

Capsule Summaries of All Twitter Files Threads to Date, with Links and a Glossary

For those who haven't been following, a compilation of one-paragraph summaries of all the Twitter Files threads by every reporter. With links and notes on key revelations

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It's January 4th, 2023, which means Twitter Files stories have been coming out for over a month. Because these are weedy tales, and may be hard to follow if you haven't from the beginning, I've written up capsule summaries of each of the threads by all of the Twitter Files reporters, and added links to the threads and accounts of each. At the end, in response to some readers (especially foreign ones) who've found some of the alphabet-soup government agency names confusing, I've included a brief glossary of terms to help as well.

In order, the Twitter Files threads:

1. [Twitter Files Part 1](#): December 2, 2022, by [@mtaibbi](#) **TWITTER AND THE HUNTER BIDEN LAPTOP STORY**

Recounting the internal drama at Twitter surrounding the decision to block access to a *New York Post* exposé on Hunter Biden in October, 2020.

Key revelations: Twitter blocked the story on the basis of its "hacked materials" policy, but executives internally knew the decision was problematic. "Can we truthfully claim that this is part of the policy?" is how comms official Brandon Borman put it. Also: when a Twitter contractor polls members of Congress about the decision, they hear Democratic members want more moderation, not less, and "the First Amendment isn't absolute."

1a. [Twitter Files Supplemental](#), December 6, 2022, by [@mtaibbi](#)

THE “EXITING” OF TWITTER DEPUTY GENERAL COUNSEL JIM BAKER

A second round of Twitter Files releases was delayed, as new addition Bari Weiss discovers former FBI General Counsel and Twitter Deputy General Counsel Jim Baker was reviewing the first batches of Twitter Files documents, whose delivery to reporters had slowed.

2. [Twitter Files Part 2](#), by [@BariWeiss](#), December 8, 2022 **TWITTER’S SECRET BLACKLISTS**

Bari Weiss gives a long-awaited answer to the question, “Was Twitter shadow-banning people?” It did, only the company calls it “visibility filtering.” Twitter also had a separate, higher council called SIP-PES that decided cases for high-visibility, controversial accounts.

Key revelations: Twitter had a huge toolbox for controlling the visibility of any user, including a “Search Blacklist” (for Dan Bongino), a “Trends Blacklist” for Stanford’s Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, and a “Do Not Amplify” setting for conservative activist Charlie Kirk. Weiss quotes a Twitter employee: “Think about visibility filtering as being a way for us to suppress what people see to different levels. It’s a very powerful tool.” With help from [@abigailshrier](#), [@shellenbergermd](#), [@nelliebowles](#), and [@isaacgrafstein](#).

3. [Twitter Files, Part 3](#), by [@mtaibbi](#), December 9, 2022 **THE REMOVAL OF DONALD TRUMP, October 2020 - January 6th, 2021**

First in a three-part series looking at how Twitter came to the decision to suspend Donald Trump. The idea behind the series is to show how all of Twitter’s “visibility filtering” tools were on display and deployed after January 6th, 2021.

Key Revelations: Trust and Safety chief Yoel Roth not only met regularly with the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, but with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). Also, Twitter was aggressively applying “visibility filtering” tools to Trump well before the election.

4. [Twitter Files Part 4](#), by [@ShellenbergerMD](#), December 10, 2022 **THE REMOVAL OF DONALD TRUMP, January 7th, 2021**

This thread by Michael Shellenberger looks at the key day after the J6 riots and before Trump would ultimately be banned from Twitter on January 8th, showing how Twitter internally reconfigured its rules to make a Trump ban fit their policies.

Key revelations: at least one Twitter employee worried about a “slippery slope” in which “an online platform CEO with a global presence... can gatekeep speech for the entire world,” only to be shot down. Also, chief censor Roth argues for a ban on congressman Matt Gaetz even though it “doesn’t quite fit anywhere (duh),” and Twitter changed its “public interest policy” to clear a path for Trump’s removal.

5. [Twitter Files Part 5](#), by [@BariWeiss](#), December 11, 2022 **THE REMOVAL OF DONALD TRUMP, January 8th, 2021**

As angry as many inside Twitter were with Donald Trump after the January 6th Capitol riots, staffers struggled to suspend his account, saying things like, “I think we’d have a hard time saying this is incitement.” As documented by Weiss, they found a way to pull the trigger anyway.

Key revelations: there were dissenters in the company (“Maybe because I am from China,” said one employee, “I deeply understand how censorship can destroy the public conversation”), but are overruled by senior executives like Vijaya Gadde and Roth, who noted many on Twitter’s staff were citing the “Banality of Evil,” and comparing those who favored sticking to a strict legalistic interpretation of Twitter’s rules — i.e. keep Trump, who had “no violation” — to “Nazis following orders.”

6. [Twitter Files Part 6](#), by [@mtaibbi](#), December 16, 2022 **TWITTER, THE FBI SUBSIDIARY**

Twitter’s contact with the FBI was “constant and pervasive,” as FBI personnel, mainly in the San Francisco field office, regularly sent lists of “reports” to Twitter, often about Americans with low follower counts making joke tweets. Tweeters on both the left and the right were affected.

Key revelations: A senior Twitter executive reports, “FBI was adamant no impediments to sharing” classified information exist. Twitter also agreed to “bounce” content on the recommendations of a wide array of governmental and quasi-governmental actors, from the FBI to the Homeland Security agency CISA to Stanford’s Election Integrity Project to state governments. The company one day received so many moderation requests from the FBI, an executive congratulated staffers at the end for completing the “monumental undertaking.”

7. [Twitter Files Part 7](#), by [@ShellenbergerMD](#), December 19, 2022 **THE FBI AND HUNTER BIDEN’S LAPTOP**

The Twitter Files story increases its focus on the company’s relationship to federal law enforcement and intelligence, and shows intense communication between the FBI and Twitter just before the release of the *Post*’s Hunter Biden story.

Key Revelations: San Francisco agent Elvis Chan “sends 10 documents to Twitter’s then-Head of Site Integrity, Yoel Roth, through Teleporter, a one-way communications channel from the FBI to Twitter,” the evening before the release of the *Post* story. Also, Baker in an email explains Twitter was compensated for “processing requests” by the FBI, saying “I am happy to report we have collected \$3,415,323 since October 2019!”



Chan, Elvis M. (SF) (FBI)
Information Sharing

October 13, 2020 at 6:22 PM

To: Yoel Roth, [REDACTED]

Twitter folks,

Heads up I will be sending a Teleporter link for you to download 10 documents. It is not spam! Please confirm receipt when you get it. Thanks.

Regards,

Elvis M. Chan
Supervisory Special Agent
Squad CY-1, National Security
FBI San Francisco



Found in Roth Large Mailbox



Yoel Roth
Re: Information Sharing

October 13, 2020 at 6:24 PM

To: Chan, Elvis M. (SF) (FBI), Cc: Yoel Roth, [REDACTED] & 1 more

[Details](#)

Received and downloaded - thanks!

[See More from Chan, Elvis M. \(SF\) \(FBI\)](#)

The ten teleporter documents referred to in Mike Shellenberger's FBI thread.

8. [Twitter Files Part 8](#), by [@lhfang](#), December 20, 2022 **HOW TWITTER QUIETLY AIDED THE PENTAGON'S COVERT ONLINE PSYOP CAMPAIGN**

Lee Fang takes a fascinating detour, looking at how Twitter for years approved and supported Pentagon-backed covert operations. Noting the company explicitly testified to Congress that it didn't allow such behavior, the platform nonetheless was a clear partner in state-backed programs involving fake accounts.

Key revelations: after the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) sent over a list of 52 Arab-language accounts "we use to amplify certain messages," Twitter agreed to "whitelist" them. Ultimately the program would be outed [in the Washington Post](#) in 2022 — two years after Twitter and other platforms stopped assisting — but contrary to what came out in those reports, Twitter knew about and/or assisted in these programs for at least three years, from 2017-2020.

Lee wrote a companion piece for the *Intercept* [here](#):

9. [Twitter Files Part 9](#), by [@mtaibbi](#), December 24th, 2022 **TWITTER AND "OTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCIES"**

The Christmas Eve thread (I should have waited a few days to publish!) further details how the channels of communication between the federal government and Twitter operated, and reveals that Twitter directly or indirectly received lists of flagged content from "Other Government Agencies," i.e. the CIA.

Key revelations: CIA officials attended at least one conference with Twitter in the summer of 2020, and companies like Twitter and Facebook received “OGA briefings,” at their regular “industry” meetings held in conjunction with the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security. The FBI and the “Foreign Influence Task Force” met regularly “not just with Twitter, but with Yahoo!, Twitch, Cloudflare, LinkedIn, even Wikimedia.”

10. [Twitter Files Part 10](#), by [@DavidZweig](#), December 28, 2022 **HOW TWITTER RIGGED THE COVID DEBATE**

David Zweig drills down into how Twitter throttled down information about COVID that was true but perhaps inconvenient for public officials, “discrediting doctors and other experts who disagreed.”

Key Revelations: Zweig found memos from Twitter personnel who’d liaised with Biden administration officials who were “very angry” that Twitter had not deplatformed more accounts. White House officials for instance wanted attention on reporter Alex Berenson. Zweig also found “countless” instances of Twitter banning or labeling “misleading” accounts that were true or merely controversial. A Rhode Island physician named Andrew Bostom, for instance, was suspended for, among other things, referring to the results of a peer-reviewed study on mRNA vaccines.

11. *and*

12. Twitter Files [Parts 11 and 12](#), by [@mtaibbi](#), January 3, 2023 **HOW TWITTER LET THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY IN**

and

TWITTER AND THE FBI “BELLY BUTTON”

These two threads focus respectively on the second half of 2017, and a period stretching roughly from summer of 2020 through the present. The first describes how Twitter fell under pressure from Congress and the media to produce “material” showing a conspiracy of Russian accounts on their platform, and the second shows how Twitter tried to resist fulfilling moderation requests for the State Department, but ultimately agreed to let State and other agencies send requests through the FBI, which agent Chan calls “the belly button of the USG.”

Revelations: at the close of 2017, Twitter makes a key internal decision. Outwardly, the company would claim independence and promise that content would only be removed at “our sole discretion.” The internal guidance says, in writing, that Twitter will remove accounts “identified by the U.S. intelligence community” as “identified by the U.S.. intelligence community as a state-sponsored entity conducting cyber-operations.”

The second thread shows how Twitter took in requests from everyone — Treasury, HHS, NSA, FBI, DHS, etc. — and also received personal requests from politicians like Democratic congressman Adam Schiff, who [asked to have journalist Paul Sperry suspended](#).

13. [Twitter Files Part #13](#), by @AlexBerenson, January 9, 2023 **HOW TWITTER COVERED UP COVID TRUTHS**

New addition Alex Berenson details how Twitter throttled down or erased true information about COVID-19, with the help of a former Pfizer lobbyist, Scott Gottlieb.

Key Revelations: Twitter senior political liaison Todd O’Boyle feared that onetime acting FDA commission Brett Giroir’s correct observations about the effectiveness of natural immunity were “corrosive” and might “go viral,” and put a misleading label on the tweet. Gottlieb also pressured Twitter to remove Berenson himself.

14. [Twitter Files Part #14](#), by @mtaibbi, January 12th, 2023 **THE RUSSIAGATE LIES**

One: The Fake Tale of Russian Bots and the [#ReleaseTheMemo](#) Hashtag

Internal communications at Twitter show that Russian bots were not in fact hyping the classified memo of Republican congressman Devin Nunes in January of 2018.

Key Revelations: Three key Democrats — Senators Dianne Feinstein and Richard Blumenthal, and former House Intel Committee chief Adam Schiff — cited a think tank called Hamilton 68 in denouncing a memo by Nunes as aided by “Russian influence operations.” Yet all three were told by Twitter executives there were no Russians in the picture. Said former Trust and Safety chief Yoel Roth, “I just reviewed the accounts that posted the first 50 tweets with [#releasethememo](#) and... none of them show any signs of affiliation to Russia.”

[Twitter Files Supplemental](#), by @mtaibbi, January 13th, 2023

MORE ADAM SCHIFF BANS, AND “DEAMPLIFICATION.”

A brief thread of 10 tweets showing that the former head of the House Intelligence Committee, Adam Schiff, sent repeated requests for bans of people critical of their office.

Key Revelation: Schiff and the DNC both not only asked for the takedown of an obvious satire by “Peter Douche,” but requested takedowns of accounts that were critical of the Steele dossier and outed the name of the supposed “whistleblower” in the Ukrainegate case, Eric Ciaramella. Schiff staffers said that while they “appreciate greatly” efforts by Twitter to deamplify certain accounts, they worried such efforts “could... impede the ability of law enforcement to search Twitter.”

15. [Twitter Files #15](#) by @mtaibbi, January 27, 2023 **MOVE OVER, JAYSON BLAIR: TWITTER FILES EXPOSE NEXT GREAT MEDIA FRAUD** Internal communication about Hamilton 68, a project by the Alliance for Securing Democracy purporting to track 600 account “linked” to “Russian influence activities.” Reporters used Hamilton 68 as the basis for countless news stories, from CNN’s [“Russian bots are using #WalkAway to try to wound Dems in midterms”](#) to [“After Florida](#)

[School Shooting, Russia's Bot Army Pounced.](#)"

Key Revelation: Twitter's Yoel Roth was suspicious of Hamilton 68's methodology and reverse-engineered their list, which he quickly discovered to be bogus, full not of Russians but "legitimate right-leaning accounts" who were being implicitly called Russian assets. "Virtually any conclusion drawn from [the dashboard]," Roth wrote, "will take conversations in conservative circles on Twitter and accuse them of being Russian." Roth urged Twitter to "call this out on the bullshit it is," but Twitter higher-ups worried about the political consequences, choosing instead to play a "longer game." Neither the actors involved, nor any of the media outlets who ran Hamilton-based stories initially commented, though the ASD later replied, prompting a [back-and-forth](#) (and [forth](#)) with this site.

16. [Twitter Files #16](#), by @mtaibbi, February 18, 2023 **COMIC INTERLUDE: A MEDIA EXPERIMENT**

Mainstream outlets finally cover the Twitter Files with excitement, after House testimony elicited a claim that Donald Trump complained, unsuccessfully, to Twitter about a tweet by Chrissy Teigen (who in turn complained that she didn't "[know how to go on](#)" after her tweet about Trump being a "pussy ass bitch" was read to congress). Irritated that *this* became the big censorship story after releasing thousands of takedown requests from government agencies involving people all over the world, I decided to do an experiment.

Key Revelations: We released a list of 354 names Maine Senate Angus King wanted taken down for reasons like "Rand Paul visit excitement," "followed by [former Republican opponent Eric] Brakey," and my personal favorite, "mentions immigration." For balance we also released a letter from a Republican official at the State Department, Mark Lenzi, who tells Twitter about 14 real Americans "you may want to look into and delete." Surely, if the main objection to the Twitter Files is that they're "one-sided," someone will cover a Republican doing the bad thing? But no, more crickets. *With help from @Techno_Fog*

17. [Twitter Files #17](#): by @mtaibbi, March 2, 2023 **NEW KNOWLEDGE, THE GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT CENTER, AND STATE-SPONSORED BLACKLISTS**

A review of the activities of the Global Engagement Center, or GEC, what one source called "an incubator for the domestic disinformation complex."

Key Revelations: A GEC-funded think tank, the DFRLab, sent Twitter a list of 40,000 names of people suspected of supporting "Hindu nationalism" that somehow had scads of ordinary Americans with handles like @mad_murican and @TrumpitC on the list; GEC sent Twitter a list of 5500 "Chinese accounts" that among other things had three CNN contributors on it ("Not exactly Anderson's besties, but CNN assets if you will," commented Twitter's Patrick Conlon), GEC sent another list of 499 accounts deemed Iranian disinformation, using criteria like: used Signal and Telegram to communicate and used hashtags like #IraniansDebateWithBiden. Other GEC reports deemed various actors part of foreign propaganda "ecosystems" for offenses like following more than one Chinese diplomat, retweeting an Iranian-created "FREE PALESTINE" meme, and

for retweeting material that was “anti-Macron in nature.”

Glossary of “Twitter Files” Terms

1. **Government Agencies and NGOs**
CISA: The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, an agency within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

CENTCOM: Central Command of the Armed Forces

ODNI: Office of the Director of National Intelligence

FITF: Foreign Influence Task Force, a cyber-regulatory agency comprised of members of the FBI, DHS, and ODNI

“OGA”: Other Government Agency, colloquially — CIA

GEC: Global Engagement Center, an analytical division of the U.S. State Department

USIC: United States intelligence community

HSIN: Homeland Security Information Network, a portal through which states and other official bodies can send “flagged” accounts

EIP: Election Integrity Project, a cyber-laboratory based at Stanford University that sends many reports to Twitter

DFR: Digital Forensic Research lab, an outlet that performs a similar function to the EIP, only is funded by the Atlantic Council

IRA: Internet Research Agency, the infamous Russian “troll farm” headed by “Putin’s chef,” Yevgheny Prigozhin

2. **Twitter or Industry-specific terms**
PII: Can have two meanings. “Personally identifiable information” is self-explanatory, while a “Public Interest Interstitial” is a warning placed over a tweet, so that it cannot be seen. Twitter personnel even use “interstitial” as a verb, as in, “Can we interstitial that?”

JIRA: Twitter’s internal ticketing system, through which complaints rise and are decided

PV2: The system used at Twitter to view the profile of any user, to check easily if it has flags like “Trends Blacklist”

SIP-PES Site Integrity Policy — Policy Escalation Support. SIP-PES is like Twitter’s version of a moderation Supreme Court, dealing with the most high-profile, controversial rulings

SI: Site integrity. Key term that you’ll see repeatedly in Twitter email traffic, especially with “escalations,” i.e. tweets or content that have been reported for moderation review

CHA: Coordinated Harmful Activity

SRT: Strategic Response Team

GET: Global Escalation Team

VF: Visibility Filtering

GUANO: Tool in Twitter's internal system that keeps a chronological record of all actions taken on an account

VIT: Very Important Tweeter. Really.

GoV: Glorification of Violence

BOT: In the moderation content, an individualized heuristic attached to an account that moderates certain behavior automatically

BME: Bulk Media Exploitation

EP Abuse: Episodic abuse

PCF: Parity, commentary and fan accounts. "PCF" sometimes appears as a reason an account has escaped an automated moderation process, under a limited exception

FLC: Forced Login Challenge. Also called a "phone challenge," it's a way Twitter attempts to verify if an account is real or automated. "Phone challenges" are seen repeatedly in discussions about verification of suspected "Russia-linked" accounts

IO: Information Operations, as in *The GEC's mandate for offensive IO to promote American interests.*

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