

Twitter Files' Matt Taibbi Says Elon Musk Sent Him Unhinged Messages

 newrepublic.com/post/179067/twitter-files-matt-taibbi-messages-elon-musk

February 16, 2024

Breaking News

from Washington and beyond

Ben Metzner/

February 16, 2024/10:49 a.m. ET

The former “Twitter Files” journalist has apparently fallen out of the good graces of billionaire Elon Musk.



STR/NurPhoto/Getty Images

It appears Elon Musk has turned against yet another ally in his wayward war against online censorship.

On Thursday, Matt Taibbi, the *Rolling Stone* journalist turned blogger, posted screenshots of text messages from Musk allegedly showing that Taibbi had been “shadowbanned” on X, formerly known as Twitter, as revenge for Taibbi’s deal with the publishing platform Substack, which last spring launched Notes, an X competitor.

Matt Taibbi @mtaibbi

Since @elonmusk published parts of these conversations, I might as well include others. I was under a “blanket search ban” at one point and a lot of my 1.9 million followers still don’t see my content.

Apr 9, 2023

Elon, am I being shadowbanned?

We went on lockdown after discovering that Substack had stolen a massive amount of our data to prepopulate their Twitter rip-off.

Looks like there is still a blanket search ban. Should be fixed by tomorrow.

Going forward, tweets with Substack will not appear in For You unless it is paid advertising, just like FB/Insta/etc. They will appear in “Following”.

Apr 10, 2023

Elon, I’ve repeatedly declined to criticize you and have nothing to do with your beef with Substack. Is there a reason why I’m being put in the middle of things? This really seems crazy.

You are dead to me.

Please get off Twitter and just stay on Substack.

This is about the Substack thing? Seriously?

FranksRedHat @FranksRedHat · 19h

Replying to @mtaibbi and @elonmusk

Sorry, are you actually suggesting Elon is deliberately burying your visibility to stop people from seeing what you post?

Any proof of this? Seems like a pretty large scandal for his supposed #1a platform if that is true.

3:43 PM · Feb 15, 2024 · 210.1K Views

“Elon, I’ve repeatedly declined to criticize you and have nothing to do with your beef with Substack,” Taibbi’s messages show. “Is there a reason why I’m being put in the middle of things? This seems really crazy.”

“You are dead to me. Please get off Twitter and just stay on Substack,” Musk appears to have replied, all but confirming Taibbi’s suspicion that he was the victim of a “blanket search ban.”

Allegations of censorship would mark an acrimonious, ironic end to Musk and Taibbi’s relationship after Musk trusted Taibbi with publishing the “Twitter Files,” a collection of documents purporting to show X’s (then Twitter’s) coordination with the FBI to suppress mentions of the *New York Post*’s Hunter Biden story and other tweets critical of Democrats. Taibbi, whose exposés of the financial industry in the wake of the 2008 recession garnered the public’s admiration, called the Files, hand-delivered by Musk after he purchased Twitter in 2022, “by far the most serious thing I have looked at, and certainly the most brave story I’ve ever worked on personally.” But Taibbi’s work was called into question by several journalists who reviewed it, and the Twitter Files never had the industry-upending effect Taibbi and Musk promised.

Taibbi retreated to his own Substack to continue to write, and Musk reshaped Twitter in his own Groyper-ish image. Now it appears business has gotten in the way of Taibbi and Musk’s access-based friendship. It’s not immediately clear what this falling out will mean for the future of censorship on X, but it amounts to a burn notice for the source who gave Taibbi the supposed best scoop of his career. At the very least, Taibbi will have plenty of time off X to reflect on his previous work.

(Unfortunately) More on Elon:

Elon Musk’s Unhinged Pro-MAGA Tweets Expose Tech Oligarchy’s Dark Side

Ellie Quinlan Houghtaling/

February 16, 2024/10:32 a.m. ET