



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 9, 2023

## Biden's FTC Attacks 1st Amendment, Sought 411 From Twitter on Journalists Who Received Files

The Biden administration wanted to wage full-scale war on the journalists who received the Twitter Files and exposed the leftists and government officials who ordered Twitter to censor social-media posts.

In its 112-page report on the Federal Trade Commission's attempt to force Twitter to answer questions about its business practices, the House Judiciary Committee's Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government revealed that the FTC demanded something unprecedented. The out-of-control agency wanted details about the interactions Twitter and owner Elon Musk had with journalists. Specifically, the FTC named the authors of the Twitter Files stories.



AP Images  
Matt Taibbi

Today, hard-left Democrats on the committee attacked journalist Matt Taibbi, and [laughably claimed](#) that exposing Twitter's communist censorship of conservatives endangered employees.

The request is a direct attack on the First Amendment, and a clear attempt to intimidate journalists who dissent from the Biden administration's woke, leftist narratives, or believe the 2020 election was stolen.

### Twitter Files Exposed Censorship

The attack on Musk opened when he bought the company. But the Democrat-voting rocket tycoon really stepped in a pile when he released the Twitter Files to Taibbi and other writers.

In a long Twitter thread and articles on Substack and Racket News, they revealed that Twitter, [on orders](#) from the federal government, censored conservatives who spread "disinformation." [Twitter also became](#) a "subsidiary" of the FBI, [promoted Pentagon](#) psywar propaganda, and even [took orders](#) from amateurs and left-wing extremists about users who "[engaged] in inauthentic behavior." That dragnet pulled in "septuagenarian Trump supporters," Taibbi reported.

"Twitter is both a social media company and a crime scene," Musk tweeted after he took over and released the files.

The FTC couldn't let a loose cannon like that go off. And so it mounted a campaign of harassment and intimidation with more than 12 letters to Twitter that contained more than 350 demands for information. The letters prove that the FTC "has been attempting to harass Twitter and pry into the company's decisions on matters outside of the FTC's mandate," the [subcommittee report concludes](#).



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Under the guise of protecting the privacy of Twitter users, one letter sought the company's communications with journalists. The First Amendment didn't, apparently, concern anyone at the FTC.

Three days after Musk called Twitter a crime scene, and eight days after the first Twitter Files dropped, "the FTC demanded details of Twitter's interactions with journalists, including 'Bari Weiss, Matt Taibbi, Michael Shellenberger, Abigail Shrier,' and the *identities of all other journalists* to whom Twitter had potentially provided access of its internal records," the [subcommittee report avers](#) (Emphasis added).

The report then explains why the leftists at the FTC would demand a look into the Twitter's communications with journalists:

Twitter allowed the journalists, as part of their reporting on government censorship by proxy, to review internal communications and correspondence between Twitter employees and federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

And the FTC clearly didn't care that the Twitter Files "did not concern private user data or information that Twitter users wanted private," but instead the wide-ranging censorship combine the company established with the federal government. Acting under the guise of protecting the public weal, the FTC wanted to find out just who was involved in exposing the truth.

"Tellingly, the FTC's first demand in its letter sent after the initial installment of the Twitter Files did not concern what private user information may have been at risk," the [report continues](#):

Instead, the FTC demanded that Twitter "[i]dentify all journalists and other members of the media to whom" Twitter has granted access to since Musk bought the company. The FTC even named some of the specific journalists — "Bari Weiss, Matt Taibbi, Michael Shellenberger, [and] Abigail Shrier" — with whom Twitter has engaged on the Twitter Files.

The FTC also demanded to know any "other members of the media to whom You have granted any type of access to the Company's internal communications for any reason whatsoever."

Note that again: *any reason*.

"There is no reason the FTC needs to know every journalist with whom Twitter was engaging," the report explains:

Even more troubling than the burden on the company, the FTC's demand represents a government inquiry into First Amendment-protected activity. It is an agency of the federal government demanding that a private company reveal the names of the journalists who are engaged in reporting about matters of public interest, including potential government misconduct. While the FTC's inquiry would be inappropriate in any setting, it is especially inappropriate in the context of journalists disclosing how social media companies helped the government to censor online speech.

Musk was right when he tweeted that the inquiry "is a serious attack on the Constitution by a federal agency."

## Laughable Attack



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Amusingly, during a hearing today at which Taibbi and Shellenberger testified, Democrats did little but personally attack the two.

The most ridiculous questions came from the ranking Democrat, a delegate from the Virgin Islands called [Stacey Plaskett](#). [She said](#) the Twitter Files adduced no evidence that the government and Twitter collaborated to censor dissidents, and called Taibbi, Schellenberger, and the rest “so-called journalists.”

Replied Taibbi:

I’m not a so-called journalist. I’ve won the National Magazine Award, the I.F. Stone Award for Independent Journalism, and I’ve written 10 books, including four *New York Times* bestsellers.

The so-called congresswomen and one of her colleagues also asked Taibbi to reveal his sources. Taibbi refused.

**H/T:** [The Wall Street Journal](#)



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