

Published on American Civil Liberties Union (https://www.aclu.org)

# An Internal Report on Oregon's Illegal Surveillance of Black Lives Matter on Twitter Leaves Us With More Questions Than Answers

#### Author(s):

**David Rogers** 

This blog originally appeared on the ACLU of Oregon's website [2].

Last week a  $\underline{\text{report}}_{[3]}$  on the surveillance of Black Lives Matter in Oregon was released by the Oregon Department of Justice.

The report confirmed what we learned back in November: That an agent who works for the Criminal Division of DOJ was testing a surveillance program, called Digital Stakeout, by searching various key words, including #BlackLivesMatter. The agent then mistook posts from DOJ's own director of civil rights, including a post of the logo of the legendary hip-hop group Public Enemy and political cartoons, as a threat to law enforcement and wrote a memo that was passed all the way up the chain of command to Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum before it was, finally, rejected as dangerous, racial profiling. The attorney general hired an outside attorney to conduct an independent investigation of the matter to determine if policies or laws were violated.

In other words, the law that prohibits law enforcement from surveilling innocent Oregonians was broken.

After reading through the report and looking through the <u>exhibits</u> [4], we are left with more questions than answers. I honestly don't know whether to laugh or to cry at the lack of awareness that was revealed of both the law and of what might constitute a threat. This is not only shameful, but also dangerous. Given the power that they wield, I am dismayed at the state of the Criminal Justice Division and afraid for the Oregonians that are supposed to be protected by them. Self-reinforced bias — against protesters, black people, and who knows who else — has left the agency ill-equipped to do their job.

While the report falls short in several areas, one thing it does conclude is that this agent was "not in compliance" with state law. In other words, the law that prohibits law enforcement from surveilling innocent Oregonians was broken.

We still do not know who else was caught up in this illegal dragnet. From the little we have learned, it doesn't seem possible that this was an isolated incident when it is clear that there is a fundamental misunderstanding of the law. Not only is this ineffective law enforcement. It will also have a chilling effect on free speech and assembly, as Oregonians will rightfully wonder whether they are also being monitored. If the attorney general's office is getting it wrong — when they are the ones charged with enforcing the laws of Oregon — then we must assume that other law enforcement are engaging in illegal surveillance too.

An Internal Report on Oregon's Illegal Surveillance of Black Lives Matter on Twitter Leaves Us With ... Page 2 of 2

This glimpse into the inner workings of the Oregon Department of Justice has revealed severe problems. Attorney General Rosenblum has a formidable task ahead of her to fix these problems and to regain the public's trust.

This post is part of a series exploring what we have learned about the DOJ surveillance of Black Lives Matter in Oregon. Click here [2] to see all of our posts on this topic.

#### © 2015 ACLU

Source URL: https://www.aclu.org/blog/speak-freely/internal-report-oregons-illegal-surveillance-black-lives-mattertwitter-leaves-us

[1] https://www.aclu.org/blog/speak-freely/internal-report-oregons-illegal-surveillance-black-lives-matter-twitter-leaves-us

[2] http://aclu-or.org/blog

[3] http://aclu-or.org/sites/default/files/DOJ\_Investigation\_Final\_Redacted\_Report.pdf

[4] http://aclu-or.org/sites/default/files/DOJ\_Investigation\_Final\_Redacted\_Exhibits.pdf

## **INVESTIGATION REPORT**

Submitted April 6, 2016

by

Carolyn D. Walker, Attorney Stoel Rives LLP

#### **Table of Contents**

Back	ground	1
	Criminal Intelligence Unit	1
Inves	stigation Methodology	3
Findi	ings	4
Witn	less Interviews and Observations	7
1.	—Research Analyst 3	7
2.	—Research Analyst 3	8
3.	—Research Analyst 3	9
4.	—Research Analyst 3	11
5.	—Special Agent	12
6.	—Special Agent	17
7.	David Kirby—Special Agent in Charge	18
8.	Darin Tweedt—DOJ Chief Counsel	20
9.	—Research Analyst 4	23
10.	Steven McIntosh—Assistant Special Agent in Charge of CJD	24
11.	Matt McCauley—Assistant Attorney General	26
Cone	clusions and Recommendations	28
	Investigation Find With 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.	Investigation Methodology  Findings  Witness Interviews and Observations  Research Analyst 3  Description of the property of th

#### I. Background

On November 4, 2015, I was contacted by Lisa Umscheid, an attorney with the Oregon Department of Justice ("DOJ"), regarding my availability to conduct an investigation into the use of a digital monitoring software platform by at least one employee of the DOJ's Criminal Justice Division ("CJD" or "division"). By contract effective November 10, 2015, the DOJ retained me under the supervision of the DOJ's Supervising Attorney, Ms. Umscheid, to (a) conduct an investigation into any improper conduct and performance of employees with regard to their compilation, analysis, monitoring and use of digital information (such as content posted on websites, social media or Twitter feeds) in the course of any work performed as employees of DOJ; and (b) advise DOJ regarding the scope of an audit of the CJD's compilation, analysis, monitoring and use of digital information in connection with the division's work.

This investigation was initiated by order of Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum after she learned that DOJ/CJD employee, used social media monitoring software that was being tested for potential purchase by the DOJ to conduct a search using search terms including #blacklivesmatter. The search resulted in a review of the Twitter account of Erious Johnson, Jr., Director of Civil Rights for DOJ and Office of Attorney General, and generated a report on the outcome of the search. The Attorney General notified Mr. Johnson of this report, subsequently called for this investigation into the matter and placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation.

unit within the CJD's Criminal Intelligence Unit. An overview of the Criminal Intelligence Unit, as provided in writing by former DOJ Chief Counsel Darin Tweedt, is set forth below:

#### Criminal Intelligence Unit

The ability to gather and analyze information about criminals and their organizations is invaluable to law enforcement agencies. The Criminal Intelligence Unit, aka

and proposing such changes in those policies and procedures as the department may deem appropriate.

(continued . . .)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The benefits of gathering and analyzing criminal information was recognized by the Oregon legislature in 1977 when it directed the Department of Justice to:

<sup>(2)</sup> Establish a coordinated system of collecting, storing and disseminating information relating to organized crime.

<sup>(3)</sup> Develop and maintain a liaison between local, state and federal law enforcement agencies in Oregon, assisting them in the investigation and suppression of organized criminal activity and encouraging cooperation among those agencies.

<sup>(4)</sup> Conduct comprehensive factual studies of organized criminal activity in Oregon, outlining existing state and local policies and procedures with respect to organized crime, and formulating

Criminal Intelligence Center, facilitates the gathering, analysis and sharing of criminal information with local, state and national law enforcement agencies. The Unit is composed of the Oregon TITAN Fusion Center, the Oregon HIDTA Investigation Support Center, and the Oregon HIDTA Watch Center.

• <u>Oregon TITAN Fusion Center</u>: The Fusion Center is Oregon's focal point for receiving, analyzing, gathering, and sharing threat-related information in order to better detect, prevent, investigate, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity.

The Fusion Center is composed primarily of staff from the Criminal Justice Division.<sup>2</sup> This staff works in conjunction with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. The Fusion Center produces threat assessments<sup>3</sup>, officer safety bulletins, general crime bulletins and terrorism related bulletins. In addition, the Fusion Center is an essential component of the state's critical infrastructure review process. The Fusion Center also provides criminal analysts to assist federal, state and local law enforcement agencies with criminal investigations. Finally, the Center provides important training to law enforcement agencies, businesses and first responders about active shooters and the latest terrorist trends, techniques and procedures.

• <u>High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Investigation Support</u>

<u>Center:</u> The Investigation Support Center is a co-located multi-agency program.

Its mission is to promote, facilitate, and coordinate the exchange of criminal intelligence information, and provide analytical support. The Criminal Justice Division has five Research Analysts assigned to the Investigation Support Center.

<sup>(...</sup> continued) ORS §180.610 (2), (3) (4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The Criminal Justice Division component is one attorney, one Special Agent, five Research Analysts and an IS Specialist.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> A threat assessment is the "[p]rocess of identifying or evaluating entities or events for indications of potential harm to life, property, operations or information. These assessments involve investigative research which results in a written product identifying possible threats to a specific person or incident. Examples include Pendleton Round-up, Hillsboro Air Show or Governor's Inauguration. Threat assessments may be conducted by an individual or team of analysts based on the complexity of the assessment."

Oregon TITAN Fusion Center Procedure, Threat Assessments/Risk & Vulnerability Assessments, September 18, 2015.

• <u>High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Watch Center</u>: The Watch Center's primary mission is to enhance officer safety through deconfliction for the designated HIDTA counties. Watch Center analysts also provide tactical analytical support to law enforcement officers throughout Oregon. The Criminal Justice Division has three Research Analysts and a supervisor assigned to the Investigation Support Center.

See Ex. A (November 25, 2015 Memorandum from Darin Tweedt).

#### II. Investigation Methodology

Prior to conducting witness interviews, I met with various DOJ employees to obtain background information on the CJD and the circumstances that led to the decision to conduct the investigation that is the subject of this report. These individuals included: DOJ Senior Assistant Attorney General Lisa Umscheid, Deputy Attorney General Fred Boss and DOJ Special Counsel on Public Safety Michael Slauson.<sup>5</sup>

Beginning December 15, 2015, I conducted face-to-face interviews with CJD employees and obtained background information and documents relevant to the Attorney General's concerns. At the start of each interview, I explained my role as an investigator hired by DOJ to conduct an investigation into the facts and provide recommendations to DOJ. I explained that the statements made by the witnesses would be shared with the DOJ, but that the witnesses should not discuss our interview with others. I also explained the Garrity rights notices that were provided to the witnesses.

I reminded these employee witnesses that there could be no retaliation either by or against them for anyone's participation in the investigation, and to immediately notify HR if they experienced retaliation. I provided the witnesses with my business card and invited them to contact me if they had any other information or documentation to share.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Deconfliction is a process designed to ensure that multiple agencies are not inadvertently targeting the same event, individual, or organization. Deconfliction occurs when officers of one investigative agency are notified that officers of another agency may be conducting operations in the same area or may be investigating the same suspect. Deconfliction prevents costly duplication of investigative effort and compromise of investigations. Most importantly, deconfliction directly impacts officer safety by reducing the chances two law enforcement agencies, unbeknown to each other, are carrying out undercover law enforcement operations in the same area.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Mr. Slauson has since assumed the position of Acting Chief Counsel of the CJD.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Note, I have been informed that under the terms of their collective bargaining agreement, union employees are permitted to engage in discussions with others regarding the investigation.

To better understand the search methodology used by and others, I requested training on the software that was used for the search. The company that developed and owns the software ("Digital Stakeout") that was used for the search cooperated with DOJ's request to provide me with an abbreviated general overview demonstration/training on the software.

I further requested that the DOJ conduct a thorough search of CJD computers used by to determine the scope of his searching and activity regarding #blacklivesmatter and other relevant search terms.

As part of my investigation, I requested a copy of all CJD policies, procedures or protocols relevant to privacy rights of individuals and groups and how and when information could be gathered. I received and reviewed the following division policies:

- Oregon TITAN Fusion Center Privacy Policy. See Ex. B.
- o Social Media Non-Covert Investigation Policy 3-101.5 dated July 31, 2015. See Ex. C.
- Fusion Center Procedure for Threat Assessments dated September 18, 2015. See Ex. D.
- Oregon TITAN/Fusion Center Policy Regarding First Amendment Protected Events. See Ex. E.

I also reviewed the following statutes and regulations relevant to CJD employees:

- o 28 CFR Part 23 regarding Criminal Intelligence Systems Operating Policies. This federal regulation applies to state agencies if they are operating inter- or multi-jurisdictional criminal intelligence systems that are supported with Crime Control Act funding. The regulation forbids the collection or maintaining of criminal intelligence information about the political, religious or social views, associations or activities of any individual or any group, association, corporation, business, partnership or other organization unless such information directly relates to criminal conduct or activity and there is reasonable suspicion that the subject of the information is or may be involved in criminal conduct or activity. See 28 CFR §23.20(b).
- ORS §181.575 (now recodified as ORS §181A.250) states that "no law enforcement agency, as defined in ORS §181.010 (Definitions for ORS §\$181.010 to 181.560 and 181.715 to 181.730), may collect or maintain information about the political, religious or social views, associations or activities of any individual, group, association, organization, corporation, business or partnership unless such information directly relates to an investigation of criminal activities, and there are reasonable grounds to suspect the subject of the information is or may be involved in criminal conduct."

My findings, summary of the interviews and observations, conclusions and recommendations are below.

#### III. Findings

1. In early 2015, Chief Counsel Darin Tweedt directed Special Agent In Charge Steve McIntosh to identify and test social media monitoring software ("SMMS") programs that could be helpful in criminal investigations supported or conducted by the CJD.

2.	On September 29, 2015, certain CJD employees within the Intelligence Unit were given a demo and some training by the vendor of an SMMS product, Digital Stakeout. Digital Stakeout takes user specified keywords and searches multiple open source social media sites, and returns results that can be pinpointed to a geographic area specified by the user. The vendor allowed the employees to use Digital Stakeout on a free trial basis after the demo, and some employees tested it for a period of time.  On September 30, 2015, Agent used Digital Stakeout to conduct a search on the keyword search term "#blacklivesmatter" combined with "#fuckthepolice" ("the search"). He focused his search on Salem, Oregon, which yielded results that included Twitter posts by Erious Johnson, Jr. believed that some of Mr. Johnson's posts were
	threatening to the police and ne verbally shared his concerns with Special Figure 11
4.	Mr. Kirby verbally described the concerning posts to Mr. Tweedt, and based on the description, Mr. Tweedt recommended to Deputy Attorney General Fred Boss that
5.	recommendation and on October 1, 2015, prepared and presented to Mr. Kirby a report he prepared and presented to Mr. Kirby a report he
۶.	and an "Dongible threats towards law enforcement by DOJ employee. This report was
	a single page memo with an attachment that included several pages of posts that printed directly from Mr. Johnson's Twitter feed rather than from Digital
6	Stakeout. See Ex. F. On October 8, 2015, Mr. Kirby delivered the report to Deputy Chief Counsel Stephanie
7. 8.	Tuttle. In an email to Mr. Tweedt, Mr. Kirby reiterated his concerns about the crosshars image and gave Mr. Tweedt a detailed description of the image and the accompanying language. Upon reading Mr. Kirby's detailed description, Mr. Tweedt emailed Mr. Kirby that the image was actually the logo for the "rap group" Public Enemy. See Ex. G. On October 8, 2015, Ms. Tuttle left report on Mr. Tweedt's office chair. On October 12, 2015, upon his return from out of town travel, Mr. Tweedt reviewed the
9.	report. On October 13, 2015, Mr. Tweedt gave the report to Mr. Boss, who at some point thereafter
1	gave the report to Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum.  On October 20, 2015, the Attorney General called Mr. Tweedt into a meeting with herself and Mr. Boss, during which she expressed her extreme displeasure over the report by because she believed he had engaged in racial profiling. She instructed Mr. Tweedt to find anti-racial profiling training for the Special Agents, and ordered that all SMMS use be immediately discontinued.
<u> </u>	Another SMMS program that was being considered for use by the Intelligence Unit was X1, but it appears to only have been used on a very limited basis by Research Analyst to conduct a keyword search on the word based on some activity with
2	Note that none of Mr. Johnson's tweets that were attached to Cotober 1, 2015 memo contained any reference to "fuck the police."

11. On or about October 20, 2015, at the direction of Mr. Tweedt, Steve McIntosh verbally notified some employees to discontinue use of Digital Stakeout. It is unclear whether he notified all of the employees at that time, as there are conflicting accounts of who received this verbal notice and when it was received. was placed on administrative leave pending the 12. On November 10, 2015, outcome of this investigation. 13. On November 12, 2015, Mr. McIntosh sent an email to all subject employees to discontinue use of Digital Stakeout. See Ex. H. , had stopped any active use of Digital Stakeout at 14. All other employees, except or before the time Mr. McIntosh issued his November 12, 2015 email. 15. The trial version of Digital Stakeout that was being used by employees was not enabled to keep a record of searches conducted by employees, so the search terms could not be verified independently from the list provided to this investigator that the employees reported having 16. Digital Stakeout allows users to access only open source (publicly available) information, and does not allow users to breach information that is protected by privacy settings. None of and other employees using Digital Stakeout the searches conducted by accessed non-public information on Mr. Johnson or others. 17. Mr. Johnson was not specifically targeted for investigation by conducted the search of the terms that resulted in finding Mr. Johnson's Twitter posts of his own volition, and not under any direct or implied orders of the DOJ. 19. The Intelligence Unit is subject to federal 28 CFR Part 23 regarding Criminal Intelligence Systems Operating Policies and to its state equivalent, ORS §181.575 (now recodified as ORS §181A.250), as well as the unit's own policies regarding privacy and free speech rights of individuals and groups. These policies apply regardless of whether the information being gathered or sought is obtained while engaged in a training exercise or while conducting substantive work. search was not in compliance with 28 CFR Part 23, ORS §181.575 or the 20. Intelligence Unit's Privacy Policy. 10 conducted the search, the lack of a diverse or alternative point of view 21. Once regarding the import of the search results contributed to the belief that Mr. Johnson's posts constituted a potential threat to the police. was verbally directed to prepare a written memo based on his description of the 22. search results and his belief that the posts constituted a potential threat to police. 23. Intelligence Unit employees either are not uniformly provided with copies of all relevant departmental policies, or do not recall having received all such policies. <sup>9</sup> The combined list of search terms any of the employees reported using is included in a November 9, 2015 email from Mr. McIntosh to Mssrs Tweedt and Kirby and Stephanie Tuttle. See Ex. I. <sup>10</sup> Depending on whether he obtained prior written authorization from a superior,

Investigation Policy 3-101.5.

actions may also be out of compliance with the Social Media Non-Covert

24. Intelligence Unit employees are either not receiving or taking advantage of relevant training offered on applicable laws and departmental policies on a consistent basis.

25. Intelligence Unit employees have not received adequate cultural competency training, or training on anti-racial profiling, hidden or implicit bias, and/or diversity training.

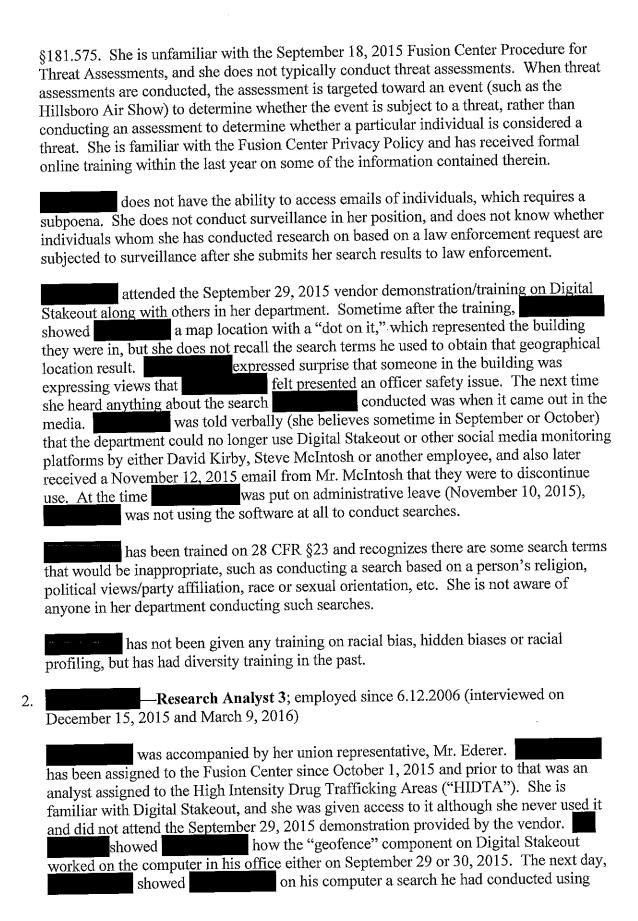
26. The Intelligence Unit is in the process of updating its policies and training procedures and implementing a system to maintain the policies and more consistently mandate and track the training.

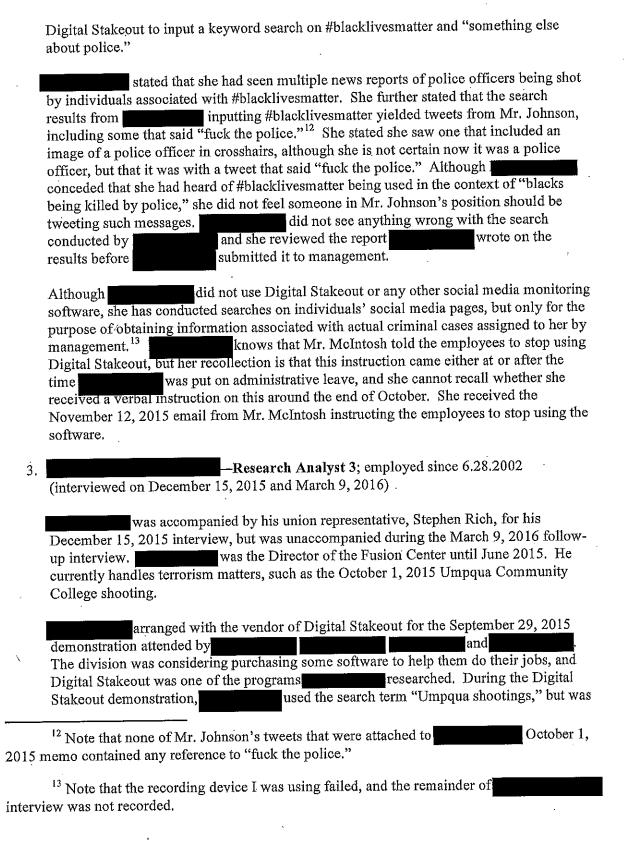
27. The Intelligence Unit has taken steps to implement anti-racial profiling training for its employees and plans to move forward with the training pending the outcome of this investigation.

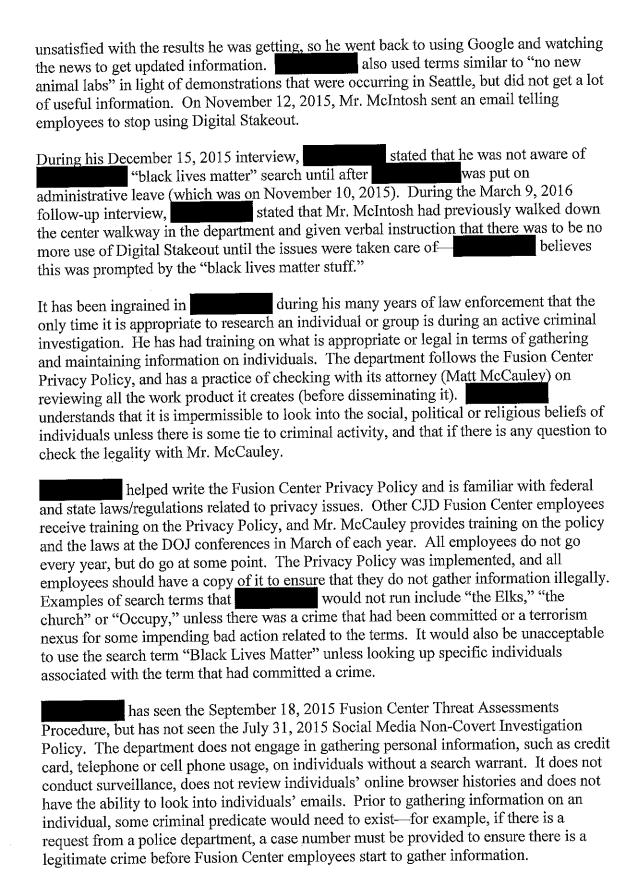
### IV. Witness Interviews and Observations

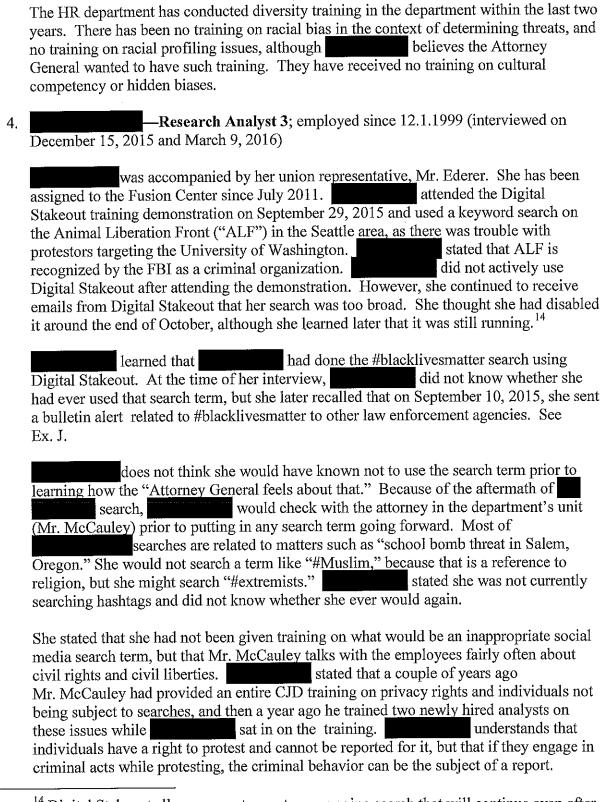
Between December 15, 2015 and March 16, 2016, I conducted recorded interviews of several DOJ/CJD employees. <sup>11</sup> These employees were selected for interviews because they either participated in the training on the use of Digital Stakeout and/or used Digital Stakeout at after he conducted the some point; had some pertinent communication with #blacklivesmatter search ("the search"); were in the supervisory chain of command over ; and/or were involved with CJD actions taken after the search. -Research Analyst 3; employed since 4.10.2000 (interviewed on December 15, 2015 and March 9, 2016) was accompanied by her union representative, Joe Ederer. assigned to the Fusion Center. She attended the demonstration/training for Digital Stakeout, but thinks it was at the end of October 2015 (the demonstration was actually on and September 29, 2015), along with believes she never used Digital Stakeout outside of the September 29 training, except once to sign on another member. She had previously conducted a search through the X1 Social Discovery platform using because David Kirby wanted her to conduct the search based on the search term some activity with reviews social media sites of individuals only in the context of providing case support to law enforcement agencies, and has never conducted any information gathering on individuals who were not part of a criminal investigation. She is familiar with 28 CFR §23 and understands it applies to her, and that by extrapolation so does ORS

Note that on March 4, 2016, I contacted Mr. Johnson to invite him to meet with me in the event he had information to share that might aid in the investigation, given that it was his Twitter feed that brought the issue of activity to light. Mr. Johnson expressed his willingness to answer any specific questions, but declined to meet with me as he had no independent information relevant to this investigation.









<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Digital Stakeout allows a user to create an ongoing search that will continue even after logging out of the system until the user disables the ongoing search.

