

IN THE COURT OF CHANCERY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE

DAVID M. WAGNER,	:
	:
Plaintiff,	:
	:
v.	: Civil Action
	: No. 2021-1090-JTL
TESLA, INC., a Delaware	:
corporation,	:
	:
Defendant.	:

- - -

Chancery Court Chambers
Leonard L. Williams Justice Center
500 North King Street
Wilmington, Delaware
Wednesday, January 19, 2022
2:00 p.m.

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BEFORE: HON. J. TRAVIS LASTER, Vice Chancellor.

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TELEPHONIC ORAL ARGUMENT AND GUIDANCE OF THE COURT ON
PLAINTIFF'S MOTION TO EXPEDITE PROCEEDINGS

CHANCERY COURT REPORTERS
Leonard L. Williams Justice Center
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1 APPEARANCES:

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-and-

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9 for Plaintiff

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14 Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan, LLP
15 for Defendant

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1 THE COURT: Travis Laster joining.
2 Who will be presenting for the
3 plaintiff?

4 ATTORNEY ANDREWS: Good afternoon,
5 Your Honor. This is Gillian Andrews from Heyman
6 Enerio. I will be presenting today on behalf of
7 plaintiff David Wagner today.

8 THE COURT: Who is going to be
9 speaking for the respondent?

10 ATTORNEY BARLOW: Your Honor, Mike
11 Barlow of Abrams & Bayliss on behalf of defendant
12 Tesla. I am joined today by colleagues from Quinn
13 Emanuel: Mr. Alex Sprio, Mr. Andy Rossman, and
14 Mr. Sascha Rand. I'll be handling the argument today.

15 THE COURT: Well, I've read your
16 papers. Let's get underway.

17 ATTORNEY ANDREWS: Thank you, Your
18 Honor. And I'd be remiss if I didn't also introduce
19 Kurt Heyman on the line as well and my colleagues from
20 Pomerantz: Gustavo Bruckner, Sam Adams, and Daryoush
21 Behbood.

22 With that, I'll go ahead and proceed
23 with my presentation on the plaintiff's motion to
24 expedite this Section 220 proceeding. And I would

1 like to thank the Court for the prompt hearing on this
2 matter in such short order after the case was
3 reassigned to Your Honor.

4 Plaintiff filed his Section 220 action
5 and this motion on December 16th after Tesla failed to
6 respond to the December 2nd demand. We are now before
7 the Court over one month later, through no lack of
8 effort by the plaintiff, seeking expedition of this
9 summary proceeding.

10 Section 220 actions are statutory
11 summary proceedings. And we provided several
12 authorities in our reply where expedition was granted
13 and a trial scheduled within two to three months,
14 which is what we are seeking here.

15 There is also a heavy burden on a
16 defendant to prove that a case is so unusual that
17 expedition is not warranted. In that attempt, Tesla
18 points to the *Gharrity I* opinion, noting that there is
19 a possible risk of the public misconstruing a ruling
20 on the low evidentiary threshold of Section 220
21 actions, but fails to acknowledge that the Court was
22 willing to grant expedition there despite those
23 concerns.

24 And I'll quote from Vice Chancellor

1 Slight: "If it isn't stayed, it will be expedited,
2 as all 220s in this court are." And that's from
3 page 83 of the transcript attached to defendant's
4 brief as Exhibit D.

5 I also note that in *Gharrity I*, the
6 Section 220 action, Tesla produced documents to the
7 plaintiff, but is seemingly reluctant to do so here.

8 Defendant opposes expedition by
9 alleging this action is a copycat of other pending
10 derivative lawsuits. This is a Section 220 action,
11 not a plenary litigation, and it is not the same.
12 None of the other actions concern the November 2021
13 tweets we highlighted, and all but one of those
14 actions was filed before the consent motion in
15 April 2019.

16 Indeed, the most recent allegations in
17 *Gharrity II* are from May 2020. The company's review
18 of any particular tweet is a distinct factual matter,
19 including whether that review complied with the
20 consent motion. And that is what plaintiff seeks to
21 investigate in this action.

22 The board composition has changed
23 several times since 2019. And as of October 2021, the
24 board has been reduced to eight directors.

1 Additionally, consistent turnover in
2 the general counsel's office since 2019 is also a
3 cause for a concern. These changes could have led to
4 a different policy or procedure or could have had an
5 impact on how the board is receiving or handling
6 information related to the consent motion and managing
7 the company's compliance with Texas law.

8 Tesla's arguments regarding a stay
9 also fail to preclude expedition. This case poses no
10 true risk of prejudice or an adverse or inconsistent
11 ruling to the derivative suits.

12 Tesla points to dicta in the hearing
13 transcript in *Gharrity I* but fails to note exactly how
14 a finding here would negatively impact the derivative
15 lawsuits.

16 Also, Tesla relies on *Ohio Laborers*,
17 another derivative suit, where Vice Chancellor Slights
18 noted that there was a basis for expedition and
19 expressly recognized the possibility of ongoing
20 misconduct that could necessitate lifting of the stay.

21 The same risks are not present here in
22 this Section 220 action, as plaintiff's statutory
23 inspection right is not a matter of "front and center
24 in ... the pending federal actions." And that's a

1 quote from the transcript at page 39 attached to
2 defendant's brief as Exhibit A.

3 There is no risk of claim or issue
4 preclusion or any jurisdictional issues presented by
5 plaintiff's claims here. Nevertheless, a preliminary
6 motion to expedite a Section 220 action is not the
7 stage to litigate the merits of any hypothetical
8 underlying derivative claims and whether or not they
9 would be subject to a stay.

10 Lastly, plaintiff has standing to
11 pursue inspection as a Tesla stockholder. A
12 "Stockholder" is defined by the statute as "a holder
13 of record of stock ... or a person who is the
14 beneficial owner of shares of such stock"

15 There is no minimum holding
16 requirement under the statute, nor is there a voting
17 requirement. As evidenced by the attachments to the
18 demand letter, which are also appended to the
19 complaint, plaintiff holds Tesla common stock.

20 Indeed, the Court has granted
21 expedition in Section 220 matters even where standing
22 was at issue. And that's evidenced in the *Knott*
23 *Partners v. Telepathy Labs* case that we cited.

24 The Court should not impose such

1 standing restrictions that Tesla seeks to grasp onto
2 Section 220, particularly on such an incomplete
3 record. With that, Your Honor, plaintiff respectfully
4 asks that the Court grant the motion to expedite and
5 promptly schedule a trial on this matter within
6 60 days.

7 Unless Your Honor has any questions
8 for me, I will turn the microphone over to Mr. Barlow.

9 THE COURT: Thank you.

10 Mr. Barlow.

11 ATTORNEY BARLOW: Your Honor, I want
12 to echo the appreciation for hearing us promptly in
13 light of the transfer of the case.

14 Your Honor, we respect and understand
15 plaintiff's position that this is a Section 220
16 summary proceeding. But it's also the case that
17 opinions of the Delaware courts going back to -- the
18 one I remember is *Seinfeld v. Verizon* from the
19 Delaware Supreme Court -- expounding upon the credible
20 basis requirement discussed the balancing of interests
21 that a court engages in in handling Section 220 cases
22 as between a stockholder's access to books and records
23 to investigate wrongdoing and the right of the company
24 to be free from fishing expeditions based on suspicion

1 or curiosity. And, Your Honor, that's a quote about
2 the credible basis standard.

3 But we think the same considerations
4 animate how the Court should approach a scheduling of
5 a Section 220 proceeding, and this Section 220
6 proceeding, consistent with the Court's inherent
7 authority to control its docket, which is, to consider
8 and balance and address the interests of a plaintiff
9 who purports to be a fractional stockholder, who, in
10 today's presentation and in any of the papers, never
11 explained any type of specific reason why it needs the
12 documents on the time period they request, with the
13 interest of the corporation, which, in this case,
14 faces federal securities litigation on these issues
15 starting in May.

16 And so on behalf of Tesla, what we are
17 asking today is that some consideration be given to
18 those facts that have been -- that are for realities
19 before us and the matter be put down on a reasonably
20 prompt schedule for trial in June of 2022.

21 And I want to expand a little bit on
22 the plaintiff's issues because we heard some things
23 today about how this case is different. And,
24 candidly, I respectfully disagree.

1 Plaintiff purports to bring -- or
2 wants to investigate bringing potential derivative
3 claims. That would be the tenth cause of action
4 relating to that subject pending in the courts of
5 Delaware, two of which are pending in federal court
6 and seven of which are pending in this Court, Your
7 Honor. And all of those cases have been stayed.

8 And the argument that this case
9 relates to later tweets or that this case relates to
10 different tweets has been uniformly rejected by this
11 Court. It was addressed specifically in the *Laborers'*
12 *District Council* action in 2019, where a contested
13 stay petition was, nonetheless, stayed. And the Court
14 addressed, there, not only issues of the 2018 tweets
15 relating to whether Tesla would go private, but also
16 later tweets in 2019 and 2020 in both the *Laborers'*
17 and the *Gharrity* action. Again, all of those cases
18 have been stayed.

19 So the suggestion that this is not a
20 copycat action, I think, Your Honor, is belied -- and
21 I don't mean to be pejorative about this -- but it's
22 belied by the complaint, most of the paragraphs of
23 which, as it relates to substantive background, go
24 back to 2013, 2018, 2019 and all of the same factual

1 allegations that are alleged in those other derivative
2 complaints. There's only a handful relating to the
3 current tweets.

4 And then if you look at the time
5 period in the demand, they want to go back to 2018,
6 January 1st, 2018.

7 And I heard today that the board is
8 somehow different. In fact, it's not. I believe all
9 of the current members of the board are named
10 defendants in the *Gharrity* suit.

11 And so the suggestion that this case
12 is somehow distinct as a factual matter, respectfully,
13 Your Honor, I don't think holds water and doesn't
14 change the fact that the presentation of derivative
15 claims based on these same facts -- without getting
16 ahead of addressing what those derivative claims might
17 be -- I have every confidence, would be stayed pending
18 consideration of the federal securities litigation.

19 And, Your Honor, to return to that
20 federal securities litigation and the balancing, I do
21 think it is important to recognize that in scheduling
22 this matter, having the matter heard in June, after
23 that federal securities litigation is considered, is
24 absolutely consistent with the precedent of this court

1 in which derivative and -- both types of claims have
2 been stayed pending the underlying federal securities
3 litigation.

4 And I specifically was -- and we
5 quoted at length in our papers the quote of Vice
6 Chancellor Slight in the *Gharrity* Section 220 case in
7 which he expressly recognized the risk that the public
8 would perceive a credible basis finding as more than
9 what the court might intend under the law and noting
10 that that's especially the case where "the allegations
11 of wrongdoing are well-known in the public sphere."

12 And, Your Honor, I note that quote
13 because, as lawyers, we often spend time analogizing
14 quotes in other cases to the different sets of facts
15 that apply here. To be clear, those -- that is the
16 same company, and these are the same sort of types of
17 allegations. And so I believe Vice Chancellor
18 Slight's concern manifested in *Gharrity* is exactly
19 evident here and can be very reasonably addressed by
20 handling trial on a schedule in June.

21 What we didn't hear in the discussion
22 of the *Gharrity* Section 220 case in my colleague's
23 presentation was an explanation that the way Vice
24 Chancellor Slight handled that matter to avoid

1 imposing the prejudice of litigating a credible basis
2 determination on Tesla was to litigate scope issues
3 first and not litigate the credible basis issues. And
4 that's why we attached that ruling and that
5 explanation to our opposition.

6 So that was a creative way of
7 addressing that situation here. We don't think our
8 proposal of doing a trial in June is nearly as
9 creative as that but fundamentally gets to the same
10 point, which avoids the risk that the Court would be
11 making a credible basis determination in just the
12 weeks before the company faces federal securities
13 litigation and a jury trial in the Northern District
14 of California.

15 In addition, there are practical
16 considerations that I don't need to remind the Court
17 about: How much extra effort expedited proceedings
18 places on both the Court and on the parties. And that
19 is particularly the case here, where many of the same
20 personnel are essentially litigating many of those
21 similar issues in California right around the same
22 time frame.

23 And lastly, I want to point out that
24 there are important issues to litigate here that are

1 perhaps different from some of the cases that we've
2 cited earlier. Mr. Wagner purports to own one-tenth
3 of one share of Tesla stock.

4 I am not aware of precedent in this
5 court addressing someone who only owns -- or purports
6 to own a fractional interest like that. And I think
7 it presents interesting questions of whether when the
8 General Assembly expanded Section 220 to include
9 beneficial owners in 2003, it intended to create a
10 situation where brokers could, as an accounting
11 mechanism, divide the fractional ownership of one
12 share among tens or hundreds of people and give them
13 all inspection rights. The term "beneficial owner"
14 has long been understood, as a matter of securities
15 practice, to be something that you define by the
16 ability to exercise a voting right or the ability to
17 transfer shares.

18 And from what we can tell from the M1
19 website, which is the brokerage where the plaintiff
20 purports to own, he doesn't, as we can tell, have the
21 right to transfer his one-tenth of a share or the
22 right to vote it.

23 So we heard in the reply brief that
24 they want to take -- they think that matter should be

1 addressed on a complete record, at paragraph 31. We
2 agree. We think it's going to take some time to
3 address that issue, to get the documents about the
4 plaintiff's holdings in Tesla and have that addressed,
5 and, if those documents aren't sufficient, to
6 potentially explore other documents that go to the
7 issue of whether or not he is, in fact, a beneficial
8 owner.

9 So I understand plaintiff's position
10 that they seek to proceed on a 60-day schedule, but I
11 do not think that it is warranted by the actual facts
12 of this case, Your Honor. And I note that their
13 indication of authority for the proposition that, for
14 example, all 220 cases are expedited and, therefore,
15 this one must be, I think, falls apart if you merely
16 look at it.

17 They cite, for example, for the
18 proposition -- the *Gharrity* quote about expedited
19 proceedings in Footnote 1 of their reply. And, again,
20 that *Gharrity* proceeding -- we litigated over the
21 course of a year in that case addressing stay
22 proceedings and then scope issues. That is not what
23 we are proposing today.

24 What we are proposing is what we

1 believe to be a much more reasonable and prudential
2 scheduling of this matter shortly after the jury trial
3 in the Northern District of California on similar
4 issues. That matter is set for a 10-day jury trial
5 beginning immediately after Memorial Day. We have, in
6 full disclosure, added one week, and that is why the
7 June 20th date is referenced in our papers as one week
8 from the expected end of that 10-day trial to allow
9 for jury deliberations and the like.

10 So we have an interest in moving this
11 matter forward -- and promptly, Your Honor -- but we
12 think the schedule the defendant proposed is the
13 reasonable one, and we ask that it be adopted.

14 THE COURT: All right. Reply.

15 ATTORNEY ANDREWS: Thank you, Your
16 Honor. And I will be brief.

17 It is clear that Mr. Musk continues to
18 tweet and continues to show a disregard for the
19 compliance with the consent motion. So that has the
20 potential to cause further and imminent harm to the
21 company and plaintiff's interests as a stockholder.

22 To touch on a few other items, we have
23 expressly not limited our demand to pursuing
24 derivative claims, and we have left open appropriate

1 other prophylactic options depending on what we
2 discover after receiving these books and records.

3 To address how our case is different
4 from the other pending derivative lawsuits, our claims
5 are temporally distinct, and they occur well after the
6 entry of the consent motion. As I noted, changes in
7 the general counsel's office and on the board may have
8 led to changes in critical policies since the last
9 case was filed that likely affects how and when
10 information regarding compliance with the consent
11 motion reaches the board and how it is then handled.

12 We do not know what the records may
13 show, but Mr. Musk has been very active on Twitter,
14 and there is much that should have happened at the
15 company between May 2020 and now that is not covered
16 by the prior pending derivative actions. And to
17 include such allegations, the plaintiffs in the other
18 derivative suits would be required to submit a new
19 demand letter and/or amend their existing complaint.
20 The merits of any derivative suit that plaintiff may
21 eventually bring based on what is discovered should
22 not be prejudged at this nascent stage of a statutory
23 summary proceeding.

24 The issues that my colleague raises

1 are precisely the kinds of issues that are routinely
2 addressed on an expedited basis in Section 220
3 matters. As I noted, cases where standing is
4 contested have even been allowed to proceed on an
5 expedited basis. And that's the *Knott Partners* case
6 that we referenced in our reply brief.

7 We think that the requested documents
8 are necessary to plaintiff's purposes in fully
9 investigating the potential misconduct. And we have
10 requested documents dating back to January 2018
11 because we believe that is when the conduct began.

12 The Court made clear in *Bloom Energy*
13 that "The temporal scope of a Section 220 inspection
14 that is based on suspected wrongdoing or mismanagement
15 extends to the time when the evidence reveals the
16 wrongdoing or mismanagement began."

17 Of course, the plaintiff is willing to
18 engage in discussions to reasonably narrow his
19 request, as appropriate, while still seeking to obtain
20 all documents necessary to complete a full
21 investigation. And if it is, in fact, true that the
22 documents from January 1st, 2018, through May 2020 are
23 mirror or copy requests previously made by other
24 stockholders, then those materials should be readily

1 available, collected, and reviewed and should not be
2 burdensome to produce here.

3 Again, Your Honor, we would
4 respectfully request a trial on this matter within
5 60 days at the Court's convenience.

6 THE COURT: So from your standpoint,
7 what is the real-world difference between the middle
8 of March and the middle of June? Mr. Barlow has
9 pointed to real-world things, like the trial in the
10 Northern District of California, to suggest that it
11 really would be better, from his perspective, to have
12 the trial in June. What would be the real-world
13 practical implications of that for you and your side?

14 ATTORNEY ANDREWS: Your Honor, we, of
15 course, have an interest in getting information as
16 soon as possible to make a determination about how
17 best to proceed. We think that with Tesla's
18 cooperation and on a trial in 60 days, which would put
19 us somewhere towards the end of March, beginning of
20 April, we could be clear of the one-day trial in this
21 matter well before the securities class action
22 proceeds at the end of May.

23 Obviously, as Your Honor well knows,
24 these are summary by nature. We're not going to have

1 a wealth of discovery or dispositive motion practice
2 or anything like that, and it will be a summary
3 one-day trial. So we think that we could get clear of
4 that well in advance of the securities class action
5 and alleviate, hopefully, any issues with that.

6 THE COURT: What happens in terms of
7 the information you have requested if the securities
8 action is resolved in favor of Musk?

9 ATTORNEY ANDREWS: Again, Your Honor,
10 these are distinct tweets -- or they are happening
11 while the board has changed, while general counsel is
12 in flux. We do not know if the policies and
13 procedures have been changed such that we may still
14 have an ability to proceed if not with a derivative
15 suit, then maybe some other prophylactic measure
16 directed toward the board to address what the
17 stockholder is very concerned about and has been
18 evidenced in the fluctuation and the stock prices in
19 the market with the ongoing tweets and the like.

20 So we're really just looking to,
21 hopefully, address those issues one way or the other,
22 whether it's in a lawsuit or through some type of
23 prophylactic demand or approach to the board. And
24 that's really what we're looking to accomplish.

1 THE COURT: All right. Let's take a
2 couple-minute pause. It's 2:24 right now. Let's take
3 ten minutes, until 2:35.

4 (Recess taken from 2:25 p.m. until 2:35 p.m.)

5 THE COURT: This is Travis Laster
6 speaking. I am not sure if I said to return at 2:35
7 or 2:40. Are people back and ready to go, or did I
8 say 2:40 such that I should wait a couple more
9 minutes?

10 ATTORNEY ANDREWS: I am on the line,
11 Your Honor.

12 ATTORNEY BARLOW: Your Honor, this is
13 Mike Barlow. I'm here. I think you said 2:35.

14 THE COURT: That makes me feel a
15 little bit better. I appreciate that.

16 I am going to go ahead and give you an
17 answer now. Let me give you the bottom line up front.
18 I'd like to schedule this for a half-day trial during
19 the week of April 4th. So that would be, based on
20 what I've got on my calendar, most likely either the
21 4th or the 6th. I could potentially move things
22 around to other days that week, if necessary.

23 Let me tell you why I'm doing that.
24 I've thought seriously about what the company has said

1 regarding the other demands, the other derivative
2 actions, and the action in the Northern District of
3 California, and I have a couple thoughts.

4 I start from the proposition that
5 220 actions are summary proceedings. They are
6 supposed to be straightforward. They are supposed to
7 be relatively easy to handle. They are not supposed
8 to be the equivalent of merits-based litigation in the
9 guise of 220. That counsels in favor of getting these
10 done on a faster schedule to maintain that principle.
11 If we start elongating things and letting people dig
12 into more and more collateral issues, or at least try
13 to, it risks letting 220 get turned into something
14 that it's really not.

15 To that effect, the concern has been
16 expressed that if this Court were to permit documents
17 regarding these tweets, that that could send a signal
18 in advance of the trial in the Northern District of
19 California that might be misinterpreted. I am not so
20 enamored with my own influence.

21 All that would be necessary for this
22 plaintiff to obtain documents is a credible basis to
23 suspect that there was some type of violation of the
24 consent order. That doesn't mean there is a violation

1 of the consent order. That doesn't mean it's even
2 more likely than not that there was a violation of the
3 consent order. It just means that there is some
4 reason why we might want to find out more. The same
5 would be true regarding oversight of Musk or policies
6 that might be in existence or things of that nature.
7 I don't think that anyone is going to be able to spin
8 that into some prejudicial ruling.

9 The times when things get sometimes
10 misinterpreted is when we have the equivalent of
11 defendants engaging in scorched earth litigation and
12 trying to inject merits-based defenses into the
13 Chancery proceeding.

14 My *Amerisourcebergen* decision went
15 into a lot of deal about the opioid crisis, but that
16 was because the company put it at issue. Vice
17 Chancellor Slight's decision in *Facebook* went into a
18 lot of analysis about the underlying wrongs in the
19 Cambridge Analytica situation, but that's because the
20 company, for whatever reason, wanted to fight on that
21 ground.

22 So Tesla holds the keys to the kingdom
23 here. If they want to treat 220 like it's supposed to
24 be treated and to approach this as an information

1 access dispute, in which the petitioner ultimately
2 would be entitled, at most, to a reasonable set of
3 documents tailored to the demand, there really isn't
4 any risk. And if, for whatever reason, Tesla wants to
5 engage in the types of scorched earth behavior that
6 we've seen other companies try to engage in, that's on
7 you-all. That's not on me. That's not all on the
8 petitioner.

9 I have also thought about this from a
10 scheduling standpoint. If the trial in the Northern
11 District of California is a big deal and the trial is
12 scheduled to go when it goes, that strikes me as more
13 of a problem for a June trial than anything else.

14 I will say that I'm, frankly,
15 skeptical about it being a problem. There's no doubt
16 in my mind that a company with the largest market cap
17 in the world has the ability to litigate multiple
18 things at once. There's no doubt in my mind that the
19 fine lawyers can litigate in multiple places at once.
20 Mr. Barlow could easily handle this 220 case on his
21 own or even delegate it to one of his very skilled
22 associates, of which I know he has several, who are
23 able to do 220 proceedings. I am just not swayed that
24 those are real-world concerns.

1 I think the better thing to do for
2 everyone is to get this done and move on and not have
3 a potential rescheduling or extension of the trial in
4 the Northern District of California hanging over
5 people's heads. I don't want people coming to me and
6 saying, "Oh, well, we thought we could do the trial in
7 June, but we really can't get people to do our
8 pretrial brief because they are in trial." Again, I'd
9 be very skeptical of that. I think the better
10 approach is to get the 220 done up front.

11 I've also thought about these other
12 derivative actions. I am sympathetic to the idea that
13 an issuer faces a lot of 220 demands. Here, I do
14 think that Mr. Musk brings some of this on himself
15 with his serial tweeting. What the plaintiff is doing
16 here in terms of seeking 220 documents is actually
17 what I think is and what I think our Supreme Court has
18 made clear is the preferred way to do things.

19 In other words, don't file suit first
20 and seek documents later. Don't make assertions first
21 and seek documents later. Seek documents first and
22 figure out whether there's anything there that you
23 actually need to pursue. If the documents come back
24 and there is nothing meaningful there in terms of a

1 problem, that's a very different situation than if
2 there's a basis to move forward with some sort of
3 remedial-oriented action.

4 I think those are all the reasons why
5 I am not swayed by the existence of these other
6 litigations, be it the Northern District of California
7 proceeding or the other derivative actions.

8 Let me also say that I just don't
9 think this thing ought to be that burdensome. The
10 plaintiffs have sought a relatively appropriate level
11 of documents in terms of how deep into the company
12 they are going. It seems to me that this really ought
13 to involve, in the first instance, board-level
14 documents and policies. There ought to be a way to
15 get that done or worked out.

16 The plaintiffs aren't seeking
17 litigation-style discovery. And I'll tell you, I'm
18 not going to give them litigation-style discovery. I
19 understand that 220 is different from litigation-style
20 discovery. Yes, there are times, given a sufficient
21 showing, when a plaintiff might be able to get some
22 documents, like emails, that ordinarily would not be
23 available until litigation, but that requires a
24 showing. And here, it seems to me that, in the first

1 instance, we're likely at more governance-level
2 documents than we are at email-level documents. But
3 we shall find out.

4 I'm happy to take up in due course
5 this interesting question about the holder of a
6 fractional share. I'll tell you what I think is
7 likely going to happen when we dig into this. And I'm
8 speaking here based on my knowledge of UCC Article 8,
9 not anything specific about the case. What I think
10 you are likely to find is even the nominal holder
11 beneficially of, let's say, a thousand shares through
12 a brokerage account is not the holder of a thousand
13 shares in the sense that Delaware pretends they are.
14 What they are is an entitlement holder, which gives
15 them a proportionate interest in the fungible bulk
16 that their brokerage firm holds. So what this person
17 happens to hold is a smaller interest in that fungible
18 bulk.

19 I'm going to be surprised if there is
20 really, ultimately, an analytical or legal difference
21 between the rights that this gentleman has and the
22 rights that someone who we think owns whole shares
23 has. The reality is that Article 8 just doesn't work
24 the way the Delaware Code thinks stockholder ownership

1 works. It operates under a system of entitlement
2 interests and fungible bulk. That is an aliquot
3 system where you are not even entitled to a specific
4 number of shares.

5 You guys can explore it. You can
6 bring me the learning. That's my bet as to what's
7 ultimately going to happen.

8 Now, maybe this is a different
9 product. Maybe this is a product that is not held
10 that way. I will be happy to be edified as to that,
11 and we can take up whatever needs to be done. But I
12 wouldn't be surprised if Mr. Wagner is an entitlement
13 holder just like anybody else who holds through a
14 broker, notwithstanding the DGCL's failure -- I
15 shouldn't say "failure." We link to Article 8 of the
16 UCC, but our statutes are still based on this idea
17 that even beneficial owners hold discrete shares when,
18 again, what they hold are entitlement interests.

19 So that's a roundabout way of saying
20 that I think that I will resolve whatever that issue
21 is in conjunction with the trial so that you-all can
22 give me the factual record that I need on that.

23 Bottom line, why don't you-all figure
24 out some reasonable set of documents that gives

1 Mr. Wagner a sense of what's going on with the
2 tweeting oversight and the tweeting.

3 I think it's not good that there
4 wasn't any response to this. I saw in the answer a
5 statement that the right people at Tesla didn't get
6 the demand. Well, now people are in the know.

7 I would encourage Mr. Barlow to meet
8 with his friends from the Heyman Enerio firm. But for
9 COVID, I would encourage you-all to get together and
10 actually be in the same room. I won't require or even
11 encourage you to do that under current circumstances.
12 But why don't you talk about whether there is a
13 reasonable set of documents that this plaintiff can
14 get and then move on. Assuming there's a credible
15 basis to suspect wrongdoing, which you-all know is a
16 low threshold, and assuming that we get past this
17 beneficial ownership issue, that's all he's going to
18 get. I'm not going to give wide-ranging inspection
19 into the company. There's going to be some reasonable
20 set.

21 I would really encourage you-all to
22 figure this out. Otherwise, we'll go forward. We'll
23 get together during the week of April 4th. We'll get
24 this out of the way, and then people can move on to

1 other things. The bigwigs who are dealing with the
2 Northern District trial can fly out to California and
3 do their thing there, and everyone can put this one in
4 the rearview mirror and head on to the next
5 engagement. That's my ruling.

6 I would ask that Mr. Barlow and
7 Ms. Andrews work on getting some type of stipulated
8 schedule together. Since Tesla has answered, I would
9 put in a limited discovery cutoff and then a sequence
10 for pretrial briefing and the pretrial order.

11 Let's be reasonable on discovery.
12 We've got to figure out what this beneficial ownership
13 thing is. In my world, I think the plaintiff is
14 entitled to understand generally what types of
15 documents Tesla has. They don't get the documents.
16 Nobody is suggesting that they get the documents. But
17 they get to understand what there is so that they
18 don't come and argue to me for things that don't exist
19 and they can actually think about it, and you guys can
20 work constructively on something that might be
21 reasonable and sufficient. If Tesla wants to depose
22 the plaintiff, there can be a deposition of the
23 plaintiff. But I would exhort you-all not to make
24 this 220 case more than it needs to be.

1 So those are my thoughts. I'll look
2 forward to getting some type of stipulation from you.
3 Just to give you a due date, why don't you-all get me
4 a stipulation by a week from today -- so that's the
5 26th -- and then you-all can be on your way.

6 Thank you very much.

7 (Court adjourned at 2:52 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, DENNEL NIEZGODA, Official Court Reporter for the Court of Chancery of the State of Delaware, Registered Merit Reporter, Certified Realtime Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing pages numbered 3 through 31 contain a true and correct transcription of the proceedings as stenographically reported by me at the hearing in the above cause before the Vice Chancellor of the State of Delaware, on the date therein indicated, except for the guidance at pages 21 through 31, which were revised by the Vice Chancellor.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand at Wilmington, this 21st day of January, 2022.

/s/ Dannel Niezgoda

Dannel Niezgoda
Official Court Reporter
Registered Merit Reporter
Certified Realtime Reporter