

Facebook Censors Articles from Conservative Outlets About Manafort, Cohen



BY TYLER O'NEIL

CHAT COMMENTS

Facebook logo, author Simon3. From Wikimedia Commons.



Multiple posts sharing articles by prominent conservatives have been temporarily censored on Facebook under the excuse that they "look like spam." Both articles dealt with the Paul Manafort conviction and the Michael Cohen guilty plea, arguing that these events were not nearly as damning to President Donald Trump as the media supposed.

First, Facebook blocked Salena Zito, CNN contributor and author of the groundbreaking book ["The Great Revolt: Inside the Populist Coalition Reshaping American Politics."](#) On Wednesday afternoon, Zito published a *New York Post* article explaining ["why Trump's supporters won't care about Cohen and Manafort's convictions."](#)

■ [Google Deletes 39 YouTube Channels](#)

On Thursday morning, she noticed something out of place. "So this is interesting... [Facebook] took down my post of my

reporting for the [New York *Post*] — I've received nine separate messages from readers telling me the same thing has happened to them. 'sup [Facebook]?" Zito asked in a tweet.

SalenaZito 

@SalenaZito



So this is interesting... [@facebook](#) took down my post of my reporting for the [@nypost](#) — I've received nine separate messages from readers telling me the same thing has happened to them. 'sup [@facebook](#) ?nyp.st/2BDHd9K

6:57 AM - Aug 23, 2018 · Mount Lebanon, PA

Why Trump's supporters won't care about Cohen and Manafort's convictions

ZANESVILLE, OH — Last week, a woman in her mid-40s who lives in a tidy suburban enclave just outside of Columbus, Ohio, summed up her continued support for President Donald Trump despite his morals,
nypost.com

♡ 2,196 💬 1,572 people are talking about this



Salena Zito shared a picture of the post removed from the social media platform, with a message: "We removed this post because it looks like spam and doesn't follow our Community Standards."

 [View image on Twitter](#)



SalenaZito 

@SalenaZito



Per [@facebook](#) to one of several people who posted my [@nypost](#) story (including me) only to have it removed. I just attempted to re-post it, we shall see.

7:16 AM - Aug 23, 2018 · Mount Lebanon, PA

 51  49 people are talking about this

"They did put the article back up," Salena Zito told PJ Media. "They never responded to any of my inquiries." The author laid out the ways she contacted Facebook: "I first put out a polite tweet, then I direct messaged them, then I sent them a message through the Facebook page, and then I sent a message through support. No answer."

"After trying to contact them through several different ways, the story miraculously reappeared," Zito told [the Washington Times's Larry O'Connor](#).

Facebook also targeted Jenna Lynn Ellis, a [contributor to The Washington Examiner](#), director of public policy at the James Dobson Family Institute and author of "[The Legal Basis for a Moral Constitution: A Guide for Christians to Understand America's Constitutional Crisis](#)."

Silicon Valley Strikes Back: Facebook Censors PragerU After Google Lawsuit

Ellis published an article in *The Washington Examiner* explaining why "[Democrats are overreacting to the Michael Cohen guilty plea](#)." She argued that plea bargains are a legal fiction, are not confessions, and are not evidence of crimes or verdicts of guilt.

Therefore, the Cohen plea did not implicate Trump in financial crimes.

Ellis shared the article on Facebook, and a friend took a picture of Facebook removing the post. Again came the same message: "We removed this post because it looks like spam and doesn't follow our Community Standards."



Facebook screenshot of Jenna Lynn Ellis's Michael Cohen article censored as "spam."

"I reposted the screenshot and tagged Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg and the tags were immediately removed," Ellis told PJ Media. She argued that Facebook is trying to eat its cake and have it, too.

"Facebook has every right to suppress content as a private platform, but they have to do so openly in their terms and conditions, which should give every user clear notice of the agreement for use," she told PJ Media. "If they want to be a liberally biased platform, do so openly so conservatives can determine if they want to use that platform."

Instead, the Facebook team "are misrepresenting their user agreement and trying to benefit from conservatives adding to their user numbers to drive up value, but still censor selectively and against users' reasonable expectations in signing up for the platform."

Steve Beynon, senior digital engagement editor at *The Washington Examiner*, gave an update on Ellis's story. "We had another reader send a message to the Examiner's page with a similar problem," he reported. "We have not received any violation notices from Facebook and our original post is still up. However, the image is gone."

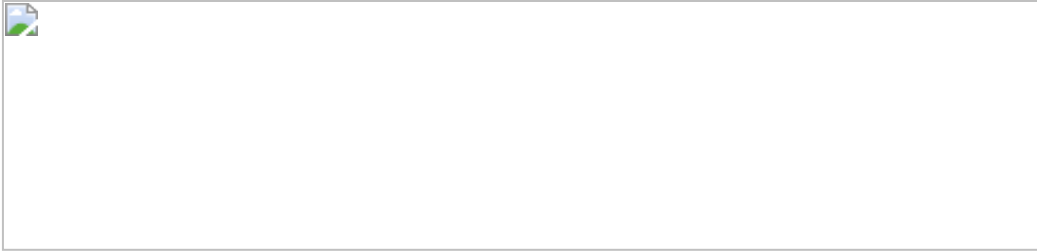
Beynon suggested that the problem may trace back to a bad "bot." "Unfortunately, most social media sites have bots that sometimes wrongfully IDs spam/bad content."

Ellis also showed PJ Media evidence of further "looks like spam" censoring. One photo showed a mobile notification with the same message, "We removed your post because it looks like spam."



Facebook screenshot.

One of Ellis's Facebook friends reported receiving "the same removal notice — about a barbershop chorus video I posted last night.!?"



Facebook screenshot.

The American Thinker's [Thomas Lifson reported](#) that other conservative articles had been blocked as spam, as well.

Facebook did not respond to PJ Media's request for comment by press time.

'The Greatest Threat to Free Speech Comes From LGBTQ Activists Who Rule Facebook, Google, Amazon'

This round of "spam" censorship, whether targeted at conservatives or not, seems to come at a particularly bad time for Facebook. Last week, the social media platform shadow-banned the conservative educational video nonprofit PragerU. At least nine of PragerU's Facebook posts [reached zero of their 3 million followers](#), and Facebook actually deleted some of their videos.

That move seemed ironic since PragerU had [filed a lawsuit](#) against Google/YouTube last October, alleging "intentional" censorship of conservative speakers. YouTube [continues to restrict access to PragerU videos](#), without censoring similar videos from other, less mainstream or less conservative, accounts.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a left-wing smear factory that brands conservative and Christian organizations "hate groups" for disagreeing with their liberal worldview, has

encouraged the censorship of conservatives online. Organizations on their "hate group" list have found themselves exiled.

Just this week, GoFundMe [effectively stole](#) more than \$2,500 from Jihad Watch founder Robert Spencer, whom the SPLC labeled an "extremist" and a "hate group" leader. This came shortly after [Patreon de-platformed Spencer and Jihad Watch](#).

Amazon.com's charity program Amazon Smile [dropped D. James Kennedy Ministries](#) and the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), citing the SPLC "hate group" list. D. James Kennedy Ministries has [sued Amazon and the SPLC](#) for this action. Last September, the credit card processing website [Vanco Payments refused](#) to work with the Ruth Institute, a small Roman Catholic pro-family nonprofit, due to its presence on the "hate group" list.

Social media companies relying on the SPLC's "hate group" list may find themselves in a pickle, however. Approximately 60 different organizations are considering [separate defamation lawsuits](#) against the SPLC over the "hate group" list.

Even conservatives not among the groups targeted by the SPLC have found themselves targeted by Facebook, however. [Christian scholar Robert Gagnon](#) has been repeatedly suspended on Facebook, and in April the social media platform [suspended a German history professor](#) for saying that "Islam is not a part of German history."

Follow the author of this article on Twitter at [@Tyler2ONeil](#).