

The 6 Most Shocking Recent Revelations of Government Censorship

By

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UncoverDC has been providing you with the most in-depth coverage of the landmark Missouri v. Biden censorship case you will find anywhere. However, there have been a few instances of government censorship revealed that we feel EVERY American must know so we've distilled that down for you in this column.

For those who like the nitty gritty, you can find all of our work on this case by clicking [here](#).

For those who want the TLDR, Missouri and Louisiana, along with several individual plaintiffs, sued the federal government, accusing them of pressuring and threatening big social media companies to censor Americans' speech on a number of different topics. The judge granted expedited depositions and discovery in the case so that he can rule on a temporary injunction to halt this government action while the trial progressed. That act in itself is relatively unheard of, but what it has produced so far? It's worse than we imagined.

So here are the top 6 most shocking recent revelations of government censorship, coming from recent discovery releases in the case.

1. CISA considers your thoughts "Cognitive Infrastructure"

One of the most stunning things we've learned from this lawsuit is that the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency now considers your thoughts and what you post online, a part of the United States Government's "[critical infrastructure](#)," thereby giving them the authority to regulate them. I don't think anyone asked everyday Americans if they'd want the government regulating what goes on inside their brains, but alas, here we are.

Through discovery that has been released, we have uncovered that CISA is at the forefront of censorship activities in the United States, often acting in concert with taxpayer-funded NGOs to act as a sort of "censorship help desk." They became so overwhelmed that they decided to create something known as the "disinformation governance board," which would provide them the funding and, more importantly, the public *cover* to be able to continue funneling censorship demands to social media behemoths, like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Understandably, once this "disinformation governance board" became public knowledge, it was promptly disbanded. However, the activities it was meant to cover have not.

"Plaintiffs move to depose Jen Easterly ("Easterly"), the Director of CISA within the Department of Homeland Security, because she supervises the "nerve center" of federally directed censorship."

Think about this- CISA is designating YOUR THOUGHTS and speech as the most important form of US Infrastructure- COGNITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE. That in and of itself could be the subject of a lawsuit.

"...the most critical infrastructure is a cognitive infrastructure."

misinformation.

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6. Jen Easterly—CISA Director

Plaintiffs move to depose Jen Easterly ("Easterly"), the Director of CISA within the Department of Homeland Security, because she supervises the "nerve center" of federally directed censorship. Plaintiffs describe the CISA's central role as "directly flagging misinformation to social-media companies for censorship." Plaintiffs also assert that Easterly "claim[s] that social-media speech" by Americans "is a form of 'infrastructure,' and that policing speech online by the

federal government falls within her agency's mission to protect 'infrastructure,' stating that ... 'the most critical infrastructure is a cognitive infrastructure.'⁴⁵

Plaintiffs also cite to Easterly's text messages between Easterly and Matt Masterson, a

The "Disinformation Governance Board" is now on trial. This is really chilling, and thank goodness for the states of Missouri and Louisiana.

"Allegedly, these texts center around Easterly and Masterson discussing a "Disinformation Governance Board." The conversations ultimately describe how Easterly seeks greater censorship and that this would be done by federal pressure on social media platforms to increase censorship."

2. Rob Flaherty coerced Facebook to ban and censor the vaccine injured, despite acknowledging their posts were true and didn't break the Terms of Service

Rob Flaherty is the White House Director of Digital Strategy and a senior advisor to President Joe Biden. The government initially attempted to hide his involvement in censorship, but other discovery exposed his name, and the judge granted written interrogatory and discovery to the Plaintiffs in this case. As we will see in the examples below, Flaherty often acts as a "boss" or manager to social media executives, cursing at them and treating them with disdain when they don't follow his directives to censor the speech of Americans.

In an email [response](#) to Flaherty, Facebook beamed about removing post visibility and censoring the vaccine injured, [stating](#):

"As you know, in addition to removing vaccine misinformation, we have been focused on reducing the virality of content discouraging vaccines that does not contain actionable misinformation. This is often true content, which we allow at the post level because experts have advised us that it is important for people to be able to discuss both their personal experiences and concerns about the vaccine, but it can be framed as sensation, alarmist, or shocking. We'll remove these Groups, Pages, and Accounts when they are disproportionately promoting this sensationalized content. More on this front as we proceed to implement."



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...

Here they focus on the most deprived of all actions I have seen; ensuring that vaccine injured were ripped from their support groups and screaming their plight to NO ONE, even if true, and even if it didn't violate ANY TOS. This is inhumane. This is your government.

To be sure, Flaherty and his colleagues sometimes strike a cordial tone when social-media companies bow to their demands. But even then, they invariably follow up with additional demands for censorship. For example, after a discussion with White House official Andrew Slavitt, Facebook promised to go beyond “removing vaccine misinformation” to “reducing the virality of content discouraging vaccines *that does not contain actionable misinformation.*” *Id.* at 15 (emphasis added). “This is *often-true content*,” Facebook explained, “but it can be framed as sensation[al].” *Id.* (emphasis added). Flaherty applauded Facebook for acceding to the White House’s demands to remove “often-true” content that does not violate Facebook’s policies, and congratulated Facebook for recognizing that the real “problem does not sit in ‘microchips’-land” but instead lies in “often-true” content that happens to contradict the White House’s preferred narrative. *Id.* at 14–15. “If you’re downranking sensational stuff—great,” Flaherty said. *Id.* at 14. Then came the additional demands: “[B]ut I want to know how effective you’ve seen that be from a market research perspective. And then, what interventions are being taken on ‘skepticism’?” *Id.*

10:55 PM · 1/11/22 · 20.6K Views

This is the most heart-wrenching so far. As vaccine injury begins to rear its ugly head, people flock to Facebook to share their experiences. Facebook tells the government that they are taking action on that content even though it is true and doesn't violate TOS. This is evil.

updated on our progress and when we expect to be able to share the data with you.

3. **Levers for Tackling Vaccine Hesitancy Content:** You also asked us about our levers for reducing virality of vaccine hesitancy content. In addition to policies previously discussed, these include the additional changes that were approved late last week and that we'll be implementing over the coming weeks. As you know, in addition to removing vaccine misinformation, we have been focused on reducing the virality of content discouraging vaccines that does not contain actionable misinformation. This is often-true content, which we allow at the post level because experts have advised us that it is important for people to be able to discuss both their personal experiences and concerns about the vaccine, but it can be framed as sensation, alarmist, or shocking. We'll remove these Groups, Pages, and Accounts when they are disproportionately promoting this sensationalized content. More on this front as we proceed to implement.

4. **WhatsApp:** Finally— mentioned the policies that apply to WhatsApp. WhatsApp's approach to

I have a lot to say about this. Here we have Facebook admitting there is a barrage of content like this, and they are stopping anyone from seeing it. This is a crime against humanity. Many needed community and a place to find help after being injured. Your government and Facebook wouldn't allow that.

If this isn't one of the most cruel, inhumane, terrible things I have ever seen in my entire life, I don't know what is. Speaking as Tracy, the human and not the journalist, I am not sure how these folks can sleep at night. They know. They knew. They didn't care.

3. Flaherty wanted Facebook to take more action in censoring the encrypted chat program "WhatsApp"

Rob Flaherty spent an inordinate amount of time trying to get Facebook to more stringently censor WhatsApp, despite Facebook telling him they had no way to read the messages its users were sending one another. Facebook added multiple layers of censorship to the app, deboosting posts that were forwarded often and pinning what it called "authoritative" messages about COVID and vaccines to the application.

Understand first, WhatsApp is a *chat* application where people converse with one another or in small groups. This is the level of control they are looking for over your conversations. Additionally, this may be new information on what the company is doing in terms of censorship.

From: [REDACTED]@fb.com>
Sent: Friday, April 9, 2021 2:16 PM
To: Flaherty, Rob EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Follow up--WA responses

Hi Rob,

Wanted to follow up on your additional questions about WhatsApp -- responses to your questions embedded in line and in blue below, along with a few attachments that are discussed in-line. Happy to discuss further.

Also--happy to schedule our next session with [REDACTED] for Monday if you're interested. I know she was hoping to bring her colleague [REDACTED] to brainstorm on some ideas with you and Courtney. We can do this Monday or anytime next week.

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Thanks,

[REDACTED]

We also wanted to follow up on your questions about WhatsApp. For more you're already attached to this

Who feels like this is just fine for a one-to-one chat application that is used by people because they bill it as a secure encrypted place to chat? Sure, they can't read your messages, but they can still (and do) control the conversation.

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You're right that without being able to see the content of messages on WhatsApp, we're not able to measure prevalence (and, relatedly, reduction) of particular types of content. WhatsApp seeks to control the spread of misinformation and inform users through deliberate, content-agnostic product interventions -- things like labeling and limiting message forwards. The underlying idea there is that messages that did not originate from a close contact are less personal compared to typical messages sent on WhatsApp, and may be more prone to contain misinformation. The labels ("forwarded"; and "forwarded many times" if the message has been forwarded five times or more) are intended to prompt people to stop and think when they are reading a message and before they forward something, which may not be accurate. The forward limits (no more than five chats at a time; one chat a time for highly forwarded messages), are intended to reduce their spread. As mentioned in my earlier note, when WhatsApp rolled out the limitation for highly forwarded messages to one chat at a time in April 2020, this resulted in a 70% reduction of those messages globally. Of course, not all forwards are misinformation, so these are by nature somewhat blunt tools, but they are important ones -- and ones that many other messaging services don't provide.

A few additional things to note:

1. WhatsApp also employs best-in-class spam detection technology to **spot accounts engaging in mass messaging behavior, so they can't be used to spread spam or viral misinformation**. We ban over 2 million accounts per month for bulk messaging behavior, 75% of them without a recent user report, which means our automated systems stop abuse before users can report them. (This [white paper](#) describes these systems in further detail.)

4. Flaherty wanted to know what Facebook was doing to censor vaccine claims that were “dubious” but not false

Rob Flaherty consistently demanded information about what Facebook was doing to censor content that was not false but that they considered “dubious.” He demanded internal data from the organization to confirm their efforts to censor Americans were working.

From: Flaherty, Robert EOP/WHO
Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:37 PM
To: [REDACTED]@fb.com>; Rowe, Courtney M. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>; Humphrey, Clarke EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>

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Cc: [REDACTED]@fb.com>; [REDACTED]@fb.com>; [REDACTED]@fb.com>
Subject: RE: COVID-19 Outreach to communities worldwide

[REDACTED] Thanks.

This line, of course, stands out:

that repeatedly share these debunked claims may be removed altogether.

Can you share more about your framework here? May, of course, is very different than “will.” Is there a strike policy, ala Youtube? Does the severity of the claims matter?

And as far as your removal of claims, do you have data on the actual number of claims -related posts you’ve removed? Do you have a sense of how many are being flagged versus how many are being removed? Are there actions (downranking, etc) that sit before removal? How are you handling things that are dubious, but not provably false?

Thanks

5. Joe Biden was inadvertently swept up in the censorship algorithm the White House forced Instagram to implement

In what can only be considered a stroke of serendipity, Joe Biden’s account on Instagram was inadvertently demoted and shadowbanned due to the frequency with which is was posting content about COVID-19 vaccines. Instagram, at the behest of an abusive Rob Flaherty, created an algorithm to demote accounts that were sharing an inordinate amount of vaccine-related content. Flaherty realized that the POTUS account wasn’t picking up followers and emailed execs at the company to let them know. They responded, stating that they couldn’t get into details, but the account had been fixed. After a profanity-laced email sent back from Flaherty, the execs were forced to admit that the very censorship

algorithm they created to censor everyday Americans swept up the President as well. Needless to say, the White House didn't much like being censored.

6. The office of First Lady Jill Biden was also involved in censoring Americans on Twitter

The First Lady also got into censorship action, begging Twitter to remove an edited video of Jill Biden that was clearly a parody. Twitter fought back against the demand but ultimately removed the content after Flaherty became involved and was copied on communications. We wouldn't have known that censorship extended to the sitting First Lady without the expedited discovery order covering Rob Flaherty.

This last one is a doozy. The White House is ARGUING back and forth with Twitter, refusing to remove a piece of video content that was edited. There are 5-6 emails with Jill Biden's Press Secretary going back and forth about why Twitter won't remove content. They keep saying no...

From: [REDACTED]@twitter.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 11:11 AM
To: Tom, Christian L. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>
Cc: LaRosa, Michael J. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Doctored video on Twitter of the First Lady

Appreciate you following up. After escalating this to our team, the Tweet and video referenced will not be labeled under our synthetic and manipulated media policy. Although it has been significantly altered, the team has not found it to cause harm or impact public safety.

The team was able to create this Twitter Moment (here) and event page for more context and details:
>>>><https://twitter.com/i/events/1465769009073123330><<<<<<<<

Flaherty jumps in here after escalation because he can't believe they won't act. The only reason we have this is because he was added to the email chain. It looks like we can broaden discovery now to the FIRST LADY. Please click this. Read the entire thing.

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From: [REDACTED]@twitter.com>
To: Flaherty, Rob R. EOP/WHO
Sent: 12/17/2021 10:44:52 PM
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Doctored video on Twitter of the First Lady

Hi Rob -
I'm around if you'd like to dial me [REDACTED]

Best,
[REDACTED]

On Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 5:33 PM Flaherty, Rob R. EOP/WHO [REDACTED]@who.eop.gov> wrote:

New to the thread here, but this all reads to me like you all are bending over backwards to say that this isn't causing confusion on public issues. If the AP deems it confusing enough to write a fact check, and you deem it confusing enough to create an event for it, how on earth is it not confusing enough for it to at least have a label?

Total Calvinball.

Throughout the filings, we see Rob Flaherty berating and abusing executives at social media companies, demanding internal analytics and data to ensure their policies are working and directing them to remove posts. We see he and his assistant, Andy Slavitt, scolding Facebook about a Tucker Carlson video that went viral on the platform, even though the video contained true content. There is much more you can read, so settle in with a cup of coffee and check out the detailed analysis [here](#).

We will continue to cover this critical civil rights case as it progresses through the court.