a forensics team to copy the boatload of requested information from computers. "In this country, we don't leverage the justice system to punish our political opponents."

Correction: In this country, we *shouldn't* leverage political power to ruin the lives of opponents — and decent people don't. But that's exactly what Pelosi's partisan committee is working overtime to do.

John Doe, which turned the lives of innocents upside down, has gone down in recent history as a nakedly partisan and embarrassing abuse of power without accountability — but that was just one state. The Jan. 6 committee is John Doe for all of America, and those responsible for its sins be brought to account.

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