



# **THE MARICOPA COUNTY** **WATCHED & GAGGED REPORT**

## **ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICIALS WEAPONIZE THEIR OFFICES AGAINST CITIZENS, THE MEDIA, & LEGISLATURE TO CHILL FREE SPEECH REGARDING ELECTION OPERATIONS:**

*How the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, Maricopa County Recorder Stephen Richer, former Recorder & now Secretary of State Fontes, and former Secretary & now Governor Hobbs transformed election departments into surveillance and censorship operations*

**5/2/2024**

**Written By Merissa Hamilton. Public Records obtained by The Gavel Project.**

*Please Note: Public Records Request file names in footnotes. File link at the end of the report. Timeline Report follows.*

From a review of 27,556 pages of public documents between 2019 and 2023, this briefing uncovers the sophisticated surveillance, censorship, and narrative manufacturing program implemented by the Secretary of State, Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, and Maricopa County Recorder's Office starting in 2019. By 2022, the Maricopa County Recorder's Office reportedly had 11 employees charged with digitally spying on citizens, media, and legislators.<sup>1 2</sup>

Recently at a PBS AZ Votes 2024 Live Special, Secretary of State Adrian Fontes said the duty of Americans is to have "civic faith" that "election officials are going to follow their oath."<sup>3</sup> While he justifies the anti-mis-, dis-, and malinformation efforts as noble to save democracy and "fight our foreign and domestic adversaries," this briefing analyzes if local government offices, in concert with Federal resources, have gone too far in acting with a blatant weaponization of government – turning Election Command Centers into First Amendment Jurisprudence departments.

### **BACKGROUND**

In January 2020, then Recorder Fontes made one of the top three budget priorities "stopping the spread of misinformation."<sup>4</sup>

*"The crisis of confidence and the spread of misinformation about our election processes is just as real of a threat as IT and physical security threats. Promoting continued public education and information is paramount."*

He requested the Communications and Constituent Services Department be expanded from six people to a staff of 11.

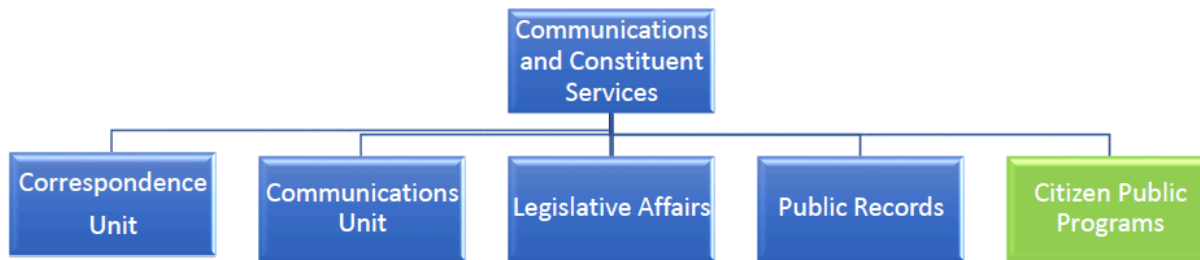
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<sup>1</sup> 09012022 MCRO percent of staff effort monitoring social media.pdf

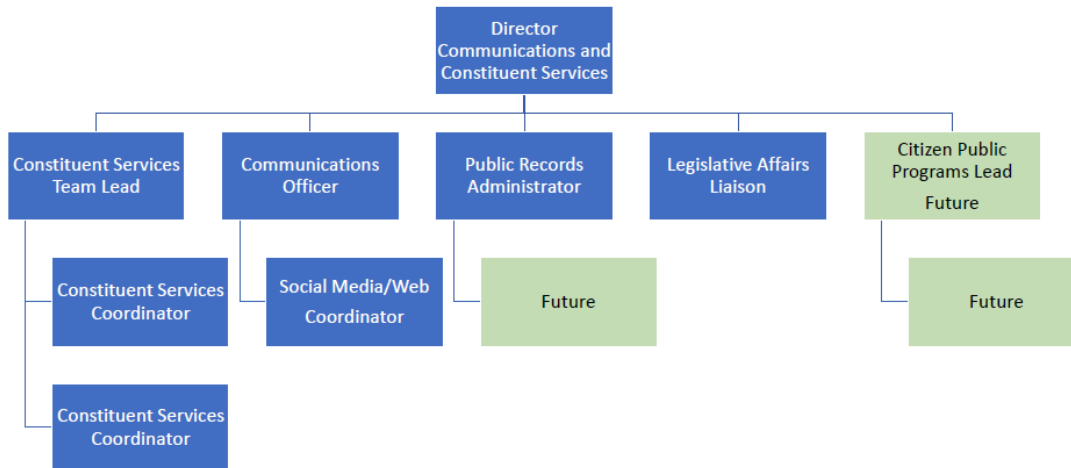
<sup>2</sup> Proposed Executive Leadership of MCRO incl expanded Comms team.pdf

<sup>3</sup> 2024 PBS AZ Votes 2024 Live Special [https://www.youtube.com/live/oBhtAi3Si2E?si=HjcJCZhbc\\_siB2vt&t=2209](https://www.youtube.com/live/oBhtAi3Si2E?si=HjcJCZhbc_siB2vt&t=2209)

<sup>4</sup> Fontes Recorder Budget 2020.pdf



## Positions



This expansion comes on the heels of Facebook notifying the Arizona Secretary of State’s Office that they created a dashboard tool for election officials to do keyword searches of public content on Facebook for users in their state.<sup>4</sup> Facebook even provided a training webinar to integrate Arizona election officials into the new program. Facebook begins flagging posts for election officials to verify as misinformation.<sup>5</sup> In July 2020, Facebook launched a Voting Alerts tool for election officials to broadcast voting information and give Katie Hobbs’ Secretary of State’s Office \$75k in ad credits to recruit poll workers.<sup>6 7</sup> Katie Hobbs’ Office began abusing the access to request Facebook remove posts for misinformation by requesting posts that are critical of Hobbs’ to be taken down.<sup>8</sup> In most cases, Facebook governs removals in a manner that is strictly limited to inaccurate information about election processes. During this same period, Katie Hobbs’ Office used staff resources to report posts and accounts on Twitter for removal.<sup>9 10</sup>

In the November 2020 General Election, the expansion of censorship to block misinformation is a collaboration of Federal, state, and local officials, plus NGOs and universities. For example, due to conflicting communication from election officials on the use of Sharpies versus pens, voters became concerned with the processing of their ballots if they used Sharpies to fill out their ballots. The Secretary of State’s Office (AZSOS), in collaboration with CISA, an NGO named Election Integrity Partnership (EIP), Stanford University, and Facebook began flagging posts for removal.<sup>11</sup> Various election officials across the state worked with Facebook to flag posts in a “more holistic fashion” per

<sup>4</sup> See 09302019 FB Social Media Tracking Dashboard.pdf  
<sup>5</sup> 03162020 FB EV Social Media Post Verification.pdf  
<sup>6</sup> 07302020 FB Launches Voting Alerts Tool.pdf  
<sup>7</sup> 08192020 FB 75k Ad Credits.pdf  
<sup>8</sup> 08202020 Kamala Post Removal Request.pdf  
<sup>9</sup> 11012020 Twitter Post Removal Request.pdf  
<sup>10</sup> 11032020 Twitter Account Suspension.pdf  
<sup>11</sup> 11042020 Sharpie CISA EIP.pdf  
 PG 2 - AZ Election Offices Surveillance & Censorship for First Amendment Jurisprudence

the AZSOS' request.<sup>12</sup> Twitter says they took down hundreds of posts related to Sharpies.<sup>13</sup> Katie Hobbs, in her official capacity, also asked Twitter to take down posts related to an uproar over her calling President Trump's base "neo-nazis."<sup>14</sup>

When Stephen Richer took over as Maricopa County Recorder in 2021, one of his first decisions was to choose a grant from the AZ Department of Homeland Security in alignment with his predecessor's efforts. Per his staff, he had three choices of uses:<sup>15</sup>

- *"Elections – specifically from a critical infrastructure position impacted by Cybersecurity, for example do you want to train election staff on cybersecurity, Election - misinformation (monitor of social platform software + headcount) or communication programs (videos etc)*
- *Voter Registration – specifically software, training, server security*
- *Warehouse – renovation to secure ballots or election equipment"*

Recorder Richer chose the grant that included a focus on monitoring social media platforms. The following month, in March, the AZSOS sends out a bulletin<sup>16</sup> with a report from EIP titled "The Long Fuse Misinformation and the 2020 Election," which encourages election officials to expand their censorship operations with the following recommendations for state and local officials:

- Implement processes to report misinformation to social media platforms and government partners
- Establish a single source of truth for election information

The EIP report further encourages traditional media to handle "misinformation uniformly" and social media to develop policies on "repeat spreaders."

Congressional Chairman of Judiciary Jim Jordan released more on the EIP program in the transcript of the interview with Kate Starbird from EIP. Of his work, she said Recorder Stephen Richer said:

*"Dealing with misinformation is my day job. Running the election is my night job."*<sup>17</sup>

Later that month, Recorder Richer began implementing an extensive news monitoring effort that he said was necessary because:

*"I actually have an unhealthy mental quirk that makes me feel anxious if I don't feel like I'm aware of all of the relevant stuff and have stuff listed out."*<sup>18</sup>

Richer brought on a firm to develop a communications strategy for the Recorder's Office, describing the effort on a podcast<sup>19</sup> as:

*"When you want to be really really good at communicating a message, hopefully these people are particularly good at it...another important part has been working with our media contacts... They are more readily able to write stories and form stories...And importantly, we've developed relationships with the national and local media who can help us broadcast this message who consider us responsible, reliable purveyors of truth."*

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<sup>12</sup> 11042020 Sharpie\_Other Posts FB Takedown.pdf

<sup>13</sup> 11042020 Twitter Sharpie Post Removal.pdf

<sup>14</sup> 11132020 Katie Hobbs Twitter Takedown Requests.pdf

<sup>15</sup> 02122021 MCRO Misinformation Grant.pdf

<sup>16</sup> 03052021 EIP Misinformation Report from AZSOS.pdf; EIP-Final-Report.pdf

<sup>17</sup> Starbird Transcript\_Redacted\_Errata.pdf

<sup>18</sup> 03312021 MCRO Daily News Clips.pdf

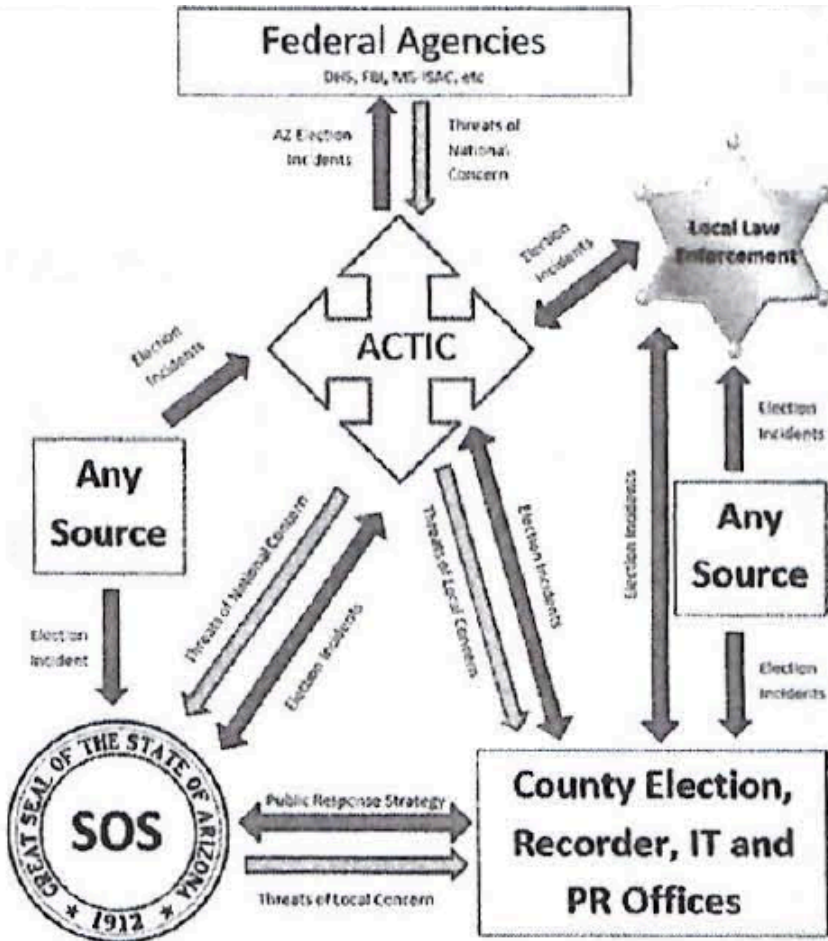
<sup>19</sup> <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6lbkqq5WOGexkfCGL53IZo?si=6jZoIA66RxGUslVyBQHKwg>

Staff described the narrative communications strategy as “objective information security” defining it as “we are protecting an accurate, objective truth that we can all agree on. This is how we try to promote accurate information and fight against disinformation.”<sup>20</sup>

Secretary Katie Hobbs publishes the 2021 Election Officer Certification Training manual.<sup>21</sup> The training defines “acts or misinformation that undermine public confidence” as an election security incident and states that the Public Communication Strategy for Election Officers is:

*“Do not give away too much information.”*

The ACTIC system is used as a central hub for information sharing of election incidents:



The Maricopa County Information Security Department starts a daily “Active Threat Focus” briefing tracking social media posts and sentiment utilizing tracking tools from companies such as Infosec Assurance and Critical Mention.<sup>22</sup> The Recorder’s Office purchases additional social media and news media tracking sites, including Brandwatch Signal and ElectionOnline.org.<sup>23</sup>

The Recorder and Board of Supervisors (BOS) staff implement a daily social media surveillance program where staff spends their day watching videos on YouTube and Rumble of primarily conservative-leaning citizens giving opinions on election operations. They also target the Arizona Republican Party and legislators. Most videos on YouTube end up being removed. In some cases, entire channels are removed from YouTube.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> 09152021 objective truth.pdf

<sup>21</sup> AZSOS 2021 Election Officer Cert Training.PDF

<sup>22</sup> 10112021 Active Threat Analysis of Social Media Posts.pdf

<sup>23</sup> 12222022 Brandwatch Signal tracking.pdf; 06232022 Social Media and News trackers.pdf

<sup>24</sup> 052721 Video Platforms Social Media Tracking.pdf



In mid-2022, Recorder Richer begins asking his staff to compile specific articles for him to take home in a binder on the weekends.<sup>25</sup> This expands to a daily leadership media email with news mostly focused on President Trump's legal cases, election lawsuits, and the political outlook of 2024.<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that post-Stephen Richer filing the defamation lawsuit against Kari Lake, the daily emails have a category added called "The Recorder Lawsuit,"<sup>27</sup> even though the lawsuit was filed in his personal capacity.

The Recorder's Office also creates an official Misinformation, Disinformation, and Malinformation Guide (MDM) adopted from a CISA guide<sup>28</sup> which they share with the AZSOS.

By late 2022, the Recorder and BOS offices seem to have implemented multiple policies for redacting public records requests and responding to media based on how they evaluate the requestor of the information.<sup>29</sup>

At one point, Maricopa County created a guide for staff on how to ban users from social media and implemented a Social Media Tracker application that seems to allow ban requests from staff to evade email public records requests since few requests appear to be communicated over email after this point in the records.<sup>30</sup>

Maricopa County and the Board of Supervisors implemented a Command Center strategy with a goal of "full integration into social media platforms."<sup>31</sup> Recorder Richer also expanded the Voter Registrar program so that these volunteers will "bring accurate information to their communities."<sup>32</sup> His office also sets up a plan for an Election Fact Ambassador<sup>33</sup> team that is tasked with amplifying specific "source of truth" messaging on social media. While the description of the program is that ambassadors are supposed to provide neutral/non-defensive messaging, it's not fully known if these posts include ramping up to aggressive and even threatening messages against citizens posting opinions about election administration.<sup>34</sup> It's not clear if this is the case, as the list of influencers isn't included in the public records obtained.

Recorder Richer ramped up his staff's surveillance responsibility by having them produce hundred-page-plus transcripts of citizens talking about elections in Twitter Spaces,<sup>35</sup> while the AZSOS implements a volunteer strategy to track citizens on social media.<sup>36</sup> Meta provides Arizona election officials with a whitelist email address to fastrack their misinformation takedown requests.<sup>37</sup>

But even with all of these layers of monitoring, surveillance, and censorship, the Recorder's Office didn't find it sufficient and insisted the social media companies "step it up" saying, "That [if] they continue as they performed for the 2022 Primary, to me would be completely unacceptable."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> 062122 Subject Upcoming trip and other stuff while I'm at it\_Maybe some of this can go to the new guy

<sup>26</sup> 061623 Re articles\_Leadership Daily News.pdf

<sup>27</sup> 071723 RE readings\_Leadership Daily News.pdf; 080323 Leadership Daily News for today2.pdf

<sup>28</sup> 09262022 Recorder MDM Guide.pdf

<sup>29</sup> 12142022 PRR Redaction Methods.pdf; 08012022 Staff discussion on how to handle Rachel Alexander.pdf

<sup>30</sup> How to Ban Someone From Social Media\_Social Media Tracker.pdf

<sup>31</sup> 08212022 MCRO demands FB Twitter perform higher for censorship.pdf

<sup>32</sup> Election Center Breakout Session\_Community Partnerships and Trust Talking Points.pdf; 03032022 Wide Margins High Turnout Talking Points.pdf

<sup>33</sup> 10212022 Election fact ambassador plan.pdf; Election fact ambassador plan attachment.pdf

<sup>34</sup> Stephen Troll Farm Threats.pdf

<sup>35</sup> 03012023 Twitter Space Transcript.pdf

<sup>36</sup> 07252022 AZSOS Volunteers to Monitor Social Media on Election Day.pdf

<sup>37</sup> 04282022 Meta Whitelist Censorship Email Address.pdf

<sup>38</sup> 08212022 MCRO demands FB Twitter perform higher for censorship.pdf

The Recorder's Office and AZSOS began having weekly calls with Facebook in preparation for the 2022 General Election.<sup>39</sup>

## FIRST AMENDMENT JURISPRUDENCE

In the late summer of 2021, Recorder Stephen Richer potentially set an ideology for his Office's efforts against "misinformation" in a speech that he wrote for Maricopa County Community College where he said the First Amendment is a thorn in the side of his office:<sup>40</sup>

"I posit that the gravest threat to voting rights and our elected form of government is no longer the systematic disenfranchisement of a particular class of people, but instead the undermining of the entire election system through lies and disinformation.

And it is in this respect, that the Constitution today is in some ways a thorn in the side of my office. Specifically the First Amendment."

He laments that the First Amendment is "the biggest threat to elections and democracy," and that because of this Constitutional God-given right, he "can't touch these idiots" that spread misinformation --- especially for him as a public official. He says that his job has caused him to be "disturbed by humanity" and that's led to him having "a new perspective on the First Amendment."

Recorder Richer says that he's hopeful the Dominion defamation lawsuit "resets" some of this First Amendment jurisprudence "landscape," but suggests that whether or not the election tabulation systems provider wins their defamation lawsuits, it's within the government's best interest to limit First Amendment rights in America. He says he doesn't have a solution to the problem of the First Amendment allowing for information he doesn't agree with about election operations to be spread by citizens and that he thinks "it's possible that our First Amendment jurisprudence needs to change." He goes on to expound on the solution to "lies and disinformation" as not just a legal problem but also a religious problem and a journalism problem, etc.

He presented a similar argument in an op-ed to the National Review. However, they asked that he remove the parts about First Amendment jurisprudence, and it was never published. On the contrary, his staff had an entirely different response saying that they "loved" his speech, which seems to confirm a culture of First Amendment jurisprudence to chill free speech exists in the office that oversees early election, signature verification and chain of custody processes.

Additionally, less than a year later, at a Chicago U Conference titled "Disinformation and the Subversion of Elections," in a panel with former CISA Director Chris Krebs, Recorder Richer says that his goal, presumably in his official capacity, is establishing and fighting for "objective truth."<sup>41</sup>

He says of the AZ Senate regarding the audit, "You are destabilizing the institution by raising false conjectures. We are not anti-audit. We think it should be done by professionals. It offended me from a stance of competency. If you don't have confidence in this institution, it's like not having confidence in the criminal justice system. Why would you think it's right to have the power conferred upon them by the government if you don't believe in this institution? That's incredibly destabilizing. That should be worrisome to anyone. I am an institutional conservative."

Recorder Richer goes on to say that he believes social media companies have a right to regulate speech on their platforms. He further insinuates the Bar Association should go after attorneys taking up election cases.

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<sup>39</sup> 09022022 Meta Calls with AZSOS and MCRO.pdf

<sup>40</sup> MCC Speech on blowing up the 1A.pdf; SR National Review Op Ed Request.pdf; SR National Review Op Ed Request2.pdf

<sup>41</sup> <https://youtu.be/9uxW51h4Qjw?si=y8PaqHNThjR44zZc>

Recorder Richer asks Chris Krebs if he's "witnessed a chilling effect [on speech] just by [Dominion] filing of the lawsuits." Chris responds that it hasn't silenced Mike Lindell, and Recorder Richer responds with a sullied "no, okay."

## CONFLICTS IN SEPARATION OF POWERS

On a number of occasions, election officials seek to take down and censor posts from elected officials in the Legislature. This begs the question of whether this creates a conflict in the separation of powers between the different levels of government. Which level of government should be the "authoritative" source, and how can one government declare to the public that it holds the sole authority in that role?

The social media and mainstream media surveillance program didn't just impact citizens. In the post-2020 General Election period, when counting was still in progress, the AZSOS asked Facebook to take down Senator Townsend's press release calling for "a recount and forensic audit" of the 2020 General election. Facebook declined to take down the post.<sup>42</sup>

In May 2021, the Recorder's Office flagged a video of Sonny Borelli on YouTube, which is now removed.<sup>43</sup> It's not known what the video content was, but it can be presumed it was his statements on election-related concerns.

In July of 2021, the AZSOS discusses a plan to prepare for censorship of the AZ Senate audit results.<sup>44</sup> The AZSOS says, "The major top-of-mind concern we have moving into Friday is the streaming of misinformation that may come from the Senate hearing that afternoon."<sup>45</sup>

In April of 2022, in regards to a media response pertaining to a statement Attorney General Brnovich made, Maricopa County/Recorder staff suggested, "The bigger discussion on the county/board side, in my opinion, is whether to call out/hold accountable the elected officials who are participating in this misinformation."<sup>46</sup>

## CENSORSHIP, NARRATIVE BUILDING AND WEAPONIZATION OF GOVERNMENT

In March of 2021, a video surfaced of people dumpster diving outside of one of the Maricopa County Election Offices, claiming they found shredded ballots in the dumpster. While Recorder Richer approved of his office sending out an official statement denying they were shredded ballots, internal emails show a different story from the narrative published.<sup>47</sup>

The narrative published to media:

*"Maricopa County has not, and would never destroy voted ballots until legally authorized to do so after the 24-month retention period."*

*The reality is the November General Election ballots are sealed and stored in the vault, not the warehouse. The vault is under the watch of a 24-7 camera. None of the ballots or other General Election materials from the vault were in the garbage, and as a matter of business, the county can and does throw out trash.*

*The fact is, these individuals were dumpster diving on Maricopa County property. Security footage shows they attempted to break into the warehouse entrance of the Elections Department on Saturday with a board from the dumpster.*

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<sup>42</sup> 11122020 AZSOS Takedown Request of Senator post.pdf

<sup>43</sup> 052721 Video Platforms Social Media Tracking.pdf

<sup>44</sup> 07232021 FB Senate Audit Censorship.pdf

<sup>45</sup> 09222021 MCRO Censoring Audit1.pdf; 09222021 MCRO Censoring Audit2.pdf

<sup>46</sup> 04112022 MCRO Suggests Go After Elected Officials.pdf

<sup>47</sup> 03082021 Shredded Ballots Narrative.pdf

*Maricopa County plans to follow up with law enforcement about these activities.”*

An internal email from a staff member to Recorder Richer describing the situation:

*“We had a meeting with the VR staff and informed them of what occurred over the weekend.*

*After further discussion, we’re assuming that the shredded EV ballot would’ve been from a voter that was marked as deceased because our office doesn’t receive any other type of EV ballots.*

*We used to receive 5 to 8 cages of undeliverable EV ballots and would manually enter all of this information on VRAS to begin the registration verification process. The Elections Department began using the Electronic Return Service, which automated this process and we no longer receive the cages of undeliverable EV ballots.*

*The only EV ballots that we receive in the VR area would be for envelopes that are marked as deceased and we follow those up with a letter to the Family of the Deceased Voter requesting further information before we either deactivate or cancel the voter. Going forward, we’re going to request the EV department make a photocopy of the EV envelopes that have been marked as deceased and interoffice those photocopies which will eliminate any EV ballots being sent to the VR division.*

*We’re assuming that staff made a photocopy of the envelope and then shredded the EV ballot. We’ve instructed staff that going forward we should NOT be shredding any of the EV envelopes and will box up all returned/undeliverable mail and send to the warehouse for storage and secure destruction. We’ve also placed signs by the shredder instructing staff on what needs to occur should they forget. Going forward any shreds will be placed in the “secured” recycle bins that are located throughout our office.*

*The other issue is that we usually shred any photocopies of VR forms or proof of citizenship documentation; the originals are scanned onto VRAS and the original documents are sent to the warehouse for storage.*

*We apologize about this incident, the safeguards that we’re adopting should avoid any future mishaps and to reiterate any shreds will be placed in the secure (locked) recycle bins.”*

In an email discussion in response to the Federalist questioning a claim of “25,000 missing votes in Maricopa County”, one of the Communication Department staff at Maricopa County is asked to send a retraction/correction request to the reporter.” The staffer disagrees with the strategy, and instead in consultation with others, the team decides a “push back hard strategy,” saying:

*“If the goal is to ‘push back hard,’ it will be more effective to put out our own statement so that the reality-based media system will spread it far and wide than to try to get a publication that has made up its mind to retract/correct. That said, [staffer] explanation makes sense to me and I think whatever we do, let’s push it back to the judge dismissing the case.”<sup>48</sup>*

In responding to a reporter about whether the Senate Committee asked the Recorder to testify, in a staffer discussion, one person says:<sup>49</sup>

*“The question and answer are straightforward. Responding to a reporter isn’t going to change what a Senate committee plans. I think this is all part of the plan to build up a web of lies and misrepresentations and then to bring in our experts to mock them.”*

Another staffer replies back:

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<sup>48</sup> 01182023 Retract-Push Back Hard.pdf

<sup>49</sup> 01302023 Bring in Our Experts to Mock Them.pdf

*“The only thing that I’d worry about, and I’m not convinced we should worry, is that by saying that no one asked us to give a presentation to the committee, they might actually ask for one. Might be an opportunity to set things straight, however in front of a critical group legislators.”*

There are many other examples of narrative building where a straightforward answer based on facts likely exists but is not pursued. However, what’s more alarming is that when they don’t have a narrative handy, the election staff resort to censorship, such as on General Election Day in 2022 when there were printer malfunctions.

When Meta asked about removing the posts, the election staff responded:

*“The video is real, but it has been misconstrued to demonstrate problems in Maricopa County in a way that they don’t exist.”<sup>50</sup>*

So, although the post was real, the opinion of the citizen posting it didn’t fit the narrative that election officials wanted. In response Meta agreed to start removing all similar posts.

The practices of the Recorder’s Office go so far as Recorder Richer saying he filed a bar complaint against an attorney simply for retweeting a post he disagreed with, and he even contacted the attorney’s employer asking, “I ask that you assess if he is fit to be part of the faculty.”<sup>51</sup>

Of the same post in reference, a staffer asks Facebook to remove the user of the original post completely:

*“Please consider taking down this video and suspending this user. She is a regular promoter and creator of election lies.”<sup>52</sup>*

## **WHEN THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA STEPS OUT OF LINE**

In December 2021, the news channel AZ Family had Senate President Karen Fann and Senator Rick Gray on the show to discuss the audit. Maricopa County staff sent them a demand letter with a deadline for not including their office in the story, saying:<sup>53</sup>

*“They [Senate President Karen Fann and Senator Rick Gray] were permitted to continue spreading misinformation about the 2020 General Election unchecked during the published interview and there was no apparent fact checking in the online story despite our public website dedicated to the truth about election operations at JustTheFacts.Vote. Scott Pasmore never performed his due diligence by reaching out to the Elections Department, Recorder’s Office, or my team in the Office of Communications. This is unprofessional and irresponsible considering the severity of her allegations and the ongoing threats to election officials at all levels.*

*Maricopa County demands AZ Family uses the attached statement to publish clarifying stories on television during the same shows the interview originally aired. The web story must also be updated to reflect the content of this statement and the fact AZ Family did not research the original story. We expect you to provide an interview opportunity of similar length and promotion after the County issues its official response to the Cyber Ninjas’ report.*

*Please provide a response to this email by December 23, 2021.”*

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<sup>50</sup> 11082022 Removing Posts on Printer Issues.pdf

<sup>51</sup> SR Fire\_bar complaint.pdf

<sup>52</sup> 08012022 FB to be deleted.pdf

<sup>53</sup> 12122021 MCRO Demands AZFamily Go Against AZ Senate.pdf

While the AZ Family representative doesn't apologize, they quickly met Maricopa County's demands without seemingly letting the Arizona Senate respond:

*"Thanks for reaching out to us about this situation. Below are the steps we'll be taking immediately.*

*We have included the bullet points from your statement to the article on azfamily.com*

*[https://www.azfamily.com/news/politics/arizona\\_politics/one-on-one-with-senate-presidentkaren-fann/article\\_8708df5a-5ebc-11ec-a23a-db7179879773.html](https://www.azfamily.com/news/politics/arizona_politics/one-on-one-with-senate-presidentkaren-fann/article_8708df5a-5ebc-11ec-a23a-db7179879773.html)*

*We also offer you the same interview opportunity. Please let us know when it works best for you."*

This certainly holds true of Recorder Richer's policy that his office is the only source of "objective truth."

## CONCLUSION

According to the Kofi Annan Foundation, the Global Commission on Elections, Democracy and Security stated that to build public confidence in election outcomes, "It is not enough to reform institutions; citizens need to be convinced that changes are real and deserve their confidence. Inclusiveness, transparency and accountability are all fundamental to developing that confidence."<sup>54</sup>

Arizona election officials have taken quite the opposite approach. Needless to say, all of the monitoring, surveillance, censorship, and propaganda efforts have not proven effective in building trust among the public. A post-2022 General Election survey by Maricopa County found that the experience the voters reported for in-person early voting was rated with "Bad" being the highest response at 28.6% of all respondents, while 55.8% of Election Day in-person voters reported "Bad" as their rating.<sup>55</sup>

Rather, the aggressive authoritarian approach by election officials, Federal agencies, NGOs, and social media companies may be increasing distrust in elections, resulting in legitimate concerns of voter disenfranchisement.

Quite contrary to Recorder Richer's statement that the First Amendment is "destroying democracy and elections," it can be argued that the technocratic oligarchy that election departments have become in Arizona is destroying the fabric of our free Republican form of government as defined by the Constitution. As Thomas Jefferson stressed, without our First Amendment, the consent to govern does not exist. Is our government now devolving itself into tyranny?

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**Access Public Record Referenced Files:** <https://drive.proton.me/urls/R0JTRDMZPM#aQt1ox52UG1>



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<sup>54</sup> <https://www.kofiannanfoundation.org>

<sup>55</sup> 02092023 2022 General Election Survey.pdf



# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

## 2019

### August

08072019 FB\_AZSOS.pdf

Facebook reaches out to the AZSOS on election integrity training & FB practices

### September

09302019 FB Social Media Tracking Dashboard.pdf

Facebook notifies the AZSOS of a dashboard and tool to track and censor posts from voters about elections

### October

10282019 FB Democracy Works.pdf

Facebook announces a collaboration with "Democracy Works" to promote local elections

## 2020

### March

03042020 MCRO FB FLAGGED POST.pdf  
03162020 FB EV Social Media Post Verification.pdf

First confirmed instance of Maricopa County asking Facebook to take down a post

### July

07212020 FB VOTER INFO CTR.pdf

Facebook launches a Voter Information Center and has a session for Election Authorities to give feedback

### August

08192020 FB 75k Ad Credits.pdf

Facebook gives AZSOS \$75k in free ad credit to promote their official page

### November

11022020 Coconino Censorship.pdf

First confirmed instance of Coconino County asking Facebook to take down a post

11042020 Sharpie CISA EIP.pdf

Stanford, CISA, Maricopa County and AZSOS work together to censor the "sharpiegate" and watermark posts. AZSOS asks for a more holistic approach to censor posts.

11042020 Twitter Sharpie Post Removal.pdf

Twitter says they've taken down hundreds of tweets about the sharpie concerns

11132020 Katie Hobbs Twitter Takedown Requests.pdf

AZSOS Katie Hobbs herself ask for additional political posts criticizing Hobbs to be removed. Twitter declines.

11122020 AZSOS Takedown Request of Senator post.pdf

AZSOS asks for a press release from a State Senator to be removed. Facebook declines.

### December

12282020 FB fact check group.pdf

Facebook fact check groups begin to contact AZSOS

## 2021

### Unknown

AZSOS 2021 Election Officer Cert Training.PDF

AZSOS publishes the 2021 Election Officer Certification Training which defines "acts or misinformation that undermine public confidence" as an election security incident. Says the Public Communication Strategy for Election Officers is "do not give away too much information."

### February

02122021 Grant for censorship.pdf

Recorder Stephen Richer chooses an AZ Dept of Homeland Security grant which includes social media monitoring

02192021 MCRO Staff Audit Narrative.pdf

Maricopa County/Recorder staff write narratives in support of the Senate Election audit

### March

03052021 EIP Misinformation Report from AZSOS.pdf

Election Integrity Partnership publishes the report "The Long Fuse: Misinformation and the 2020 Election" which recommends election departments implement processes to report misinformation to social media platforms and government partners and establish a single source of truth for election information

# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

## 2021

### March

03082021 Shredded Ballots Narrative.pdf

After blogs post that shredded ballots were found in the dumpster. Recorder's Office puts out a statement that they didn't dispose of ballots. Internally, they receive communication that it was indeed shredded ballots from a voter marked as deceased.

2021 Daily News Tracker Emails Stephen unhealthy mental quirk.pdf; 03312021 MCRO Daily News Clips.pdf

Recorder Stephen Richer starts having staff track news daily which includes a wide variety of topics that don't all relate to the office he oversees

### April

04162021 Pre-Audit Talking Pts.pdf

Maricopa County/Recorder staff provide pre-narratives for the BOS regarding the audit with a shift in tone. "The Senate election audit talking points" document is a concise look at bias, credibility, accountability and the County record on election integrity."

### May

05272021 Youtube Videos by Local Conservatives Taken Down.pdf; 052721 Video Platforms Social Media Tracking.pdf

Maricopa County and Recorder staff begin a daily video tracker of youtube videos by citizens providing their opinions of election administration, January 6, Trump, etc. Some videos are from the AZGOP and state senators. Most videos are now deleted by youtube.

### July

07202021 MCRO Timely Voter Files.pdf

MCRO suggests not sending voter files timely to political parties to impede their action on the records

07232021 FB Senate Audit Censorship.pdf

Facebook reaches out to AZSOS about censoring posts related to the Senate Audit

### August

08032021 Policy list\_End PC Elections\_ChargeforPrimaries.pdf

Maricopa County releases their legislative policy agenda which includes eliminating precinct committeemen elections and charging parties for primary elections

08192021 The Richer Report.pdf

Recorder Richer uses staff resources to produce his personal letter to the Republican Party called "Dear Arizona Republicans"

### September

09162021 RE voter ed video series.pdf  
09152021 objective truth.pdf

In an email to the Citizens Clean Elections Commission, a leadership staffer from MCRO says about the office, "We are protecting an accurate, objective truth that we can all agree on. This is how we try to promote accurate information and fight against disinformation."

MCC Speech on blowing up the 1A.pdf

In a speech to the Maricopa County Community College, Recorder Richer says that the First Amendment "is the greatest threat to elections and democracy." He says the First Amendment is a thorn on the side of his staff and we need First Amendment jurisprudence.

09222021 MCRO Censoring Audit1.pdf 09222021 MCRO Censoring Audit2.pdf

Facebook reaches out to AZSOS on censoring posts related to the Senate Audit and protecting Maricopa County. AZSOS says that "misinformation" from the Senate is the main concern.

# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

## 2021

### September

SR National Review Op  
Ed Request.pdf  
SR National Review Op  
Ed Request2.pdf

Jack Butler, the Submissions Editor at National Review, tells Recorder Richer that he must remove the part about First Amendment jurisprudence from his Op-Ed on the First Amendment being a threat to elections and democracy, but he can keep the part about cheering on the Dominion defamation lawsuits.

09282021 All Voting is  
Local.pdf

All Voting is Local has direct access to the Recorder's Office staff bypassing Public Records Request procedures

### October

10402021 Pima  
County.pdf

Pima County Elections Department asks Maricopa County to give them direction on creating resources to fight disinformation from the Arizona Legislature because "Finchem, Rogers, and Ward, et al, have now turned their jaundiced eyes toward we poor blighters in Pima County."

### December

12082021 MCRO  
Templatize Comms.pdf

After a table top exercise, MCRO suggests they can "templatize a good amount of messages ahead of time, come up with good guidelines, and practice a few statements ahead of the 2022 General Election."

12172021 CISA MCRO.pdf

CISA asks MCRO if they can include their "Just the Facts" as part of their "CISA Planning and Incident Response Guide"

12122021 MCRO Demands  
AZFamily Go Against AZ  
Senate.pdf

MCRO goes after AZ Family for giving the Senate President air time on the audit. Gives them a 48hr deadline to update the story with their statement and give Bill Gates equal air time. MCRO calls them "irresponsible and unprofessional" for giving the Senate air time. Demands they include the MCRO website as a "fact check."

## 2022

### January

01052022 Response to  
Fifield.pdf

In an article by Jen Fifield about Maricopa County's response to the audit: "After analyzing each claim, the county is referring 37 cases of potential voter fraud to the Arizona attorney general, including 26 potential deceased voters, six voters who may have voted twice, and five voters who may have voted in more than one county...The county hired Scottsdale-based cybersecurity firm PacketWatch to analyze and respond to some of the technical claims made about the county's election management system. Overall, the county and PacketWatch did not identify any systematic problems with the county's election."

01102022 Camera  
Feeds.pdf

MCRO proposes to limit the 6 early voting camera feeds to specific statutorily mandated periods of elections.  
• Cameras: Early Voting #1 - #6 • Streaming Period Start: T-Minus 45 from Election • Streaming Period End: Canvass + 5 Days

01202022 SR Policy.pdf

Recorder Richer says he could support publishing ballot images only to a limited audience and limited hand count and duplication audits.



# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

## 2022

### February

02042022 Rogue Employee Exercise.pdf

Maricopa County discusses a table top test exercise if a key employee went rogue and started disclosing information about the department. Staff suggests using an executive session to do the exercise so all of the BOS can attend.

02172022 CISA MDM Guide.pdf

CISA releases two new guides on Combatting Mis, Dis, and Malinformation

### March

02242022 High Turnout Wide Margins.pdf  
030322 High Turnout Wide Margins.pdf

Recorder Richer on High Turnout Wide Margins Podcast says his team had "to fight back" against the AZ Senate because they sanctioned the Audit. He says his Comms team is now his most robust team in his operation. He hopes that by 2022 election there's a certain amount of fatigue that sets in that causes most people to think twice about making allegations. He brought on a firm to create a communications strategy to form stories and developed relationships with the national and local media who can help broadcast this message as responsible, reliable purveyors of truth.

03082022 SJ Voter Outreach Plan.pdf

Scott Jarrett submits a voter outreach plan to build trust

### April

04012022 SR to CISA.pdf

Recorder Richer asks CISA "for whatever you can do to help more people separate fact from fiction."

<https://youtu.be/9uxW51h4Qjw?si=y8PaqHNTjR44zZc>

06102022 SR ChicagoU.pdf

Recorder Richer invited to speak at "Disinformation and the Subversion of Elections: Breakout Session" at U Chicago with Chris Krebs. He says the goal of his department is "goal is objective truth." He says elected officials not believing in institutions is "incredibly destabilizing." Richer says he'd sign up for accountability of social media companies allowing posts on elections. He says "first amendment jurisprudence might need to be reevaluated," encourages the Dominion defamation laws, and encourages bar complaints against election integrity attorneys. He asks Chris Krebs if he thinks Dominion defamation laws have a "chilling effect just by their filing of the lawsuits." The response is basically no.

04112022 MCRO Suggests Go After Elected Officials.pdf

Maricopa County/MCRO suggest going after the elected officials distributing misinformation

04282022 Meta Whitelist Censorship Email Address.pdf

Facebook provides a whitelist contact method to AZSOS for reporting posts

### May

05302022 Storytelling.pdf

MCRO works with The Elections Group on their storytelling guide for election officials

### June

06132022 Authoritative News.pdf

MCRO begins referring conservative media outlets to news articles they had published with their "authoritative information" instead of answering questions directly.

# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

## 2022

### June

06142022 MCRO  
Restructure.pdf

There is a restructure of the Recorder's Office

06172022 MCRO Building  
an Army for Release of  
Trusted Information.pdf

MCRO building an "army of people carrying that trusted message" through the Voter Registrar program

062122 Subject Upcoming  
trip and other stuff  
while I'm at it Maybe  
some of this can go to  
the new guy.pdf

Recorder Richer started having his staff provide him with a weekly email summary of media. "I'll send a list of articles from \_\_\_news clips every week that I'd appreciate somebody printing and putting in a binder for me to read over the weekend, every weekend."

06232022 Media  
Monitoring Companies  
for MCRO.pdf; 06232022  
Social Media and News  
trackers.pdf

Recorder's Office pays for two companies to monitor media: Critical Mention and ElectionOnline.org

06302022 MCRO BOS  
Sheriff.pdf

MCRO says Gates and Richer meeting with Sheriff Penzone for more security even though there are no known threats. "I have no knowledge of specific threats, but Maricopa County believes in being prepared and the sheriff is a natural partner along with federal and state law enforcement. They are the experts in evaluating whether threats are credible and whether action is warranted.

### July

07122022 Meta  
Training.pdf

Meta invites election officials to a social media training to "best leverage Facebook and Instagram for the upcoming 2022 Midterm Election and beyond

07252022 AZSOS  
Volunteers to Monitor  
Social Media on  
Election Day.pdf

AZSOS recruits volunteers to monitor Twitter to report posts to Google, "We are putting together our materials for the volunteers monitoring Twitter on Election Day."

SR Fire\_bar  
complaint.pdf

An attorney that works at ASU retweets a post about election concerns and Recorder Richer says he reported the attorney to the AZ Bar and sent emails to his employer suggesting he no longer be employed there. Richer calls the post and "incitement to violence" because it says "#LockThemUp"

### August

08012022 FB to be  
deleted.pdf

MCRO asks Facebook to delete the entire account of the original person that posted the tweet Recorder Richer took issue with.

08012022 Real  
Journalists  
Category.pdf

MCRO Comms team begins categorizing journalists as "real" or "not real" based on whether they report the narrative they provide to them as truth

08032022 AZSOS CISA  
AZGOP.pdf

AZSOS tries to get a tweet from the AZGOP removed because it reports Hobbs's office is responsible for the County running out of paper ballots due to a miscalculation of an estimate of ballots needed

# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

**2022**

**August**

08212022 MCRO demands  
FB Twitter perform  
higher for  
censorship.pdf

MCRO says that Facebook and Twitter aren't performing high enough in censorship response from the Primary. "We'd like to request meet with Twitter and Facebook to do a hot wash - to discuss what went well and highlight areas of improvement in their support of Elections...IMO one of the greatest asks is that they demonstrate setting up a Command center that interfaces with our network of command centers - that it be staffed by those who can rapidly respond to our reports of immediate threats. That they continue as they performed for the 2022 Primary to me would be completely unacceptable."

**September**

09012022 MCRO percent  
of staff effort  
monitoring social  
media.pdf

MCRO says there are 5 members on constituent services that spend 25% of their time on misinformation. Additionally: "The Recorder's Office and County Office of Enterprise Technology have six staff members actively threat monitoring...As a direct result of the Primary, half of our Information Security Officer's time was reporting threats and online harassment to law enforcement. Because of this, we've implemented a new reporting system to help manage this information."

09022022 Voter Reg  
Strategy.pdf

Meta communicates their voter registration strategy for the rest of 2022

09022022 Prep Election  
Comms Social Media.pdf

AZSOS holds a call to prep election offices with their their election communication strategy with social media companies. They ask for a separate call just with Maricopa County.

09022022 Meta Calls  
with AZSOS and MCRO.pdf

MCRO, AZSOS and Meta start having a weekly call

09262022 Recorder MDM  
Guide.pdf

MCRO creates an MDM (misinformation, disinformation, malinformation) guide and share it with the Secretary of State

**October**

10052022 MCRO  
Essays.pdf

MCRO creates a 100+ page report for a trip called "Conversations on the Future of the American Republic: Focusing on a Conservative Agenda for Democracy Prepared for Chief Deputy Recorder Darron Moffatt." The report includes chapters titled as follows: "Suggested Pre-Readings," "Conservatism's Enduring Debates," "Make the 2020s a Decade of Reform," "HOW POLITICS POISONED THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH," "Restoring Losers' Consent: A Necessary Step to Stabilizing our Democracy," "A Time for Statesmanship," "White Christian Nationalism 'Is a Fundamental Threat to Democracy'," "Revitalizing Local Democracy: The Case for On-Cycle Local Elections," "The American Right Democracy Roadmap," "The UnPopulist's First Anniversary: A Ray of Hope, Even as Populist Authoritarianism Spreads," and "The Return of the Anti-Enlightenment."

10132022 MCRO Social  
Media Lockdown.pdf

MCRO has staff do an optional social media lockdown class to protect their accounts through the election



# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

## 2022

### October

10152022 Recount  
deadline.pdf

MCRO staff suggests that they should alert the press to the problems with the new recount law in 2022, but they decide to wait until October 26th. It's unknown if this ever happened as it became a crisis in 2024.

10172022 Fraudulent  
Voters.pdf

MCRO says Recorder Richer would "like to address thousands of potentially fraudulent voter registration forms we have received from Field Corps in the last few months" during a press conference with the BOS.

10182022 FB Know Your  
Rights.pdf

Facebook launches a "Your Rights" voter module

10192022 No Comms  
Area.pdf

A reporter is coming to interview Bill Gates and Comms staff. Comms says they do not want reporters in the Command Center.

Election fact  
ambassador plan.pdf  
10212022 Election fact  
ambassador plan.pdf

Maricopa County Comms team creates an "Election fact ambassador plan" for the November election for "influencers" to amplify their message.

### November

11082022 Removing Posts  
on Printer Issues.pdf  
11082022 Printers on  
Election Day1.pdf  
11082022 Printers on  
Election Day2.pdf  
11082022 Printers on  
Election Day3.pdf

Meta reaches out to the AZSOS and MCRO to remove posts related to printers not working on election day. AZSOS says the videos are real but "misconstrued." Meta says they will remove all posts with this video.

11142022 MCRO discusses  
denying a press  
pass.pdf

MCRO discusses rejecting a press pass because "adherence to journalistic integrity, truth reporting and because she accuses the media of not covering the real story."

11262022 Election  
Report.pdf

MC Election staff decide to draft their post election report around posts from twitter they want to debunk

### December

12072022 Justthenews  
has MCRO flagged tweets  
for removal.pdf

MCRO won't answer questions from media around whether they flag tweets for removal. On questions about CISA, they say, "it is no secret that the Maricopa County Recorder's Office communicates with CISA, DHS, and other government agencies to engage in information sharing and best practices, as well as law enforcement purposes."

12142022 PRR Redaction  
Methods.pdf

MCRO has multiple methods of redacting public records requests depends on who the request comes from

12162022 CISA Briefing  
Planning.pdf

Katie Starbird from the Election Integrity Partnership and CISA thank Recorder Richer for his time on advising them on "combating MDM and your commitment to defending election integrity." Starbird was interviewed by Congress' Judiciary Committee on their social media monitoring operation. She quotes Recorder Richer in that report as saying, "Dealing with misinformation is my day job. Running the election is my night job."

12222022 Brandwatch  
Signal tracking.pdf

MCRO subscribes to a social media tracking service called Brandwatch Signal which informs them of a sentiment score. Tracks a lot of Kari Lake/War Room tweets.

# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

**2023**

**January**

01122023 SR Official Election Policy.pdf

Recorder Richer releases his Arizona Election Law Reform policy list

01182023 Retract-Push Back Hard.pdf

BOS asks MCRO to ask a reporter for a "retraction/correction request." MCRO suggests "We should send the retraction/correction and then follow up with a public statement." They decide to go with a different route they call the "push back hard" strategy where they give the "reality-based media system" their statement to "spread it far and wide."

01242023 SR Cancels All Voter Outreach.pdf

Recorder Richer cancels all voter outreach events starting in January 2023 even though Maricopa County already paid for some of them.

01272023 Kari tabulator sys logs.pdf

Recorder Richer asks the Public Records Request team how Kari Lake got system log files so he can give them to someone anonymously active on social media which bypasses the PRR system.

01302023 Bring in Our Experts to Mock Them.pdf

In an internal discussion response by MCRO to the media about a question related to if the Recorder was invited to speak at an AZ Senate Election Committee hearing, MCRO says the plan is "to build up a web of lies and misrepresentations and then to bring in our experts to mock them." They caution against "saying that no one asked us to give a presentation to the committee, they might actually ask for one. Might be an opportunity to set things straight, however in front of a critical group legislators."

**February**

02092023 2022 General Election Survey.pdf

Maricopa County Recorder's 2022 General Election Survey Results show poor satisfaction rates for both Election Day in-person and early in-person voting.

**March**

03012023 Twitter Space Transcript.pdf

Recorder Richer asks a staffer to create a transcript of a twitter space that included several citizens in Maricopa County. Richer asks for a specific section by a specific high profile individual in Arizona to be focused on. The document is about 200 pages long.

MCRO adds an interview question on dealing with misinformation: "Over the past few years, the Elections Department has been the recipient of misinformation and inaccurate stories circulating in the public. As an employee of the Elections Department, how would you approach responding to a member of the public that is speaking negatively about a process within the department that you have little or no knowledge?"

**May**

05242023 Narrative Building JusttheNews.pdf

MCRO has a narrative discussion on how they should answer a conservative "frequent flier" reporter on a question about machines not working on Election Day. They say they need to be "more assertive" in their answer and lean on "mentioning the court wins."

# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

## 2023

**May**

05252023 CISA Twitter  
Fontes MCRO.pdf

The AZSOS and CISA ask Twitter to take down a post showing what an AI app says about Secretary Fontes. They ask for the post to be removed because they claim it "contains misinformation" about Fontes. The post remains.

**June**

061623 Re  
articles\_Leadership  
Daily News.pdf

Recorder Richer tells "The Lorax" staffer that puts his weekend binders together that he only needs the highlighted articles printed. The highlighted articles are often focused on Trump's legal cases and the political outlook of 2024.

**July**

071723 RE  
readings\_Leadership  
Daily News.pdf; 080323  
Leadership Daily News  
for today2.pdf

After filing the defamation lawsuit, Recorder Richer has his staff add a daily news topic of "The Recorder Lawsuit" which is Stephen Richer's personal defamation lawsuit against Kari Lake.

Recorder Richer exchanges emails with redacted recipients where he provides materials on tort law.

**August**

07312023\_Conservative  
ProDemocracy  
Coalition\_pg10665\_Agora  
-R Street comms entity  
memo.pdf

MCRO provides a positive response to participate in a "Proposal for new pro-democracy conservative communications entity"

**Unknown Dates**

CISA MDM Censorship  
Guide.pdf

CISA presents their mis-, dis-, and malinformation (MDM) incident response guide.

How to Ban Someone  
From Social  
Media\_Social Media  
Tracker.pdf

Maricopa County creates a guide titled "Instructions on How to Ban a User on Social Media."

SR Speech to Election  
Workers.pdf

Recorder Richer writes a speech to election workers. It includes statements: "Unfortunately, aside from me, very few people seem to care about professionals any more...We have to adapt to make Americans once again believe in the abilities of professionals."

SR Staff Appreciation  
Speech

In a speech to staff, Recorder Richer says, "We restructured the Communications department on both the Elections and Recorder's side" and outsourced some [voter registration] activities to "find opportunities to utilize our staff more efficiently."

Election Center Breakout  
Session\_Community  
Partnerships and Trust  
Talking Points.pdf

In a document titled "Election Center Breakout Session 'Community Partnerships and Trust' Talking Points", the points for Recorder Richer say, "The goal of our office is to become a trusted resource, that we would be the first resource people would come to for accurate information about elections in Maricopa County." It also says they've created a program called, "The Public as Partners" where "by engaging this volunteer network, we can create an army of ambassadors to share factual information and expand the reach of our efforts."



# ARIZONA ELECTION OFFICES SURVEILLANCE & CENSORSHIP OPERATION TIMELINE

## Unknown Dates

Recorder Fontes  
Disinformation Comms  
Strategies.pdf

MCRO under Recorder Fontes instructs staff saying, "Trends in misinformation we have seen should be sent each day." The document says disinformation can come from rival government departments: "Disinformation false information which is intended to mislead, especially propaganda issued by a government organization to a rival power or the media.... If we are made aware of a post somewhere else that is true misinformation, we would work with the government contacts on Facebook or Twitter to have the post removed."

Election fact  
ambassador plan  
attachment.pdf

In a document titled, "Building a Partnership of Election Fact Ambassadors," MCRO says, "We will reach out directly to election experts, political thought influencers, and celebrities to ask if they are willing to receive a daily email from us starting one week prior to Election Day. This email will come from Chairman Gates... We are the source of truth for most questions about the elections we run...While our reach has grown significantly since 2020, our messaging often does not spread as far and wide as misinformation...We should partner with people whose opinions are respected, whose values of democracy we share, and whose reach is greater—or different in important ways—than ours."

List of Maricopa  
County ED Problems.pdf

List of issues Maricopa County identified with election or poll worker operations. The document contains a list of suggested solutions to resolve concerns. Many issues documented are common issues the communications staff label as "misinformation" in their media responses and online materials.

MCRO Election  
Administration Policy  
Reforms.pdf

Document contains a list of policy proposals including eliminating precinct committeemen elections, automatic voter registration, same day voter registration, etc.

MCED Social Media  
Comment Policy.pdf

Maricopa County Elections Department social media comment policy to police content.

MCED Social Media  
Outreach List.pdf

Maricopa County Election Dept. creates a social media influencer "Election Outreach List" where they send a daily email of what they want promoted

ED Pandemic-like Comms  
Strategy.pdf

Communication Overview for Election Day, November 8, 2022 - "Strategy: Employ an emergency management posture using a Joint Information Center like what was deployed during the pandemic."

MCRO Proposed  
Expansion of Comms  
Team.pdf

Expanded Communication Team plan - Maricopa County Recorder's Office & Elections Department EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM (PROPOSED DRAFT)