



White House Catches Twitter Leak, Benghazi Betrayers Still Free

The Obama administration organized a sting operation to nab a rogue “tweeter” who was criticizing White House policy on the popular social media platform.

The anonymous account named @NatSecWonk was tweeting out a “steady stream of personal and sometimes offensive attacks on White House and State Department officials,” according to media reports.



Stuff, a New Zealand-based tech source, [published a Washington Post story](#) of the president’s posse and how they got their man.

Three weeks ago, the group hatched a plan to trick the suspected NSC staffer into revealing himself.

They would intentionally plant inaccurate, but harmless, information with him to see if it would pop up as a 140-character tweet, according to a US official with knowledge of the effort.

It is not clear whether the sting led directly to the unmasking last week of Jofi Joseph, 40, who was identified as the creative force behind @natsecwonk and was fired from his position on the administration’s Iran negotiations team.

But the lengths to which White House officials went to find Joseph reveal how much of an embarrassment his Twitter feed had become inside the West Wing and across the street at the stately Eisenhower Executive Office Building, where Joseph worked alongside his NSC colleagues while secretly skewering them online.

“It was like they were hunting for bin Laden in a cave and he was right in the belly of the beast all along,” said a former NSC official who worked with Joseph, marveling that he was able to keep his identity secret for over two years.

“We talked about it from time to time in the hallways, ‘Did you see what @natsecwonk posted?’ ” said this former official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal operations. “He probably heard people walking around saying things about the account.”

Joseph said in a statement Wednesday that “I deeply regret violating the trust and confidence placed in me.”

“What started out as an intended parody account of DC culture developed over time into a series of inappropriate and mean-spirited comments,” the statement continued. “I bear complete responsibility for this affair and I sincerely apologise [sic] to everyone I insulted.”

During a [White House press briefing](#) on Wednesday, October 23, Press Secretary Jay Carney described Joseph as a “an employee of the State Department on temporary duty” at the White House. He added that Joseph “does not work here anymore.”



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on October 25, 2013

A [story in the *Washington Post*](#) supports Carney's characterization of Joseph's employment history, reporting that Joseph was a member of "a team of more than two dozen aides working on the administration's policy toward Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions."

During his tenure at the White House, Joseph not only got away with tweeting out pithy shots at the Obama administration's national security decisions, but he apparently broke the rules to do it. The *Washington Post* reports that "inside the National Security Council, most officials aren't allowed to use or even look at Twitter, the popular social-networking service," chiefly because of the possibility "that public accounts could compromise secrets on the NSC's computers." In order to enforce the social media silence, "Staffers' government-issued cellphones do not have Internet access," the *Post* added.

Although Carney refused to elaborate on the trap set for Joseph or how it was sprung, the *Washington Post* article reports that administration insiders "said privately that Joseph — a political appointee who served at the pleasure of the president and could be fired more easily than a civil servant — was sanctioned not just because of offensive tweets but also because he exhibited poor judgment in an office that handles sensitive national security secrets."

In one of his tweets (all of which have now been deleted), @NatSecWonk took a shot at Hillary Clinton's role in standing by while American officials were murdered. Joseph tweeted: "Look, [Republican Rep. Darrell] Issa is an [expletive], but he's on to something here with the @HillaryClinton whitewash of accountability for Benghazi."

That's an important connection between Joseph, the @NatSecWonk twitter account, and the president's zealous pursuit of the author of the tweets.

The fact that President Obama would take the time to mastermind a sting operation to capture and quiet an insider exposing his administration's foreign policy embarrassments only serves to highlight the fact that the president has done absolutely nothing to punish those responsible for the murders in Benghazi or to fire IRS officials who were using the taxing power as a political weapon or to identify and hold accountable Justice Department employees selling guns to Mexican thugs that were used to kill an American officer.

Joe A. Wolverton, II, J.D. is a correspondent for The New American and travels frequently nationwide speaking on topics of nullification, the NDAA, and the surveillance state. He is the host of The New American Review radio show that is simulcast on YouTube every Monday. Follow him on Twitter @TNAJoeWolverton and he can be reached at jwolverton@thenewamerican.com



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