

You Power, Our People, The Worlds Defense, In More Ways Than One. A Look at Reporting

Your Power, Our People, the Worlds Defense

In More Ways Than One

A LOOK AT REPORTING

September 18, 2019

PREPARED FOR:
FACEBOOK, INC

PROJECT COMPLETED BY:

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INTRODUCTION

The following report encompasses two different studies completed by Col. Bryan Denny (Ret.) and Mrs. Kathy Waters, along with a newly unexpected outcome from the Facebook Help Team. Reporting fraudulent accounts under the option of “as a friend” was the primary focus. Data was collected throughout the dates of April 20, 2019 to August 26, 2019 with the objective of gathering information to reiterate platform security, and reporting procedure concerns that were found to be successful or ineffective; resulting in Facebook finding the most efficient and fruitful way to combat the issue of duplicated accounts and identity theft within their highly populated platforms.

REPORTED AS A FRIEND

REPORT 1

On April 20, 2019 at approximately 11:30pm PST, Mrs. Waters reported an account (See Example 1) using Col. Denny’s photo as a profile picture. This account was under the name Prince Lezy (Denny Lezy). Prior to removal, the account could be found at: <https://www.facebook.com/olamilekan.olayemi.758>. Mrs. Waters received a letter from the Facebook Team stating “Reports like yours are an important part of keeping Facebook a safe and welcoming community.” Then goes on to say “Since this is happening to your friend, we’re going to close your report and follow up with your friend directly once we’ve reviewed the account.” Mrs. Waters informed Col. Denny of the reported profile with the review team being in further contact with him via email. The Facebook Team gave Mrs. Waters’ report case number #1015730330972, which showed “closed”. (See Example 2 Photo A).

On April 21, 2019 at 2:34am EST (due to time difference, an email was sent to Col. Denny immediately after the closing of Mrs. Waters report) Col. Denny received an email stating “One of your Facebook friends reported Prince Lezy for pretending to be you. We take these requests seriously, we will review the profile and remove it if it goes against our Community Standards. We’ll let you know when a decision has been made”. This case was then issued a new case number #2493861590638242. (See Example 2, Photo B)

At 8:17am EST on April 21, 2019, approximately 6 hours after Col. Denny’s initial email from the Facebook Team, he received a response from the that Team stating, “We reviewed the profile your friend reported and found that it isn’t pretending to be you and doesn’t go against our Community Standards. Note: If you see something on someone’s profile that shouldn’t be on Facebook, be sure to report the content (ex: a photo or video), not the entire profile. For more information about our policies, please read the Facebook Community Standards.” (See Example 1, Photo C) Case number #2493861590638242 was then closed.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS

Mrs. Waters chose to follow through with the recommendation to Col. Denny by the Facebook Team, in regard to reviewing further into Facebook's Community Standards.

SECTION IV. Integrity and Authenticity, Section 18 Misrepresentation:

"Authenticity is the cornerstone of our community. We believe that people are more accountable for their statements and actions when they use their authentic identities. That's why we require people to connect on Facebook using the name they go by in every day life. Our authenticity policies are intended to create a safe environment where people can trust and hold one another accountable." (See Example 3)

Featuring another's photo as a profile picture, and one that was used without permission by the rightful owners, is not considered an authentic identity. The name Prince Lezy could be someone's name however, tied with the account name is also "Denny Lezy", the actual surname of the man in the profile photo, and the man that Facebook reached out to in regard to "pretending to be you". This should have been a solid red flag for those reviewing the reported account.

SECTION IV. Integrity and Authenticity, Section 11 Privacy Violations and Image Privacy Rights:

"Privacy and the protection of personal information are fundamentally important values for Facebook. We work hard to keep your account secure and safeguard your personal information in order to protect you from potential physical or financial harm. You should not post personal or confidential information about others without first getting their consent. We also provide people ways to report imagery that they believe to be in violation of their privacy rights." (See Example 4)

As mentioned above, Col. Denny was not asked permission from Mr. Lezy to use his personal photos. When the Facebook Team investigated this case, Col. Denny did not receive contact from the Team to confirm that authorization was ever granted.

PHOTO REPORTING

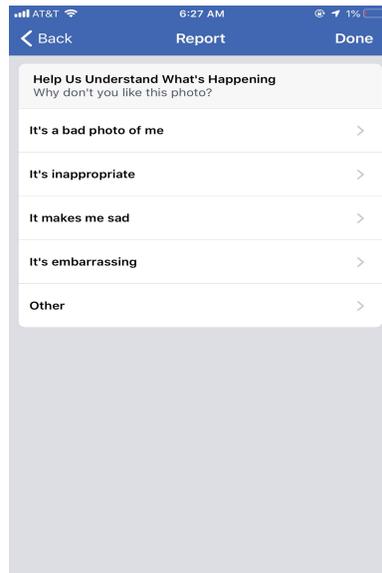
Since Mr. Lezy's account was not removed, Mrs. Waters chose to report the photo used as the profile picture of Mr. Lezy's per the option mentioned in the above Community Standards. Mrs. Waters reported the photo as "fraud" since this was the appropriate option for this circumstance. The section proceeded to give four options:

1. It's annoying or not interesting
2. I'm in this photo and I don't like it
3. I think it shouldn't be on Facebook
4. Spam

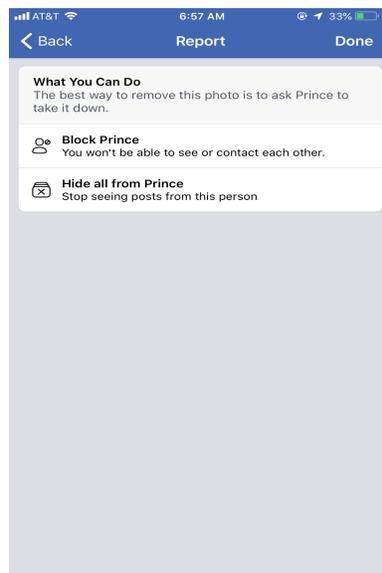
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Neither of the options fit the concern directly, therefore Mrs. Waters chose to report the photo two different ways to make sure all appropriate options were exhausted.

Mrs. Waters first chose #2, "I'm in this photo and I don't like it". The following photo shows options from that choice:



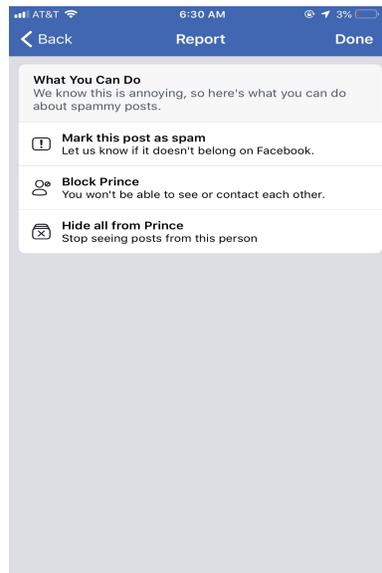
Once clicking each to see the best form of reporting, Mrs. Waters only options were the following:



In order to have this photo removed, the options given were insufficient to what was being requested. A removal was not an option, flouting was.

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Mrs. Waters next best route was to report under #4 “Spam”. Here were the options from that choice:



As mentioned above, Mrs. Waters did not want to block or hide Mr. Lezy’s information, she wanted Col. Denny’s photo removed per Facebook’s Community Standards stating *“You should not post personal or confidential information about others without first getting their consent.”* Therefore, Mrs. Waters went with the only choice remaining, “Mark this post as spam”. Confirmation of the report was given; however, movement was not made to the account until both Col. Denny and Mrs. Waters reported this incident to their Facebook team contacts on April 22, 2019.

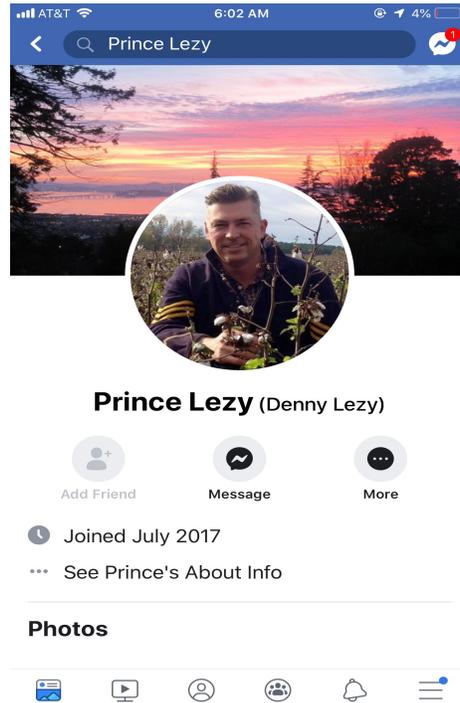
HOW TO REPORT

The reporting of Mr. Lezy’s account was done by the recommended step by step process of Facebook’s own reporting procedures. According to Facebook’s reporting instructions “Accounts and Pages that impersonate other people go against our Community Standards and aren’t allowed on Facebook.” Facebook’s instructs to report the entire account, and not just the photo being used. Mrs. Waters followed Facebook’s directive procedures. (See Example 5)

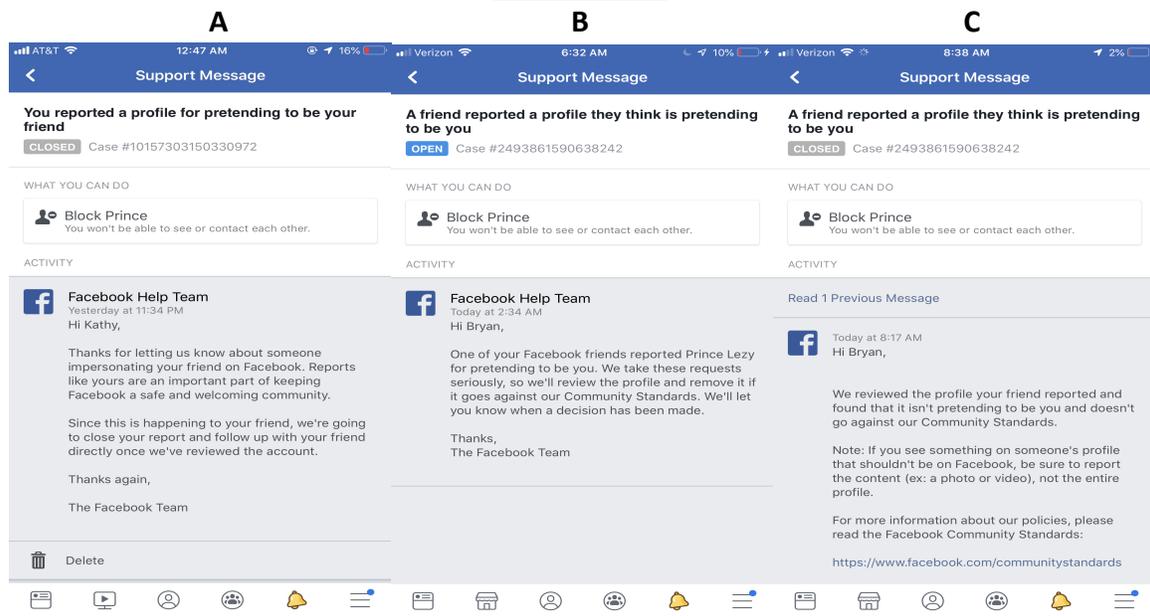
One final note, Mrs. Waters has also provided a screen shot (See Example 6) of Mr. Lezy’s comment on his own page stating, “YBNLhttp://young boi Nigeria limited”. A definitive tie and or belonging to the Yahoo Boys. Facebook is aware of this group and the crimes they commit amongst their platforms. Showing how Facebook confirmed Mr. Lezy’s account is within their “Community Standards”, may lead many people to believe that there’s a reason why Facebook keeps these fake accounts around.

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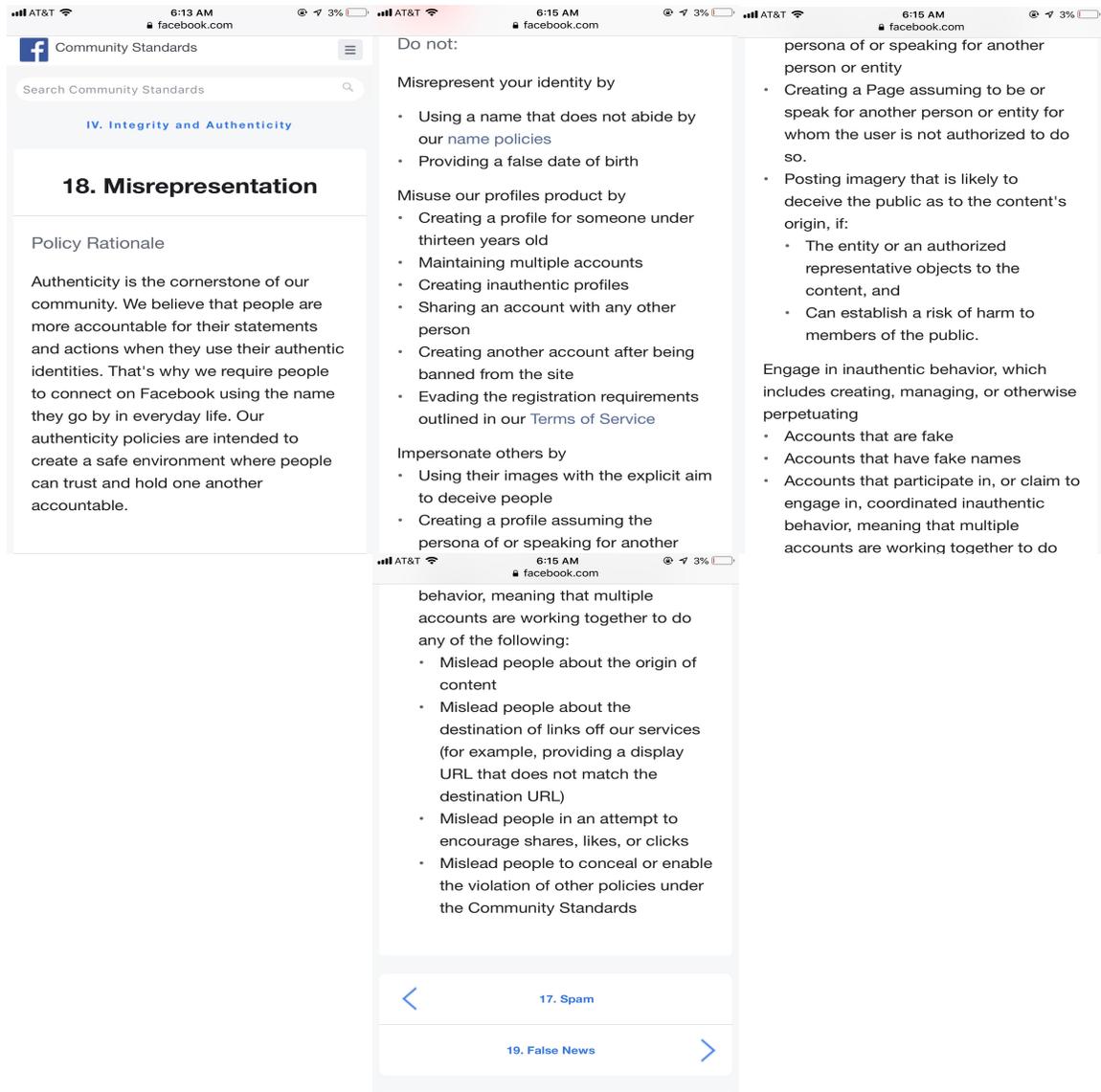
EXAMPLE 1



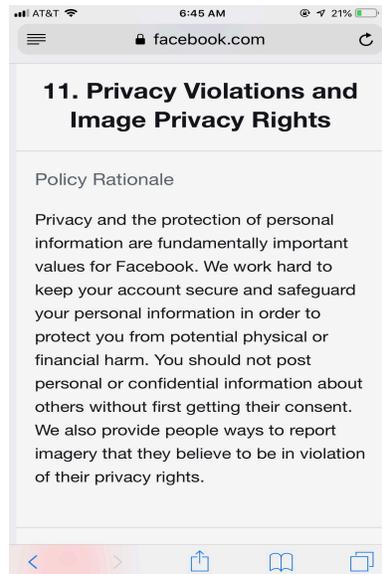
EXAMPLE 2



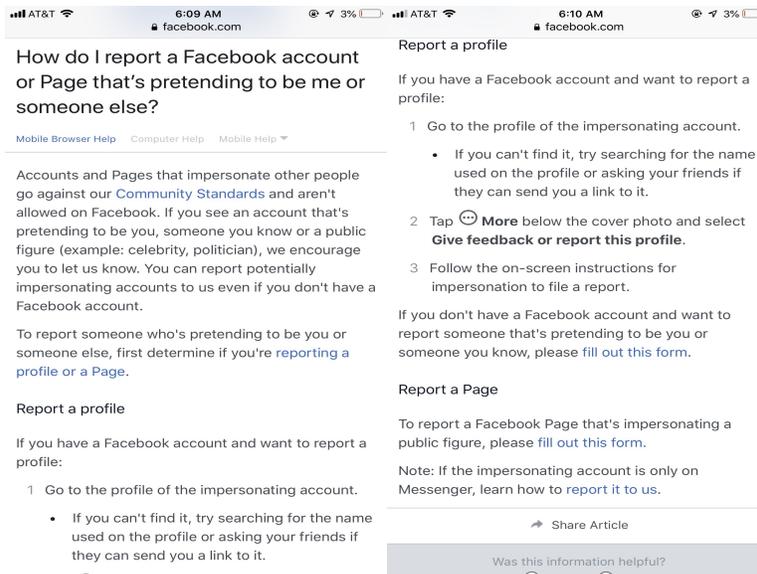
EXAMPLE 3



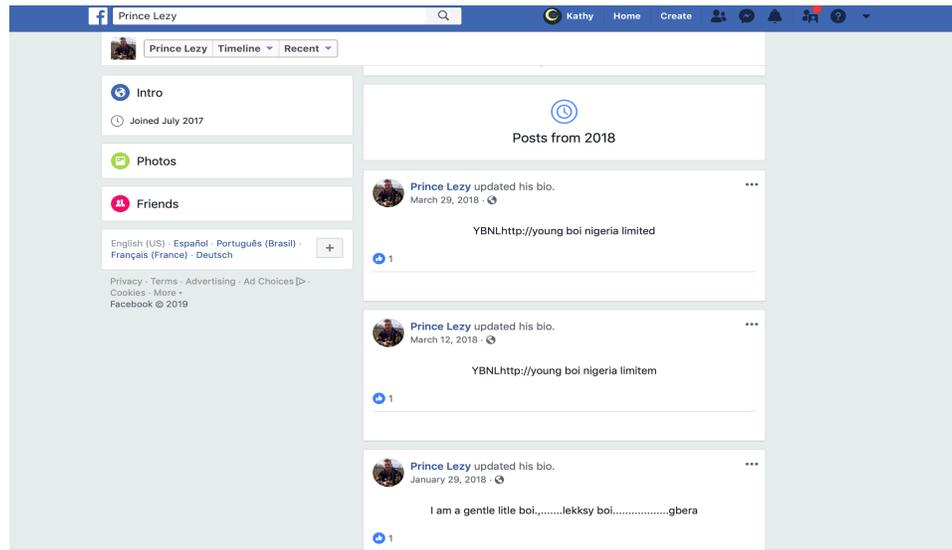
EXAMPLE 4



EXAMPLE 5



EXAMPLE 6



REPORT 2

On August 18, 2019 a fake account was created under the name “Bryan Denny” (<https://www.facebook.com/axmed.macallindaud>). The profile photo of this account presented Col. Denny’s son’s photo with a background of Col. Denny’s wife with a horse (See account below). Account was located on August 20, 2019.

On August 20, 2019, Mrs. Waters reported the account as a “Fake account” (report result never provided) and as “Pretending to be someone” then choosing “a friend”, following with Col. Denny’s name. Mrs. Waters received a message immediately following the report, as a friend of Col. Denny’s, and was told “we’re [Facebook] going to close your report and follow up with your friend directly once we’ve reviewed the account” (See “Acknowledgement 1” below, notification to Col. Denny of report by Mrs. Waters found under “Acknowledgement 2” below).

On the same day, August 20, 2019, Col. Denny reported the same account as “Pretending to be someone”, then selecting option “Me”. Col. Denny also reported the account as “Pretending to be someone” then choosing “a friend”, following with his son’s name, Nate Denny (See “Acknowledgment 3” below). Col. Denny, immediately after reporting “a friend”, received the same message as Mrs. Waters stating, “we’re [Facebook] going to close your report and follow up with your friend directly once we’ve reviewed the account” (See “Acknowledgement 4” below).

RESULTS:

A response on August 20, 2019 from Facebook regarding the report of pretending to be himself resulted in the account being found within Facebooks Community Standards (see “Answer 2” below)

On August 20, 2019 a response from Facebook regarding the report made by Mrs. Waters of pretending to be a friend resulted in the account being found within Facebooks Community Standards (See “Answer 1” below).

On August 20, 2019 a response from Facebook regarding the report made by Nate Denny, of pretending to be a friend resulted in the account being found within Facebooks Community Standards (See “Answer 5” below).

Nate Denny then went onto his account and reported the fake account as “Pretending to be someone” then choosing option “Me” two separate times (only one example provided below). He also reported as “Pretending to be Someone, then selecting “a friend” following with Col. Denny’s name. When reporting “a friend”, Nate Denny received the same immediate response as both Col. Denny and Mrs. Waters did by the Facebook Team stating, “we’re going to close your report and follow up with your friend directly once we’ve reviewed the account” (See “Acknowledgement 5” below).

RESULTS:

A response on August 20, 2019 from Facebook regarding the report of pretending to be himself, resulted in the account being found within Facebooks Community Standards (see “Answer 4” below)

On August 20, 2019 a response from Facebook regarding the report made by Col. Denny, of pretending to be a friend of Nate Denny’s resulted in the account being found within Facebooks Community Standards (See “Answer 3” below).

In conclusion, with 3 reporting people all with ties to “the real” Bryan Denny, and 7 reports overall, this account continued to be found within Facebook’s Community Standards. When verifying if the account was still active on 8.21.2019, findings showed the account was still alive, however the profile photo was changed to a dove and the background photo was changed to a photo of Col. Denny’s horses. Col. Denny’s son and wife’s photos were still found within the account.

REPORTED ACCOUNT

<https://www.facebook.com/bryandennygf/>



The screenshot shows a mobile phone interface at 7:06 AM with 70% battery. The search bar contains "Bryan Denny". The profile picture is a circular image of a young man in an orange shirt. The cover photo shows a woman standing next to a brown horse in a field. Below the profile picture, the name "Bryan Denny" is displayed. There is a blue "Add Friend" button, a settings gear icon, and a three-dot menu icon. The profile information includes: "Works at U.S. Army", "Went to West Point - The U.S. Military Academy", and "Lives in Kabul, Afghanistan". At the bottom, there is a navigation bar with icons for home, video (with a red notification bubble containing the number 6), marketplace, profile, notifications, and a menu icon.

AT&T 7:06 AM 70%

< Bryan Denny



Bryan Denny

 Works at **U.S. Army**

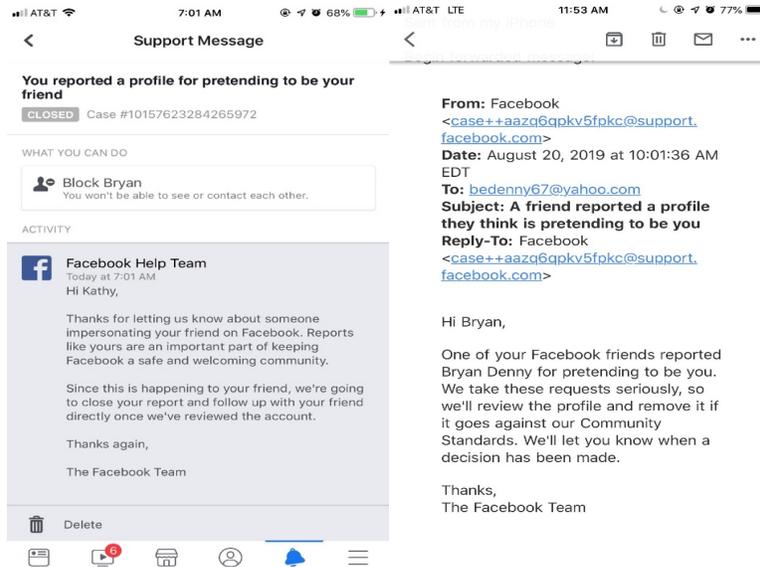
 Went to **West Point - The U.S. Military Academy**

 Lives in **Kabul, Afghanistan**

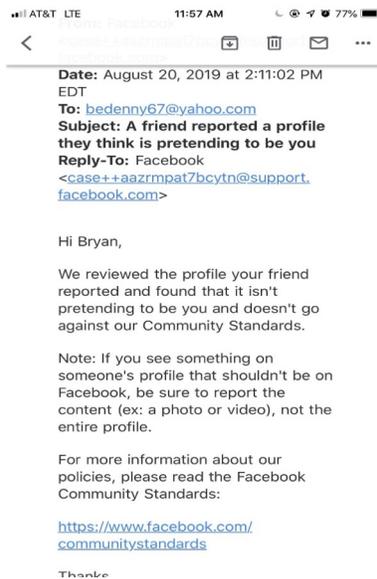
     

MRS. WATERS REPORT ON THE COL. BRYAN DENNY ACCOUNT/RESULTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 2



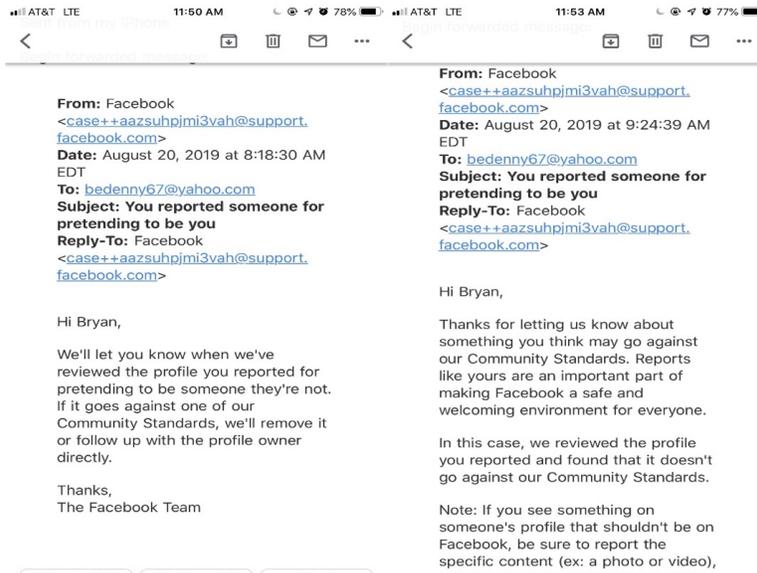
ANSWER 1



COL. DENNY'S REPORTS ON THE BRYAN DENNY ACCOUNT/RESULTS

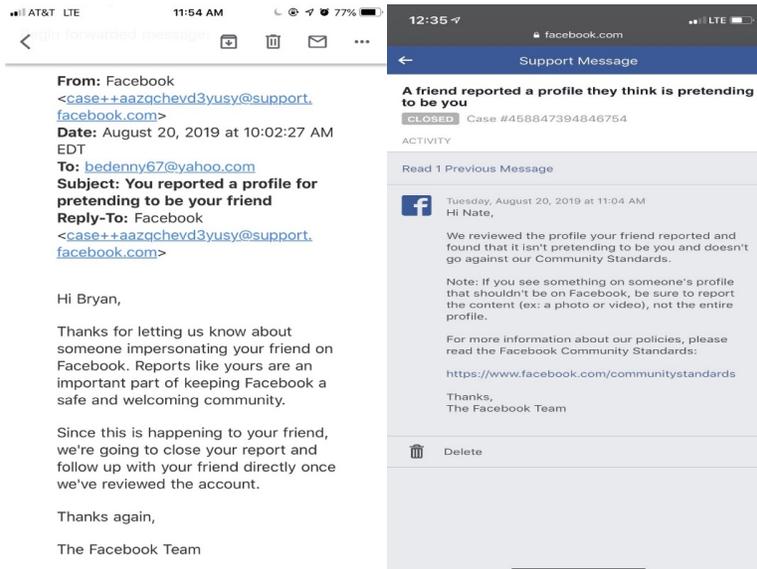
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 3

ANSWER 2



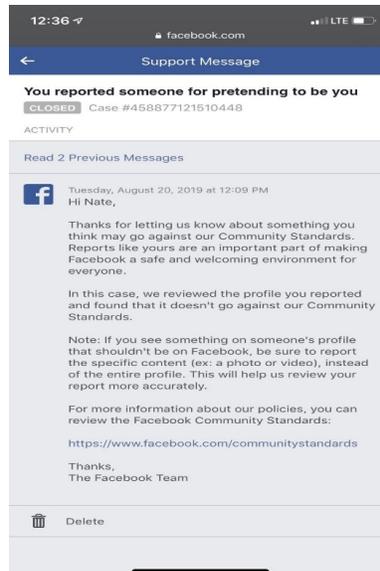
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 4

ANSWER 3



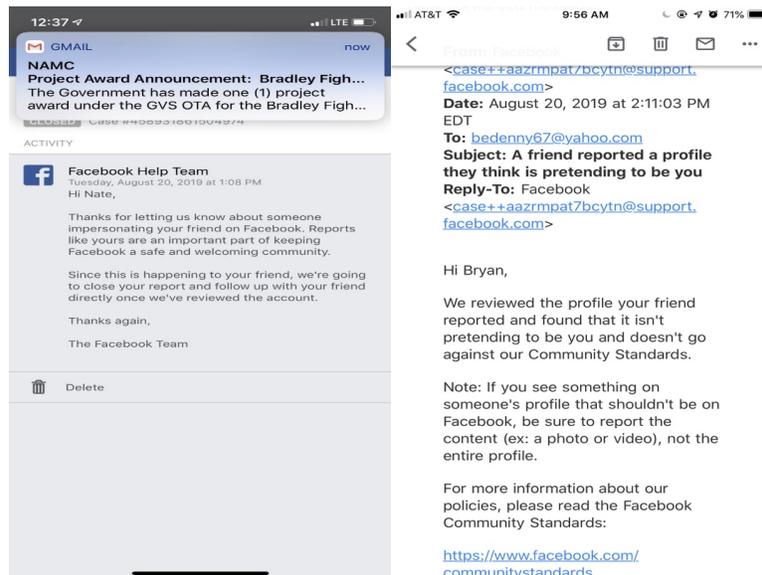
NATE DENNY'S REPORTS ON THE BRYAN DENNY ACCOUNT/RESULTS

ANSWER 4



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT 5

ANSWER 5



FACEBOOK TAKEDOWNS

From July 1, 2019 to August 26, 2019 Col. Denny has received 501 notifications from Facebook stating “We removed a profile that your friend reported because it doesn’t follow our Community Standards. We let the profile owner know that it’s been removed, but not who reported it.” Personal Facebook contacts of Col. Denny’s have not come forward to relay the actions of reporting during this nearly two-month period, which leads Col. Denny and Mrs. Waters to believe this may be a “take down trial” within Facebook’s reporting system. On July 24, 2019, July 27, 2019 and August 5, 2019, the personal Facebook Team Contacts were enquired by Col. Denny and Mrs. Waters via email, what may have changed or if there was a new process in place to create these takedowns. Acknowledgement of the emails were never provided by that team. A sample of questions delivered but unanswered were:

1. Were the removed accounts recognized and taken down prior to becoming active on the platforms?
2. Were the accounts active and found by a new technological advancement of Facebook?
3. Why are the reports coming in as reported by a friend?
4. Are these accounts being found by photos Col. Denny provided to the “team” back in October of 2017?

Any take down of the fraudulent accounts is a positive result, however to better understand the actions and reasonings would also contribute to how others would be able to see success when reporting.

MISSION

Part of Facebook’s Mission (See “FACEBOOK’S WORDS” below) states *“Moreover, at times we will allow content that might otherwise violate our standards if we feel that it is newsworthy, significant or important to the public interest. We do this only after weighing the public interest value of the content against the risk of real-world harm.”*

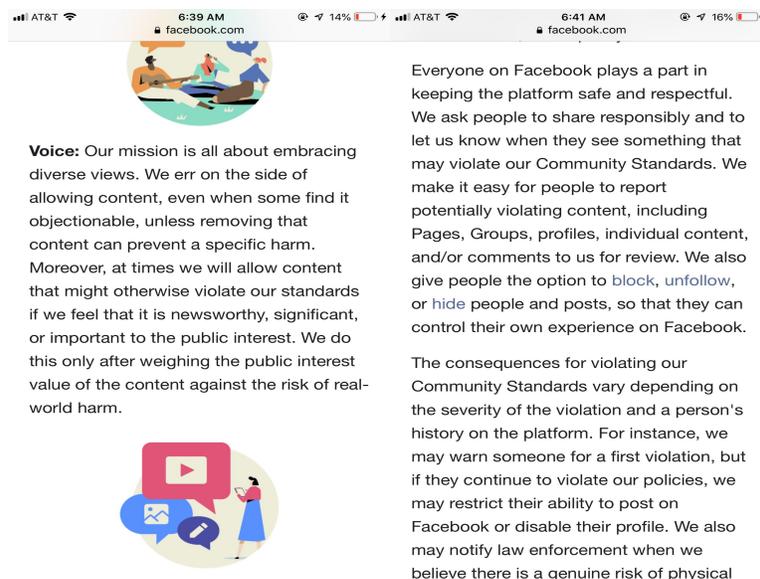
According to the *Internet Crime Report of 2018* provided by the Internet Crime Complaint Center (www.IC3.gov), this statement seems to be a farce when reviewing the reported victims of “confidence Fraud/Romance crime coming in at 18,493 (up 3,121 reporting victims from year prior) and a financial loss of \$362,500,761 (up \$151,127,772 also from the year prior) in the US alone.”

The concerns here are great, and the need for better investigating, research and knowledge (not considering that this is the act of algorithms and not hands on staff that is required for this process) are needed in order to help bring down the fake accounts. Facebook states *“Everyone on Facebook plays a part in keeping the platform safe and respectful. We ask people to share responsibility and to let us know when they see something that may violate our Community*

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standards.” (See FACEBOOK’S WORDS). There are thousands on Facebook’s platform “sharing this responsibility”. The question surfaces, when do they get to feel the reciprocation of this request? And when does Facebook start abiding and taking on the responsibility of their own Community Standards? Col. Denny and Mrs. Waters provide Facebook with their most accurate numbers, statements, and findings. Both parties hope Facebook will take the time and address this issue for not only Col. Denny, but every identity theft victim whom has had to endure the same frustration and kick back throughout the futile reporting process. Are the new “take downs” a sign of positive things to come? Will we see more education posted across Facebook platforms and public service announcements reachable across all media portals? Are these forms of movements too little too late?

FACEBOOK’S WORDS



Voice: Our mission is all about embracing diverse views. We err on the side of allowing content, even when some find it objectionable, unless removing that content can prevent a specific harm. Moreover, at times we will allow content that might otherwise violate our standards if we feel that it is newsworthy, significant, or important to the public interest. We do this only after weighing the public interest value of the content against the risk of real-world harm.

Everyone on Facebook plays a part in keeping the platform safe and respectful. We ask people to share responsibly and to let us know when they see something that may violate our Community Standards. We make it easy for people to report potentially violating content, including Pages, Groups, profiles, individual content, and/or comments to us for review. We also give people the option to [block](#), [unfollow](#), or [hide](#) people and posts, so that they can control their own experience on Facebook.

The consequences for violating our Community Standards vary depending on the severity of the violation and a person's history on the platform. For instance, we may warn someone for a first violation, but if they continue to violate our policies, we may restrict their ability to post on Facebook or disable their profile. We also may notify law enforcement when we believe there is a genuine risk of physical

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REFERENCES

Facebook, "*Community Standards*", 15 September, 2019. Retrieved from Facebook.com

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internet Crime Complaint Center, "*2018 Internet Crime Report*", Retrieved from IC3.gov, September 10, 2019