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Democracy Dies in Darkness

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023 • \$3

## Air Force punishes 15 over leaks on Discord

IG report says ‘lack of supervision’ helped enable disclosures

BY DAN LAMOTHE

The Air Force disciplined 15 members of the Air National Guard after an internal investigation found that a “lack of supervision” and a “culture of complacency” helped enable a 21-year-old airman to share hundreds of classified documents online in a sprawling leak of U.S. military secrets that rocked the national security establishment this spring.

In a report delivered to Congress on Monday, the Air Force blamed Airman 1st Class Jack D. Teixeira’s superiors for failing to restrict his access to classified systems and facilities and to alert appropriate authorities during the time that he was alleged to have been illegally sharing government secrets.

The Air Force completed its investigation in August, but notified Congress and disclosed the findings Monday after being informed that The Washington Post was publishing a multipart investigation into the Discord leaks. The first article in the series published Monday morning; a “Frontline”/Post documentary will premiere Tuesday.

The office of the Air Force inspector general found that while Teixeira is believed to have worked alone to smuggle classified documents from his workplace at Otis Air National Guard Base in Massachusetts — and post photographs of them online — other members in his unit “had information about as many as four separate instances of his questionable activity.”

“After interviewing higher levels of the supervisory chain, it appears knowledge of these security incidents was not fully disclosed above the squadron level,” said an eight-page summary of the investigation. It added that “three individuals in the unit who understood their duty to report specific information regarding A1C Teixeira’s intelligence-seeking and in-

SEE AIR FORCE ON A7

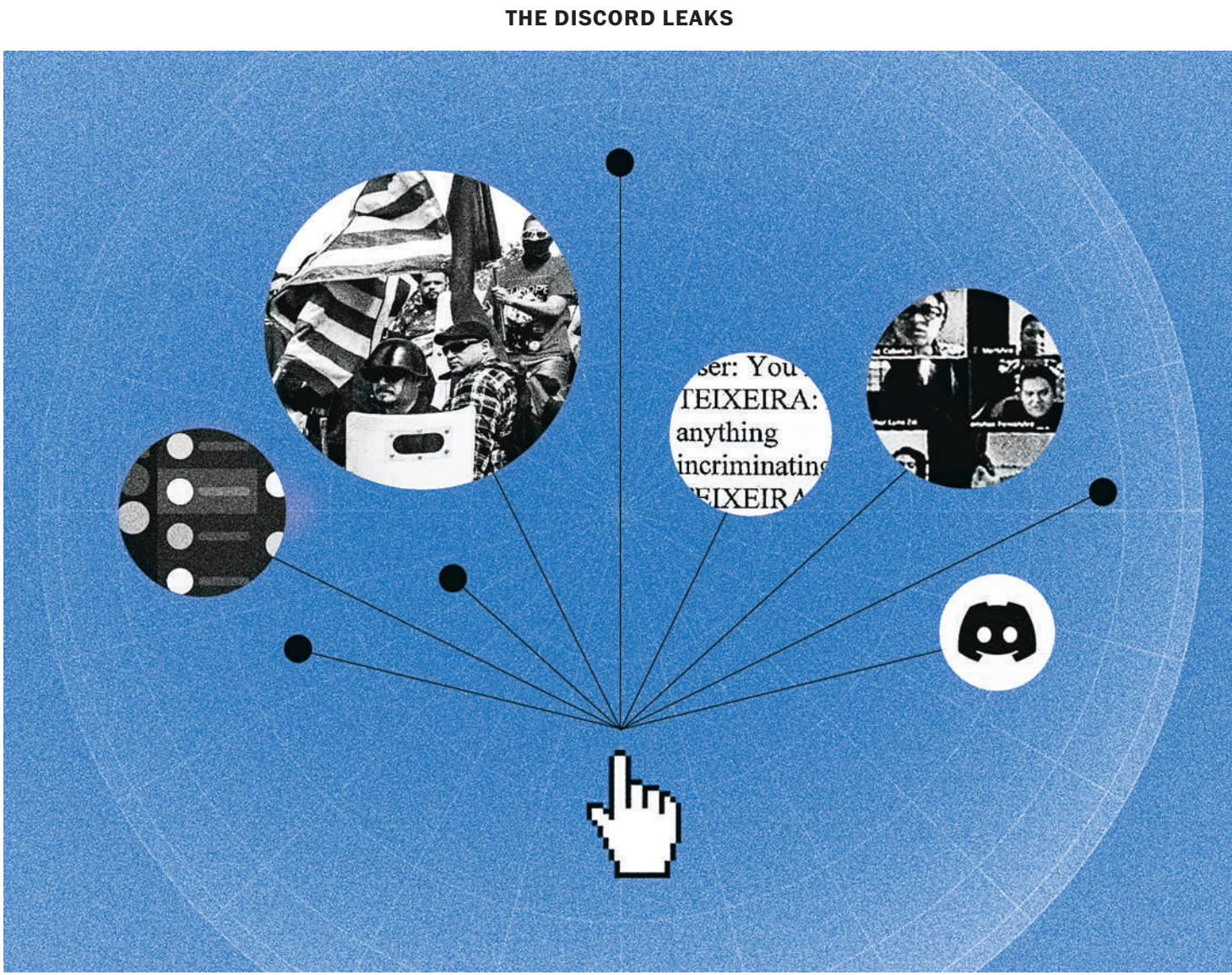


ILLUSTRATION BY LUCY NALAND/THE WASHINGTON POST; EVELYN HOCKSTEIN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION; DISCORD SCREENSHOTS; UNSPLASH; ISTOCK

## Where extremism found a home

After white supremacists used Discord to plan the deadly Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville in 2017, company executives promised to clean up the service.

The chat platform built for gamers banned prominent far-right groups, built a trust and safety team and started marketing to a more diverse set of users.

The changes garnered attention — Discord was going mainstream, tech analysts said — but they papered over the reality that the app remained vulnerable to bad actors, and a privacy-first approach left the company in the dark about much of what took place in its chatrooms.

Into that void stepped Jack Teixeira, the young Air National Guard member from Massachusetts who allegedly exploited Discord’s lack of oversight and content moderation to share top-secret intelligence documents for more than a year.

As the covid pandemic locked them down at home, Teixeira and a group of followers spent their days in a tightknit

Discord’s rules, culture of user moderation let hate proliferate in ‘problematic pockets’

BY SAMUEL OAKFORD,  
CHRIS DEGHANPOOR,  
JAMES O'DONNELL  
AND SHANE HARRIS



About this partnership: New reporting by The Washington Post and “Frontline” reveals details about Jack Teixeira’s alleged leak of classified U.S. intelligence on the Discord chat platform, his possible motivations and the red flags officials missed.

Based on a collaborative months-long investigation, “The Discord Leaks” examines one of the biggest leaks of government secrets in U.S. history. The documentary premieres tonight on PBS and online at washingtonpost.com.

chat server that he eventually controlled. What began as a place to hang out while playing first-person-shooter games, laugh at gory videos and trade vile memes became something else entirely — the scene of one of the most damaging leaks of classified national security secrets in years.

Discord executives say no one ever reported to them that Teixeira was sharing classified material on the platform. It is not possible, added John Redgrave, Discord’s vice president of trust and safety, for the company to identify what is or isn’t classified. When Discord became aware of Teixeira’s alleged leaking, staff moved “as fast as humanly possible” to assess the scope of what had happened and identify the leaker.

But according to interviews with more than a dozen current and former employees, moderators and researchers, the company’s rules and culture allowed a racist and antisemitic community to flourish, giving Teixeira an audience eager for his revelations and unlikely to

SEE DISCORD ON A8

## Plan to bring D.C. teams to Va. takes a step forward

BY TEO ARMUS,  
LAURA VOZZELLA,  
SAM FORTIER  
AND GREGORY S. SCHNEIDER

A group of Virginia state lawmakers voted Monday in favor of a deal to bring the Washington Capitals and Wizards to a new arena in Northern Virginia, according to four people with knowledge of the situation.

Under the plan, which would still require approval from the full General Assembly and local officials, both teams would move to a new facility anchoring a massive mixed-use development in Alexandria’s Potomac Yard neighborhood, according to three of those people and four others. All of them spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss details of the plan. A Virginia stadium au-

SEE ARENA ON A6

**Svrluga:** A move might be good for Caps, Wizards and bad for D.C. **D1**

## Building a safe space to talk about gun violence

After losing two cousins to shootings, a D.C. teen started a group to prevent more tragedies

BY ELLIE SILVERMAN

The students sat around the tables in the high school musical theater classroom and shared the grief and fear they carry with them.

They mourned over neighborhood beefs that turned into deadly violence. The stories they heard about kids killing other kids. The stray bullets claiming lives. The sound of gunfire outside their homes. The mental calculations they make about whether to use their expensive AirPods to listen to music on their way to school or wear a flashy outfit, for fear of becoming a victim. The way even being there for others who are grieving or recovering from gunshot wounds sometimes feels like too much.

Every day, they said, they are reminded just how dangerous a year it has been to be a kid in D.C.

“Sometimes I’ll be thinking about stuff, and reality will just hit me,” Kanihya Glover told her classmates last month. “It’ll be like: ‘Is this real?’”

SEE GUN VIOLENCE ON A22



AMANDA ANDRADE-RHOADES FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

**Kanihya Glover, right, leads Broken Concrete, a weekly group meeting for students affected by gun violence. Glover says she hopes that Broken Concrete will one day become a national organization.**

### IN THE NEWS

**A new era** As right-wing rule ended in Poland, the country’s new prime minister promised to restore the country’s democracy and relations with the European Union. **A11**

**Animal cruelty** Nearly 120 animals were seized, including dozens that were dead, from a roadside zoo in Virginia. **B1**

**THE NATION** **Hundreds of** Harvard professors and alumni fought to save the school president’s job. **A3**  
**Ukrainian President** Volodymyr Zelensky told U.S. officials not to “betray” his military. **A4**

**THE WORLD** **Egyptians** are voting in an election expected to hand their president a third term. **A10**  
**Israel claimed** progress against Hamas as Gaza’s humanitarian situation worsened. **A14**

**THE ECONOMY** **A seventh-grader** in Kansas has become a social media sensation for her candid makeup videos. **A17**  
**More than 50** Democrats have run campaign ads on X, formerly known as Twitter, this year even as corporate advertisers flee. **A18**

**THE REGION** **The administration** of D.C. Mayor Muriel E. Bowser has declined to use surplus funds to boost food assistance benefits. **B1**  
**Authorities in D.C.** indicted 10 men suspected of committing carjackings in the city and Maryland. **B1**

**STYLE** **The summer** blockbuster “Barbie” and the final season of HBO’s “Succession” each raked in an armful Golden Globe nominations. **C1**

**HEALTH & SCIENCE** **A panel of experts** lists the best way to stay healthy as the chill of winter arrives. **E1**

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The Washington Post  
Year 147, No. 53697

