

# “Q Anon” May Have Been an FBI Psyop

By [Swiss Policy Research](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

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*A recent Reuters investigation may indicate that “Q Anon” was in fact an FBI cyber psyop.*

The “Q Anon” phenomenon has generally been regarded as a [hoax or prank](#), originated by online message board users in late October 2017, that got out of control. The “Q Anon” persona was preceded by [similar personae](#), including “FBI anon”, “CIA anon” and “White House insider anon”.

“Q Anon” originally called himself “Q clearance patriot”. Former CIA counterintelligence operative **Kevin M. Shipp** [explained that](#) an actual “Q clearance leaker” – i.e. someone possessing the [highest security clearance](#) at the US Department of Energy, required to access top secret nuclear weapons information – would have been identified and removed within days.

However, in November 2020 Reuters [reported that](#) the very first social media accounts to promote the “Q Anon” persona were seemingly “linked to Russia” and even “backed by the Russian government”. For instance, the very first Twitter account to ever use the term “Q Anon” on social media had previously “retweeted obscure Russian officials”, [according to Reuters](#).

These alleged “Russian social media accounts”, posing as accounts of American patriots, were in contact with politically conservative US YouTubers and drew their attention to the “Q Anon” persona. This is how, in early November 2017, the “Q Anon” movement took off.

But given the [recent revelations](#) by British investigator David J. Blake – who for the first time was able to conclusively show, at the technical level, that the “Russian hacking” operation was a cyber psyop [run by the FBI](#) and FBI cyber security contractor CrowdStrike – the Reuters report may in fact indicate that “Q Anon” was neither a hoax nor “Russian”, but another FBI psychological cyber operation.

Of note, US cyber intelligence firm New Knowledge, founded by former NSA and DARPA employees and tasked by the US Senate Intelligence Committee, in 2018, with investigating alleged “Russian social media operations” relating to the 2016 US presidential election, was itself caught [faking a “Russian social media botnet”](#) in order to influence the 2017 Alabama senate race.

If the “Q Anon” persona – similar to the Guccifer2.0 “Russian hacker” persona [played by](#) an FBI cyber security contractor – was indeed an FBI psychological operation, its goal may have been to take control of, discredit and ultimately derail the supporter base of US President Trump. In this case, the “Q Anon” movement may have been a modern version of the original [FBI COINTELPRO](#) program.

## Postscript

Contrary to some [media claims](#), the person or people behind the “Q Anon” persona have never been identified. Some media speculated that [James Watkins](#), the owner of the 8chan/8kun message board, on which “Q” was posting his messages, might be “Q” or might be linked to “Q”, but Watkins denied this. In September 2020, the owner of QMap, a website aggregating “Q” messages, was identified as a [Citigroup employee](#), but again no actual link to “Q” could be established.

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