

**The
Intercept**

EXHIBIT 3

BORDER PATROL CHIEF CARLA PROVOST WAS A MEMBER OF SECRET FACEBOOK GROUP

Ryan Devereaux

July 12 2019, 6:48 a.m.

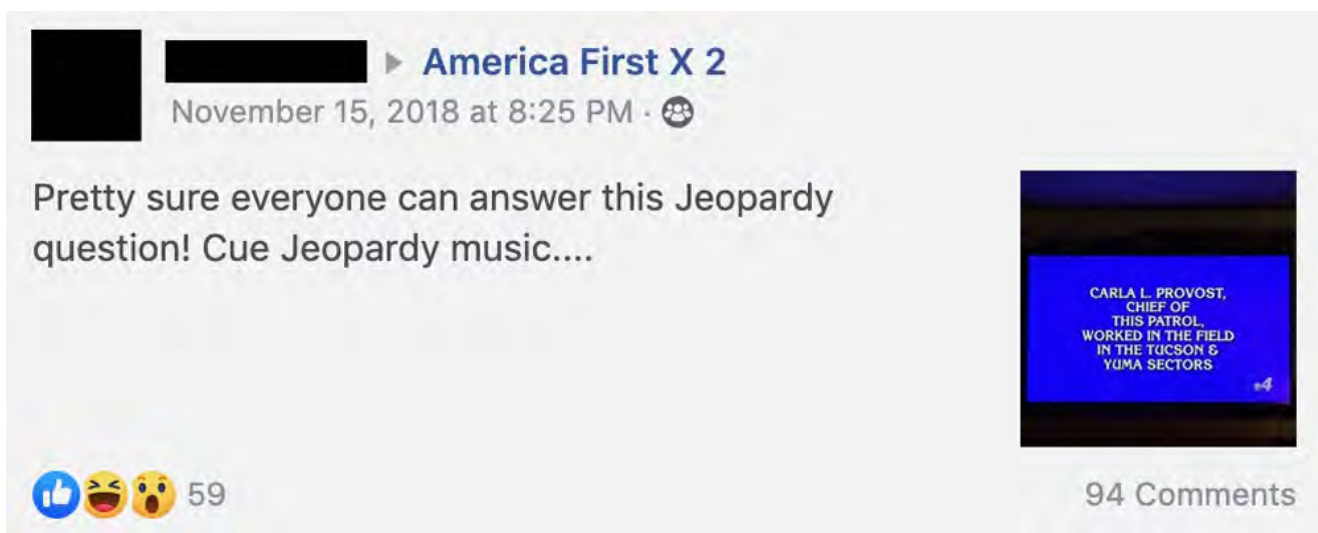


U.S. Border Patrol Chief Carla Provost watches as Vice President Mike Pence greets U.S. Customs and Border Protection employees at their headquarters in Washington on Jan. 11, 2019. Photo: Andrew Harnik/AP

When news broke that thousands of current and former Border Patrol agents were members of a secret Facebook group filled with racist, vulgar, and sexist content, Carla Provost, chief of the agency, was quick to respond. “These posts are completely inappropriate and contrary to

the honor and integrity I see – and expect – from our agents day in and day out,” Provost said in a statement. “Any employees found to have violated our standards of conduct will be held accountable.”

For Provost, a veteran of the Border Patrol who was named head of the agency in August 2018, the group’s existence and content should have come as no surprise. Three months after her appointment to chief, Provost herself had posted in the group, then known as “I’m 10-15,” now archived as “America First X 2.” Provost’s comment was innocuous – a friendly clapback against a group member who questioned her rise to the top of the Border Patrol – but her participation in the group, which she has since left, raises serious questions.



The original post made to the Facebook group. Some personal information and names have been redacted for privacy.



What is picked up supervisor in 2 years

33w · Edited



^ Hide 41 Replies



More than you permanently 841!

Hahaha

33w · Edited



someone has to watch everything

33w



Carla Provost It was actually 3 years.....hard to turn down when they offer it to you.....just saying.

33w



[Redacted]



33w



Provost is one of several Border Patrol supervisors The Intercept has identified as current or former participants in the secret Facebook group, including chief patrol agents overseeing whole Border Patrol sectors; multiple patrol agents in charge of individual stations; and ranking officials in the Border Patrol's union, who have enjoyed direct access to President Donald Trump. (It is technically possible that someone else posted in the group using the individuals' accounts.) The group's existence has already generated at least two investigations from lawmakers and internal Department of Homeland Security oversight bodies.



Read Our Complete Coverage

The War on Immigrants

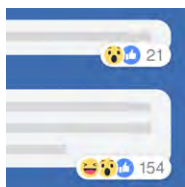
Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, sent [a letter](#) to the DHS Inspector General's office last week specifically requesting that investigators examine whether Provost and Acting DHS Secretary Kevin McAleenan knew about or had previously addressed the problem of government personnel posting "violent, racist, misogynistic comments and pictures" in the "I'm 10-15" group.

"This is why I have requested a full investigation into this matter," Thompson said in a statement to The Intercept, after being informed of Provost's participation in the group. "We need to know who in CBP leadership knew about these deplorable groups, when did they find out, and what action they took, if anything."

Customs and Border Protection, the agency that oversees the Border Patrol, did not dispute that Provost and other senior agents had commented in the group. Provost did not respond to a request for

comment. In a statement, CBP said its Office of Professional Responsibility “is investigating the material provided to CBP this week from multiple sources.”

“CBP does not tolerate misconduct on or off duty and will hold those who violate our code of conduct accountable,” the statement said. “Several CBP employees have received cease and desist letters and several of those have been placed on administrative duties pending the results of the investigation. These posts do not reflect the core values of the Agency and do not reflect the vast majority of employees who conduct themselves professionally and honorably every day, on and off duty.”



ReLated

Border Patrol Agents Tried to Delete Racist and Obscene Facebook Posts. We Archived Them.

ProPublica was [first to report](#) the existence of the secret Border Patrol group on July 1, revealing that members used the page to joke about migrant deaths and share sexually violent and threatening posts about several Democratic lawmakers, including, in particular, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez, D-N.Y. Politico followed up by [reporting](#) that senior officials in the Border Patrol, as well as CBP public affairs officials, had known about the group for years and used it as an “intelligence” stream to monitor the sentiment of the workforce. The Intercept [then reported](#) that the public revelations sparked an internal purging of the Facebook group’s content, but not before we archived hundreds of posts shared over multiple weeks.

CBP’s press office disputed reporting that it had monitored the group. “While the Agency has taken appropriate action to review,

investigate, and caution employees about inappropriate posts brought to our attention, the Agency does not restrict employees from affiliating through social media groups,” a spokesperson told The Intercept in an email. “Further, contrary to previous media reports, CBP’s Office of Public Affairs does not continuously monitor the personal use of social media by CBP employees.”

Evidence of Provost’s participation in the secret Border Patrol group comes as Ocasio-Cortez, along with Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-Texas; Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich.; and Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., head into a hearing with the Committee on Oversight and Reform and the inspectors general of DHS and the Department of Health and Human Services on Friday to discuss their recent visit to detention centers along the border.

As both ProPublica and The Intercept have reported, the lawmakers visit was a hot topic among “I’m 10-15” members, who discussed throwing burritos at the members of Congress or, in the case of one El Paso-based agent, staging a “bang in” to relieve stress from their presence. In a statement to the press Wednesday, Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, chair of the oversight committee, said the Facebook group would be a topic of discussion at the hearing. The Maryland Democrat has opened an investigation into the group and, in [a letter](#) to Mark Zuckerberg, requested that the Facebook executive see to it that his company “preserve all documents, communications, and other data related to the ‘I’m 10-15’ group” including “log files and metadata.”

Shortly after the Facebook group was revealed, CBP’s Office of Professional Responsibility issued a public [statement](#), citing Provost, saying that it had alerted the DHS inspector general’s office and that an investigation had been launched. McAleenan [later said](#) that an unspecified number of individuals had been placed on “administrative duties” following the disclosures over the last week, while ABC

News obtained an internal memo showing that CBP “was aware, as early as February 2018, of at least one private Facebook group that included ‘inappropriate and offensive posts’ by its personnel.”

Whether the group in question was “I’m 10-15” is unclear. As CNN reported last week, CBP employees have also participated in a group known as “The Real CBP Nation” that shared similar content to the Border Patrol group.

A CBP spokesperson told The Intercept that it “investigated and took action regarding specific inappropriate social media posts and associated individuals that the Agency was made aware of in 2016” and that OPR “distributed guidance to the workforce that warned CBP employees can be disciplined for inappropriate social media posts, including posts in private groups” in February 2018. As for current investigations, the spokesperson said, “Several employees have been placed on administrative duty (also known as restricted duty).”

“The cases are still being investigated. When the facts are ascertained in the investigative process, the report is reviewed to determine whether the case should be heard by the Agency’s Disciplinary Review Board or referred to local management for review under management’s disciplinary authority. We cannot comment on individual cases.”

Catering to current and former Border Patrol agents and other CBP employees, the “I’m 10-15” group had more than 9,500 members before being exposed. As of Friday morning, the number was a little over 4,000. Though efforts were made to remove recent disturbing content, much of the group’s past posts and comments sections remain intact, with the names of members who have left the group appearing in gray.

The names of three current chief patrol agents appeared in The Intercept’s search of the Border Patrol Facebook group, including Matthew Hudak, of the Big Bend sector, whose last post was

on August 10, 2016; Rodney S. Scott, of the San Diego sector, who remains in the group and whose last post was on November 17, 2018; and Jason D. Owens, former deputy chief patrol agent for the Laredo, Texas, sector, who now oversees operations the Border Patrol's Houlton sector in Maine. The Intercept additionally identified nine current or former group members whose names match current patrol agents in charge, or PAICs, of individual Border Patrol stations.

The names of Border Patrol union figures also appear in the group, including Hector Garza, who was among the first active-duty agency members to [establish a relationship](#) to then-candidate Trump in 2015, and Tucson chapter union head Art del Cueto, host of the Breitbart-sponsored Border Patrol union podcast "The Green Line" and frequent Fox News guest.

Join Our Newsletter
Original reporting. Fearless journalism. Delivered to you.
I'm in →

While posts shared by Border Patrol supervisors viewed by The Intercept were generally benign, that was not true in all cases.

By all indications, group member Thomas Hendricks was something of an edgy memelord in "I'm 10-15," never cowering before the politically correct demands of so-called snowflakes. When Hendricks appeared to disappear from the group last summer, his stature and mystique grew, prompting "who is Tom Hendricks" and "we are all Tom Hendricks" style posts.

The truth, as ProPublica [reported](#) this week and as comments reviewed by The Intercept indicate, is that Hendricks appears to be a supervisor in the Border Patrol Calexico station with more than two decades on the job. He returned to "I'm 10-15" on June 21, posting "That's right

bitches. The masses have spoken and today democracy won. I have returned. To everyone who knows the real me and had my back I say thank you. To everyone else? This is what I have to say...”

Hendricks then included an image of a smirking Trump forcing Ocasio-Cortez’s face into his crotch by the back of her neck.

The post, which garnered more than 250 likes, was on the ProPublica website less than two weeks later.

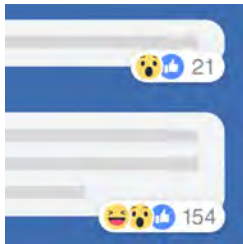
WAIT! BEFORE YOU GO on about your day, ask yourself: How likely is it that the story you just read would have been produced by a different news outlet if The Intercept hadn’t done it?

As the pandemic worsens, it’s not just the virus itself that threatens human life. The corruption, cronyism, and incompetence of those in power is adding fuel to the fire. The public deserves to know more than just case counts and death tolls, which is why our reporters are digging deep to break stories on corporate profiteering and political jockeying that undermine public health.

The kind of reporting we do is essential to democracy, but it is not easy, cheap, or profitable. The Intercept is an independent nonprofit news outlet. We don’t have ads, so we depend on our members – 55,000 and counting – to help us hold the powerful to account. Joining is simple and doesn’t need to cost a lot: You can become a sustaining member for as little as \$3 or \$5 a month. That’s all it takes to support the journalism you rely on.

[Become a Member](#) →

RELATED



Border Patrol Agents Tried to Delete Racist and Obscene Facebook Posts. We Archived Them.



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Other Democrats Reject “Staged” Tour of Migrant Detention Facilities



With Record Numbers of Displaced People, Deterrence Policies to Stop Their Movement Are Mass Murder



History Has Taught Us That Concentration Camps Should Be Liberated. We Can’t Wait Until 2020.

LATEST STORIES

Amid Coronavirus, a Flawed Guardianship System Can Make It Impossible to Care for Relatives in Assisted Living Facilities

Rachel M. Cohen – 9:30 a.m.

Adult guardianship is a legally thorny issue that sees seniors placed in assisted

living facilities, even when they have relatives willing to care for them.

NYPD's Culture of Impunity Sees an Officer Repeatedly Accused of Physical and Sexual Abuse Rising Through the Ranks

Tana Ganeva, W. Paul Smith – 6:00 a.m.

Mayor Bill de Blasio's pledge to discipline officers who commit violence does nothing to address NYPD's culture of rewarding bad behavior.

National Review Is Trying to Rewrite its Own Racist History

Ryan Grim – Jul. 5

The magazine invested extraordinary amounts of time and resources into building an intellectual edifice for segregation.

The Intercept

ABOUT

EDITORIAL POLICIES

BECOME A SOURCE

JOIN NEWSLETTER

BECOME A MEMBER

TERMS OF USE

PRIVACY

SECUREDROP

© FIRST LOOK MEDIA. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED