

FACEBOOK LEAKS AND LOSES: DATA BREACH TRIGGERS LOSS

by: Abby Weir / @abigail_weir_

The revelation of a recent leak of personal information by social media giant Facebook caused the company's value to drop more than \$50 billion dollars this week.

Numerous lawmakers have expressed worries regarding privacy and social media after a breach in millions of user's information. Cambridge Analytica, a private company that gathers data for political campaigns and processes, collected private information on 50 million Facebook users without the individuals' permission or consent.

The right-leaning organization received a hefty donation from Republican donor Robert Mercer. The firm also promised Steve Bannon helpful tools that could identify voter personalities as well as influence voters. It is also believed that the information is still in Cambridge Analytica's possession.

This is not the first time Cambridge Analytica has been accused of collecting and sharing users' personal information. The firm has previously worked for political campaigns, most notably President Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. There were accusations of the firm leaking voter information during their work with the Trump campaign in 2016; however, this is the first time speculations have been confirmed. This is also not the first time Facebook has been used for an attempted political gain. In 2016 Russians allegedly used the platform to sway the American electoral process.

With this huge leak, people are starting to consider whether their information is actually safe on social media websites. There are still many questions to be asked, but lawmakers have commented on the leak and

their constituents' concerns.

Republican senator Jeff Flake told CNN, "This is a big deal, when you have that amount of violations there

data, and the privacy are significant ... So the question is who knew it, and when did they know. How long did this go on, and what happens to that data now?"

Senator Marco Rubio also commented on the leak, stating he believes that some online social platforms have gotten too large too quickly to handle the mass amount of

information and tent of their site while

also fulfilling their obligations and responsibilities.

Democratic Representative Adam Schiff told ABC, "We need to find out what we can about the misappropriation of the privacy, the private information of tens of millions of American."

Facebook representatives have responded to the monumental leak. Initially the company remained calm about, almost downplaying, the issue, but has since addressed the issue with more concern. Paul Grewal, a vice president of the platform, has promised that the company will take action to protect its users. He also said that Cambridge Analytica has been suspended from the website, as well as top individuals from the firm. "We will take whatever steps are required to see that the data in question is deleted once and for all — and take action against all offending parties," said Grewal.

Cambridge Analytica is also involved in political controversy in the U.K. The firm is being investigated by both Parliament and government regulators for possible illegal activities during the "Brexit" campaign. The firm will likely be involved in a similar situation with the American political system. For now Cambridge Analytica denies claims that their actions violated any of Facebook's terms and conditions.

AUSTIN ON ALERT: PACKAGE BOMBER DELIVERS TERROR

by: John Shutze / @johnshutze

Early Wednesday morning, the suspected Austin package bomber detonated an explosive device in his vehicle, killing himself, as authorities closed in on him.

Authorities identified the suspected bomber as Mark Anthony Conditt, a 24-year-old white male, just days after multiple bombings in the Austin area. Conditt fled from his hotel as police gathered, waiting on more firepower to arrive.

Austin Police Chief, Brian Manley, released a statement Wednesday morning, stating "We don't know where this suspect has spent his

last 24 hours, and therefore we still need to remain vigilant to ensure that no other packages or devices have been left throughout the community."

Since the beginning of March, five package bombs "randomly" detonated, killing two and injuring multiple others.

The first attack occurred on March 2, when 39-year-old Stephen House was killed by a package bomb outside of his home.

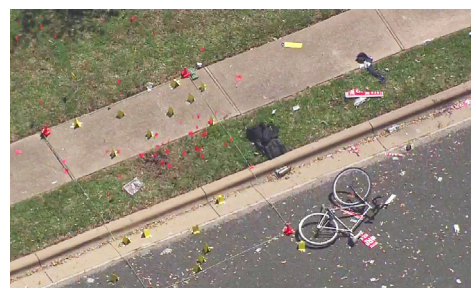
The next two attacks both took place on March 12, in which an explosion killed 17-year-old Draylen Mason and his left his 41-year-old mother in critical condition. Later that day, a 75-year-old woman was

seriously injured by an explosion outside her home.

An increasingly random attack happened on March 18, when a tripwire detonated a bomb on the side of the road, injuring two passersby.

The final bomb detonated March 20, at a FedEx facility in San Antonio, injuring one. A package shipped by the same individual was intercepted by authorities before delivery. It contained an explosive device.

Law enforcement believe all of these incidents are related, yet no clear connection has been established. Authorities are still searching for a motive behind these recent bombings, however nothing has been discovered at this point.



ABOVE: The latest package bomb was detonated by a tripwire when a cyclist and his friend passed.

BELOW: Suspect Mark Anthony Conditt can be seen wearing a wig as he ships explosives.

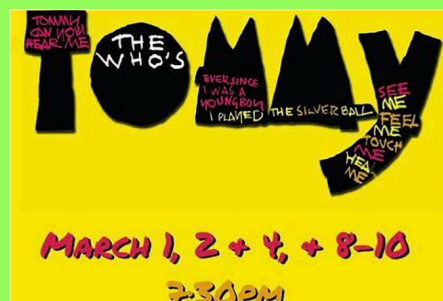
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