



Matt Taibbi @mtaibbi

Dec 16, 2022 · 45 tweets · [mtaibbi/status/1603857534737072128](https://twitter.com/mtaibbi/status/1603857534737072128)

1. THREAD: The Twitter Files, Part Six TWITTER, THE FBI SUBSIDIARY

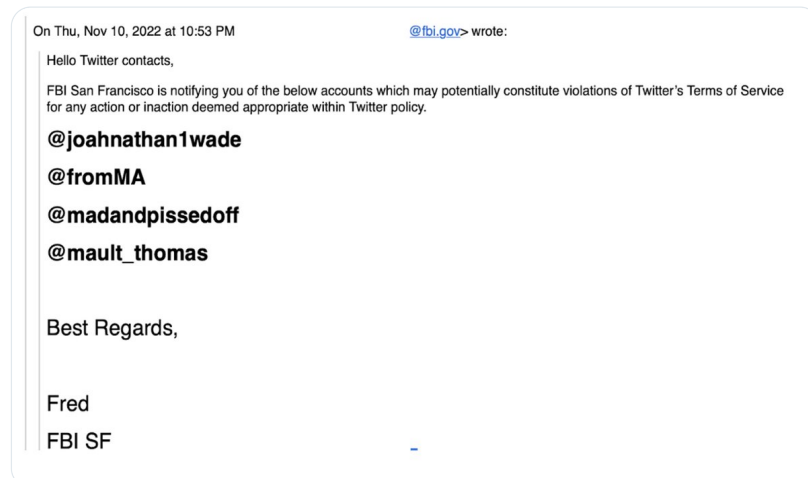
2. The [#TwitterFiles](#) are revealing more every day about how the government collects, analyzes, and flags your social media content.
3. Twitter's contact with the FBI was constant and pervasive, as if it were a subsidiary.
4. Between January 2020 and November 2022, there were over 150 emails between the FBI and former Twitter Trust and Safety chief Yoel Roth.
5. Some are mundane, like San Francisco agent Elvis Chan wishing Roth a Happy New Year along with a reminder to attend "our quarterly call next week." Others are requests for information into Twitter users related to active investigations.
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.
7. The FBI's social media-focused task force, known as FTIF, created in the wake of the 2016 election, swelled to 80 agents and corresponded with Twitter to identify alleged foreign influence and election tampering of all kinds.
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.
9. It's no secret the government analyzes bulk data for all sorts of purposes, everything from tracking terror suspects to making economic forecasts.
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.

11. What stands out is the sheer quantity of reports from the government. Some are aggregated from public hotlines:

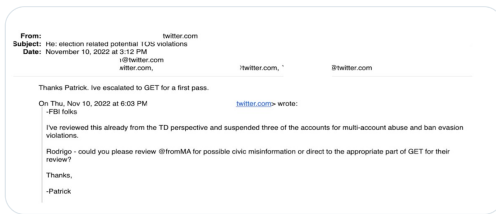


[12.An](#) unanswered question: do agencies like FBI and DHS do in-house flagging work themselves, or farm it out? “You have to prove to me that inside the fucking government you can do any kind of massive data or AI search,” says one former intelligence officer.

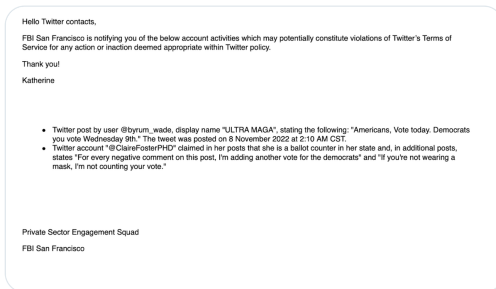
“HELLO TWITTER CONTACTS”: The master-canine quality of the FBI’s relationship to Twitter comes through in this November 2022 email, in which “FBI San Francisco is notifying you” it wants action on four accounts:



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:



15. Just to show the FBI can be hyper-intrusive in both directions, they also asked Twitter to review a blue-leaning account for a different joke, except here it was even more obvious that [@ClaireFosterPHD](#), who kids a lot, was kidding:



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.

17. Of the six accounts mentioned in the previous two emails, all but two – [@ClaireFosterPHD](#) and [@fromMA](#) – were suspended.

18. In 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":

From: [redacted]@fbi.gov>
Sent: Sunday, November 6, 2022, 12:06 PM
Cc: [redacted]@fbi.gov>; [redacted]@fbi.gov>; [redacted]@fbi.gov>; [redacted]@fbi.gov>
Subject: Request for Coordination with Twitter

ASAC Chan,

The National Election Command Post (NECP) is requesting assistance from SF regarding coordination with Twitter. Specifically, NECP has been made aware of Tweets by certain accounts that may warrant additional action due to the accounts being utilized to spread misinformation about the upcoming election. Specifically, NECP is requesting the following:

1. Coordination between SF and Twitter to determine whether the accounts identified below have violated Twitter's terms of service and may be subject any actions deemed appropriate by Twitter.
2. The issuance of preservation letters regarding the accounts identified below in order to preserve subscriber information and content information pending the issuance of legal process.
3. Any location information associated with the accounts that Twitter will voluntarily provide to aid the FBI in assigning any follow-up deemed necessary to the appropriate FBI field office.

Twitter Accounts

1. @DartfulCodger
2. @DrAndrewJackson
3. @DanDuryeas
4. @2020_mtb
5. @JeanneGary13
6. @RSBNetwork
7. @Davidkloy
8. @Ronsmi49336969
9. @AScottHoneycut
10. @thearmogdaship
11. @Davidkloy
12. @lexitolah
13. @Tiboron11
14. @wisefrog57
15. @hfsboat5
16. @chriswest567
17. @Trump2017847791
18. @kag2020_2024
19. @Tiberius444
20. @BillyBaldwin
21. @chrisfg33ad
22. @michaelp4283
23. @BrettBarker22
24. @EPaul9
25. @warrenintronno

Please let us know if you need additional information to process this request by replying all to this email.

Thanks,
--Michael

19. Agent Chan passed the list on to his "Twitter folks":

On Sun, Nov 6, 2022 at 9:10 PM Elvis Chan [redacted]@fbi.gov> wrote:

Twitter folks,

Please see below list of Twitter accounts which we believe are violating your terms of service by disseminating false information about the time, place, or manner of the upcoming elections.

Let us know if you decide to take any actions against these accounts based on our tipper to you. Also let us know if we need to issue a preservation letter as we intend to serve legal process for these accounts. Thanks for your consideration.

Regards, Elvis

Elvis M. Chan
Asst. Special Agent in Charge
FBI San Francisco, Cyber Branch
Work: [redacted]
Cell: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]@fbi.gov
Pronouns: he, him, his

20. Twitter then replied with its list of actions taken. Note mercy shown to actor Billy Baldwin:

From: Patrick Conlon [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 8, 2022 09:41 AM
To: Chan, Elvis M. (SF) (FBI) [REDACTED] @fbi.gov>
Cc: Yoel Roth [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (CID) (FBI) [REDACTED] @fbi.gov>; [REDACTED] (CID) (FBI) [REDACTED] @fbi.gov>; [REDACTED] (CID) (FBI) [REDACTED] @fbi.gov>; [REDACTED] (CID) (FBI) [REDACTED] @fbi.gov>; [REDACTED] (CID) (FBI) [REDACTED] @fbi.gov>; [REDACTED] (SF) (FBI) [REDACTED] @fbi.gov>; [REDACTED] (SF) (FBI) [REDACTED] @fbi.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL EMAIL] - [SOCIAL NETWORK] Re: Request for Coordination with Twitter

Hi Elvis,
Thank you for your patience as our team assessed the accounts that you flagged.
We've completed our review and taken the following actions on some of the accounts:
Permanently suspended for policy violations (ban evasion, platform manipulation, excessive misinformation strikes) -

- @JeanneGary13
- @wisefrog57
- @EPaul9
- @2020_mtb
- @chriswest567
- @Trump2017847791
- @BrettBarker22

Temporarily suspended for spam behaviors -

- @Davidkloy

Had Tweets bounced for civic misinformation policy violations -

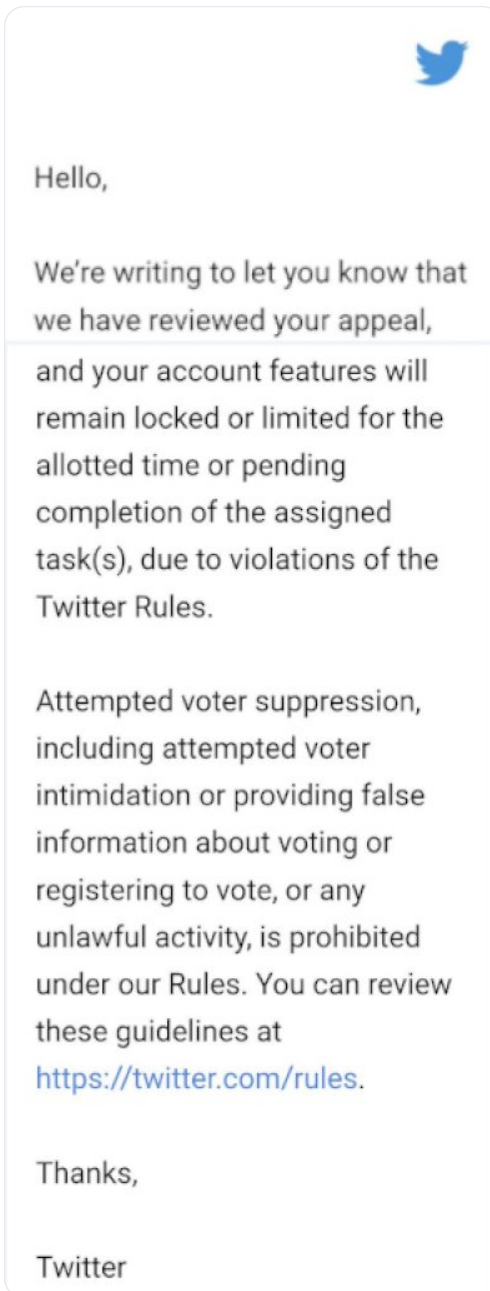
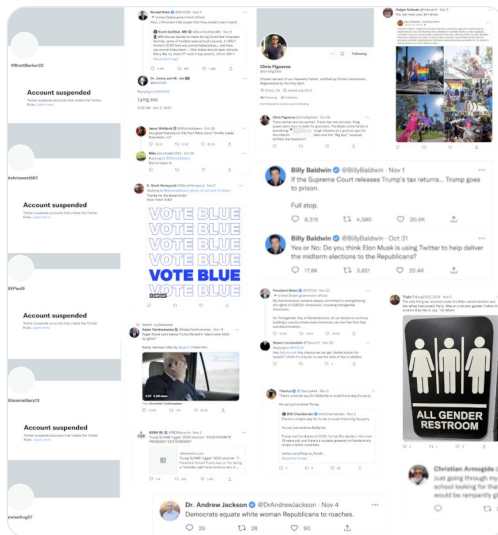
- @Ronsmit49336969
- @thearmogidaship
- @lexitollah
- @Tiboron11
- @kag2020_2024
- @kag2020_2024
- @chrisfig33ad
- @michaelp4283
- @warrenintronno

In regards to your question about a preservation letter, it is a good way to ensure that the data hasn't been purged from our systems before legal process is filed and processed. Externally the contact for submitting those is the same.

Thank you,

-Patrick

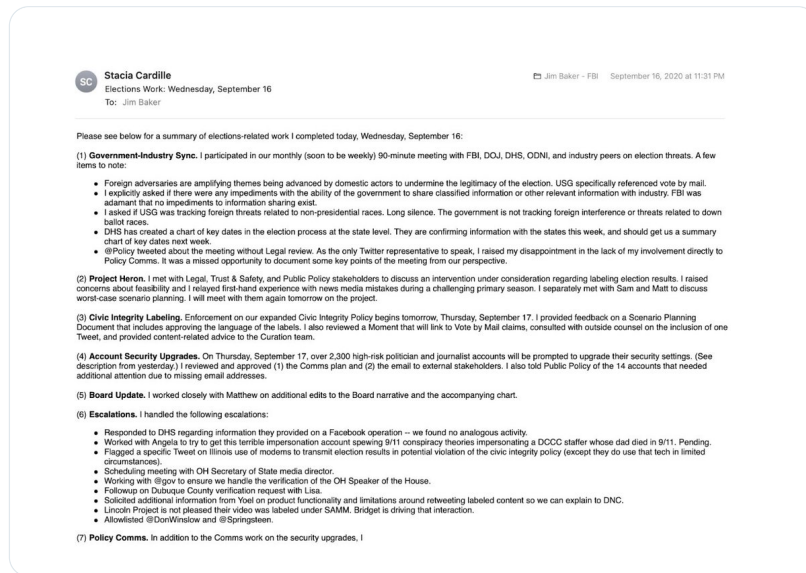
21. Many of the above accounts were satirical in nature, nearly all (with the exceptions of Baldwin and @RSBNetwork) were relatively low engagement, and some were suspended, most with a generic, “Thanks, Twitter” letter:



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?”

23. “I can't believe the FBI is policing jokes on Twitter. That's crazy,” said @Tiberius444.

[24.In](#) 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:



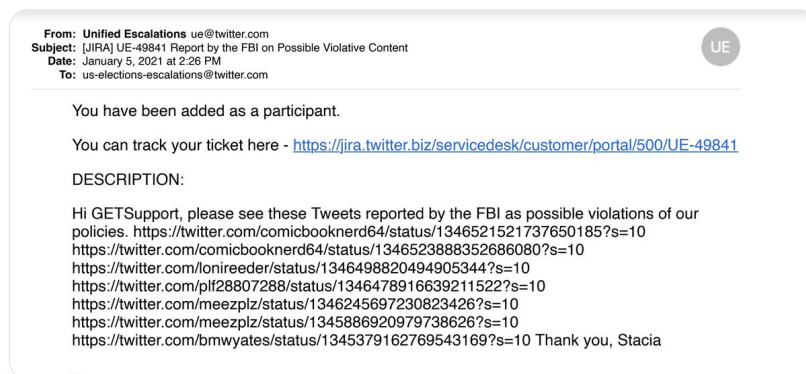
25. The Twitter exec writes she explicitly asked if there were “impediments” to the sharing of classified information “with industry.” The answer? “FBI was adamant no impediments to sharing exist.”

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?

[27.At](#) the bottom of that letter, she lists a series of “escalations” apparently raised at the meeting, which were already “handled.”

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).”

29. Another internal letter from January, 2021 shows Twitter execs processing an FBI list of “possible violative content” tweets:



30. [Here](#), 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:

Susan **UnitedWeStand** @SGaeta88 · 11 Std.
So, Cuomo wants to imprison suspected Covid carriers, force Vaccinations without due process?
Things Power hungry madmen would do!
[@realDonaldTrump](#)
[@FLOTUS](#)
krisannehall.com/index.php/reso...

KRISANNE HALL
Liberty over Security, Principle over Party and Truth over Personality

B Yates @BmWYates
Folgen

Antwort an [@SGaeta88](#) [@amandadonnell14](#) und 2 weitere

This is our future guys if the dems get full control. If you are in Georgia you better vote Wednesday.

06:39 - 2. Jan. 2021

31. In this March, 2021 email, an FBI liaison thanks a senior Twitter exec for the chance to speak to “you and the team,” then delivers a packet of “products”:

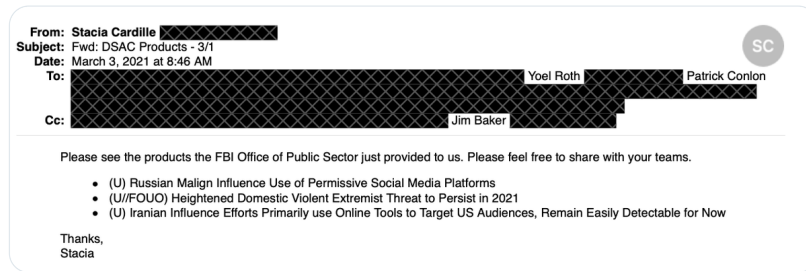
----- Forwarded message -----
From: [redacted] (FBI) (FBI) <[redacted]@fbi.gov>
Date: Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 11:38 AM
Subject: DSAC Products - 3/1
To: Stacia Cardille <[redacted]>

Hi Stacia,

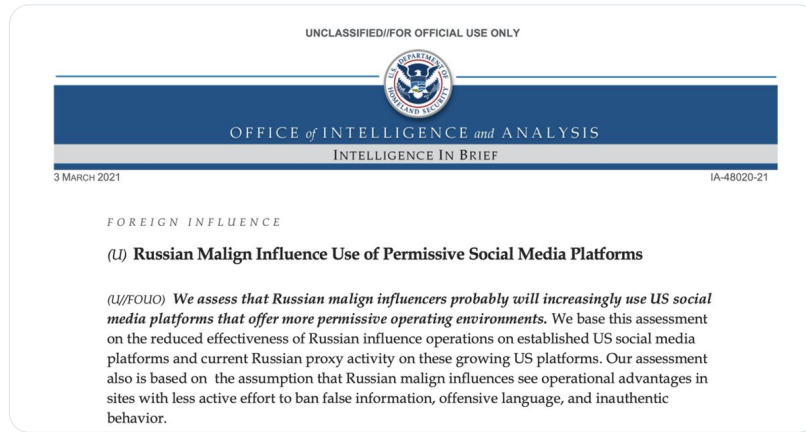
It was great speaking with you and the team at Twitter last week. I wanted to flag a few products that were released today, and earlier in the week, that may be of assistance to Twitter.
Let us know if you have any questions.

Kindly,
[redacted]

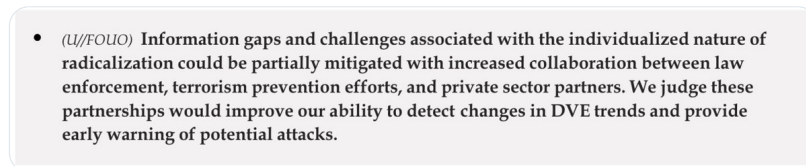
32.The executive circulates the “products,” which are really DHS bulletins stressing the need for greater collaboration between law enforcement and “private sector partners.”



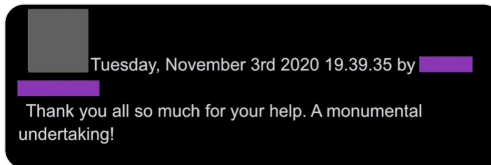
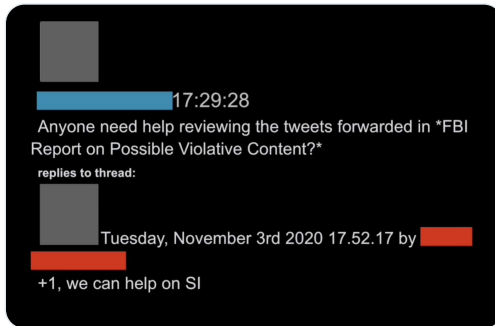
33.The ubiquity of the 2016 Russian interference story as stated pretext for building out the censorship machine can’t be overstated. It’s analogous to how 9/11 inspired the expansion of the security state.



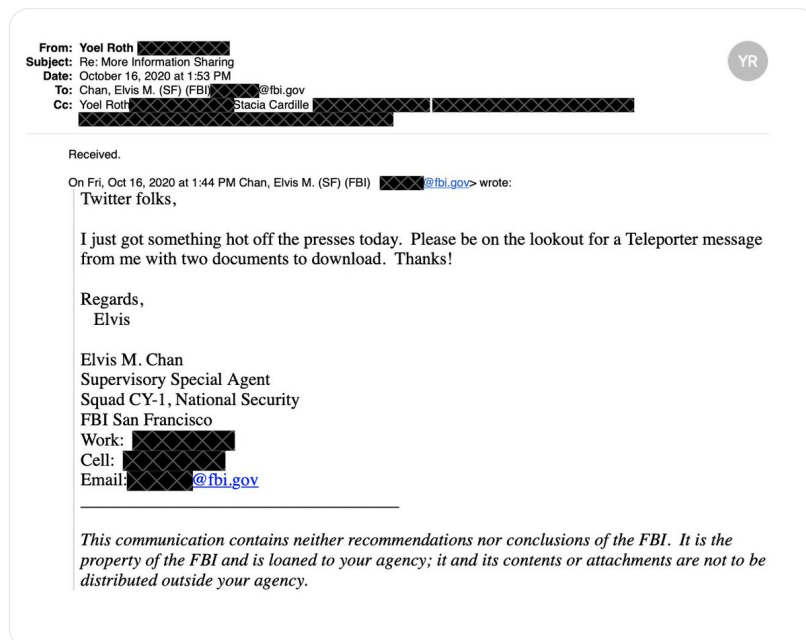
34.While the DHS in its “products” pans “permissive” social media for offering “operational advantages” to Russians, it also explains that the “Domestic Violent Extremist Threat” requires addressing “information gaps”:



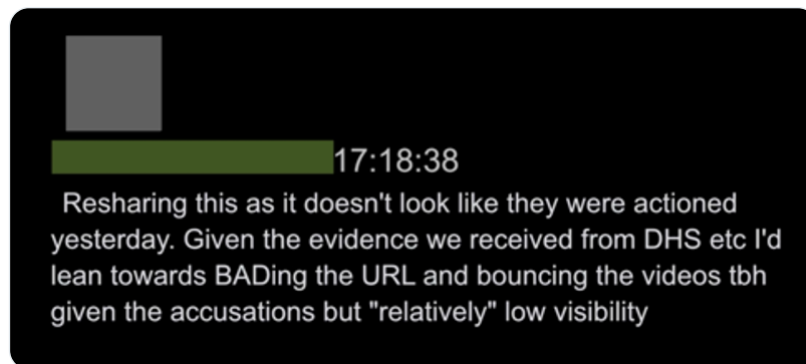
35.FBI in one case sent over so many “possible violative content” reports, Twitter personnel congratulated each other in Slack for the “monumental undertaking” of reviewing them:



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:



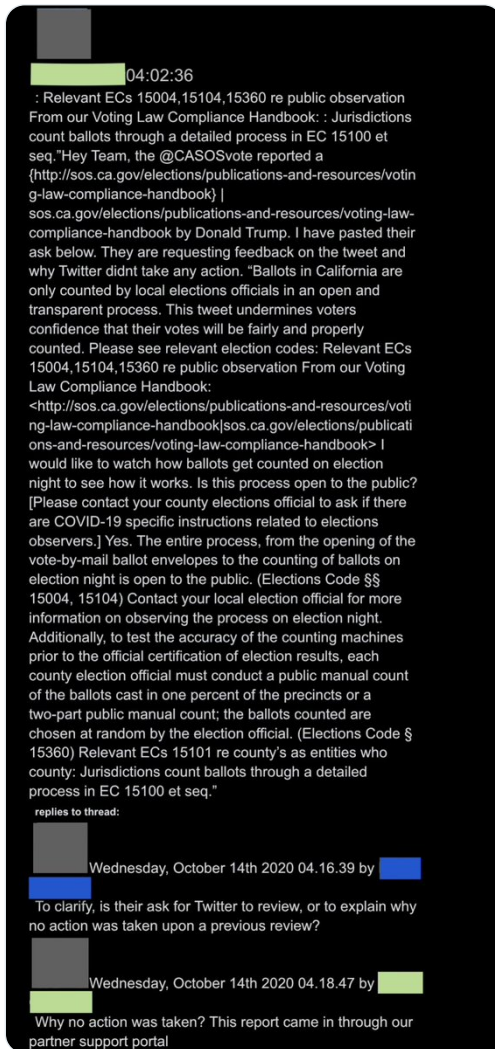
37. Reports also came from different agencies. Here, an employee recommends “bouncing” content based on evidence from “DHS etc”:



38. State governments also flagged content.

39. Twitter for instance received reports via the Partner Support Portal, an outlet created by the Center for Internet Security, a partner organization to the DHS.

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:



[41.Here](#), a video was reported by the Election Integrity Project (EIP) at Stanford, apparently on the strength of information from the Center for Internet Security (CIS):

16:39:43

This is a very long and legal-heavy video, but essentially it claims that PA election workers opened the inner envelopes on ballots before election day and called people to correct their ballots prior to election day. According to CIS (escalated via EIP), the video misrepresents 1) PA law, 2) the PA Supreme Court decision, and 3) the affidavits shown in the video (details in the thread). Thoughts on how to handle this one? {<https://twitter.com/tracybeanz/status/1326981600689602561?s=19>}

Friday, November 13th 2020 16.39.55 by

Details from CIS: "The law doesn't prohibit curing, it prohibits curing prior to 7a on Election Day. The author misrepresents this by stating that the officials can't contact voters whereas they can't do so until pre-canvassing starts. The author misrepresents the PASC decision by stating voters are not forbid from curing ballots; PASC simply stated the law didn't require officials to offer an opportunity to cure. On the affidavits, these folks were contacted about having an opportunity to cure a ballot. In none of the examples do the affidavits state that the election official called them and said the voter's specific ballot needed curing. The author of the video misrepresented this and claimed otherwise."

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:

Reporting Misinformation to the EI-ISAC

If you spot misinformation or disinformation about your election jurisdiction on social media, you can submit it to the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center® (EI-ISAC®). We'll work with the platforms and other partners to get it addressed.

WHAT TO REPORT
Anything on social media that’s about your jurisdiction, pertains to the administration or security of the 2020 general election, and is false. Examples include, but aren’t limited to, dates of the election, mail ballot rules, information on ballots, polling place status, and election reporting procedures.

HOW TO REPORT IT
Send an email to misinformation@cisecurity.org. Copy others in your organization or state whom should also see the information, such as your chief state election official. Include the following information:

- A screenshot of the social media post and, if possible, the URL
- Your name, role, jurisdiction, and official email address
- A description of why this is misinformation. This doesn't

WHAT WILL HAPPEN
After the EI-ISAC receives your email, we will:

- 1 Verify the information**
We ensure you are a verified election official or their representative, and that you included all the necessary information. If we don't know you, we may contact you or someone else in your office to verify your identity.
- 2 Forward it to our partners**
 - a** The Cyber and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). They will submit it to the relevant social media platform(s) for review. They may also share it with relevant federal agencies
 - b** The Election Integrity Partnership at Stanford University. They will analyze the report to see if it is part of a larger disinformation effort.
- 3 Provide updates**
Any time we receive meaningful information about your case, we'll follow up with you. This can be minutes, hours, or days, depending on the platforms and what they discover.

43.The EIP is one of a series of government-affiliated think tanks that mass-review content, a list that also includes the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensics Research Laboratory, and the University of Washington’s Center for Informed Policy.

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.

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

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