

THE BAN · THE APPEAL ABYSS · THE SMOKING GUN

Banned on Christmas Eve

My 22-year Facebook account, gone in an instant — and the year-long fight to prove I was hacked, not guilty.

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POOF. GONE.

EDITOR'S NOTE

It's Christmas Eve, and instead of cocoa you get a notice that twenty-two years of your digital life just went poof. No warning, no explanation — just a message as cheerful as a tax audit. This is Part 1: the ban, the gas-lit appeal abyss, and the smoking gun hiding in Meta's own URL. [Part 2 — the autopsy & the court case — continues the story.](#)

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"Account Permanently Disabled. You cannot request another review."

THE DUMPSTER FIRE

Poof. Gone.



Picture this. It's Christmas Eve, and instead of a warm mug of cocoa, you get a piping hot notice that twenty-two years of your digital life just went poof – gone, like the last donut at a morning meeting. That's what happened to me.

Other people were opening presents or pretending to like their in-laws. Meanwhile, I

was staring at a screen. It informed me that my Facebook account had been permanently disabled. No warning. No explanation. No context. Just a message as cheerful as a tax audit.

"Account Permanently Disabled. You cannot request another review."

TWO DECADES OF OVERSHARING

This wasn't just any account

This was my *award-winning* Facebook account. "**Biggest Social Media Oversharer**" at my ten-year high school reunion, thank you very much.

A meticulously curated archive contained memories, milestones, grief, and joy. It included memes, sobriety anniversaries, and family losses. There were inside jokes and way too many opinions about reality TV shows that probably didn't deserve the emotional investment.

And it was gone in an instant. The timing felt particularly cruel. Christmas Eve: a day when most customer-service departments are as reachable as Santa's workshop.

I'd been using Facebook since 2004, back when you needed a ".edu" email to sign up. I'd watched it evolve from a simple college networking site to the digital town square where democracy goes to die. I dropped Myspace Tom faster than a three-day-old "Top 8 Friends" list.



Caleb throws Myspace Tom into the trash. I'd survived every privacy scandal, every algorithm change, every redesign — two decades of loyal participation in this odd social experiment. Now I was being kicked out without so much as a "bye bitch."



A dramatic reimagining of my ten-year high school reunion — crowned "Biggest Social Media Oversharer,"
Class of '99.

"yOu cAnNoT rEqWeSt aNoThEr rEvU"

— THE FINAL, COLD, ABSOLUTE LANGUAGE OF THE BAN

The language was final. Cold. Absolute. It was almost like they were trolling me. It carried the tone of a bureaucracy that assumes guilt and offers silence as due process — the message that tells you very clearly that no one is coming to help you.

It's the digital equivalent of being kicked off the party bus. Except the party bus holds all your family photos and your primary means of staying connected to distant relatives.

Dopamine withdrawals are a real thing. It wasn't just the loss of access. It was the sudden realization of how much of my identity had become intertwined with this platform. My connection to friends on other continents. My repository of old photos. A primary news source. Even my method of remembering birthdays. All of it disappeared faster than a one-night stand after the booze wears off.



A cartoonish take on the Facebook logo, sticking its tongue out — the company's controversial nature, distilled.

**Y'ALL GOT ANY MORE
OF THEM...**



LIKES?

ARGUING WITH A ROOMBA

Into the Appeal Abyss

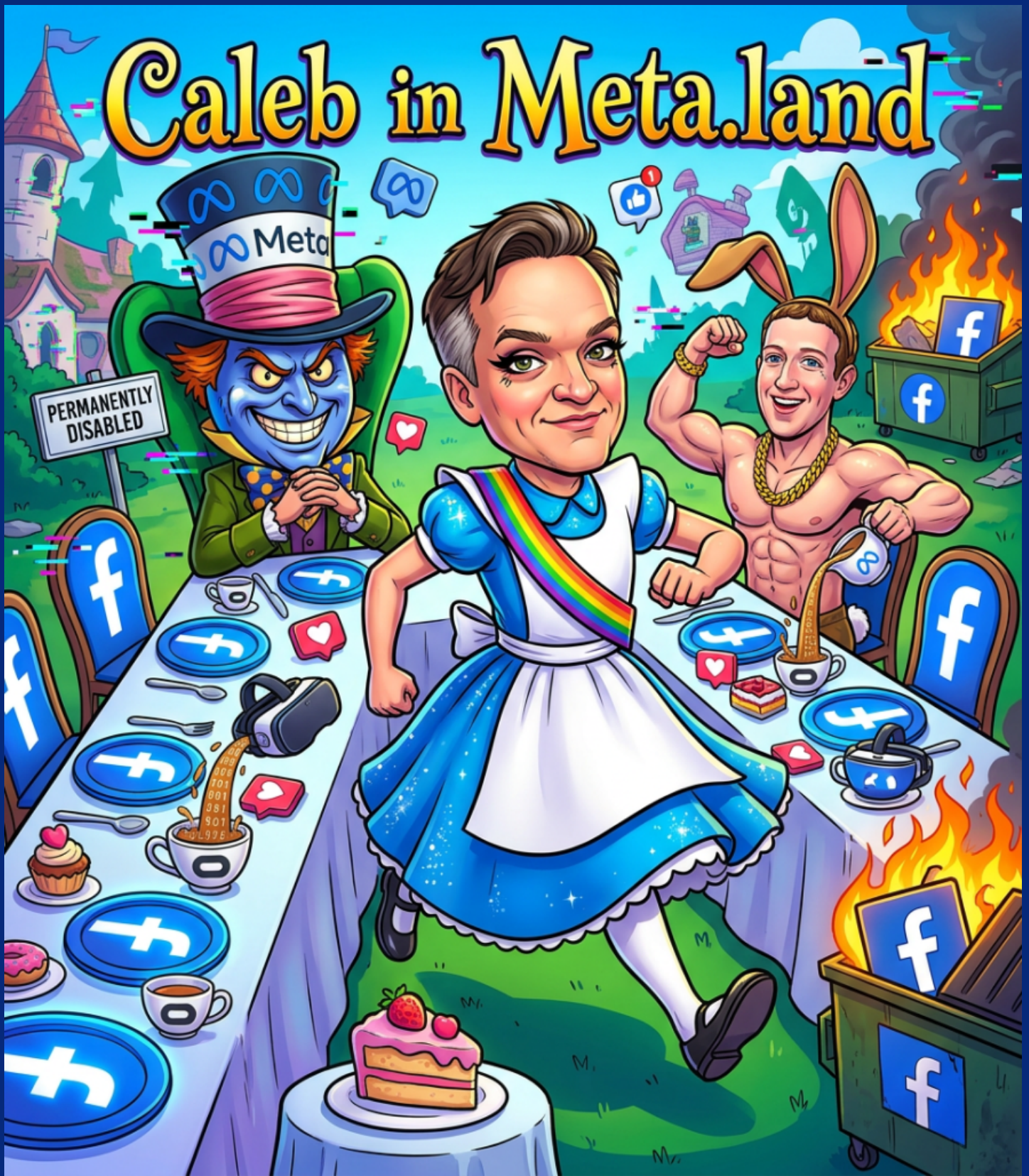
Most people would have called it quits and said oh well. Why? Because Meta's appeal process is like arguing with a Roomba. It bumps into a wall, spins in a circle, and pretends not to notice you. Only about twenty-four percent of appeals go anywhere. Paying for Meta Verified support mostly gets you a shinier automated brush-off from agents named Solange.

It was a confusing hedge maze with more grey areas than my Aunt Linda's mystery casserole at Thanksgiving. I was down the rabbit hole. Things were getting curiouser and curiouser.

You know me – I'm gay and stubborn. I also love tea parties. So I said nope to giving up and pulled a full Leslie Knope instead.

"Caleb in Metaland"

Caleb in Meta.land



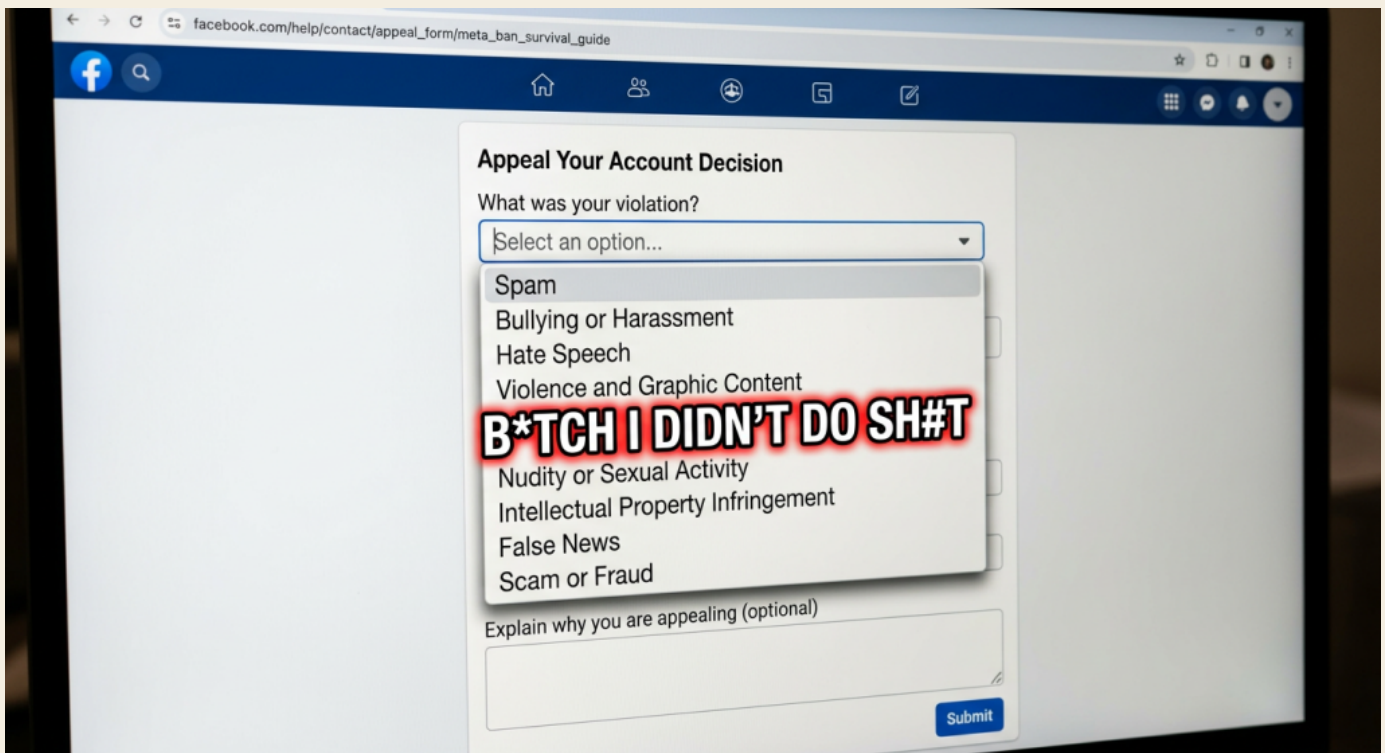
Guess your own crime: a dystopian game show

The appeal process deserves its own anthropological study. First, you're presented with a form that asks you to explain what you did wrong. It already assumes guilt. The drop-down menus for violation types don't include "Bitch, I didn't do shit." You're forced to guess at your own crime like some dystopian game show.

Then comes the waiting. Days turn into weeks. Weeks turn into months. The automated responses arrive with the regularity of a Swiss watch and the helpfulness of a belt and suspenders but no pants. Each one essentially

says, "We've reviewed your appeal and determined that you're still guilty of something we won't specify."

The most infuriating part was the gas-lighting. The responses would reference "community standards" violations without citing which standards or what content. It was like being told you failed a test but not being allowed to see the questions or your answers. The platform seemed designed not to resolve issues but to exhaust you into acceptance.



The appeal form's violation menu — frustration, highlighted. None of the options fit "I didn't do anything."

ACCIDENTAL CYBER DETECTIVE

Finding the smoking gun

I documented the whole experience. Screenshots. Timestamps. Notes. Emails. I'm a documentary filmmaker, so I treated it like a job.

I even started paying Meta for Meta Verified, because it comes with the promise of elevated HUMAN support – capital letters doing a lot of work there. What I got instead was a maze of catch-22s, broken promises, and flat-out falsehoods.

In the beginning, they tried to shame me. They literally told me my account was disabled because I was a bad person. When I asked what I had done to merit closure, they responded with, "You know what you did" – which I haven't heard out loud since I was a toddler.

It was dismissive. Infantilizing. It made me feel like a bad dog who'd chewed up the furniture but couldn't remember doing it. That's when I realized I needed proof.

"Your account was disabled because you are a bad person."

— AN ACTUAL META VERIFIED AGENT



The Meta support floor, reimagined: "Your account was disabled because you are a bad person."

login_with_hacked_cookie

The breakthrough came almost by accident. While desperately trying every avenue to regain access, I stumbled upon **hacked.facebook.com** – a link I'd never heard of but decided to try.

I entered my password and was redirected to a link that looked... odd. I looked closer and did a digital spit-take. It read:

www.facebook.com/checkpoint/disabled/login_with_hacked_cookie

That phrase isn't decorative. "Login with hacked cookie" is Facebook's own internal language.

Cookie theft is a breach where a hacker doesn't need your password – so it never triggers two-

factor authentication. It's the digital equivalent of someone stealing your house keys and then acting surprised when you notice the furniture moved.

This was my smoking gun. Facebook's own system informed me my account had been compromised through cookie theft – a sophisticated attack I'd have no way to prevent or even detect until too late. I finally had ironclad proof: it was a hack, not something I did. But instead of restoring my account, Meta treated me like the criminal.

The real fight – and the gut-wrenching digital autopsy – was still ahead.

TO BE CONTINUED IN PART 2

What the Heck is Cookie Theft?

(And Why It Got My 22-Year Facebook Account Zucked)



1 Normal Login



Your Password
+ 2FA

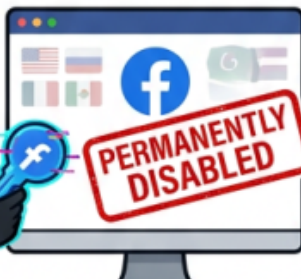
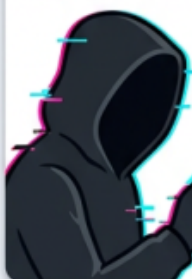
2 Cookie Theft (The Sneaky Way)



Hacker steals your digital
house key —
no password needed



3 What Happens Next



Facebook security
system cookies detects
'suspicious activity' and
slams a account icon.

You get punished... even
though you were the victim.

4 Why This Sucks

Cookie theft bypasses 2FA. You never even
knew it happened until Facebook disabled
your account. No warning. No explanation.
Just 'You know what you did.'



Pro tip: This is why downloading your data + checking login history is so important.

How cookie theft works — the login, the steal, the consequences, and why two-factor never fires.

THE SURVIVAL KIT

Recovering a disabled account

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- 01 Act fast.**
You generally have up to 180 days to appeal a suspension before it becomes permanent.

 - 02 Document everything.**
Screenshot every error message, URL (especially anything with "hacked" or "disabled"), and email.

 - 03 Download your data immediately.**
If you still can – Settings › Your Facebook Information › Download Your Information.

 - 04 Try the hacked-account flow.**
Visit hacked.facebook.com and see if it gives you clues about session / cookie theft.

 - 05 Don't spam appeals.**
One well-written, calm appeal performs better than dozens of angry ones.

 - 06 Consider Meta Verified — last resort.**
It sometimes escalates to (semi) human support, but results vary wildly.
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EXPERT INSIGHTS & TIPS

An FAQ with Macho Mark Z

Direct from the Digital Tyrant's Seat.



A muscular Mark Zuckerberg on a throne marked "ZUCK'D," gold chain catching the light, flanked by two golden Oscars, a glowing Facebook logo, and a burning trash bin. We asked the man himself.

Q. Why did you permanently disable my 22-year-old account on Christmas Eve with zero explanation?

Macho Zuck (flexing, thick gold chain catching the light): Bro, the algorithm don't take holidays. Sometimes it just hits you with the rear-naked choke. You know what you did... or maybe the cookie thief did. Either way, tap or nap. Merry Christmas.

Q. What the hell is "login_with_hacked_cookie," and why did your own system admit my account was compromised?

Macho Zuck (shrugging while adjusting his chain): Hackers these days are straight black belts in session theft. We catch the breach, we shut it down hard. Collateral damage happens when you're running the digital octagon. Should've had better guard, my friend.

Q. Your appeal process felt like pure gaslighting. Why does every response just say "We reviewed it and you're still guilty"?

Macho Zuck (smirking, cracking his knuckles): Details are for white belts. Billions of users, millions of reports – can't be breaking down every single takedown. Trust the process. Or don't. I'm still undefeated in my local BJJ bracket.

Q. I paid for Meta Verified hoping for real human help. Why did I still get the automated runaround?

Macho Zuck (laughing): Verified gets you to the front of the automated line, champ. I'm out here training with UFC fighters and stacking chains – you think I'm personally reviewing your 2017 memes? The system is the system. Respect it or get swept.

Q. Should people just give up when they get hit with a Meta ban?

Macho Zuck (leaning in, suddenly serious): Hell no. That's when you turn into the Hardy Boy. Document everything. Find your smoking gun. Download the data. Some legends even drag me into small claims court. Respect the grind. Most people tap out early – that's why I keep winning.

Q. Any final advice from the guy actually running the platform?

Macho Zuck (standing, double-bicep flex so the gold chain bounces): Back up your memories off-platform, use real 2FA, and don't put your whole life in one app. Me? I'm building the future, rolling on the mats, and collecting chains. You got Zucked? Dust off, touch grass, and come back stronger. The algorithm doesn't miss you... much.

TO BE CONTINUED IN PART 2

THE AUTOPSY & THE COURT CASE →

