

Facebook and YouTube remove posts naming CIA impeachment whistleblower

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Multiple media sources reported on Friday that the social media platforms Facebook and YouTube were removing posts that identified by name the CIA whistleblower behind the Congressional impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump.

In an email statement, Facebook said, “Any mention of the potential whistleblower’s name violates our coordinating harm policy, which prohibits content ‘outing of witness, informant or activist,’” adding, “We are removing any and all mentions of the potential whistleblower’s name and will revisit this decision should their name be widely published in the media or used by public figures in debate.”

CNN also reported that YouTube issued a statement saying that it was using a combination of artificial intelligence software and human monitors to find and delete videos with the name of the “Ukraine-gate” whistleblower. “The removals, the spokesperson added, would affect the titles and descriptions of videos as well as the video’s actual content,” the CNN report said.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has independently confirmed that Facebook is deleting posts containing the name of alleged CIA whistleblower Eric Ciaramella.

Facebook’s claim that any content posted on its platform naming Ciaramella constitutes “outing” the whistleblower is absurd. The alleged identity of the career CIA analyst who filed a complaint regarding the July 25 phone call between President Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has been known since October 30 when the pro-Republican Real Clear Politics website published his name.

When his name was published by Real Clear Politics, the whistleblower’s attorneys—in typical CIA fashion—said they could “neither confirm nor deny”

that Ciaramella was their client.

Ciaramella is a plausible candidate for being whistleblower, given his background as a registered Democrat and CIA analyst with expertise in Ukraine and Russia. He worked under both Obama National Security Advisor Susan Rice and Trump National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster. In mid-2017 he was sent back to the CIA amid accusations that he was leaking anti-Trump information to the media.

While Ciaramella’s name has been widely circulated by Republican political figures, right-wing news sites and former CIA analyst and Trump aide Fred Fleitz said, “everyone knows who he is,” the Democrats and their allies in the media at the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and major television networks have not made his name public.

Even an article in the *New York Times* on Friday that reported on Facebook’s censoring of posts by the right-wing website Breitbart did not include Ciaramella’s name. By taking the step of scrubbing posts mentioning allegations that are widely shared and reported, Facebook and YouTube are now joining with these corporate media organizations and blocking the public from having access to important information.

The latest heavy-handed social media censorship—so obviously being carried out in the service of the Democratic Party impeachment inquiry and the CIA—actually helps the Trump administration, the Republican Party and the extreme right-wing political forces defending the White House, allowing them to adopt the false posture of advocating free flow of information, even as Trump continues to demonize the media as the “enemies of the people.”

The mass scrubbing of all social media content by Facebook and YouTube that mentions the name Eric Ciaramella is part of the broader censorship efforts by

the technology monopolies, in collaboration with the intelligence state, and sets the stage for even more draconian attacks on freedom of expression.

This must be seen within the context of the drive by a substantial section of the ruling establishment for the social media platforms to “step up to the plate” and, as Hillary Clinton said last week, take down “false, deceptive or deliberately misleading content” or “pay a price.” Leading figures within the Democratic Party, including presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, have been campaigning for social media censorship that will block what they call “untruthful statements.”

As explained on the *World Socialist Web Site*, the increasing calls for censorship on social media are part of a protracted campaign by the US intelligence apparatus, under conditions of a growing movement of the working class and young people and increasing interest and support for socialism, to suppress left-wing, antiwar and progressive political viewpoints.

Furthermore, the WSWS has pointed out that what is determined as “fake” or “real” is not to be decided by the government or giant tech monopolies: “All the dishonesty of the campaign for internet censorship is contained in the failure to answer, much less consider, one central question: Who is to determine what is true and what is false?”

The publication of the name of the CIA analyst who submitted his complaint memo to the heads of the House and Senate Intelligence Committees in August is not a crime. In fact, his identity is of substantial consequence, given that his complaint became the starting point of an effort to remove a sitting president through impeachment.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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