

# Twitter Files revealed growing government control – Matt Taibbi

US federal agencies' influence over the platform grew before the 2020 election, the journalist outlined



FILE PHOTO: A sign at Twitter headquarters in San Francisco, California, December 8, 2022 © AP / Jeff Chiu

During his examination of the Twitter Files, investigative reporter Matt Taibbi discovered a pattern of increasing government control over the social media platform, he told RT's John Kiriakou on Saturday's episode of ['The Whistleblowers'](#).

Since purchasing Twitter for \$44 billion in October, Elon Musk has released batches of documents shedding light on the platform's previously opaque censorship policies, enlisting independent journalists to break each document dump. Independent journalist Matt Taibbi was the first chosen, publishing communications that revealed a company-wide effort to suppress reporting on Hunter Biden's laptop – the contents of which implicated the Biden family in numerous foreign corruption schemes.

*"I wasn't very interested in that story per se," Taibbi told Kiriakou. "The question I was really interested in answering was what level of communication and coordination exists between... Twitter and federal law enforcement, and perhaps agencies beyond the FBI, Department of Homeland Security, or the White House."*

While researching Twitter's decision to ban then-President Donald Trump's account in early 2021, Taibbi said that he began noticing instant messages between Twitter executives *"where you would see little indentations at the top of the messages that said 'this is flagged by DHS, this is flagged by the FBI.'"*

*“And that right away told us something very significant, that Twitter was in the business of processing requests that came from federal law enforcement agencies,”* he said.

Taibbi discovered that in the runup to the 2020 election, Twitter would receive lists of thousands of accounts to suspend. These lists were handed to the company by the FBI, CIA, NSA, Pentagon, State Department, Treasury and others, and sometimes came in the form of excel spreadsheets, which employees were expected to ban without question.

*“There were so many requests, they got one batch one day and when they completed it there was a round of applause in the chat,”* Taibbi told Kiriakou.

At one point, when Twitter employees received a list of accounts from the State Department to ban for spreading so-called Russian *“disinformation,”* they argued that they should take no action, as the department had provided no evidence. However, a Twitter executive who previously worked for the CIA told them to flag the accounts anyway, as the site’s *“government partners are becoming more aggressive”* with their censorship demands.

*“That decision was significant, because it was one of the moments when Twitter basically realized ‘We can’t say no any more,’”* Taibbi explained.

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In the time since Taibbi released his first story on the Hunter Biden laptop, further reporting has revealed that Twitter **assisted** the US military’s online influence campaigns, **censored** *“anti-Ukraine narratives”* on behalf of multiple US intelligence agencies, **suppressed** *“legitimate content”* on Covid-19 on behalf of the White House, and **participated** in the *“Russiagate”* hoax.



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