

The FBI and Twitter

 cnav.news/2022/12/17/accountability/executive/fbi-twitter/

By Terry A. Hurlbut

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The latest installment of the Twitter Files gives details on something earlier installments only hinted at. First *The Intercept* reported (gloated?) that Twitter, like Facebook, behaved as a State actor. Twitter Files Release Three confirmed this, but even then gave only a bare hint. Yesterday Matt Taibbi revealed an extensive body of correspondence between Twitter and the FBI. At least one other commentator suggests this correspondence gives the most comprehensive (and comprehensible) picture yet of the Deep State, its inner workings, and its unsavory influence on the body politic.

Twitter as subsidiary of the FBI

Promptly at 1:00 p.m. PST, Matt Taibbi began to reveal the extent of cooperation between Twitter and the FBI. Herewith the thread, with very other tweet:

2. The #TwitterFiles are revealing more every day about how the government collects, analyzes, and flags your social media content.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) December 16, 2022

4. Between January 2020 and November 2022, there were over 150 emails between the FBI and former Twitter Trust and Safety chief Yoel Roth.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) December 16, 2022

6. But a surprisingly high number are requests by the FBI for Twitter to take action on election misinformation, even involving joke tweets from low-follower accounts.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) December 16, 2022

8. Federal intelligence and law enforcement reach into Twitter included the Department of Homeland Security, which partnered with security contractors and think tanks to pressure Twitter to moderate content.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

10. The [#TwitterFiles](#) show something new: agencies like the FBI and DHS regularly sending social media content to Twitter through multiple entry points, pre-flagged for moderation.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

<https://t.co/bcttGWKpFW> unanswered question: do agencies like FBI and DHS do in-house flagging work themselves, or farm it out? “You have to prove to me that inside the fucking government you can do any kind of massive data or AI search,” says one former intelligence officer.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

14. Twitter personnel in that case went on to look for reasons to suspend all four accounts, including [@fromma](#), whose tweets are almost all jokes (see sample below), including his “civic misinformation” of Nov. 8: <pic.twitter.com/gwiDtPcWZv>

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

16. “Anyone who cannot discern obvious satire from reality has no place making decisions for others or working for the feds,” said [@ClaireFosterPHD](#), when told about the flagging.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

<https://t.co/ZQeb9Ko06p> an internal email from November 5, 2022, the FBI’s National Election Command Post, which compiles and sends on complaints, sent the SF field office a long list of accounts that “may warrant additional action”:
<pic.twitter.com/yILcgjEyev>

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

20. Twitter then replied with its list of actions taken. Note mercy shown to actor Billy Baldwin: <pic.twitter.com/zQzNGQMkmO>

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

22. When told of the FBI flagging, @Lexitollah replied: “My thoughts initially include 1. Seems like prima facie 1A violation 2. Holy cow, me, an account with the reach of an amoeba 3. What else are they looking at?”

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

<https://t.co/9lfX3lPzyi> a letter to former Deputy General Counsel (and former top FBI lawyer) Jim Baker on Sep. 16, 2022, legal exec Stacia Cardille outlines results from her “soon to be weekly” meeting with DHS, DOJ, FBI, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence: <pic.twitter.com/oE8fDjomNP>

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

26. This passage underscores the unique one-big-happy-family vibe between Twitter and the FBI. With what other firm would the FBI blithely agree to “no impediments” to classified information?

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

28. About one, she writes: “Flagged a specific Tweet on Illinois use of modems to transmit election results in possible violation of the civic integrity policy (except they do use that tech in limited circumstances).”

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

<https://t.co/v2RzNXctZw>, too, most tweets contained the same, “Get out there and vote Wednesday!” trope and had low engagement. This is what the FBI spends its time on: <pic.twitter.com/WfVudSRvIK>

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

32. The executive circulates the “products,” which are really DHS bulletins stressing the need for greater collaboration between law enforcement and “private sector partners.” <pic.twitter.com/by9cpm7YVf>

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

34. While the DHS in its “products” pans “permissive” social media for offering “operational advantages” to Russians, it also explains that the “Domestic Violent Extremist Threat” requires addressing “information gaps”: <pic.twitter.com/Jq4qaYK9Tm>

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

36. There were multiple points of entry into Twitter for government-flagged reports. This letter from Agent Chan to Roth references Teleporter, a platform through which Twitter could receive reports from the FBI: pic.twitter.com/INbgvsu5LV

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

38. State governments also flagged content.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

40. “WHY WAS NO ACTION TAKEN?” Below, Twitter execs – receiving an alert from California officials, by way of “our partner support portal” – debate whether to act on a Trump tweet: pic.twitter.com/W4DQvYwq7Z

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

42. If that’s confusing, it’s because the CIS is a DHS contractor, describes itself as “partners” with the Cyber and Internet Security Agency (CISA) at the DHS: pic.twitter.com/Klz132BZ59

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

44. The takeaway: what most people think of as the “deep state” is really a tangled collaboration of state agencies, private contractors, and (sometimes state-funded) NGOs. The lines become so blurred as to be meaningless.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

45. Twitter Files researchers are moving into a variety of new areas now. Watch [@BariWeiss](#), [@ShellenbergerMD](#), and this space for more, soon.

— Matt Taibbi (@mtaibbi) [December 16, 2022](#)

Reaction

J. D. Rucker [observes](#), correctly, that those of us who suspected that a Deep State existed, and that it saw Presidents come and go and did what it wanted, were correct in our suspicions. We also have observed that a private company breaks the First Amendment:

If the government coerces or induces it to take action the government itself would not be permitted to do, such as censor expression of a lawful viewpoint.

(*Biden v. Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University*, 141 S. Ct. 1220, 1226 (2021), Thomas J, concurring.)


This is what the Attorneys General of Missouri and Louisiana, plus five other plaintiffs, now allege against the U.S. government. The Twitter executives these tweets named, are lucky they aren't named defendants in *Missouri v. Biden*. But they will almost certainly be material witnesses.

Reaction on Twitter itself varies from Wow to There, you see to Ho Hum. One person asked a very pertinent question:

Had any of the Twitter people seeking access to classified information been subjected to the requisite background checks? I'm guessing not.

— DesertDoll (@DesertDoll74) [December 16, 2022](#)

This user identified the central problem in all this: *the FBI was directly telling Twitter moderators what to do.*

 y'all there's a difference between the FBI searching peoples profiles for info, and directly telling the social media company to flag and suspend accounts based on content. The only info that should be shared between the 2, is from Twitter to the FBI after asked for help.

— Kevin Singer (@RegnisNivek856) [December 16, 2022](#)

At least one user said, blithely, “The FBI was controlled by Trump.” But the earlier Twitter Files, and the *Intercept* piece, clearly show that the FBI was a rogue agency determined to remove a sitting President from office, by hook or by crook. And it had help from many other agencies.

This behavior is inexcusable, and its revelation should scare anyone. But as Daniel Goldhagen observed, even Hitler had willing executioners.