

BUSINESS

FBI Paid Twitter Millions, Had Close Relationship With Execs And Staff, Emails Show

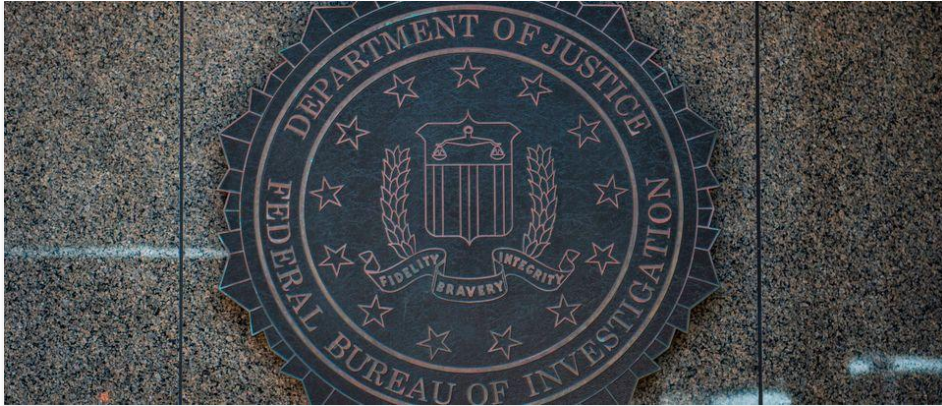


Photo by ERIC BARADAT/AFP via Getty Images

DAILY CALLER NEWS FOUNDATION



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CONTRIBUTOR

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- **The FBI paid Twitter nearly \$3.5 million dollars between October 2019 and February 2021 as compensation for the time its employees spent managing their requests, according to internal documents published by author Michael Shellenberger Monday, as part of the ongoing “Twitter Files.”**
- **After the Hunter Biden laptop story broke, a member of the FBI’s Office of the General Counsel spoke with Twitter’s then-Deputy General Counsel Jim Baker, a former FBI agent, in a private call, Shellenberger reported.**
- **“Obviously, [our work with the FBI] is close-hold and we will never get public credit, but I would like to thank our FBI counterparts who worked so well with us**

this election cycle,” wrote an unidentified Twitter employee, asking others to sign a thank-you letter to the FBI in December, 2020, according to Shellenberger.

The FBI paid Twitter millions as a reimbursement for the time the company spent processing the FBI’s requests, according to internal documents published by author Michael Shellenberger Monday, in the most recent installment of Twitter CEO Elon Musk’s ongoing “Twitter Files.”

In an email with the subject line “Run the business – we made money!” an employee, whose name was redacted, reports to then-Deputy General Counsel Jim Baker, that the FBI paid Twitter nearly \$3.5 million dollars between October 2019 and February 2021, Shellenberger **reported**. Baker, a former FBI agent, was the agency’s general counsel during Operation Crossfire Hurricane, and **approved** the surveillance of former Trump campaign aide Carter Page via improper use of the Steele dossier, according to a report by the Justice Department’s inspector general.

The FBI and Twitter **enjoyed** a close relationship in the run-up to the 2020 elections, with the FBI promising “no impediments to information sharing” between the two groups in a Sept. 16, 2020 meeting between social media executives and intelligence community staff. In a previous **installment** of the “Twitter Files,” journalist Matt Taibbi said he had not found evidence that the FBI or intelligence community was involved in Twitter’s decision to suppress access to a New York Post story about a laptop owned by Hunter Biden, but new documents from Shellenberger indicated that the FBI was, in fact, involved.

The Post’s original October 14, 2020, **story** was based on a laptop, apparently belonging to Biden, containing a 2015 email linking then-Vice President Joe Biden to his son Hunter’s business dealings with the Ukrainian gas company Burisma. Prior to the story’s release, the FBI issued **warnings** to social media platforms that there was likely to be a Russian “hack-and-leak” operation prior to the election — Twitter’s then-head of trust and safety Yoel Roth **testified** that he had been explicitly warned of a leak targeting Hunter Biden — despite not having any evidence of such an operation being underway, Shellenberger **reported**, citing the testimony of FBI Special Agent Elvis Chan.

46. *The FBI's influence campaign may have been helped by the fact that it was paying Twitter millions of dollars for its staff time.*

"I am happy to report we have collected \$3,415,323 since October 2019!" reports an associate of Jim Baker in early 2021. pic.twitter.com/SmNse97QxK

— *Michael Shellenberger (@ShellenbergerMD) December 19, 2022*

On October 13, 2020, the Post informed Biden, and his lawyer, George Mesires, that they intended to publish their story on the laptop the next day, prompting Mesires to email the owner of the repair shop that gave the Post access to the laptop just before 7:00 p.m. EST, Schellenberger **reported**.

The same day, at 9:22 p.m. EST, Chan sent ten documents to Twitter via the site's "Teleporter" portal, a one-way communications channel from the FBI to Twitter, Schellenberger **reported**. Chan, however, followed-up, directly emailing Roth and asking for Twitter to confirm it had received the documents, which Roth did two minutes later, **according** to Shellenberger.

On Oct. 14, after the Post's story was published, several internal messages from Baker — one of which cites "reliable cybersecurity experts" — push back against Roth's claim that the story wasn't a violation of their policies, **according** to Shellenberger. However, the FBI had taken possession of the laptop in December of 2019, making it "inconceivable" that the agency was unaware that the Post's story was accurate, **according** to Shellenberger.

Just after 10:00 a.m. EST, Roth sends an email to Twitter staff, notifying them that "the suggestion from experts – which rings true – is there was a hack that happened separately, and they loaded the hacked materials on the laptop that magically appeared at a repair shop in Delaware," Shellenberger **reported**. Later the same day, just after 3:30 p.m. EST, Baker held a phone call — alone — with Matthew Perry at the FBI's Office of the General Counsel.



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Twitter ultimately banned the story from being shared on its app, going so far as to **prevent** users from sharing links to the story in private messages, from Oct. 14 to Oct. 16, 2020. The ban was **announced** under Twitter’s “Hacked Materials” policy, which typically required an official statement from law enforcement agencies, confirming that the material was hacked.

Two days later, on Oct. 16, Twitter’s global head of policy Nick Pickles noted that the “seemingly-well timed briefings from [government] sources highlighting concerns about the source of the hard drive,” supported the “assessment that it’s neither whistleblower or dissident content,” **according** to Shellenberger.

Prior to the release of the Hunter Biden laptop story, the FBI was in regular contact with Twitter executives.

On Aug. 11, 2020, Chan sent the company information regarding the Russian hacking organization APT28, **according** to Shellenberger. Roth would **later** say that he believed the Post’s story felt like an APT28 hack-and-leak attack.

On July 15, 2020, Chan proposed granting temporary Top Secret security clearance for high-level Twitter executives for the 30 days prior to the 2020 election, so that the two can coordinate more effectively regarding election threats, **according** to Shellenberger.

As of June 2020, the number of FBI employees who would go on to work at Twitter had grown to the point that they were referred to as “Bu alumni” and had developed a “Bu to

Twitter’ translation chart” helping new hires translate Twitter lingo into FBI lingo, **according** to Shellenberger.

On Sept. 21, 2020, Roth and Chan established two encrypted channels of communication from Twitter to FBI HQ and FBI San Francisco, using the messaging app Signal, Shellenberger **reported**. Chan’s email confirming the formation of the channels also notes that Facebook was interested in activating the channel before the first presidential debate, which took place Sept. 29, 2020

In December 2020, various Twitter staff, including Baker, signed a thank you letter to nine members of the FBI, including Chan, for their work alongside Twitter during the election season, Shellenberger **reported**.

“Twitter was on the front line of protecting our users (and the public at large) from misinformation/disinformation campaigns that had the potential to negatively impact the fair election process,” reads an email from an employee, whose name is redacted, asking others to sign the thank you letter, according to Shellenberger. “What is not widely known is the role Twitter played in helping the FBI track and identify violent actors who wanted to perpetrate acts of domestic terrorism at polling stations and ballot counting facilities. Obviously, this work is close-hold and we will never get public credit, but I would like to thank our FBI counterparts who worked so well with us this election cycle.”

While he agreed to sign the letter, Baker reminded those on the email thread to “be mindful that the letters could leak and will be subject to FOIA, so we should prepare them with that expectation in mind,” Shellenberger reported.

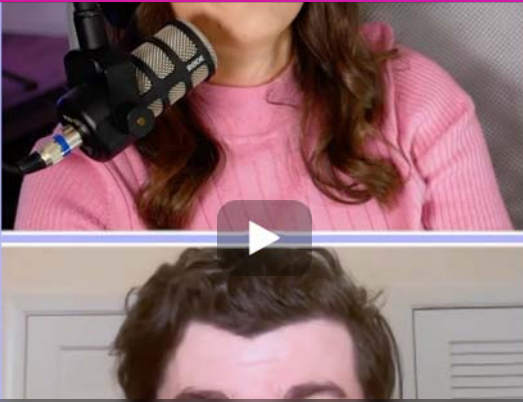
The FBI and Twitter did not immediately respond to a Daily Caller News Foundation request for comment.

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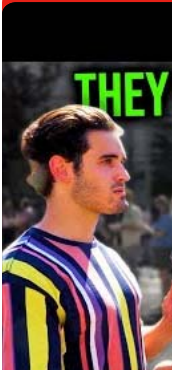
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2,908 likes



People can't afford their payments about 5 hours ago

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Asking The World "n?"

3 days ago

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by GotChosen