

Free Law Project

Who we are, what we do, and why we do it.

MichALL, 11 May 2018

Free Law
Project



<https://free.law>
[@freelawproject](https://twitter.com/freelawproject)

Me, Michael Lissner

@mlissner

- Executive Director of Free Law Project
- Began work on FLP in 2010 while at School of Information at Berkeley.
- Founded FLP as a non-profit in 2013.
- IANAL

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Today's Plan

- 1) What's Free Law Project and what do we do?
- 2) Our projects and initiatives
- 3) Questions *&* Answers



What We Do

- Free Law Project is a 501(c)(3) non-profit focused on high-quality, open legal data.
- **Goal:** Use data, software, and advocacy to help academics, practitioners, and organizations improve the legal world, making it smarter, more competitive, and more innovative.



Projects and Initiatives

COURT LISTENER

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Projects and Initiatives

- Our main initiative.
- A search and awareness tool with an API, bulk data, email alerts, RSS feeds, custom Podcasts, etc.
- Four main types of data:
 - 4M Opinions
 - 25M PACER docket entries from 2.1M cases (6.2M documents)
 - 1.1M minutes of oral arguments
 - 8,500 federal and state judge profiles
- Latest opinions and oral arguments from court websites using about 200 scrapers.
- An API that allows programmatic access to complete collection.
- Bulk data for about 400 “jurisdictions” (includes Attorney General opinions, bankruptcy courts, military courts, state courts, etc.)
- Daily alerts, custom RSS feeds, Podcasts.

CL

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CourtListener.com — Opinions

- 4M opinions from 422 jurisdictions.
- Nearly complete SCOTUS record, paired with SCDB.
- More opinions scraped from court websites daily (about 300/day).
- Alerts, API, bulk data, searchable interface.
- 30M cross-linked citations.
- More (meta)data coming regularly.
- Audit scheduled later this year.

CL



Projects and Initiatives

RECAP
hVCEK

“Turning PACER Around”

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CourtListener.com — RECAP Archive

- 2.1M cases, 25M docket entries, 6.2M PACER documents
- Sourced from:
 - Crawling PACER directly for free opinions
 - RECAP Extension (more in a second)
 - PACER RSS feeds
 - Bulk data gathering services
- Full text searchable including > 7M pages of OCR.
- API accessible, bulk data available.



RECAP Advanced Search

Advanced RECAP Search

Search our database of millions of PACER documents and dockets.

[Learn More](#)

Search Results Order: **Docket Number:**

Document Description: **Case Name:**

Filed After: **Filed Before:** **Document #:** **Attachment #:**

Assigned To Judge: **Referred To Judge:** **Nature of Suit:**

Party Name: **Attorney Name:** **Exclude items not in RECAP**

Operators Quick List

- AND** - Intersection
 - OR** - Union
 - , !, NOT** - Negation
 - " "** - Phrase search
 - ()** - Grouped queries
 - :** - Fielded search
 - *, ?** - Wildcard
 - ~** - Fuzzy and proximity
 - [x TO y]** - Ranges
 - ^** - Field boosting
- [More details...](#)

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RECAP Search Results

Refine Your Query

Select Jurisdictions **103**

Search Results Order:

Newest First

Exclude items not in RECAP

Case Name:

lehman brothers

Document Description:

Docket Number:

Nature of Suit:

Cause:

transcript

Search

[Query Help](#)

24 Cases — 193 Documents

606ms

Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc.- Adversary Proceeding (Bankr. S.D.N.Y. 2015)

Docket Number: 15-01404 **Date Filed:** November 12th, 2015 **Assigned To:** Judge Shelley C. Chapman

Parties: Sequa Corporation, ACCESS GROUP INC. SERIES 2005-A, ACCESS GROUP INC. SERIES 2005-B, IMPAC ...

Attorneys: Corinne Ball, IMPAC CMB TRUST SERIES 2005-08, Brian Glasser, IMPAC CMB TRUST SERIES ...

Document #41

... access to the transcript is restricted until 10/23/2017. The transcript may be viewed at the Bankruptcy... Due By 8/14/2017. Redacted Transcript Submission Due By 8/24/2017. Transcript access will be restricted... Transcript regarding Hearing Held on 7/20/2017 10:25 AM RE: Conference. Remote electronic access... Bankruptcy Court Clerks Office. [Transcription Service Agency: Veritext Legal Solutions.]. (See the Courts Website... Website for contact information for the Transcription Service Agency.). Notice of Intent to Request Redaction...

Document #47

... /2014. The transcript may be viewed at the Bankruptcy Court Clerks Office. [Transcription Service Agency... Due By 9/4/2014. Redacted Transcript Submission Due By 9/15/2014. Transcript access will be restricted... Transcript regarding Hearing Held on 8/12/2014 10:00AM Remote electronic access to the transcript... Courts Website for contact information for the Transcription Service Agency.). Notice of Intent to Request...

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RECAP Dockets

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From [Free Law Project](#), a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

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☆ United States v. MANAFORT (1:17-cr-00201)

District Court, District of Columbia

[View on PACER](#)

[Search this Docket](#)

Last updated: May 11, 2018, 12:13 p.m. EDT

Date Filed: Oct. 27, 2017

Date of Last Known Filing: March 12, 2018

☰ DOCKET ENTRIES (PAGE 1 OF 2)

👤 PARTIES AND ATTORNEYS

Filed to

Documents to

⬇️ Ascending ⬆️ Descending

Document Number	Date Filed	Description
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2	Oct 27, 2017	MOTION for Sealing of the Indictment, Warrants, the Instant Motion and to Delay Entry on the Public Docket of the Filing of this Motion to Seal and All Related Matters by USA as to PAUL J. MANAFORT, Jr, RICHARD W. GATES, III. (zvt) (Entered: 10/30/2017)
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[Main Document](#)

Motion to Seal Case

[Download PDF](#)

RECAP Extensions

- RECAP The Law — “Turning PACER Around”
 - A browser extension for Chrome or Firefox that saves you money while you use PACER.
 - Everything you purchase gets added to our public archive.
 - Everything anybody else purchased you get for free.
 - Use RECAP to save money and contribute to a public archive.

 <https://free.law/recap/> 

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RECAP Extension in PACER

**U.S. District Court
District of Columbia (Washington, DC)
CRIMINAL DOCKET FOR CASE #: 1:17-cr-00201-ABJ-1**

Case title: USA v. MANAFORT et al

Date Filed: 10/27/2017

Date Filed	#	Docket Text
10/27/2017	2 R	MOTION for Sealing of the Indictment, Warrants, the Instant Motion and to Delay Entry on the Public Docket of the Filing of this Motion to Seal and All Related Matters by USA as to PAUL J. MANAFORT, Jr, RICHARD W. GATES, III. (zvt) (Entered: 10/30/2017)
10/27/2017	3 R	ORDER granting 2 R Sealing of the Indictment, Warrants, the Instant Motion and to Delay Entry on the Public Docket of the Filing of this Motion to Seal and All Related Matters as to PAUL J. MANAFORT Jr. (1), RICHARD W. GATES, III. Signed by Magistrate Judge Deborah A. Robinson on 10/27/2017. (zvt) (Entered: 10/30/2017)
10/30/2017	5 R	GOVERNMENT'S MOTION to Unseal the Indictment by USA as to PAUL J. MANAFORT (1) JR, and RICHARD W. GATES, III (2). (zad) (Entered: 10/30/2017)
10/30/2017	6 R	ORDER granting 5 R Government's Motion to Unseal the Indictment by USA as to PAUL J. MANAFORT JR. (1), and RICHARD W. GATES, III (2): It is further ORDERED that the redacted version of the Indictment and the Arrest Warrants shall be unsealed and made available on the public docket. Signed by Magistrate Judge Deborah A. Robinson on 10/30/2017. (zad) (Entered: 10/30/2017)
10/30/2017	7 R	Bench Warrant Returned Executed on 10/30/2017 as to PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR. (zcal) (Entered: 10/30/2017)
10/30/2017	9 R	ORDER Setting Conditions for High Intensity Supervision Program as to PAUL J. MANAFORT JR. (1): Personal Recognizance. Signed by Magistrate Judge Deborah A. Robinson on 10/30/2017. (zcal) (Additional attachment(s) added on 11/2/2017: # 1 Unsecured Appearance Bond) (cal). (Entered: 10/30/2017)
10/30/2017	13 R	REDACTED INDICTMENT as to PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR. (1), and RICHARD W. GATES, III (2). (zad) (Entered: 10/31/2017)
10/31/2017	11 R	GOVERNMENT'S MOTION to Unseal the Docket as to PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR (1), and RICHARD W. GATES, III. (2) (zad) (Entered: 10/31/2017)
10/31/2017	12 R	ORDER granting 11 R Government's Motion to Unseal the Docket as to PAUL J. MANAFORT JR. (1), and RICHARD W. GATES III (2): IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the docket in the above-captioned case shall be unsealed, but that the original indictment remain seal and be replaced with the copy of the redact copy of the indictment provided by the Special Counsel's Office. Signed by Magistrate Judge Deborah A. Robinson on 10/31/2017. (zad) (Entered: 10/31/2017)
10/31/2017	14 R	MEMORANDUM in Support of Conditions of Release, Complex Case Designation and Notice of Intent to Use Certain Bank Records by USA as to PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR, RICHARD W. GATES, III (zrdj) (Entered: 10/31/2017)
11/01/2017	15 R	NOTICE OF ATTORNEY APPEARANCE Kyle Renee Freeny appearing for USA. (Freeny, Kyle) (Entered: 11/01/2017)
11/01/2017	16	NOTICE OF ATTORNEY APPEARANCE Greg Donald Andres appearing for USA. (zvt) (Entered: 11/01/2017)
11/01/2017	17 R	NOTICE OF ATTORNEY APPEARANCE Andrew Weissmann appearing for USA. (zvt) (Entered: 11/01/2017)
11/02/2017	18 R	RESPONSE by PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR as to PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR, RICHARD W. GATES, III re 14 R Notice (Other) (Downing, Kevin) (Entered: 11/02/2017)
11/02/2017	19 R	Ex Parte MOTION for Protective Order (<i>Post-Indictment Restraining Order</i>) by USA as to PAUL J. MANAFORT, JR, RICHARD W. GATES, III. (Attachments: # 1 R Text of Proposed Order)(Freeny, Kyle) Modified on 11/3/2017 - Unsealed pursuant to Minute Order filed on 11/3/2017. (jth). (Entered: 11/02/2017)

CourtListener.com — Judges



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CourtListener.com — Judges

- Developed with support from NSF and Knight Foundation.
- 8,500 judges from federal and state courts.
- API, bulk data, judge search.
- Campaign finance data for elected judges.
- Links to Oral Argument, Opinion, and RECAP databases.
- Political affiliations, education history, employment positions, clerkships, ABA ratings...
- ☆☆☆ Soon: Financial disclosures for all federal judges☆☆☆



William Howard Taft (1/4)



William Howard Taft (Sixth Circuit, Supreme Court)

CourtListener ID: pres-025, FJC ID: [2331](#)

Biographical Information

Born: September 15, 1857 in [Cincinnati, Ohio](#)

Died: March 8, 1930 in Washington, District of Columbia

Race: White

Gender: Male ♂

Religion: Unitarian



William Howard Taft (2/4)

Political Affiliations

Affiliations have been gathered from ballots, appointments, and original research.

- [Republican](#) (via ballot)
- Beginning December 16, 1891: [Republican](#) (via appointer)

Education History

- Attended [Yale University](#) and received a Bachelor's (e.g. B.A.) in 1878



William Howard Taft (3/4)

Judicial Positions

JUDGE *at* SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES (June 30, 1921 – February 3, 1930)

Appointed By: [Warren G. Harding](#)

Selected By: [Appointment \(President\)](#)
on June 30, 1921

Confirmation Date: June 30, 1921

Vote Info: Senate voted *by* voice vote

Termination Reason: Resigned

JUDGE *at* COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE SIXTH CIRCUIT (March 17, 1892 – March 15, 1900)

Appointed By: [Benjamin Harrison](#)

Selected By:  [Appointment \(President\)](#)
on Dec. 16, 1891

Judicial Committee Action Date:
March 14, 1892

Confirmation Date: March 17,
1892

Vote Info: Senate voted *by* voice vote

Termination Reason: Resigned

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William Howard Taft (4/4)

Non-Judicial Positions

Includes a variety of positions such as governor, president, clerk, practitioner, public defender, attorneys general, and professor.

KENT PROFESSOR OF LAW *at* YALE UNIVERSITY (1913 – 1921)

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (1909 – 1913) 🖐

Judicial Appointments (78)

- [Richard Elihu Sloan](#)
Judge *at* District Court, D. Arizona (August 26, 1912 – March 3, 1913)
- [John Moses Cheney](#)
Judge *at* District Court, N.D. Florida (August 26, 1912 – March 3, 1913)
- [Clinton Woodbury Howard](#)
Judge *at* District Court, W.D. Washington (August 26, 1912 – March 3, 1913)
- [James Madison Morton Jr.](#)
Judge *at* District Court, D. Massachusetts (August 12, 1912 – January 19, 1932)
- [Arthur J. Tuttle](#)
Judge *at* District Court, E.D. Michigan (August 6, 1912 – December 2, 1944)
- [Frederic Dodge](#)
Judge *at* Court of Appeals for the First Circuit (July 23, 1912 – June 30, 1918)



CourtListener.com



Oral Arguments

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CourtListener.com — Oral Arguments

- 1.1M minutes of oral argument audio.
 - Every episode of The Simpsons...57 times.
 - More than every episode of General Hospital
- Covers circuit courts (except 10th and 11th).
 - 11th just started offering oral arguments on their website.
 - 10th seems to be opposed.
- Automated transcriptions coming soon.
- Alerts, bulk data, Podcasts, online listening, etc.
- State courts on the list to add too, if people ask.



Advocacy

- Neutral Citations e.g. “(2000 WI 80)”
- Oral argument availability on court websites
- RSS feeds of PACER/ECF documents
- PACER/ECF reform and modernization



Other Projects & Initiatives

- SCOTUS visualizations made with University of Baltimore.
- A database of about 450 reporters as CSV or JSON, with abbreviation, alternate abbreviations, start date, end date, jurisdictions included, etc.
- A database of courts with unique IDs and other metadata.
- Citation graph with 30M inter-opinion citations.
- Pagerank scores for all opinions in collection.
- A collection of court seals.
- A collection of judicial portraits.
- PACER research and fact sheets.



Funding and Money

(How is this all possible?)

- We apply for grants
- We join other people's grants
- Two annual fundraisers
- Corporate sponsorship
- Paid engagements



Questions & Answers

Michael Lissner

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<https://free.law/donate/>

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