



Twitter Files reveal Trump ban came after Michelle Obama, others pressured the company

Description

USA: Former President Donald Trump was banned from Twitter the day after former first lady Michelle Obama and others demanded the company “permanently” remove him, according to the newest “Twitter Files” installment.

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On Saturday, CEO Elon Musk and journalist Michael Shellenberger released the fourth batch of Twitter documents that show internal communications by the company’s executives between Jan. 6-8, 2021, including and shortly after the riot at the Capitol Building.

Among the files, Shellenberger reported “internal and external pressure,” including from the former first lady, fell onto the company calling for Trump to be banned from using Twitter.



Former President Donald Trump on Nov. 15, 2022, in Palm Beach, Florida and Michelle Obama on June 13, 2022, in Los Angeles.

“Now is the time for Silicon Valley companies to stop enabling this monstrous behavior—and go even further than they have already by permanently banning this man from their platforms and putting in place policies to prevent their technologies from being used by the nation’s leaders to fuel insurrection,” Obama wrote in a lengthy statement posted to Twitter on Jan. 7.

She added: “And if we have any hope of improving this nation, now is the time for swift and serious consequences for the failure of leadership that led to yesterday’s shame.”

In addition to the former first lady, the Anti-Defamation League, among several other prominent people and organizations called for Trump’s ban.

pic.twitter.com/2xhMyVMpDF

— Michelle Obama (@MichelleObama) [January 7, 2021](#)

On the morning of Jan. 7, then-Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey wrote an email to employees instructing them, as Shellenberger wrote: “to remain consistent in its policies, including the right of users to return to Twitter after a temporary suspension.”

Trump was serving a suspension on the platform at the time.

The files also showed Twitter maintained a policy — called “Public-interest exceptions” — where elected officials were not banned as there was a great public interest in their comments, even if they seemed to violate other policies.



Former first lady Michelle Obama in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 7, 2022.
(Al Drago/Bloomberg via Getty Images)

While Trump's temporary suspension was lifted, this second policy was specifically and intentionally ignored in Trump's case, Shellenberger reported. Dorsey was also on vacation at the time of Trump's ban.

"Dorsey was on vacation in French Polynesia the week of January 4-8, 2021," Shellenberger reported. The chief executive delegated much of the responsibility to senior executives, including former Twitter Head of Trust and Safety Yoel Roth and former Head of Legal, Policy, & Trust Vijaya Gadde, who Shellenberger points out were "overwhelmingly progressive."

"In 2018, 2020, and 2022, 96%, 98%, & 99% of Twitter staff's political donations went to Democrats," Shellenberger reported.

Shellenberger also reported: "In 2017, Roth tweeted that there were 'ACTUAL NAZIS IN THE WHITE HOUSE.'"

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Twitter employees recognize the difference between their own politics & Twitter's Terms of Service (TOS), but they also engage in complex interpretations of content in order to stamp out prohibited tweets, as a series of exchanges over the "[#stopthesteal](https://twitter.com/tfZesQNXx8)" hashtag reveal.
pic.twitter.com/tfZesQNXx8

— Michael Shellenberger (@ShellenbergerMD) [December 11, 2022](#)

A day after Dorsey's email, Trump was permanently suspended for how his posts were being "received and interpreted."

After Musk purchased Twitter and took over as its chief executive, Trump's access to the platform was restored. Trump has yet to resume control of his account, however, and has previously told Fox News Digital that he intends to remain on his social media platform, Truth Social.

Category

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