

Video: Twitter Files and the Death of Russiagate

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Matt Taibbi joins CN Live! to discuss the implications of his Twitter Files revelations, including his latest on Hamilton 68 and its fatal blow to the Russiagate narrative. With Chris Hedges and John Kiriakou. Watch the replay.

In the latest installment of the blockbuster Twitter Files, reporter Matt Taibbi has [revealed](#) that probably the most important source behind the maniacal media output on the Russiagate story was a lie.

Hundreds of articles and television segments in the major U.S. Media, which kept the Russiagate fiasco front and center in American political life for several years, was fueled by a website called Hamilton 68.

The name comes from Alexander Hamilton's Federalist Papers [No. 68](#), in which he writes about the danger of foreign interference in U.S. elections. Hamilton 68 was launched in August 2017, less than a year after Hillary Clinton's defeat to Donald Trump and just as Democrats increasingly blamed alleged Russian interference for Clinton's defeat.

As the hysteria over unproven allegations of Russia's role gathered steam, Hamilton 68 appeared. It became a go-to source for corporate media by saying it had a list, which it refused to make public, of Twitter accounts it was monitoring. There are conflicting statements from Hamilton about whether these were bots or real people, and whether they were direct agents of Russia or unwitting dupes.

Taibbi writes:

*"The two founders of Hamilton 68, the blue-and-red team of former counselor to Marco Rubio Jamie Fly and Hillary for America Foreign Policy Advisor Laura Rosenberger, told *Politico* they couldn't reveal the names of the accounts because ["the Russians will simply shut them down."](#)*

Twitter, the files Taibbi discovered say, did not buy Hamilton's story and privately pushed back. Yoel Roth, Twitter's trust and safety chief at the time, said in one internal email: "I think we need to just call this out on the bullshit it is." He also threatened to give Hamilton an ultimatum, either they release the list, or Twitter would.

Twitter only obtained the list by reverse engineering data requests made by Hamilton back in 2017.

Taibbi's reporting indicated these were real people indeed. Only about 30 Twitter accounts on the list were Russian, the rest real Americans, Britons and Canadians.

Most were Trump supporters, with Twitter handles like @TrumpDyke. But some were not, such as myself before I became editor-in-chief of **Consortium News**, when I was only a writer for the site, publishing several articles debunking Russiagate in 2017.

On Hamilton's [advisory council](#) sits former senior U.S. officials, several with intelligence backgrounds, such as Michael Chertoff, former Homeland Security chief; former acting C.I.A. director Michael Morell; Rick Ledgett, a former NSA deputy director; Clint Watts, a former F.B.I. counter-intelligence officer; Mike Rogers, a former F.B.I. Agent and member of the U.S. House intelligence committee; former U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul; former Estonian President Toomas Ilves and thrown in for good measure: John Podesta, chairman of the Clinton campaign and arch-neoconservative Bill Kristol.

Hamilton 68 has blamed the media for misinterpreting its data and ignoring its appeals to correct their stories.

Hamilton 68 was rebranded Hamilton 2.0 in December and its secret list has now been replaced by a [public list](#) that only names government officials and media from Russia, China and Iran.

We asked someone from the Alliance for Securing Democracy to appear on this show and received no reply.

This troubling story underscores the gross failure of corporate media, like CNN, MSNBC, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, and even fact-checking sites like PolitFact and Snopes, to be skeptical of intelligence sources, whether active or retired. It also exposes the failure of members of Congress to not let the facts get in the way of a story that serves their political interests, as Senators Diane Feinstein and Mark Warner became reliant on Hamilton 68. Academia was also taken in.

Taibbi's revelations add to a litany of facts that have repeatedly debunked the Russiagate tale: Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report that found no connection between Russia and the Trump campaign; the president of CrowdStrike's [admission](#) under oath to Congress of finding no evidence of any hack of the DNC servers; an NYU study showing minimal impact of Russian Facebook posts and the Clinton campaign [paying](#) for both CrowdStrike, and former MI6 agent Christopher Steele's fabulous opposition research on Trump.

The Hamilton Twitter File may at last be the final nail in the Russiagate coffin.

Our special guest tonight is independent journalist Matt Taibbi, a former reporter for *Rolling Stone* Magazine and author. His latest book is *Hate, Inc.* Matt also runs *Racket*, a Substack publication where his Hamilton 68 story was published.

We are also joined by former *New York Times* correspondent and author Chris Hedges, whose latest book is *The Greatest Evil is War*. And by John Kiriakou, a former C.I.A. officer, author of *The Reluctant Spy*, and the man who blew the whistle on the agency's torture program.

Hosts: Elizabeth Vos and Joe Lauria. Producer: Cathy Vogan.

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