

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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**GLBT
Historical
Society**
museum & archives

MEDIA CONTACT

Mark Sawchuk
(415) 777-5455 ext. 008
mark@glbthistory.org

YouTube Terminates GLBT Historical Society's Account Without Warning

San Francisco — On Wednesday, July 27, 2022, the social media video-sharing website YouTube notified the GLBT Historical Society that its YouTube channel, which consists almost entirely of recordings of past educational events and programs, had been removed due to “severe or repeated violations of our Community Guidelines.” The notice further specified that the section of the guidelines in question were “multiple or severe violations of YouTube’s policy on nudity or sexual content.”

The removal was made without any advanced warning, even though none of the programmatic content the society has posted knowingly or intentionally violates YouTube’s Community Guidelines. We have tried for more than two weeks to obtain further information about what particular program, image or video was found to violate the Community Guidelines, but have so far received no additional information and have been unable to reinstate our account.

We do not believe that this was an intentional act by YouTube. It is far more likely that the society has once again been targeted by anti-LGBTQ trolls who spam queer accounts with disingenuous reports of imagined violations. While this is frustrating for us as an organization, we know that this is not an isolated incident, but part of a larger campaign to silence LGBTQ voices and remove us from public view.

“There is a direct line connecting the hundreds of bills introduced in dozens of states to roll back LGBTQ rights, drag queens being attacked for simply reading stories, and the bigots who continually flag our online accounts,” says Andrew Shaffer, interim co-executive director of the GLBT Historical Society.

“Their goal is both to make queer people invisible and to drain our resources by pulling us into unnecessary battles. We know that anti-LGBTQ forces will never succeed in completely erasing us, but they are succeeding in wasting our limited time and resources. This is not the first time we have spent hours working with social media companies to reinstate posts and accounts that were flagged and removed in error, and it almost certainly will not be the last time.”

We are asking YouTube to quickly reinstate our account and to provide clarification on how our educational programming violates the platform’s Community Guidelines. We are further calling on all online platforms to reconsider policies that put the onus on marginalized groups to fight for the right to be seen. Doing so does great harm not only to queer organizations, but to the countless LGBTQ people around the world who turn to us for information, support and inspiration.

While our YouTube account is down, we still have hundreds of primary sources, exhibitions, and archival collections available online at glbthistory.org/online-resources. We rely on the support of our members and donors to maintain and grow these collections. To learn how you can support our work, visit glbthistory.org/donate.

Resolution Attempts

The following provides a summary of the GLBT Historical Society’s attempts to seek a resolution to the termination of its YouTube account.

We submitted an appeal to YouTube on Monday, August 1. After submitting the review, we received the following message on Thursday, August 11:

“We have reviewed the channel termination you appealed and confirm that it is in violation of our Community Guidelines. Explicit content meant to be sexually gratifying is not allowed on YouTube. Posting pornography may result in content removal or channel termination. Videos containing fetish content will be removed or age-restricted. In most cases, violent, graphic, or humiliating fetishes are not allowed on YouTube. Upon review, we have decided to keep your account terminated due to repeated or severe violations of our Community Guidelines. You won’t be able to access or create any other YouTube accounts.”

After submitting an inquiry for additional information, YouTube closed the matter on Friday, August 12, by refusing to provide further information on the case:

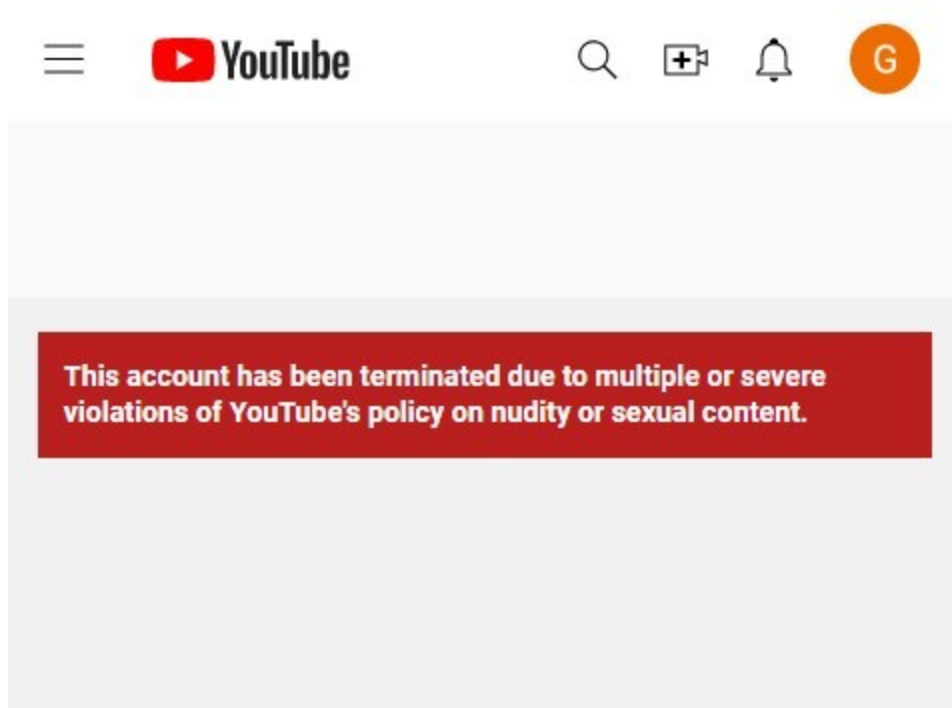
“I have checked with the comments from the specialist team, and unfortunately, we can’t give more information on this. The internal team had decided to keep your account terminated due to repeated or severe violations of our Community Guidelines. You won’t be able to access or create any other YouTube accounts.”

-- end --

ABOUT THE GLBT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The GLBT Historical Society is a public history center and archives that collects, preserves, exhibits and makes accessible to the public materials and knowledge to support and promote understanding of LGBTQ history, culture and arts in all their diversity. Founded in 1985, the society is recognized internationally as a leader in the field of queer public history and maintains one of the world's largest archival collections of LGBTQ historical materials. Our operations are centered at two sites: the GLBT Historical Society Museum, located in the heart of San Francisco's Castro neighborhood; and the Dr. John P. De Cecco Archives and Research Center, open to researchers in the Mid-Market district. For more information, visit www.glbthistory.org.

GRAPHICS



A screenshot of the GLBT Historical Society's terminated YouTube account.

The GLBT Historical Society
(415) 777-5455 | info@glbthistory.org | www.glbthistory.org
989 Market Street, Lower Level
San Francisco, CA 94114

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 Website

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